

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



In this issue:

Minister's message - 1
Summer Worship - 2
Wise Women - 3
Intercultural Engagement and Cultural Diversity - 4
Gift Cards - 5
Birthday Photos - 5
Faith Formation - 6
Foothills: Thank You - 7
Youth News - 8
Youth Leader Needed - 9
Community Engagement - 9
Camp Caravan - 10
Camp Kasota - 10
Music News - 11
Naramata - 13
Planning Team - 14
Book Club - 16
Office News - 16

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 Tracy

It's so hard these days to determine what's truth and what's not. What's misinformation and what's fact. Artificial intelligence (AI) has made fact checking problematic and ChatGBT agrees with anything someone wants to hear. Even the news seems skewed. I have learned that to get the full story in its entirety, one must visit multiple news sites and read numerous articles about the same story. I feel as though I can't trust everything I hear, and I suppose that's not a bad thing on one hand because it forces me to fact check on my own. On the other hand, I don't have the time to invest in what's needed to get the whole story.

How do we know what's truth and what's not when it comes to our spirituality? I think it's pretty simple. If what you're hearing or believing is causing harm, then it's not from God. One of the reasons for the stories of Jesus is that human beings weren't getting the message. The Good News is that God is unconditional love. Period.

As I sit here in Waterton after having finished the service yesterday, the unconditional love of God surrounds me. My family is here and my dogs are here; who could ask for anything more? God's love surrounds me in the people I meet from the USA who seem relieved to meet Canadians who show them kindness. God's love is in the rain as it nourishes the soil and fends off any worry about wildfires.

Even though I'm constantly being bombarded by stories I have to spend time vetting, I come back to the reality and truth of unconditional love. And that's what I choose to have guide me.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer full of opportunities to be kind and compassionate and spread the good news. To yourself, to others, to creation. Rest, revitalize, and know that I see you, and you are loved beyond measure.



Worship at St. Thomas - Cathy Rivard

Come join us in July and August

The Summer months are a dynamic and varied set of services with many new and different people helping out. The Worship Team would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the planning and leading of worship services during . We are a diverse, passionate, and talented bunch here at St. Thomas, and the folks who literally “stepped up” to the pulpit are to be applauded.

Bud Burgess, Loree Irving, Cindy Ma, Banner MacDonald, Kari Orosz, Wanda Veer: Accompanists.

Strummers, Elaine Taylor-Kerr: Service leaders.

Marina Theron-Monner: Soloist.

Upcoming Services for July and August 2026.

July 5

Strummers Stampede Service and Pancake Breakfast.

Music:
Strummers,
Kari Orosz.

July 12

My yoke is easy, my burden is light.

Reverend Marion.
Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30.

Music:
Kari Orosz (Pre-recorded).

July 19

The kin-dom is like...

Reverend Marion.
Scripture:
Matthew 13:31-33,
44-52.

Music:
Loree Irving

July 26

Reel Theology on the movie “Rental Family”.

Elaine Taylor-Kerr.
Scripture:
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12,
Ruth 1:17.

Music: Cindy Ma

August 2

Wrestling with God.

Reverend Tracy.
Scripture:
Genesis 32:22-31.

Music:
Marina Theron-Monner
Banner McDonald,
Wanda Veer.

August 9

Disruptive Dreams and the Cost of Complicity.

Reverend Tracy.
Scripture:
Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28.

Music:
Bud Berges.

August 16

Ubuntu Theology and the Repercussions of Crumbs.

Reverend Tracy.
Scripture:
Matthew 15:(10-20),
21-28

August 23

Holy Disobedience and the Importance of Identity

Reverend Tracy.
Scripture:
Exodus 1:8-2:10

Music:
Kari Orosz.

August 30

God’s “I Am” and our “Who Am I?”

Reverend Tracy.
Scripture: Exodus 3:1-15
Music: Kari Orosz.

The Wise Women of St. Thomas United Church

Weddings - Ruthann Watson

In the 1980's, bridal magazines were full of glossy shots of Diana inspired dresses and elegant receptions graced with string quartets and sophisticated guests. But never shots of tense interactions between an evangelical trad wife, soon to be mother-in-law, and a religion-skeptic mostly feminist mother. Or the cake decorator who disregarded the stand the father of the bride made for the occasion and proceeded to cut down the cake to fit his cheap cardboard base. Or the brother-in-law who spotted the groom's car, went home to get coveralls and a jack and was in the process of wheel removal before someone stopped him. Or the groom's friends who used their time dancing with the bride to tell her how lucky she was to have him. (Yes, I was, and am. Also, I was about to leave my job and friends to move to a log house in Drayton Valley...).

Some of you may recall the SITC episode re: Charlotte's second wedding. Fraught with spills and missteps, her friends reassure her that "the less perfect the wedding the more perfect the marriage." If this is indeed true, Cam and I should be married for 150 years. But, as Dr. Phil, before he really went off the rails, used to ask bridezillas, "Are you focused on the wedding or the marriage?" For better or worse, 41 years and many adventures later, the vows we made are still the most important part of the day. I tell myself that when I look at the photos of guests constructing pyramids of beer glasses next to table centre pieces.

Weddings and Other Disasters - Maureen Dodd

Headaches at weddings go back to biblical times, when Jacob married Leah by mistake. That's got to be an all-time Oops. Then at Samson's week-long wedding, not to Delilah; she came later, his carousing and gambling led to him killing several Philistines. It's a long story, but he thought his new bride had betrayed him, so he stomped off to another land, and she got married to a groomsman. That's the short version. Then there was the wedding at Cana, which ran out of wine, so poor Jesus, who was just trying to relax and have a night off, had to turn water into wine because of someone's poor planning.

I guess we can look at wedding hiccups as being holy tradition. Our wedding went off reasonably well, with only a few hurt feelings and reignited family feuds. My wedding dress, which I had ordered in April, never arrived for the June festivities, despite assurances from the Hudson's Bay. No wonder they went under. After two frantic shopping days, I ended up with a bad dress within my budget. I'm still bitter about that. And I can't even rage at The Bay anymore.

My Dad walked me down the aisle in record time. The organist had barely started the carefully chosen piece, when she had to cut it short. I think Dad was afraid Brian might change his mind. "After all, Dear, it's not like the lads are beating your door down." If only Dad had known then that engineers don't change their minds, we could have had a nice stately procession to the altar.

There were minor skirmishes between the drinkers, and the non-drinkers and a few old grievances were aired, but it stayed mostly civil. Although I did really have to remember 'love is patient, love is kind...' when Brian's grandmother told me that he had been a nice lad until he met me.

All in all, I thought it went well, despite the bad dress, although my two sisters ended up eloping and my brother has so far eschewed marriage, so there might have been more drama after we left.

Continued...

Enjoy your family weddings and celebrations this summer, and remember, whenever two or three are gathered together, especially if they are related, there will be complications. It's in the Bible.

Weddings and Other Disasters - Wanda Veer

It is June 22, 2026, as I write this. The month of weddings, showers, graduations, and exams, but we'll ignore the exams. And we have the furnace on! Yes, many glamorous outdoor weddings will have had to move to Plan B in 2026.

From both Ruthann's and Maureen's writings, plus discussions with friends, weddings seem to take on a life of their own. It sounds so simple. Gather the family together, exchange vows and slave rings, eat and drink, then live happily ever after. As Maureen said, problem A is the "gathering." Joe is not coming if Stuart is there, and so on. Food is an issue. Drink or not? An issue. Children allowed? An issue. Then we get to the really serious stuff like: should there be flowers at the end of each pew or every second pew? You see what I mean? We somehow create a monster.

Our wedding was a sort of success. Stan was a wreck, since his mother had spent the night before telling him what a mistake he was making. He was so nervous, he signed the Marriage Certificate with an X. I am still hoping the real Mr. X will show up and whisk me away to the castle. I did notice quite a number of guests in attendance that I did not know. Distant relatives I had never met, friends of Mom and Dad's that they insisted should attend. And in retrospect, the things we fussed about, like flowers and centerpieces and invitations, no one looked at or cared about.

Off we travelled to a honeymoon in Banff, where we went swimming in the Hot Springs. Whilst we were enjoying this amazing natural cave someone broke into our car, stole my purse, and took all the cash we had received as wedding gifts, that was the way back then. That, folks, began a lifetime of thefts from the Veer household.

Cathy Rivard shared some of her wedding highlights. The groom's family got lost and were late for the wedding. Groom decided he didn't want God mentioned in the vows. Fortunately, the attending minister was a friend of Cathy's who said "all will be well. We'll have a rum and coke and rewrite the vows". Which they did. While at the wedding, their house was broken into and many items stolen.

Can it get worse? Yes. They couldn't find the groom's dad who was tippling and talking with his ex-wife in the parking lot. Too funny.

And are we grateful for all this chaos and confusion? Absolutely. Life would be so boring if everything unfolded as planned. God, I believe, needs a few laughs at our expense occasionally!

May your summer be full of warm days and warm memories.

Intercultural Engagement and Cultural Diversity

Wednesdays October 14, 2026, to November 25, 2026, from 4:00 pm -5:30 pm.

Come as a small group to explore what intercultural engagement and cultural diversity might mean in STUC.

Contact Linda Miller by the end of June if you're interested in attending.

Gift Cards - Richard Taylor-Kerr

We are mid way through the year and have fundraised \$3900 through the sale of gift cards. Great work St Thomas! This is a little lower than last year, but I am optimistic that the second half of the year will be even better. Please continue to support this fundraiser!

We have gift cards available in \$50s and \$100s for Safeway/ Sobey's, 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.

Hospitality Birthdays - Wanda Veer

April 2026



Continued...

May 2026



Faith Formation - Gayle Wilderman

Kids and grandkids are still welcome to sign up for Camp Caravan. For a reasonable fee, kids spend the day with McKenzie and her crew. This summer's theme is Gather Round – With Love at the Center. Throughout the week, campers will explore what it means to invite, include, belong, share, and celebrate together as a community of care and faith. The curriculum invites children and youth to discover that God's love makes room for everyone and calls us into deeper connection with one another. [Camp is from July 13-17, 2026.](#)

Welcome back to Sunday School Sunday will be [September 13, 2026.](#)

Our new teacher, Kaitlyn Smith will be there to meet the kids. We hope to have called all the parents to make sure you know when everything starts. Kaitlyn has volunteered before with Ashley, is a mom of two little ones, and is a substitute teacher to boot.

Have a wonderful summer! See you kids at Camp Caravan and if not, welcome back in September!

Faith Formation Team – Reverend Marion Martin, Kaitlyn Smith (Children's Co-ordinator), Myrna Malanik, Marie Vallet, Gayle Wilderman and library – Fiona Craig, Elaine Gray, Sheila Humprey,

The Congregation of Foothills United Church, Thank You

A huge shout out to St. Thomas.

The folks at Foothills United Church want to extend a huge thank you to each of you, for all your care, support, and concern over the last number of years.

Words cannot express our appreciation for all your time spent volunteering in the Thrift Store, Clothing Boutique, and for sitting at the front door to welcome people into our building.

Thank you, for your support in coming out and joining us for events at Foothills United Church, it reminded us of the good old days when the place was packed.

We are sad to let go of our building and to no longer be a Faith Community, but we know we will find homes with other Communities of Faith.

We journey forward knowing that we have made a difference in the community of Bowness and beyond and that we will continue to change the world in many wonderful ways.

Thank you again for your love and support.

A SMALL GIFT A BIG SUMMER

Camp Caravan is hitting the road again! We're bringing faith, fun, and friendship to children and communities across Calgary and Southern Alberta.

This year, we need your help.

Every summer, families rely on our No-Barrier Bursary Fund so their kids can attend camp. Camp costs \$150 per child, but we believe finances should never keep a child from belonging, laughter, and faith-filled community.

No child is ever turned away.

Right now, however, our **bursary fund is nearly empty**, and the need is greater than ever. Your gift helps us keep saying YES. \$150 sends one child to camp \$75 shares the cost Any amount opens the door for another camper

When you give, you're not just funding a week of camp you're creating friendships, confidence, faith, and lifelong memories. Help keep the Camp Caravan rolling. Scan the QR code for a donation or visit:

<https://camp-caravan.ca/>

(Tax receipts provided for gifts over \$25.)



Youth News

Junior Youth Group

The Junior Youth Group is an energetic group of children in grades four – six. The children have a lot of fun together getting to know each other, doing some crafts and playing active games.

We plan to offer monthly in person events during the 2026/2027 school year. We will also be continuing the collaboration with Symons Valley for some of the 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.

Junior Youth group will take a break over the summer and start up again in September. Fall dates are **September 18, 2026, October 2, 2026, November 6, 2026, and December 4, 2026**. September, October, and December will be at St. Thomas. November will be at Symons Valley United.

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 night. Sunday mornings are focused on faith discussion, learning more about various scriptures, or exploring social justice issues. Friends are always welcome to come to Friday activities and Sunday mornings. 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!

In June, we attended the annual youth camp at Sylvan Lake, participated in Pride Prom at St Thomas United Church, joined our regional friends in the last Naked Faith of the year, and played some Dungeons and Dragons. We also discussed National Indigenous Month, National Men's Mental Health Month, and ran our youth led service at Symons Valley United Church.

What is happening this summer?

Here are the events we currently have planned for the summer. Please remember that this schedule is subject to change on short notice. Keep an eye out on your weekly emails for the most up-to-date information! During Summer, our Sunday morning programming takes a break, and will start up again in September. Additionally, our Friday social events slow down. Please note we will be running a few extra events on Mondays, to complete more of our D&D Campaign

July 6, 2026: Monday D&D, at Symons Valley United Church.

July 10, 2026: We will be playing minigolf, at a location to be announced!

July 24, 2026: We will be playing D&D at Symons Valley United Church!

Continued...

August 7, 2026: We will be meeting at Dairy Queen to enjoy some ice cream, and play outdoor games!

August 10, 2026: Monday D&D, at St. Thomas United Church

August 21, 2026: We'll be playing churchwide games, at Symons Valley United Church!

Youth Leader Needed - Elaine Taylor-Kerr

St. Thomas and Symons Valley United Churches have a very active youth group for Junior High and Senior High school students. The program includes social events, mission and outreach activities, involvement in the life and work of the two congregations, and Sunday morning faith exploration and social justice discussions. The group meets Sunday morning at each church and holds a weekly joint social event typically either on Friday evening or Sunday afternoon. They also attend Fish Creek Shared Ministry youth events.

We are currently looking for an enthusiastic and energetic person to join the youth leader team. The person in this role will be key to the continuation and growth of the shared youth program at St. Thomas and Symons Valley United Churches. Responsibilities will include planning and running social activities and Sunday morning youth classes as well as communicating with other staff members and committee members to ensure the success of this program.

For further information or to apply, please email youth-advisory@stthomasunited.ca

Community Engagement - Todd J. Robertson

For the last few years, five now, I think, we have participated in the Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day for The Children's Hospital and the A&W Burgers to Beat MS campaigns. We would like to invite you to come again this year.

**Dairy Queen's Miracle Treat Day is
Thursday, August 13, 2026**



Come and join us at the Country Hills Village Shopping Centre Dairy Queen on Thursday, August 13, 2026, at 2:00 pm with your St. Thomas United Church shirt if you have one and show the community we care. Bring your lawn chairs and we can sit outside.



email community-engagement@stthomasunited.ca if you need more information



Burgers to beat MS

**Thursday, August 20,
2026**

COME AND SUPPORT A&W'S BURGERS TO BEAT MS AT THE CROWFOOT A&W FOR LUNCH AT 11:30 AM WITH YOUR ST. THOMAS UNITED CHURCH SHIRT IF YOU HAVE ONE AND SHOW THE COMMUNITY WE CARE. THERE ARE SOME OUTSIDE TABLES AND YOU CAN BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIRS AND WE CAN SIT OUTSIDE IF IT IS NOT RAINING.



Camp Caravan - Elaine Taylor-Kerr

Camp Caravan is a week-long summer day camp designed for children from kindergarten to grade eight, bringing adventure, creativity, and community to various locations across Chinook Winds Region. Each day is packed with dynamic activities, hands-on learning, and unforgettable experiences that help children explore God's love and "Follow the Spirit" in their everyday lives—all while making new friends and having a blast! There is a program for children aged 5 – 11 and a separate program for children aged 12 – 14. There is also 'youth crew', a leadership development program for youth aged 14 – 17. St. Thomas will be hosting Camp Caravan **July 13 – 17, 2026**. To register go to [Camp Caravan](#).

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

EXPERIENCE CAMP CARAVAN THIS SUMMER

JULY 13-17, 2026

ST. THOMAS UNITED CHURCH

SPIRIT-FILLED DAY CAMPS IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA AND SURROUNDING AREA'S

FOR K-GR. 1

CREATIVITY **COMMUNITY** **ADVENTURE**

Come to Camp Caravan and get ready to:

- JUMP INTO ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURES
- EXPLORE HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES
- CREATE UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES
- MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND HAVE A BLAST!

INVESTMENT:

\$150 FOR THE FIVE DAY CAMP
 \$120 FOR THE FOUR DAY CAMP
 DAILY SNACKS & LUNCHES
 DEPENDENT ON LOCATION AND
 WILL BE CONFIRMED CLOSER TO
 THE START OF CAMP
 BURSARIES ARE AVAILABLE!!!
 DETAILS CAN BE FOUND WITHIN
 THE REGISTRATION LINK

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER VISIT
www.camp-caravan.ca

OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER AND TO SEE MORE INFO

Camp Kasota West - Elaine Taylor-Kerr

Camp Kasota West is a United Church camp on Sylvan Lake near Red Deer. They offer week long residential camping experiences in July and August for children who have completed grades 1 – 9. They also offer counsellor in training weeks for youth who have finished grades 10 or 11 and sailing camps for youth who have finished grades 9 – 11.

The rates are very reasonable. Several St. Thomas children have attended over the years. Several of our former youth group members have been counsellors at camp. All have enjoyed the experience. Registration is open.

For further information see www.campkasotawest.com



Music News - Elaine Taylor-Kerr

All of the musical groups are taking a break for the summer. We will be excited to return in September re-energized after the summer break. New members are always welcome so please consider joining us in the fall. Fall start up dates are listed below.

Upcoming Special Music Presentations and Events:

July 5, 2026: Annual Stampede service put on by the Strummers

September 12, 2026: Adult choir annual advance at Ghost Lake. The adult choir gathers to catch up on everyone's summer adventures, sing through music for the coming year, and enjoy a barbecue at the end of the day. Contact Pam Bazinet for further information.

Group	Practice Time	Ages	First Fall	Contact
Children's Choir	Thursdays 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	ECS – Grade 6	Sept 10, 2026.	Kate Power childrens-choir@stthomasunited.ca
Youth Choir	Wednesdays 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm	Grade 6 – University	Sept 9, 2026.	Barb Robertson barbrob@telus.net
Adult Choir	Thursdays 7:15 pm – 9:30 pm		Sept 10, 2026 .	Pam Bazinet pmbazinet@shaw.ca
Orchestra	Mondays 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm		Sept 14, 2026	Dick Worton dworton@telusplanet.net
Strummers	Thursdays 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm		Sept 10, 2026	David Gray Davidmg1957@gmail.com
Strummers	Tuesdays 1:00 pm -		Sept 8, 2026	George Zirotf georgezirotf@gmail.com



ST. THOMAS UNITED CHURCH

Stampede Service

Led by The St. Thomas Strummers

& Breakfast

Sunday, July 5, 2026, 10:30 am

Join us for a Stampede Breakfast in the Mountainview Hall following the Strummer's Stampede service, approximately 11:30 am. There will be a breakfast of pancakes and sausages following the service. We hope you will be able to attend!



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.

City Wide Then Let Us Sing Concert – September 11, 2026.

Save the date and be sure to join in this concert celebration introducing our new United Church Hymn Book, 'Then Let Us Sing'. The concert will be **Friday, September 11, 2026, at 7:00 am** at McDougall United Church, 8516 Athabasca St. SE, Calgary.

The Reverend Joanne Anquist of McDougall United Church is busy organizing an exciting musical introduction to the book and will involve the Reverend Dr. Lisa Waites who was a member of the Hymn Book Committee in the selection of the music to be offered. The concert will feature the three kinds of music in the book: "Praise Music, Traditional Hymn tunes set to new words, and new Hymns."

Anyone interested in singing in the mass choir for this concert is invited to attend a "Mass Choir Rehearsal" on **Thursday, September 3 2026, 7:00 - 9:00 pm** at McDougall United Church.

North Calgary Cluster



Learn More




SAVE THE DATE



Then Let Us SING!

A City Wide gathering for the whole community

September 11 | 7:00 pm

Hosted at **McDougall United Church**
(8516 Athabasca St SE, Calgary)

St. Thomas Strummers Musical Outreach -

George Zirotff

In 2016 the Strummers Outreach group began performing in Seniors Retirement Homes. Since 2016, we have performed at 18 different venues, at day programs for dementia patients, and at an open concert at Hawkstone Field. Our final performance before summer and our 19th since September, will be our 100th performance, which is a wonderful milestone for us.

The ten members in our group play guitars, ukuleles, violin, bass guitar, and sing a mix of songs from oldies, rock, folk, country, and spirituals. Almost all of our songs are well known to residents and we encourage them to sing along, or dance to the music if they are able. We acquired a used sound system with funds raised from performing, which allows the residents to hear our singing and for us to harmonize much better.

Please contact George at: 403-874-0431. georgezirotff@gmail.com

Naramata - Elaine Taylor-Kerr



Naramata Centre Summer Programs for all ages
Naramata Centre is conference and retreat centre of the United Church of Canada. Open to people of all ages, Naramata Centre is an inclusive, welcoming place to connect and deepen in mind, body and spirit. Situated on 23 acres of land on the east shore of Lake Okanagan, the

Centre provides a peaceful oasis for children, teens, adults, families, and elders to play, relax, grow and be authentically themselves, supported in community.

Naramata Centre draws and inspires people from many paths and walks of life, as a place for learning, sharing, contemplation, personal growth, and spiritual renewal. The Centre has long provided a space for spiritual retreat and reflection, intentional engagement and professional development. The Centre offers a wide variety of programs in music, the arts, health and well-being, leadership, social justice, and spiritual nurture.

The essence of Naramata Centre is difficult to capture in words. It is a place where being present and connecting to oneself, others, nature, and the Sacred become easier. Come stay at the Centre to experience what it has to offer. Enjoy a program or retreat. Walk the labyrinth and visit the Chapel. Do yoga or play on the beach. Jump into the lake. Snooze or read in the shade under the canopy of trees. Sink into community and laugh and sing. Join others in Sacred Pause or meditate. Explore Naramata village and Naramata Bench wineries. So much to experience...come and discover!

Registration for summer weeks is open. See <https://www.naramatacentresociety.org/> for program descriptions, accommodation descriptions and to register.

Planning Team - Linda Miller

Back to the Future Event of May 30, 2026.

So? What happened? What information did we gather? Are we doing anything with it?

The St. Thomas Planning Team met with Reverend Scott Reynolds on June 23, 2026; to review the wealth of information we collected on May 30, 2026. We have lists and more lists. If you would like a complete copy of these, please go to the St Thomas website.

A few questions and thoughts pulled off the lists from the World Cafe:

Money Talks?

How to raise big bucks?

Legacy giving.

What does it mean to be a Christian?

Affirming.

What's relevant to youth?

How do we engage the bible?

Excellent sermons.

Online bible study?

Music?

Uplifting music.

Naked Faith.

Encourage participation.

Support for family units?

Partner with other communities / offer resources.

Welcome to all diverse family situations.

Serving people in first third of life?

Strong youth group,

Sunday school,

Mentorship.

Attracting youth?

Social media advertising,

Make church events appealing,

Food.

From the many responses, some priorities emerged as goals over the next few years:

Outreach:

- Music,
- Pastoral Care,
- Serving the Wider Community.

First third ministry:

- Meaningful children and youth programs and strong leadership,
- Music.

Discipleship:

- Music,
- Invitation,
- Pastoral Care,
- Meaningful Worship,
- Public, Intentional and Explicit about our Inclusivity.

We also determined that in many areas, St Thomas is very good at what it does. The goal is to continue this pursuit and challenge ourselves to:

- Increase membership by outreach and invitation.

- Try suggested ideas to bring folks to our congregation while continuing to provide a caring Christian community.

- Realize this may result in changes as we move through new situations.

And how do we propose to start this? How about "Welcome Back Sunday." September 13, 2026, which includes:

- Blessings of Backpacks and Briefcases.

- First Sunday back for adult choir.

- BBQ following church.

- Meet the new Sunday School leader, and Youth leaders.

- Bringing a friend to church; we don't need to keep St Thomas as a secret society.

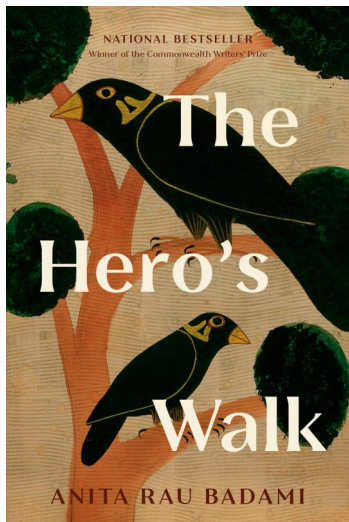
Questions: email to planning-team@stthomasunited.ca

(Your planning team: Reverend Tracy Robertson, Reverend Marion Martin, Bud Berges, Melissa Elves-Kerkhoven, Deyelle MacDonald, Linda Miller, Elaine Taylor-Kerr, Wanda Veer. Rev Scott Reynolds, advisor.)

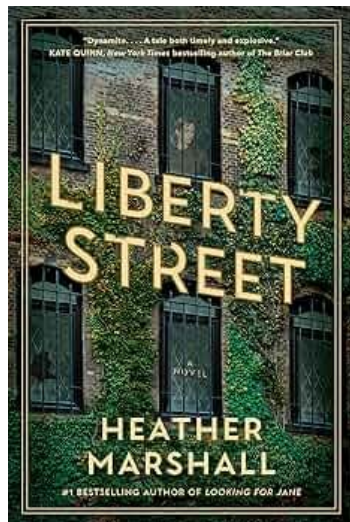
St. Thomas Book Club - Rachel Murray

For more information contact Rachel at rachelmurray@shaw.ca

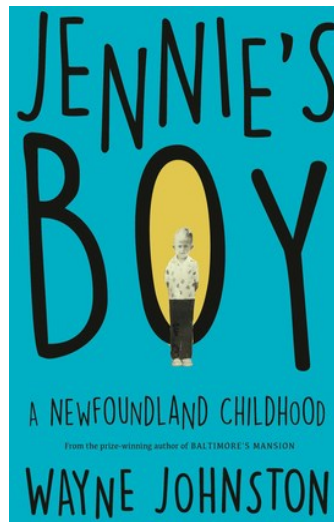
New members welcome! Meets every second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm on Zoom.



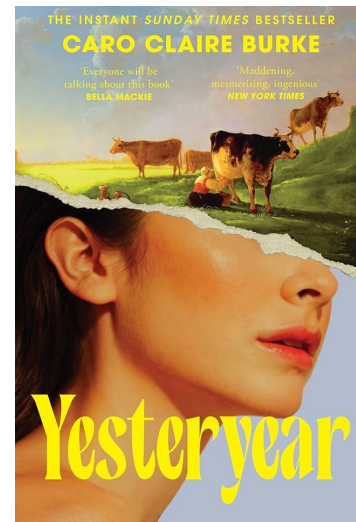
September, 2026



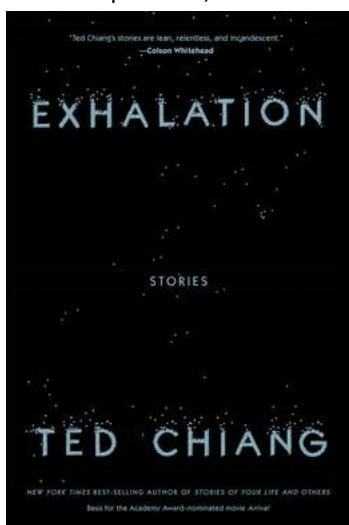
October, 2026



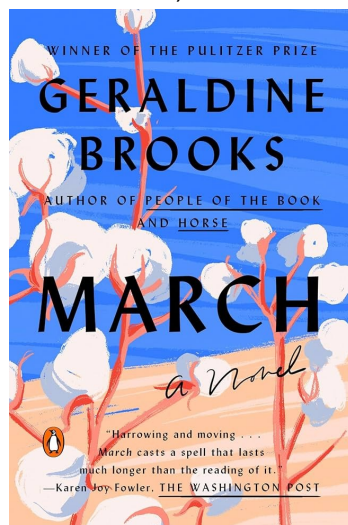
November, 2026



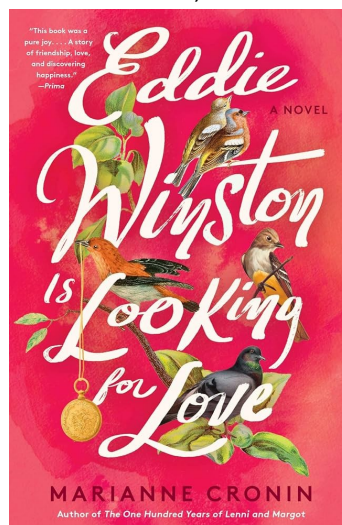
January, 2027



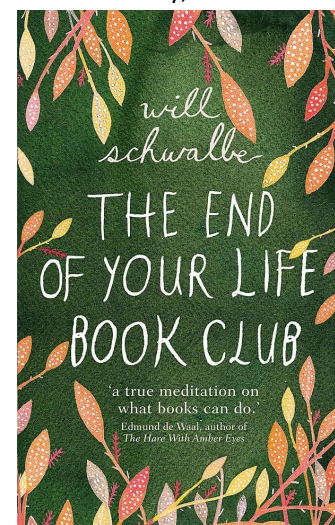
February, 2027



March, 2027



April, 2027



May, 2027

Office News - Bridget

Summer Office Hours

The church office will be closed from **July 1, 2026 through August 13, 2026**. Bridget will work reduced, irregular hours and will be away for two weeks during this period. If you have questions or need access to the church, please call and leave a message or send an email. Someone will respond to your request. The office will reopen on **Monday, August 17, 2026**.

For all urgent pastoral care needs in July, please contact Reverend. Marion at 403-715-2901. For all urgent pastoral care needs in August, please contact Reverend. Tracy at 403-870-3930.