St. Thomas United Church

November

2026 Newsletter

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

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Minister's Message - Reverend Marion

Hello everyone.
The last few months have been rather busy for both Reverend Tracy and myself. In September, Reverend Tracy attended the Diaconia of the United Church Gathering in Kelowna and then the week before Thanksgiving we both attended the 'Sowing Promise: Renewal & Revitalization Pathway,' for ministry personnel.
And to add to all the comings and goings, we have been trying to navigate not only our emotions but everyone else's emotional state over the recent referendum.

On October 20, 2026, Treena Duncan, our Executive Minister of the Chinook Winds & Pacific Mountain Regions, posted this the letter below.

We feel that it says what we are trying to articulate.

Beyond the Referendum: Our Faithful Work Continues.

Dear friends,
As we reflect on the results of the referendum in Alberta, I suspect many of us are holding a mixture of emotions.

Continued...

There is relief and gratitude that Albertans have voted by a significant majority not to pursue further conversations about separation from Canada. At a time when there is so much division and uncertainty in our world, this is welcome news.

At the same time, there is deep concern about the results of the other referendum questions and what they may mean for the people and communities affected. For some, these results will bring fear and uncertainty about the future. It is possible to feel both relief and sorrow, gratitude and concern. We don't need to resolve those feelings today.

As people of faith, we are called to love our neighbours, to stand alongside those who are vulnerable, and to seek justice. Our United Church has a long history of faithful public witness, and that calling remains as important today as ever.

I am mindful that within our own communities of faith, people will have approached these questions from different perspectives. We are not all of one mind, but we are called to remain in relationship, to listen with respect, and to remember the humanity of those with whom we disagree. That does not mean setting aside our convictions, but allowing our faith to shape how we engage with one another and with the world.

In the days ahead, I encourage you to reach out to those who may be feeling particularly vulnerable, to offer care and reassurance, and to continue building communities where all are welcomed and valued.

The prophet Micah reminds us of what God requires of us: to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). These words seem important in this moment. We do not know all that the future will hold, but we know that God is present with us, calling us to live out our faith with courage, compassion, and love.

May we continue to be the church that our communities and our world need us to be.

With gratitude for your faithful witness,

Treena Duncan (she/her)
Executive Minister, Chinook Winds & Pacific Mountain Regions

Worship - Cathy Rivard

November is a time of remembrance and we will have our Remembrance Day service on November 8. We will be honoured with having the Bowness Legion as a special guest during the Remembrance service. We will also be graced with the Maple Leaf Brass on November 29. These are important heartfelt services and everyone is invited to come and take part

November 1

All Saints Day
Stewardship 3

Reverend Tracy
Scripture:
Revelation 7:9-17

Music:
Adult Choir, Kari Orosz.

November 8

Remembrance Sunday

Reverend Tracy
Guests during the service: Bowness Legion
Scripture:
Psalm 78:1-7

Music:
Adult Choir, Strummers, Kari Orosz.

November 15

Generosity of Self

Reverend Tracy
Scripture:
Matthew 25:14-30

Music:
Orchestra, Youth Choir, Kari Orosz.

November 22

Reign of Christ

Reverend Tracy
Scripture:

Music:
Children's Choir, Adult Choir, Kari Orosz.

November 29

Advent 1 - Until the Dawn...cry out

Reverend Tracy
Scripture:
Isaiah 64:1-9

Music:
Maple Leaf Brass, Kari Orosz.

Gift Cards - Richard Taylor-Kerr

We have fundraised just over $6300 through the sale of gift cards so far this year. Excellent work St. Thomas! Please continue to buy cards and help us to get to our goal of $8000 for the year.

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.

The Wise Women of St. Thomas United Church

Seasons- Wanda Veer

Well, as I mull this around,I am not sure which direction I want to go on this subject.Is it “Seasons of my life”? “Seasons of the year”? Or “Seasons as in seasonings”?

Seasons of my life is most poignant at this time. As many of you know from my birthday notices, I am firmly opposed to aging and its limitations. I have been dutifully railing against this, but, up to now, I have to admit that I am losing the battle. I don’t want to “do less”, I don’t want to see myself and my spouse lose our youthfulness and vibrant energy. But it is happening. I have been making myself miserable worrying about this. Ridiculous, since the referendum also took up a big portion of my worrying time. Perhaps this is like the stages of grief. I am now into the phase of “well, here we are… now where do I go?” And surprisingly there have been many clues sent to me. God is definitely not ignoring my plight. I have received surprising compliments from unexpected sources,I have found those far older than I who say “get over it, child”, I have heardmedical folks say, “You are just fine,and are aging well”.

I also have taken the time to look back on the other seasons of my life, the lessons I learned, the knowledge I thought I had, the wonderful experiences that were unique to me. I have grown up along the way it seems. I take more time now to explore the other side of the equation.I wonder at the exquisite creativity of our humanness, and the idiocythat sometimes erupts.I became ratheremotional listening to the dialogue about Gloria Steinem’s death. It took me back to the ‘60’s and the “now unspeakable” treatment that women received from some men. It was the norm in the ‘60’s, and now it’s not! My perception of the Residential Schools has made a huge leap to where I now say “that was barbaric”. I am disturbed by the divisiveness in the world right now, the outrage expressed through violence, the dismantling of the system I was raised in and honored.

Every story and essay throughout history will say much the same as I am saying. Life moves along and takes you with it. Kicking and screaming, floating, or helping with the paddling. I think I’ll stick with the paddling.

Fall is my least favorite season, however 2026 has been a mishmash of surprises. Rain at the wrong time, unseasonable warm and glorious days, and then our abrupt windstorm which inadvertently killed and injured young soldiers in Wainwright. I have learned to enjoy the stillness of winter, and then on to the amazement of springtime; my fave.

And seasons? Well, I have definitely moved beyond my mom’s prairiecupboard. She was an excellent cook, but at that time garlic salt was considered exotic. I am discovering other tastes and smells, and this is good.

Continued...

WE MUST NOT FORGETTHOSE WHO SERVEDAND ARE SERVINGOUR COUNTRY, CANADA. Blessings for November!

Humility? - Maureen Dodd

November is upon us. Stick Season. The leaves have gone and the snow isn't yet beautifying the sticks, but we can still walk outside before Slip n Slide Season. Or, as orthopedic surgeons call it, Overtime Season. If you're reading this on November 1, and there are mountains of snow on the ground, I apologize. I optimistically wrote this in the middle of October.

Lately the four seasons have an apocalyptic edge to them. Winter is plague season. Spring has become flood season. Summer is fire Season, and Fall is generally pestilence, as kids get back to school and we all succumb to the bugs rampant in indoor spaces.

But we have taken a dark turn here, so let us instead go forth with joy. Pre-Christian people celebrated the changing seasons and nature with dancing, music, flowers, feasting, and well-controlled fires. No gloomy declarations of too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry, too early, too late, or that we will surely pay for the mild winter with a cold summer.

I particularly like the idea of dancing around a Maypole to celebrate Spring. The Maypole historically symbolized the reverence that people had for trees and the emergence of new growth. It was a boisterous dance with lots of flowers, ribbons, and joy. Sadly, the Puritans banned this for a while, as they were apparently opposed to dancing and to joy. I think they also must have started the aforementioned gloomy declarations.

God must not want us to be gloomy. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that "God has made everything beautiful in its time." Even Stick Season. We may not always see or understand that, but that is what faith is for. Paul's letter to the Galatians says that no matter how we celebrate new seasons, with Maypole or without, "let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

Celebrate, dance, and do not give up doing good. And dust off your sturdy footwear for Slip n Slide Season.

Humility - Ruthann Watson

I recently heard a man say, "When I grew up it was like Mayberry and now it's not and that's why I'm voting…".

Probably all of us have heard or even said a version of this. If we were lucky enough to have a happy childhood with a loving family, life seemed simple, reliable and good. Mayberry, for those of you much younger, was an American TV program based in a small "southern" town. A very young Ron Howard played Opie, a boy surrounded by decent if slightly eccentric people. Opie came home from school to Aunt Bea's freshly baked cookies, not some wild-eyed woman yelling, "We have to leave in 4 minutes. You can eat your supper in the car."

CONTINUED...

In Mayberry, diversity probably meant using mayo on your sandwiches instead of margarine. Today we'd call it satire.

The Mayberry of our childhood memories is not just a place; it's a season which could have been created by Disney. Our 8 or 10 year old selves remember summer holidays filled with endless warm days with no thought of drought. Hailstorms were exciting or scary, and we didn't notice worried conversations about crop or property damage. Snow drifts were sources of fun, not shoveling or heart attacks. We didn't understand the implications of a teacher or member of the clergy suddenly moving to another jurisdiction. Or why so many fathers spent their evenings in the Legion. Or the woman who often was bruised because she was "clumsy". Or the confirmed bachelor who spent his weekends in the city. We were years, if not decades, from the next, less innocent seasons of our lives, bombarded by click-bait and rage farming, not to mention the realities of life.

Paul wrote, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child but now..." And Yogi Berra opined, "The future ain't what it used to be".
The seasons are going to change whether we want them to or not. May we all be dressed for the weather!

Primetimers

Primetimers

Primetimers' Coffee Time in the Narthex
Thursday November 5, 2026, at 10:00 am.
Join us for coffee, tea and conversation.

Primetimers' Christmas Lunch at Chianti Crowfoot
Wednesday, December 2, 2026, at 12 noon
A sign up sheet will be in the Narthex for this event.
Sign up by Tuesday, November 24, 2026.

Due to the Christmas Lunch, there won't be a Primetimers' Coffee Time in December. Please be aware that Chianti charges an 18% service charge for large groups. Please check your bill. If the bill shows the service charge you do not need to leave

AM Fitness - Barb Robertson

I know we can't believe everything we read, but I am convinced from all the research and reports that exercise is super necessary, especially as we age. It is apparently not good for us to sit around and eat bonbons all day. Join our exercise group and make a difference in your health.
Mondays 9:00 online, Wednesdays 9:30 Mountainview Hall (weather dependant), Fridays 9:00 online
Days and time are subject to change: No classes November 23, 2026, to December 7, 2026.

Library News - Elaine Gray

New (Donated) Titles in the Library:

For kids:

Baby's First Book of Banned Books, Special Lessons for Rebellious Young Readers;
Our Skin, a First Conversation About Race;
The ABC's of Inclusion;
If You Were a Princess, True Stories of Brave Leaders from Around the World.

For adults:

No Act of Love is Ever Wasted, the Spirituality of Caring for Persons With Dementia;
First Nations Version, An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament - dedicated in memory of Karen Kavanagh.

All these titles can be found on the table near the stairs, in the narthex/lobby.



Worship - Cathy Rivard

Hymn books

At one time every member of our congregation would sing hymns on Sunday morning with a hymn book in their hands. That is no longer the case, now the vast majority of us follow along with the words to the song projected on the screen.

As a result we have an excess of hymn books and would like to offer a copy to anyone who would like one, FREE. A table will be set up next Sunday, November 1, 2026 in the foyer, after church. If you miss that date not to worry, copies will be available by simply speaking with Cathy Rivard.

Youth News

Junior Youth

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.

Our next meeting will be on November 6, 2026, at Symons Valley United Church (38 Kincora Rise NW). Upcoming dates are December 4, 2026, and January 8, 2026. November and January will be at Symons Valley United. December will be at St. Thomas.

Sam and Elaine look forward to seeing you there!

Youth Group (Grades 7 - 12)

All youth grades 7 - 12 from St. Thomas, and Symons Valley United Churches are welcome to join us on Fridays 7 – 9 pm, and at our respective churches on Sunday morning. Youth are always welcome and are encouraged to bring friends. Leaders send out weekly emails at the start of each week to remind youth of upcoming events, announcements, and plan changes if necessary. Each youth, if desired, will also receive monthly check-ins over email or other formats. For those with questions, or those wanting to get connected feel free to reach out to us over email at youth@stthomasunited.ca. Alternatively, you can call the office and request to be added to our mail-out list.

What is happening this month?

Here are the events we currently have planned for November. Please remember that this schedule is subject to change at short notice. Keep an eye out on your weekly emails for the most up-to-date information! Our Sunday mornings will consist of:

November 1, 2026: Day of the Dead. In Mexico, The Day of the Dead is celebrated as a day to honour and remember deceased loved ones. This Sunday, we will be taking the time to discuss death, who do we consider saints or martyrs, what it means to honour someone after death, and who should we honour?
November 8, 2026: Remembrance Day. As this morning is the Sunday closest to the eleventh, we will be using this day as our Remembrance Sunday. Additionally, due to the state of the world; we will take this time to discuss patterns of social unrest and violence. There is also a Lunch and Learn with the curator of Calgary's Naval Museum following the service!

CONTINUED...

November 15, 2026: Letter Writing & Outreach. This week, we will be taking the time to do some letter writing to government officials. Youth will have the liberty of choosing the issue they want to focus on. We will also take this time to check-in with progress towards our youth-led outreach project.
November 22, 2026: Hanging of the Greens. This Sunday, it is time for our annual tradition for when we join the rest of the congregation in the service to celebrate 'Hanging the Greens'. There will be Cocoa and Carols following the service.
November 29, 2026: Hope - This week will mark the official start of Advent, a time of year where we discuss the lead up for the birth of Jesus Christ.

Fridays

November 6, 2026: D&D. We will be continuing back with our campaign, in our respective groups at St. Thomas. Remember our D&D nights go until 9:30!
November 13, 2026: Indoor Games. This Friday will be a classic games night at Symons Valley! Be prepared to run around the church and play circle games!
November 20, 2026: Naked Faith. This month's service is down south at Southwood United Church. Naked Faith is a monthly alternative worship service designed for youth and young adults and all are welcome. Dinner will be provided starting at 6:00 pm, and the service will follow shortly after. Finally, youth grades 6-12 are invited to play games until 10:30 pm.
November 27, 2026: Swimming. This week will be our offsite activity! We will be going swimming! As of this moment the location has not been decided, so stay tuned for more information! There will likely be a small fee, but do not hesitate to reach out if you need subsidies. Never let money be the reason you don't go!

What to look out for:

Fall Fair: November 14 and 15, 2026, will be St. Thomas' Fall Fair! Come check it out for some fun vendors, and other cool stuff!
Coffee Check in: As a monthly tradition we typically host a drop-in coffee check-in. This gives youth the opportunity to have more personal/ unstructured conversations with youth leaders, and other youth that attend. This month we will be at the Creekside Boston Pizza from 6:00 – 8:00 pm on Thursday, November 19! For a more specific address: 12286 Symons Valley Rd NW, Calgary AB T3P 0A3
Festive Voice Christmas Concert: November 27, 2026, is St. Thomas' annual Christmas concert!
Uncharted 2027: Those aged 16 - 17, are again invited to the senior high youth retreat from February 12 – 16, 2026. Uncharted is hosted by the region's First Third Ministries, and bursaries will be available. Registration is now open! For more details and registration: UNCHARTED
If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to: firstthirdministry@united-church.ca



Imagine Children's Retreat is for children 8 – 12 years old. Together, we become a multi-age and inter-cultural community sharing playfulness, meals, and connection with one another in a safe and welcoming setting. Come wonder about and explore faith through stories, games, creative experiences, worship, music, drama, and more in a beautiful setting that inspires awe and joy! Registration is now open. There is space for 20 children to attend. IMAGINE: Children's Retreat, Kasota East Camp 2027 | Event Registration | Chinook Winds & Pacific Mountain Regions UCCan Store



Festive Voices Concert

November 27, 2026, 7:00 pm

Suggested Ticket price: $25.00

Refreshments will be served

Tickets will be available through:
St. Thomas office,
or after Sunday Services in the narthex.

The festive voices are:
Marina Theron Monnery, Val Hudson,
Curtis Veer, Brian Holiday

St. Thomas United Church
Open Hands - Open Hearts - Open Minds

St. Thomas United Church
Open Hands - Open Hearts - Open Minds

We are delighted to invite you to

COCOA AND CAROLS

Sunday, November 22, 2026
11:30 am
Following the service

- Hot Chocolate
- Food Goodies
- Carols



Outreach - Elaine Gray

Christmas Adopt-a-Family: A Note from Your Outreach Committee

For both “long timers” and “newcomers” to St. Thomas, the Outreach team, with Deyelle MacDonald’s assistance, plans to once again symbolically “adopt” families in the community who are struggling, to help make their holidays happier. Typically, we “adopt” up to three families from various organizations, still to be determined.

Our plan this year is to have everything ready by the end of November. Watch the bulletin for more details as they become available. Also, if gift wrapping is “your thing”, we would welcome your talents, working along with the Youth Group, to help get the gifts ready to be delivered. Watch the bulletin for that info as well.

St. Thomas has typically responded to this program with overwhelming generosity; we thank you in advance for your support. If you’d like to be involved on a deeper level, please speak with either Deyelle MacDonald or Elaine Gray.

Christmas Bag Program

St. Thomas has been asked again this year to help Shepherd of the Hills with their ‘Christmas Bags’ program, as the demand has increased so much this year.

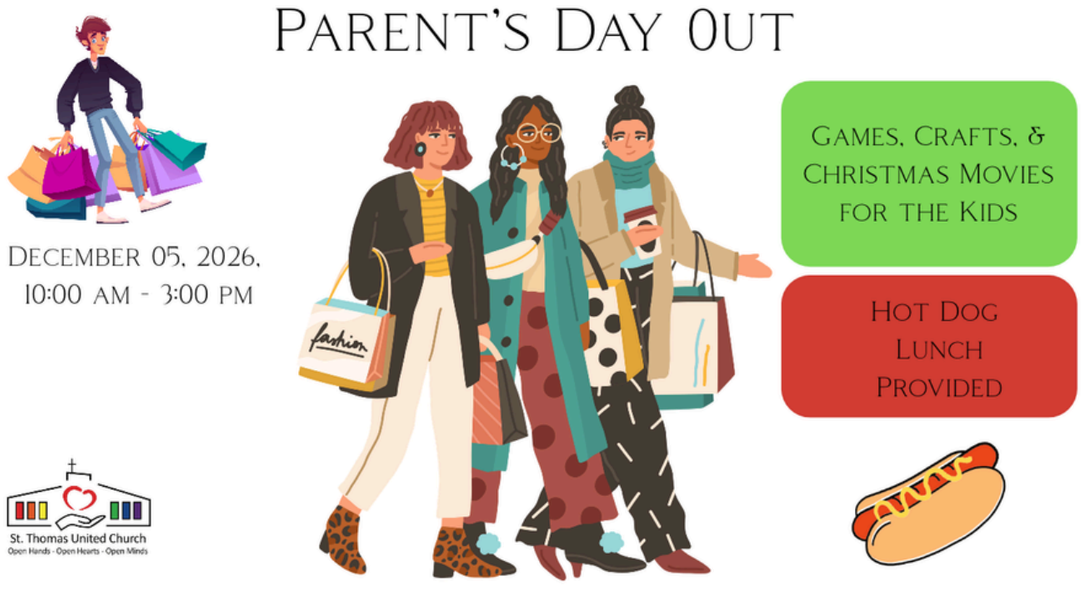
We’ve been asked for donations of packaged hot chocolate and soup. We’ll be collecting these until Monday, December 14, 2026. There will be a container in the narthex/lobby for our contributions.

Thanks for your support!

The Outreach Team: Linda Dick, Elaine Gray, Loree Irving, Deyelle MacDonald, Rev. Marion Martin, Rachel Murray

Faith Formation

Attention parents of St. Thomas United! Parents Day Out is coming December 05, 2026, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. A perfect time to get some Christmas shopping done or just time to relax in preparation for the Holiday season. There will be games, crafts, and Christmas movies for the kids to enjoy. We will also provide hot dog lunch for the kids. We are looking for volunteers for this event. Please keep an eye out for the participation/volunteer sign up sheet to be put on the front table.



Music News

All of the music groups are busy preparing music for the fall and Christmas season.

Upcoming Special Music Presentations and Events:

November 22, 2026: Cocoa and Carols following the 'Hanging of the Greens' service. Plan to stay after Church to enjoy some hot chocolate, goodies and the chance to sing some Christmas music to kick off the season.

November 27, 2026, 7:00 pm: Festive Voices Concert – This will be a fund raiser for St. Thomas. Marina Theron-Monnery and Curtis Veer both sing with this group. Val Hudson, former accompanist for Foothills, also sings with this group. Come out and enjoy their beautiful harmonies.

December 13, 2026: – Annual Children's and Youth Choirs musical during the service

December 24, 2026: 8:00 pm, Adult Choir Christmas Cantata

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

Adult Choir

As winter approaches we work towards our Remembrance Day and Christmas music. There is so much lovely music written for these events! I am sure you will enjoy our choices.

The choir continues to provide support to those who are working through celebrations of life.These times are difficult and the choir is able to give some comfort to the families.

Research continues to support the message that singing is very good for both your physical and emotional health. It “reduces stress, anxiety, and depression, while boosting mood through the release of endorphins, dopamine, and oxytocin”. It is a social activity, it involves breathing, reading, and making beautiful harmony with friends. And to top it off, it is just plain fun! Consider giving it a try.

As Friedrich Nietzsche noted, “Without music, life would be a mistake.”

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!

Pam Bazinet pmbazinet@shaw.ca

Youth Choir

“Dude, You Hear What I Hear?” The youth and junior choirs are having fun preparing for our Christmas presentation. Imagine a store full of mannequins who come to life and their interpretation of Christmas! Someone has to explain the real story of Christmas.

The youth choir did a super job singing "We Give Thanks" for the Thanksgiving service. By the time this information is published, we will have sung one more time and had a Sunday pizza practice.

As always, we would love to have more singers. Do you know someone who would like to join a great group of youth?

Barb Robertson barbrob@telus.net

Children’s Choir

Children's choir is having fun learning the music along with the youth choir for our annual Christmas musical “Dude, You Hear What I Hear?” We have already shared our music in Church twice this fall.

It's not too late to join us, just come on Thursdays from 6:00 to 7:00 pm.

Kate Power childrens-choir@stthomasunited.ca

Orchestra

The Orchestra rehearses on Monday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. We share our music at services about once a month. We played in the September 20, 2026, service and will be playing again on November 15, 2026.

The Orchestra is a friendly and welcoming group. If you play a musical instrument at any level and would like to join us, you would be very welcome.

Dick Worton dworton@telusplanet.net

Strummers

The Strummers practice 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 David Gray. Davidmg1957@gmail.com

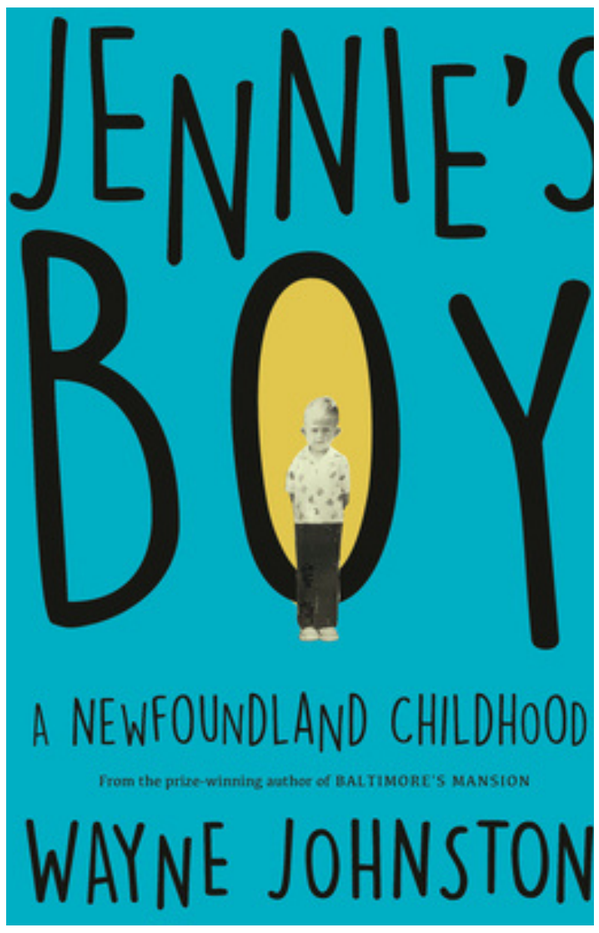
Other Opportunities for Soloists and Instrumentalists

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.

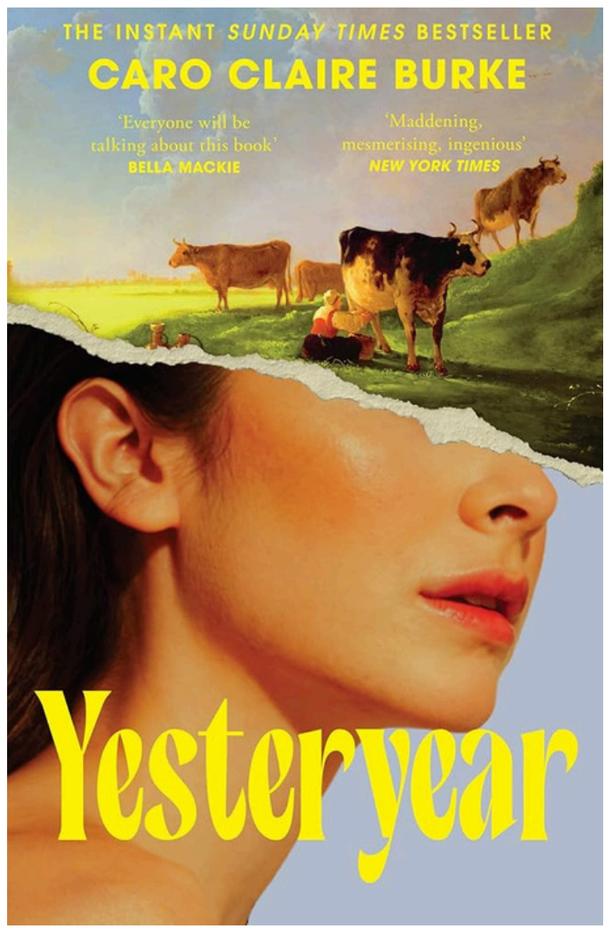


St. Thomas Book Club - Rachel Murray

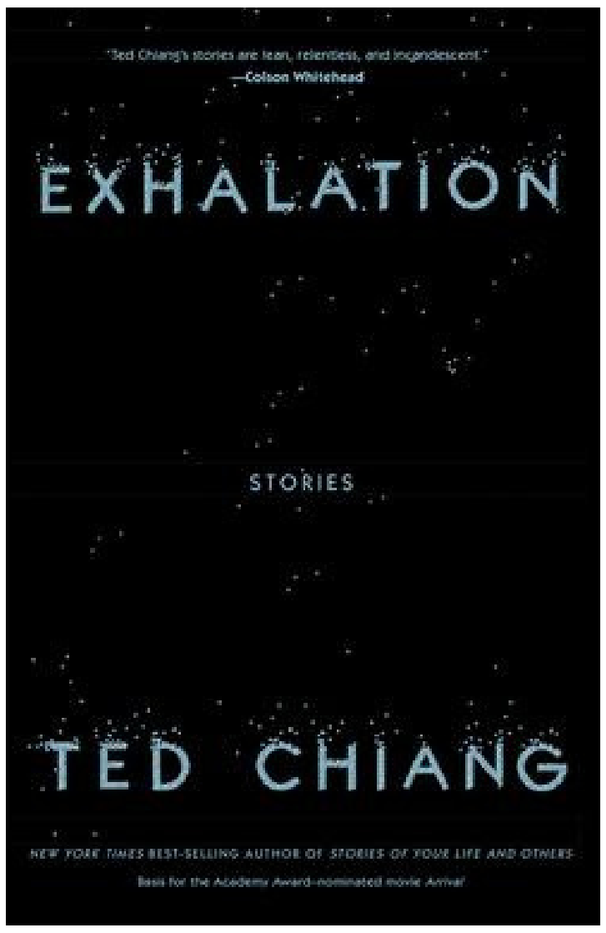
For more information contact Rachel at rachelmurray@shaw.ca
New members welcome! Meets every second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm on Zoom.
Meets every second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm on Zoom.
This year's book choices are:



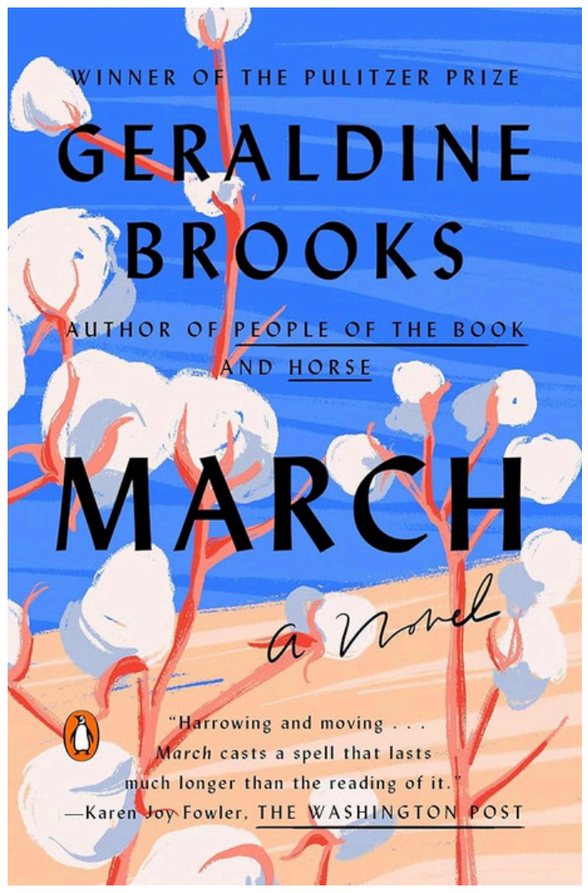
November 2026



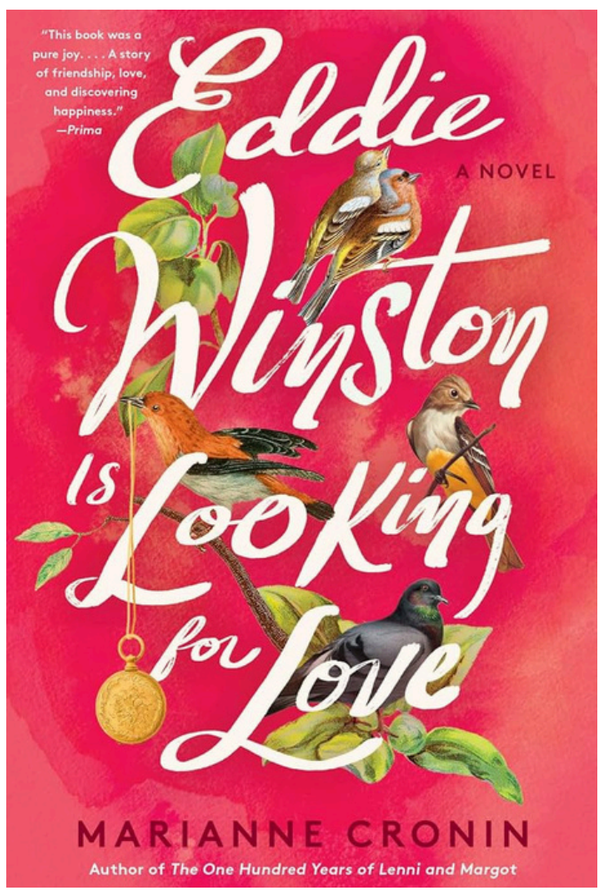
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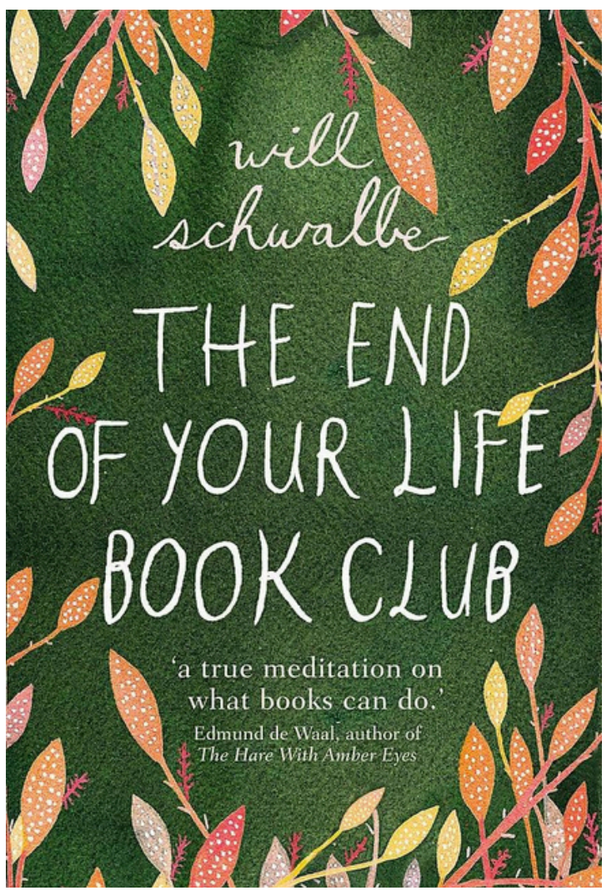
February 2027



March 2027



April 2027



May 2027

Hospitality Birthdays - Wanda Veer

June and July



August



October

