

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

A caring, inclusive community, loving God and neighbour

248 Highland Road East, Kitchener, Ontario

Email: office@ststephenchurch.ca

Phone: 519-744-2521

Website: www.ststephenchurch.ca

July News 2025

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43: 18-19

Greetings People of St. Stephen,

On behalf of my family and myself I would like to thank you very much for calling us to serve at your church. I know how much your faith community means to you and it will be our honour and privilege to walk with you in faith. I must say that we have been very pleased with the warm reception we've received so far! We're looking forward to getting to know everyone in the coming weeks, months and years.

It is true that times of change can bring feelings of loss and anxiety. Change can also bring about excitement and energy for new things. In such times I often lean on the passage above from Isaiah, and am reminded that God is constantly making new things.

As much as I like to get attached to familiar old things, there is tremendous freedom in allowing oneself to let go of the former things so that new things can be picked up. It was a big factor in our family coming to St. Stephen. After 8 years in Pickering we were ready for a new chapter, a new adventure.

I'm confident that God has many new things in store for St. Stephen as we move forward together, as we strive to shine a gospel light into a weary world. I can't wait to see what these new things are, springing forth, making a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. May God grant us the eyes to see it and the ears to hear it. May our hearts and minds perceive it and embrace where the Spirit is leading next.

Peace be with you,

Pastor Ronnie

Council Report

Pastor Ronnie joined us for his first council meeting. We are blessed to be able to work together with him hopefully for many years to come! His installation service will be held on a Sunday afternoon in September.

We are still looking for a treasurer! This person need not be a council member. We have a bookkeeper who deals with all the government and payroll requirements and Kathleen deals with writing cheques as needed so the treasurer just needs to keep an eye on things and prepare the GST/HST report.

We also need to form a Finance Committee to prepare the budget for 2026. If you would like to sit on this committee please contact Linda Mittleholtz or any member of council. Alex Keuper has agreed to sit on this committee but he needs help!

Our next meeting is August 27/25

Respectfully submitted, Linda Weinstein ~ Council Secretary

Wildfires and the ELCIC National Convention

You will have heard that wildfires have been causing mass evacuations, largely in Canada's north and west. It has been reported that Winnipeg has run out of hotel rooms and has been sending evacuees to Ontario. In the midst of this, the ELCIC will be holding a national convention in Winnipeg from July 10 to 13. Jan Hansen, a member of our congregation, has been elected to be a delegate at this convention. The convention is a necessary thing, in part because we will be electing a new national bishop, but the timing and placement of the convention puts a strain on local resources.

With the advice of conference organizers, we would like to give members of St. Stephen an opportunity to contribute to supporting evacuees. One of their suggested organizations was the Canadian Red Cross' Manitoba Wildfires Appeal. These donations will be used for assisting those impacted by the wildfires in Manitoba with immediate and ongoing relief including financial assistance, support to evacuees and the communities hosting them, recovery and resilience efforts in response to the wildfires, as well as supporting community preparedness and risk reduction for future all-hazard disaster events within Manitoba.

Donations can be made via phone at 1-800-418-1111

ELW News:

The ELW will meet again in the fall. Have a wonderful summer!

May Financial Report

In May we took in about the same as what we spent. From January to May we have spent almost \$6000 more than we have taken in. From January to May, our income was lower than budgeted, but so was our expenses. Our giving from January to May 2025 was higher than our giving in the same months in 2024.

Bringing in more than last year is encouraging. We do have a deficit, but it is typical for churches to run a bit of a deficit right up until Christmas, when a larger set of gifts often come in. It should be noted that our monthly expenses will go up, starting in June, because we will begin paying for a fulltime pastor.

	<u>May</u>	<u>Year to date</u>	<u>YTD budget</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>YTD prior</u> <u>year</u>
Income	\$16,177.49	\$100,520.40	\$-14,710.85	\$92,073.66
Expenses	\$16,115.80	\$106,325.64	\$17,546.61	\$91,071.85
Income- Expense	<u>\$61.69</u>	<u>\$-5,805.24</u>	<u>\$2,835.76</u>	<u>\$1,001.81</u>

Community Life Team Update

July is our quiet month as many are off enjoying summer holidays. But please make sure you put these upcoming events on your calendar.

Birthday Sundays:

July's Birthday Sunday will be held on Sunday July 20th and August's Birthday Sunday will be on Sunday August 17th.

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday August 13th at 5 pm – Annual Spaghetti Dinner.

Sunday September Sept 21st (new date) – Annual BBQ and birthday Sunday.

Saturday October 25th – Annual Sausage & Sauerkraut Dinner.

Saturday November 8th – Annual Bake & Craft Sale.

Saturday December 6th – Annual Christmas dinner.

Please check the Community Life Team bulletin board for sign-up sheets as we get closer to each of these events.

Until next month.

On behalf of your Community Life Team

Debbie

Putting something down in order to pick something else up

On September 13, 2020 we were not yet worshipping in-person. In the recorded worship for that Sunday pastor Richard said, “We begin today with the first of a new series of family friendly special messages for our young people. Take it away Jan.” That was the first video message in what would become a long series of messages. It is about buttons. I have posted it again and you can check it out here: <https://youtu.be/G7iKBQjXAJI>

I have recorded a new message for every Sunday since then (and sometimes a few more around advent and lent). It evolved from something that was only part of worship (both online and in-person), to something that was also posted on YouTube as a stand-alone video, to something that lived only on YouTube.

It has been a wonderful discipline to look at the assigned Bible readings each week and pull at the threads of an idea that it brings to mind. My faith has developed because of this practice. I have reached a point, though, where some of the people in my life need me to turn my attention to some new needs that have been developing. So I intend to lay down this practice of Biblical exploration and making short videos about it. I will continue for the next few weeks, possibly until I have reached a full five years of videos.

I want to thank the congregation for giving me the space to do this exploration, and I urge each of you to try a new practice that prods you to expand and explore your own faith.

Peace,

Jan Hansen

My Perspective: Two Roads - Carolyn R. Wilker

Many lessons we need to learn over and over again. It didn't stick the first time or the second. It was true for the Israelites in Old Testament times and true for disciples in Jesus' New Testament time. Still true today for us.

We've been given a choice. It's called free will, in that we get to choose how we live.

There's a poem by Robert Frost called "[The Road Not Taken](#)" where the poet encounters two roads, and he wonders aloud which one to take. (This is not a poetry lesson, in case you didn't like poetry in school.) Frost writes in the poem:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth...

"Mountain Interval marked Frost's turn to another kind of poem, a brief meditation sparked by an object, person or event."¹

We too can meditate on a person, place or event that has an effect on our choices. While you may not write it in poetry, you can ponder the meaning of a person, place or time that had its greatest effect on your choices. You can just think about, or talk with a friend about it. Or if you're a writer, you might make journal entries about these choices.

Frost's poem is a poetic way of sharing the aspect of choice.

We too have choices to make. Do we follow the world with all its challenges, or do we travel a different path, while living in that world? One that invites us to have a relationship with Jesus (John 14:6). I hope you chose the latter. That road can be bumpy too, but staying with it can make the difference.

Frost writes the end of his poem:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Please Join Us for any of our regular weekly events

Tuesday: Quilting @ 9:30 am and Cards @ 12:30pm

Thursday: Morning Exercise Class @ 9:30am

Friday: Afternoon Parkinsons and Care Givers Exercise Class @ 1pm

¹ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-frost>