

st. christopher's

# Messenger

July / August 2026

Issue 286



# FROM THE RECTOR'S STUDY



It definitely feels strange to order Christmas trees in June! We were extremely pleased with the quality of the trees we received from Potter Farms last year. We are ordering trees from their farm again, with hopes to repeat last year's success with our Christmas tree sale this coming December. Incidentally, if my travel plans work out as I anticipate

for the summer, I'll make a stop in Harvey Station, New Brunswick, to meet the Potters when I pass by on my way to Nova Scotia. We will be recruiting volunteers to sell trees in the fall. For now, ho, ho, ho, and watch for the sign-up sheets!

I want to tell you about a conversation that unfolded recently around the Mission Action Planning table

concerning the identity and the future of the group. You probably remember this part of our history. MAP was just beginning as we reopened following the pandemic. Part of the focus of one of our MAP groups was to get people together again through parish events and to reenergize the congregation. For all the right reasons, the social side of things became a significant focus, and some of the mission focus faded.

Now the MAP group has decided it's time for some of its members to focus exclusively on planning and hosting parish events. I welcome this decision, in part, because I am sensing a readiness to return to the MAP process and listen again together as a congregation for God's direction around how we can best engage with God's work in the world.

Anyone with an interest in hosting or planning new

social events please note, the Social Committee will meet on Tuesday, August 25. For all St. Christopher's people everywhere, please watch for information about renewing our Mission Action Plan, likely next winter.

Thank you to members of the current MAP group for your leadership, your energy, and your love for St. Christopher's!

As a reminder, I have a sabbatical leave coming up. I will be away from St. Christopher's for the months of July, August, and September. Our plans are all set for my absence: the right people are in place to oversee day-to-day operations, there will be sterling coverage for summer Sundays, compassionate and skilled people are ready



Best Wishes Penny!

to respond to pastoral care needs and to requests for funerals. I will return on October 1st. See you then!



REV. CANON DR.  
PENNY ANDERSON  
RECTOR

## Giving in the Summer

We have arrived at the time of year when many of us are away for long weekends and longer trips. It is also that time of year, when churches experience a significant drop in their income, as attendance is lower than at other times of the year. Please make a plan to deliver your envelopes in advance, for those Sundays when you will be away.

Pre-Authorized Giving (PAG) is one easy way to stay up to date with your gifts to St. Christopher's automatically. PAG is simple and secure. If you want more information, please reach out to the church office. We can help you set up your PAG in minutes.

Remember, even though you may be away, all of the expenses of our congregation continue through July and August. Thank you for your generous and faithful support.

# WARDENS' REPORT



**W**elcome to summer, everyone! It was wonderful to see so many of you at Sundae Sunday, hosted by our hardworking Parish Council. Parish Council is a vibrant group of parishioners who are called to contribute their leadership and ideas to our church. We meet monthly to share information, study relevant articles, and plan events throughout the year. You can identify Parish Council members by their yellow name tags. They are always open to chatting and hearing your ideas or concerns. We also had the joy of celebrating Tom Bibby's milestone birthday – thank you to everyone who helped make the day so special.

As we move into summer programming, please note that Sunday service times

switch to 9 am and 11 am. G.I.F.T, Kids' Club and Youth Group pause for the summer as Carrie and her team prepare for our Fun in the Sun summer camp from July 20–24. If you would like to spend some time with the youth of our community, please connect with Carrie about volunteer opportunities. Whether it's providing nutritious snacks or offering friendly adult support to the camp team, it is a fun and rewarding way to get involved.

Penny begins her sabbatical as of July 1st. Please be assured that our retired clergy, office staff, and warden team have things well in hand. Do not hesitate to reach out with pastoral care needs, administrative enquiries, building concerns, or anything else. We have contingencies in place to

address most concerns, and if we cannot provide one, we will find an answer for you.

While summer is a time to slow down a bit, St. Christopher's continues its active ministry. Open Doors continues its regular programming, as the needs of the community do not diminish with the change of season. For information about ongoing summer activities, please see your weekly eblast or other pages in this Summer Messenger. A special thank-you to our garden volunteers for keeping our grounds shipshape and welcoming. If you feel called to help, any time you can offer to maintain the garden over the summer will be very much appreciated. The garden gang meets on Friday mornings – if you have an hour or so to spare, consider

joining in and connecting with both plants and people.

A reminder as well to confirm or set up automatic weekly donations to St. Christopher's. It is quick and easy, and one less thing to think about over the summer. St. Christopher's relies on the generous weekly support of our community to build and plan annual budgets and projects. To set up preauthorized contributions, please contact the office –

Joy will be happy to assist.

If you have questions about the budget or current financials, please speak with one of the Wardens. We receive monthly updates from our Treasurer, Jasmin Dorsett, and are always happy to help answer questions. There is no need to be surprised at the Vestry meeting in February!

Wishing you all the joy of summer and the re-creating power of sun and fellowship.

*Lisa Kruitwagen is one of the four wardens (Bill Hewlett, Lisa Kruitwagen, Shannon Mac, Mike Ravenscroft ) who, along with our Rector, Rev. Canon Dr. Penny Anderson, make up St. Christopher's Corporation*

Lisa Kruitwagen  
WARDEN



# MUSIC & THE PERFORMING ARTS



**T**radition dictates that the Vestry report is the time to look back on a year's accomplishments and set out some goals for the future. Yet, as the band and choir terms come to an end, June seems like a perfectly good opportunity to reflect. As for looking ahead, I like to take this moment at the end of June to prioritise professional development passions that I want to target over the slower season. Part of this process is imagining where I want to be as a musician/leader/team member come September. And, as you'll soon see, I invite the music-loving reader to do the same.

Thinking back on the 2025-2026 choir year, I immediately call to mind the evening performances like Lessons and Carols, Easter Vigil and Music in the Garden. These are red letter days on the choir calendar, requiring months of preparation and they always stand out as a major accomplishment. Even a Sunday anthem takes 4-8 weeks of rehearsal depending on how familiar it is or isn't. New anthems learned in this past year have all been hits and will eventually enter the familiar

category. In the fall we learned Bring Me Little Water Sylvie by Blues man Lead Belly, in the spring we learned Create in Me by Michael Larkin, and just last week we performed a brand new composition, Blue Bird by Canadian Brian Finley with words by Curve Lake poet, Sarah Lewis. I'm particularly proud of this last performance. Not only were we singing new and relevant art music but we were singing it well and, indeed listeners were captivated from beginning to end.

It's been a successful year for the choir and the summer break is well-earned. The choir will return again on Sunday, September 13th at which point I hope there will be a few more voices. If any of the above exploits make you envious, I hope you'll speak to me about joining the choir in the fall. Don't write it off as too big of a commitment. While it can be significant, it doesn't have to be and I would enjoy the opportunity to speak more specifically about what singing in the choir might entail. It's a great place to learn new skills, improve respiratory and brain health, experience the fulfillment of achieving long

term goals, worship God through musical expression and be surrounded by great voices and great people. Seriously, nothing is risked by talking about it.

Church bands have a massive presence in evangelical worship. They are equipped with tens of thousands and sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of gear. They are often comprised entirely of professionals and occupy pride of place in the worship service. It's exactly like an English cathedral choir but with guitars and maybe a smoke machine. In the Diocese of Niagara, one encounters a different type of church band. They are likely comprised of volunteers with one paid leader, their role fits into the framework of a BAS Eucharist and they run on much smaller budgets.

Within this context, the St. Christopher's 11.30 band is an example of how good things can be. Our music is innovative yet traditional, abstract yet relevant, secular yet sacred. All the new songs we've learned this year fit that description. Look up I Am Not Okay by Jelly Roll, Firework by Katy Perry, Broken Halos by Chris Stapleton and Come

on Up to the House by Tom Waits if you want to know what I'm referring to. Thanks to Rae and Jim, the performance quality of our music (new and old) is high - especially amongst local comparisons.

While functioning at a high level and making an invaluable contribution to the 11.30 service, the band could really use some more musicians to fill out our sound. Band experience is valuable and guitar or bass guitar aptitude is preferred. If this describes you or someone you know, I hope you'll be in touch with me. Compared to a 'travelling band', St. Christopher's is an easy gig. A member gets to leave their space set up, use a good sound system, perform at normal hours of the day, and have someone (me) look after all the managerial details. Bonus points if they're looking for a welcoming, relaxed and critically thinking church community.

That's the type of growth I'd like to see for our main music groups through the next scholastic year. As

far as personal growth over the summer, I'll be attending (remotely) the Summer Organ Academy in Toronto and learning from leading educators in the field. Later, in August, I'll be on the teaching end of the equation at the local Pipe Organ Week. Finally, I've discovered a YouTube channel, En blanc et noir, with excellent information on Baroque keyboard improvisation and I plan to pick my way through those playlists over the summer months and hopefully synthesise the knowledge into my playing.

Thank you for making it to the end. One reason to save the annual reviews and goal setting for the Vestry report is that it can get long-winded. I hope you don't mind this little bit of extra summer reading.



ANDY ELMHIRST  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC



# CHRISTMAS Market

14 November 2026



# NEW SOCIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

AUGUST 25, 2026

Tuesday | 25 August | 7.00pm

In person in the Family Room  
Bring Your Ideas



# Fall Maker's Market

Saturday | 28 November | 9.30am - 2.00pm

# ARTISTS FOR OUTREACH

BURLINGTON FINE ARTS SALE

Saturday | 24 Oct | 9.30 to 5.30pm

Open to the Public

Friday Wine & Cheese  
Preview Party - ticketed event



# Hallowe'en Drag Show

featuring performers from The Doll Haus

Friday | 30 October | 8.00pm  
tickets through Eventbrite | 19+ Event



# Fresh Christmas Trees

Nova Scotia Balsam

28 November | Sales Begin

# OPEN DOORS



**W**elcome to our summer students Adam and Tim! Adam returns to Open Doors in the garden after a few years of university and Tim, who is already an accomplished baker, adds great value to our kitchen team. If you see them around, please wave and introduce yourself.

Our garden is thriving this season under the leadership of Samantha from the Burlington Food Bank. Her dedication and expertise are helping provide our programs with a diverse selection of fresh vegetables, herbs, and other garden-grown produce.

One of the most innovative features of this year's garden is the use of straw as a growing medium. Straw is an excellent substrate for plant roots because it retains moisture like a sponge while providing exceptional drainage. It helps regulate soil temperature, keeping roots cool during hot weather, and filters excess water to prevent over-saturation. By elevating plants slightly off the ground, straw also

makes harvesting more accessible for participants.

The straw was generously donated by the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) following their fall display. Rather than sending the material to compost, the RBG was excited to support a charitable initiative and give the straw a second life in our community garden.

The garden is already attracting local wildlife. Black swallowtail butterflies have discovered our dill plants and have begun laying eggs. To support these important pollinators, we will be harvesting our dill carefully to ensure there is enough remaining for the developing caterpillars.

Accessibility continues to be a priority in the garden. Accessibility mats have been installed to create safer and more comfortable pathways, making it easier for everyone to participate in gardening activities and harvest fresh produce. As the season progresses, the garden will continue to provide fresh food, learning opportunities, and meaningful community connections. We look forward to sharing more updates as our plants grow

and our harvests begin.

Our quarterly "What's for Dinner?" cooking class is back on July 29th, and it's shaping up to be a delicious afternoon geared towards kids enjoying great food, new skills, and even better company.

For just \$35 per person, you'll enjoy a hands-on cooking experience that's perfect for food lovers of all skill levels. Whether you're looking to reconnect with friends, meet new people, or simply learn a few new tricks in the kitchen, this class is a fun and affordable way to spend a summer evening.

The best part? Every dollar raised goes directly back into Open Doors programming, helping us continue supporting and strengthening our community throughout the year.

Spaces fill quickly, so don't wait. Call the office to reserve your space and join us on July 29th - and leave with a full stomach, new recipes, and the satisfaction of supporting a great cause.

Each year, Open Doors proudly hosts its annual Backpack Program, providing students in

our community with the essential tools they need to begin the school year with confidence. In 2025, we were honored to distribute 420 backpacks to children who needed them the most - a milestone that represents far more than school supplies. It's a step toward dignity, belonging, and a successful academic journey.

At Open Doors, we believe that every child deserves to start school on equal footing. The Backpack Program helps eliminate barriers by ensuring that no child walks into the classroom unprepared or feeling different from their peers. A new backpack filled with necessary supplies is a simple yet powerful way to show students that they are seen, supported, and valued.

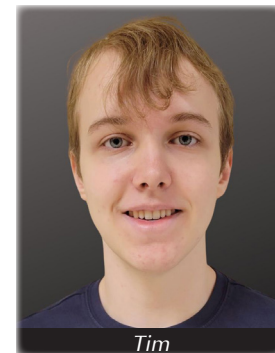
Each backpack given is a reflection of our community's generosity and we are deeply grateful to all our donors, volunteers, and partners who make the program possible year after year.

If you'd like to get

involved or learn more on how you can help, please email [opendoorsprograms@stcb.ca](mailto:opendoorsprograms@stcb.ca).



Adam



Tim



SHANNON SHUELL  
GOOD FOOD COORDINATOR

# CLIMATE JUSTICE COMMITTEE



**T**his year marks the 10th anniversary of our Open Doors Community Garden (located behind the church) and if you've never had an opportunity to tour the garden, this is your year!

Weather permitting, the Climate Justice team will be hosting tours between the 9 am and 11 am worship services on the first Sunday of every month throughout the remainder of the summer (August 2nd, and September 6th). Unfortunately, we aren't able to offer tours as planned on July 7th due to the extreme heat. We hope to be able to offer an alternate July date, as the weather allows.

We'll be highlighting what is currently growing and being harvested, as well as providing information on other topics, such as the

fertilizing, watering, and pest control measures that we use. Our Community Garden Coordinator, Sam Le Grand, will be on hand to share her knowledge, experience, and passion for all aspects of our garden.

Throughout the growing season we'll also be building a photo/video calendar of what is growing, which you will be able to find on the St. Christopher's YouTube Channel.

The produce from our garden supports our neighbours who face food insecurity through our Open Doors outreach programs – Tuesday and Thursday Community Meals and the Community Market.

We hope to welcome you to the garden on a summery Sunday this growing season! Watch for reminders in the weekly Eblast.

*The Climate Justice committee is a group of folks who are passionate about the environment and the ways that we can care for creation and advocate for change that will protect it for generations to come. You can contact us at [staff@stcb.ca](mailto:staff@stcb.ca) if you would like to know more.*



CAROL HENLEY



# CHILDREN'S & YOUTH MINISTRIES



wonder how the end of the school year is feeling in your home? Some years I feel I am limping to the finish line. Other years I'm filled with energy to look ahead at the next year and do my best back-to-school planning in the last week of June. My best Fun in the Sun planning happens on the last day of camp. Trudy and I are often texting late into Friday night, brainstorming ideas for the following year. Do you do this? When the creativity is flowing and I'm reluctant to see the program year come to a close, suddenly I'm filled with new ideas and possibilities I want to take with me into the future. In our home, we call it 'being kind to your future self.' Setting yourself up with a few tasks done that will make tomorrow morning – or next season – a little easier.

Or maybe you are just done, and in need of a break. And that's a perfect choice too. Taking time to shift into summer mode and a pause from the structure and bustle of the school

routine before looking at it again with fresh eyes. Either way, I hope this article finds you on the brink of some rest, sunshine, and time with your favourite people.

I want to leave you with lots of information in this Messenger, so that if the spark of organization and planning hits you at any point this summer when the back to school itch hits your household, you'll know where to find the details of all the fun things we have planned for the fall.

Our GIFT program wrapped up our 'Faith From the Inside Out' series in June. We got to explore all our different emotions and where to find God when we experience different feelings. Making connections to a familiar theme was a fun way to invite new young visitors into our program. If they didn't know the church, or they didn't know the Bible, a connection to a familiar theme made them feel more at home in a new place – and I'm always searching for ways to connect our time

in church with the other six days of the week.

Kids Club and Youth Group continued to offer us fun, friendship and learning opportunities. This was our first full year of Kids Club and we learned that the kids love being here, and they love bringing friends along! And they want to get together more than once a month. We also learned that our teenagers are very busy! Between work, school, sports and different obligations, we want to be flexible to accommodate them when they are available. As a result, we have decided to change both programs to twice a month, starting in September. Kids Club will meet on the first and third Sundays of the month, Youth Group will meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. Our hope is that this will keep momentum and offer families more flexibility. I'm excited for this opportunity to continue to grow and strengthen these programs.

G.I.F.T. is going to

start September 13 with a series inspired by the children. 'Builders of Faith: Crafting Lives that Reflect God's Love' is going to be based around everybody's favourite building game. I am already having so much fun choosing Bible stories with a 'builder' theme and finding hands on activities to get our creative juices flowing. If you have a Minecraft fan in your home, this is the series for them.

Finally, I would be remiss not to offer a final call-out for Fun in the Sun. We will still be accepting new registrations until July 10th, so it's not too late if you would like to add VBS camp to your schedule! Our camp counsellor registration is closed however—we have a fantastic group of leaders ready to start planning your camp week! If you are familiar with camp, you may notice a few small changes this year as we strive to make camp more accessible and accommodating for all.

CARRIE FORD-JONES  
CHILDREN'S & YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATOR

Mostly though, it will be the same Fun in the Sun we've all come to love and look forward to!

I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported the children's program throughout the year. Whether you were a volunteer, a financial contributor, offered snack preparation with the hospitality team, or just offered a word of enthusiastic feedback about the children's participation in church, we are so grateful to you for making St. Christopher's a place where young people feel safe, loved and welcome. Wishing you all a blessed and happy summer!





**Youth Group**  
for Teens 12-17

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month  
starting September 13<sup>th</sup> 2026

contact [carrie@stcb.ca](mailto:carrie@stcb.ca)



1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays  
of the month  
6:00 - 7:30pm

ages 8 - 11

**KIDS CLUB**

all are welcome!

starting Sept 20th 2026  
contact [carrie@stcb.ca](mailto:carrie@stcb.ca)



**BUILDERS OF FAITH**

Crafting Lives that Reflect God's Love

12 Week G.I.F.T. Series beginning Sept 13th 2026

FOR KIDS  
AGES 3+

Sunday mornings  
during the 9:30am service

# REPAIR CAFÉ

**Bring It | Fix It | for Free**

Volunteers help you fix broken household items  
(there may be a small charge if parts are needed)

Please send an email to explain what you'd like to get fixed,  
and to reserve a time slot: [burlingtonrepaircafe@cogeco.ca](mailto:burlingtonrepaircafe@cogeco.ca).

**Saturday | 18 July | 10am - 2pm**  
St. Christopher's | 662 Guelph Line | Burlington ON



**Fit for Service 9.30am**

Monday | Wednesday | Friday



## Blessing Backpacks – September 13

Back to school is an exciting time! To mark this big event in our children's lives, and to remind them of God's presence with them, we are blessing backpacks at our 9.30am service. Please spread the word with the people you know who travel with children. Please invite children to bring their backpacks with them to church on September 13.



## Line Dance Party with Candace

**Friday | 28 August | 7-9pm**

St. Christopher's Great Hall – \$20

*All are welcome!*

# FROM THE REGISTRY

## Deaths

May 30, 2026 Joan Marie Silmser



### Summer Office Hours

Mon 29 Jun to Tues 8 Sep  
Mon to Fri | 9am - 12noon

### Summer Worship Schedule

Sundays - 9am | 11.00am

June 28 to September 6

*Children's programs will return on September 13 at 9.30am.*



### Thursday Bible Study / Thursday Eucharist

Thursday morning programs will be on hiatus over the summer. The next meetings for the 10.30am Bible Study and the 11.30am Eucharist will be on Thursday, October 1st.

The Thur. Senior's Lunch will continue throughout the summer!



### Knitting with Diane

Would you like to learn a special skill this summer? Join Diane Wales in the Family Room on Thursdays in July at 1pm and learn to knit. If you haven't knitted in a long while, now is the time to take this refresher course. It could also be a great place to meet new friends.



## Confirmation Classes

The next service of Confirmation will take place on Sunday, October 18 at 4pm.

Please speak to Carrie Ford-Jones if you are interested in being part of confirmation classes in the fall.



The St. Christopher's Accessibility Committee presents a workshop on Mental Health with Jodie Grigsby, RMSW

### "Voices, Visions and Unusual Beliefs"

Saturday | 17 October | 1.30 - 3.00pm

# PAUSED FOR THE SUMMER



**Watercolour Wednesdays**  
September 9 @ 12.00 noon



**Burlington Mindfulness**  
September 9 & 23 @ 7.00pm



**Parish Council**  
September 15 @ 7.00pm  
Family Room



**St. C. Social Committee**  
August 25 @ 7.00pm



**Seniors' Social**  
September 8 @ 2.00pm



**Climate Justice**  
September 15 @ 7.00pm  
Youth Room



**Prayer Shawl Group**  
September 24 @ 1.00pm



**Accessibility Committee**  
September 23 @ 7.00pm



**Ginger Group**  
September 21 @ 11.30am



**Bridge Group**  
September 14 & 28 @ 2.00pm



**Men's Cooking Group**  
September 14 @ 11.30am



**Mental Health Care Support**  
September 14 @ 7.00pm



**Thursday Bible Study / Thursday Eucharist**  
October 1 10.30am /11.30am



**JAZZ VESPER**  
September 20 @ 4.00pm



Back in the fall

# SAVE THE DATE



Mark your calendar

Tyandaga Golf Course



## Community Golf Tournament & Dining Experience

- Who?** YOU... Please join us with friends and family for a fun day of “best ball” golf, fine dining, silent auction, and social time. Don't play golf? Come and enjoy, as a volunteer - still a few spots left - contact Sandi Smith at [staff@stcb.ca](mailto:staff@stcb.ca) or 634.1809.
- Where?** Golf - 1265 Tyandaga Park Dr., Burlington  
Dinner - 662 Guelph Line, Burlington
- Why?** Open Doors is all about building a diverse and inclusive community that supports our shared dignity and well-being through programs that help build a strong, healthy community. Together, we will have great fun while raising funds to support the work of Open Doors.
- Cost?** \$150.00 (18 holes of golf, cart, bagged lunch, hors d'oeuvres and a 3-course dining experience) Dinner Only - \$ 75.00
- Please contact anyone on the Golf Tournament Committee to offer silent auction items, buy tickets, sign up your team, join a team or volunteer at St. Christopher's.
- Committee Members:** Gerry Anthony, Winston Campbell, Gail Grant, Fred Grigsby, Wendy McCowan, Mike Peroune, Gord Roche, Shannon Shuell, Paul Smith, Bob Taylor, Paul Winslow