st. christopher's

Messenger

September 2026 Issue 287



Wardens' Report



What a summer it has been! As we welcome everyone back from the summer months, it is a wonderful opportunity to pause and celebrate all that has been happening at St. Christopher's. Summer may be a quieter season for some, but our church has certainly remained active, welcoming, and engaged both within our congregation and out in the community. For the third year in a row, St. Christopher's was represented at Halton Pride by a wonderful group of volunteers who gave of their time, energy, and yes, their wheel-spinning skills and sound effects! Thank you to everyone who helped make the day such a positive experience. Being present in our community, meeting people where they are, and sharing a message of love, welcome, and inclusion is an important part of who we are as a church. Another highlight was our Community Volunteer Fair, hosted in partnership with Community Development Halton. It was a great opportunity to connect with others, learn about the many ways we can serve, and celebrate the spirit of volunteerism that is such an important part of St. Christopher's and the Burlington community.

We also came together once again for the annual Open Doors Backpack Program. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated supplies, contributed financially, helped organize, and volunteered when families and students arrived to choose their new backpacks! Your generosity helped many local children and teens start the school year with confidence and style.

And, of course, we cannot forget our vacation bible school day camp, Fun in the Sun! Thank you to all of the leaders, helpers, volunteers, and families who made it such a fun, faith-filled, and meaningful experience. It takes a lot of people to make a week like this happen, and we are grateful to everyone who helped make it possible.

As we look toward the fall, I encourage everyone to take a good look through this month's Messenger to discover the many programs, events, and initiatives coming up. There are plenty of opportunities to reconnect, participate, serve, and have some fun together. It is never too early to start planning, especially with some major fundraising initiatives on the horizon, including our Golf Tournament, first ever Drag Show, and the return of our Fresh Canadian Christmas Tree Sales. There is so much to look forward to this fall and I hope you will find a way to be part of it.

Finally, on behalf of the Corporation, I want to offer a very special thank you to all of our staff, many volunteers, and wonderful team of clergy. They have not simply "held down the fort" over the summer; they have truly kept St. Christopher's running, active, and welcoming throughout the summer and during Penny's sabbatical.

We have had a couple of Penny sightings over the summer, and I am happy to report that she is making the most of her time, resting, spending time with family, and enjoying this opportunity for renewal. I'm sure she will have many stories to tell us all when she returns in October!

Whether you have been here every week or are finding your way back after some time away, welcome home! We're glad you're here!

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

Shannon Mac
Warden



Music & the Performing Arts



"Summer's lease hath all too short a date" - William Shakespeare, Sonnet 18. I certainly agree that the end of August has come quickly. My summer was filled with family fun, various musical ventures and a leisurely freedom, the memory of which is already fading. Hopefully this will create some grey matter vacancy for the planning and scheduling that lies ahead.

Some of the family fun involved a staycation week when we drove to the beach, walked a ghost tour, hiked waterfalls, watched movies and more. It was a lot of fun and proves that you don't need to be somewhere exotic to have a good time.

My summer was filled with music as well. I joined a blues and rock cover band for a month and we played some Stones, Clapton, Blue Rodeo and the like at a backyard party in Campbellford. It was fun to learn some new music and play in a new setting. In early August I taught during Pipe Organ Week, a day camp organized by the Hamilton Centre of the Royal Canadian College of Organists. There were 22 students ages 11-16 enrolled and they all got the chance to experience a variety of organs both in Hamilton and the KW/Guelph tri-city area, build a portable organ, receive two private lessons a day and perform. By virtue of donations and volunteering, the camp was offered for only $100 and this included lunches! I'm very proud to be a part of encouraging the new generation of organists and will likely be involved again next year.

At St. Christopher's the summer music has been beating along smoothly. A special thanks to John Stephen, Audrey Chan and Daniel Lu who have helped lead the music at church in July and August. Thanks also to everyone in church who has sung heartily without choir or band support, I love to hear it!

While I miss the choir and band, there are aspects of summer music that I enjoy. I like the chance to use more improvisation in the service – for the gospel acclamation, communion and often postlude as well. I also enjoy the flexibility and simplicity of leading the 11 am service by myself. But that's only part of the story, for the listener, this can get repetitive and thin over time and I know people are ready for the band and choir to return. I'm definitely one of those people suffering from 4-part harmony withdrawal.

Good thing the choir is back on September 13th at the 9:30 service. This is the perfect time to let me know if you are choir-curious. We welcome beginners and experienced singers alike. If you are interested in trying choir even for a few weeks at the start of the term, please don't hesitate to speak to me, this is always a conversation that I'm happy to have.

For the same reasons, it's a good time to join the 11.30am Band. We could really use a guitar player – acoustic, electric, bass or all the above. 11.30am is a great band for musicians who want to be in a band without the hassle of hauling gear around, booking gigs, or playing in a dark bar. Again, please let me know if you have any questions.

I'm looking forward to seeing my choir and band friends and maybe even some new faces this fall! While I've enjoyed the summer music at St. Christopher's I've missed the prayer, humour, shared vision and rich sound that come from making music in community. I'm ready for the richness and rhythm of the scholastic year even if it has come too fast.



Andy Elmhirst
Director of Music

Children's & Youth Ministries

"We had a bit of a tricky day today." If you've never heard these words from your child's second grade teacher, keep reading anyway. If you have, then come in close – because this article is for you.

It's Back to School season. And for parents and caregivers, there's always a level of anxiety and anticipation when we leave our children in the care of schoolteachers, camp counsellors and daycare providers. We wonder how they'll be without us. Will they make friends? Will they ask for help when they need it? Will the teacher notice them and see them for who they are, and provide an environment where they can grow and thrive?

Parents of neurodivergent children have a different experience. There's a level of anxiety as they wonder, "Will there be any meltdowns? Will they be able to self-regulate? Will the other children accept them? Will the teacher be able to handle challenges in a positive way?" The anticipation of pick-up time, the daily report, and that dreaded phrase: "We had a bit of a tricky day today." If you know it – you know it.

But oh, the relief we feel when our neurodivergent kids have a positive social experience and a good report from their day! Whether it's a teacher who really understands the child, a peer group they connect well with, or simply an environment that allows them to be their best selves – it's such a balm for the worried parent to see their child shine; to find the place and the people with whom they can thrive.

Friends, we want St. Christopher's to be that place. What is church, if not the place where you are welcomed and accepted exactly as Jesus would welcome and accept you? When the lunch table says "You can't sit here," and the classroom says "Stop talking and get to work," Jesus says "Come sit with me. I want to hear what you have to say." We want to be a space where children with unique needs or neurodivergence feel loved and accepted when the world is often telling them they're "too much" or "not enough." We want to be a place where parents who spend six days a week advocating for their child's needs, smoothing out challenges with classrooms and sports teams and playdates, can breathe a sigh of relief knowing "My child is going to be okay here."

So how do we do this? Dr. Ross Greene, author of *The Explosive Child* and *Lost at School* coined the phrase: "Kids do well if they can." And leading ADHD educator, Dr. Russell Barkley, says, "The children who need love the most will always ask for it in the most unloving ways." So that is our mission: To offer the environment in which children can do well. And to recognize that if they are struggling, they are asking us for more love, more patience, more understanding. Our children and youth ministry mission is committed to adapting all our programs to support a variety of emotional, learning and sensory needs. We recognize that traditional classroom environments are not where every child thrives, so we use a lot of movement, hands-on activities, and one-on-one connection. An obstacle course shows us how God can help us to navigate life's challenges. Lego bricks can tell the story of the Tower of Babel or the wall of Jericho. A walk outside can tell the Creation story. Sitting with a child who feels misunderstood tells countless stories of Jesus.

With parents we follow a strengths-based communication approach – intentionally sharing positive observations, successes, growth and joyful experiences, so that both parents and children will come to associate church with encouragement, safety and acceptance. We don't label "tricky days" in the GIFT program.

As we enter a new program year, I wanted to share this with you so that you have a better understanding of one of the many ways that St. Christopher's is passionate about accessibility and inclusion. Sometimes the children's programming feels a bit tucked away and not everyone gets a chance to see what's happening in the Youth Room. We want to share this commitment with you. Hopefully, with a better understanding of why these adaptations are so important for families with neurodivergent children, you can be part of building the safe, loving environment that we want their church to be.



You might be thinking that this requires a lot of special resources and highly trained staff. Sometimes that's true, but not always. Perhaps you've met a child with autism who has a unique and very intense interest in a subject. If you can be a listening ear – asking questions about their favourite things and patiently listening to long stories – that's God's work. If you can move quickly, doing bunny hops or jumping jacks with a child who uses movement to self-regulate – that's God's work. If you can do a jigsaw puzzle quietly, side-by-side with a child who doesn't feel comfortable with eye contact or a lot of conversation – that's God's work. There are so many ways to meet a child where they are. And there is a place for you in this ministry.

As we begin a new program year, it is my prayer that parents, children, and the wider congregation feel this mission at the very heart of everything we do. Not only in our GIFT program, but in our Kids Club and Youth Group ministries and in the way that children are welcomed in church in general. None of this happens by accident (though many of you are naturally gifted in the ways that you offer a safe and inclusive space for children with neurodivergence!) so thank you for helping us to make St. Christopher's a place where a 'tricky day' is just another opportunity for us to show God's love.



Carrie Ford-Jones
Children's & Youth Ministry Coordinator







Harvest Time in the Community Garden

The Climate Justice Committee is planning a final opportunity to tour our Community Garden on Sunday, September 27th between the 9.30am and 11.30am services. Join us to see what has been growing this summer as well as the sustainable techniques that have been used. Watch the bulletin announcements and Eblast for updates through September.

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.



CYFM Leader Retreat

With Kristen Jackson Dockeray

Saturday | 26 September | 9am – 5pm

Whether you are new or experienced in ministry, you are invited to gather with others who share a heart for children, youth, and families in our parishes.



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.

Open Doors



What a wonderfully busy summer it has been at Open Doors! The past few months have been filled with new projects, great partnerships, community connections, and plenty of fun along the way. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who helped make this summer such a productive and memorable one.

This summer, we were fortunate to welcome two summer students, Adam and Tim, who spent their time helping in our garden spaces and kitchen. What a productive summer it was with these two! Adam and Tim brought enthusiasm, care, and dedication to every task they took on, making a real difference in the day-to-day work at Open Doors. They have already been missed by our staff and volunteers. We wish them both the very best as they begin their next chapters, with Adam returning to McMaster University to study Engineering and Tim heading to Dalhousie University to pursue Engineering. We hope to see both of them back at Open Doors when they are in the area!

In July we worked with the Halton Police community officers doing Cram-A-Cruiser. Longo's on Walkers line was great providing spaces and allowing us to talk about our community market. We received three full car loads of food to put into our community market.

August brought another exciting opportunity as Open Doors took part in Rotary's summer event, Lakeside à la Carte. We are so grateful to all of our amazing volunteers who came out to help. They represented Open Doors with enthusiasm and care, greeting guests, welcoming people to our information booth, and sharing information about the work we do in our community. Our volunteers once again exceeded our expectations and demonstrated what it means to be wonderful ambassadors and stewards of our programs.

We were also thrilled to partner with Community Development Halton to help host the first Halton Volunteer Fair. With 35 other non profit and volunteer-led organizations joining us in our building, we welcomed more than 375 guests who came to discover the many ways they could get involved and volunteer throughout Halton. It was an incredible day filled with energy, conversations, and connections. We are hopeful that some of those new connections will lead people to Open Doors and give them an opportunity to become part of our volunteer community. We are looking forward to repeating this successful event next year.

We ended the summer with a very special milestone: our 10th annual Backpack Drive. For a decade now, this initiative has helped families in Burlington bridge the gap and, hopefully, take away some of the stress that comes with getting ready for a new school year. This year, each child received a backpack, lunch bag, water bottle, school supplies, and school-safe snacks. We are so thankful to everyone who helped make this year's drive possible and allowed us to support local children and families as they headed back to school.

Another exciting development this summer has been our continuing partnership with the Burlington Food Bank. With the support of their outreach funding, we have been able to welcome Shawna Reyneker to the Open Doors team as a part-time staff member to coordinate our market. This additional staffing means we can expand our services and re-open on Saturdays beginning September 12, giving Burlington residents one more opportunity each week to access the support and services offered through Open Doors. We are excited about this next step and what it will mean for the community we serve.

As we look back on the summer, we are reminded just how much can happen when staff, volunteers, partners, and community members come together with a shared commitment to helping others. From our gardens and kitchen to community events, volunteer opportunities, food programs, and support for local families, it has truly been a season of growth, connection, and plenty of reasons to celebrate.

Now, as we head into fall, we are looking forward to both our usual events and some new opportunities on the horizon. There is a lot to look forward to, so please save the date for November 5, when we will be hosting our Open Doors Harvest Fest at Paradiso Restaurant. We hope you will join us for an evening of good food, fun, community, and celebration.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of our summer - our incredible volunteers, generous partners, dedicated staff, supporters, and community members. Your time, energy, and kindness make everything we do at Open Doors possible. We can't wait to see what the fall brings and share with you all.



Shannon Shuell
Director of Outreach Ministries



Tai Chi

Wednesdays | 7.00pm



Fit for Service 9.30am

Monday | Wednesday | Friday

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.

Saturday | 19 September | 10am - 2pm
St. Christopher's | 662 Guelph Line | Burlington ON



Fit for Service Chair Yoga

Fridays | 11am



Mondays - Dance with Candace

Line Dance
5.30pm beginner | 6.30pm advanced

Partner Dance
7.30pm beginner | 8.30pm advanced



Climate Justice Committee



Climate anxiety can be defined as distress about climate change and its impacts on the landscape and human existence. Many Canadians report that anxiety about our rapidly warming climate impacts their mental health, with some reporting feeling hopeless about our ability to arrest that warming. At a time when this challenge, and a host of others, feel beyond our individual control, how do we maintain our energy and optimism that our own small actions can support systemic change?

Drs. Elizabeth Dunn and Jiayang Zhao would say that joy is an extremely powerful motivator when we are considering climate choices. Their book "how Joyful Decisions Can Save Our Species – Leave the Lights On", shows that there is a significant overlap between high impact climate actions and things that bring us joy. By focusing on those actions, rather than being motivated by guilt, shame, or fear, the authors contend that we will be more likely to stick with changes and also inspire others. Understanding the impact of our choices can help us to make choices that help the environment and also increase our happiness.

Last year the Climate Justice committee offered a Sunday morning to assist parishioners with completing a carbon calculator. Personally, I was surprised at the carbon impact of some of the items on the list. For instance, I never thought about the impact of owning a dog, (and it's quite high). I had also significantly underestimated the carbon cost of airline travel. The authors point out that you don't have to give up pets or travel but being aware of the choices that we make in terms of both the joy that they bring and their environmental cost, can help us to feel good about our decisions over time and how to make trade-offs that are sustainable for us. The book is available at Burlington Public Library, but there are also several interviews with the authors (both researchers at UBC) available online.

As the days get shorter, and we will likely be spending more time indoors, identifying our spaces and activities that bring comfort and refreshment is another way to reduce anxiety about climate and other existential threats. I hope that you will find meaningful ways to connect at St. Christopher's this fall. And there is always a space for you at Climate Justice meetings! The next meeting is at 7 pm in the Family Room on Tuesday, September 15th.

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 if you would like to know more.



Carol Henley





st. christopher's



Fall Maker's Market

Saturday | 28 November | 9.30am - 2.00pm

ARTISTS FOR OUTREACH

BURLINGTON FINE ARTS SALE

Friday | 23 Oct | 6.30 to 9.00pm
Wine & Cheese preview - tickets $30
Limited seating
contact cgoldring@cogeco.ca for tickets

Saturday | 24 Oct | 9.30 to 5.00pm



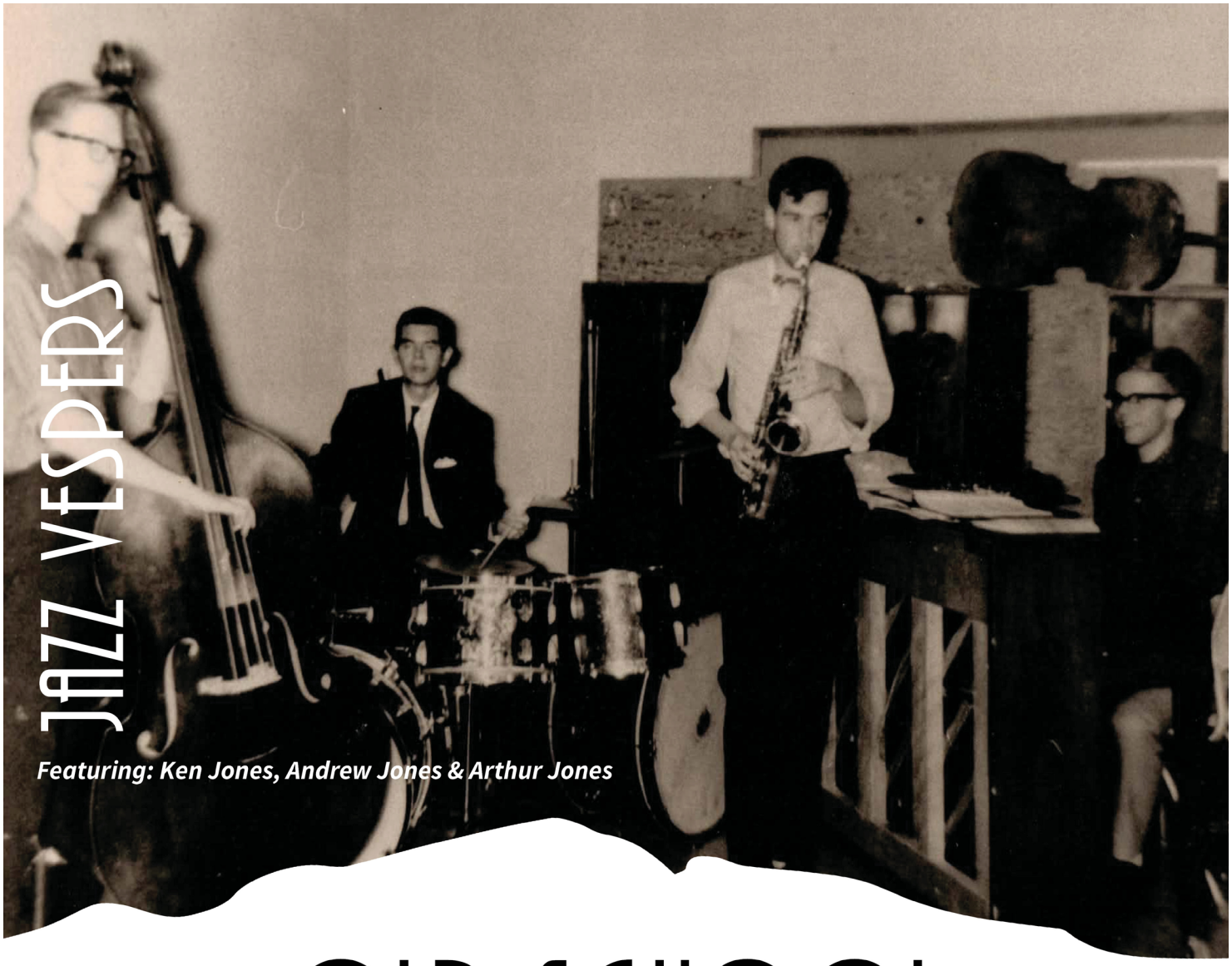
Hallowe'en Drag Show

featuring performers from The Doll Haus

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



28 November | Sales Begin



JAZZ VESPERS

Featuring: Ken Jones, Andrew Jones & Arthur Jones

OLD SCHOOL



Jim Sandilands
Bass



Adrean Farrugia
Piano



Tim Shia
Drums



Andrew Jones
Trombone



Chris Gale
Sax

Sunday
20 Sept.
2026

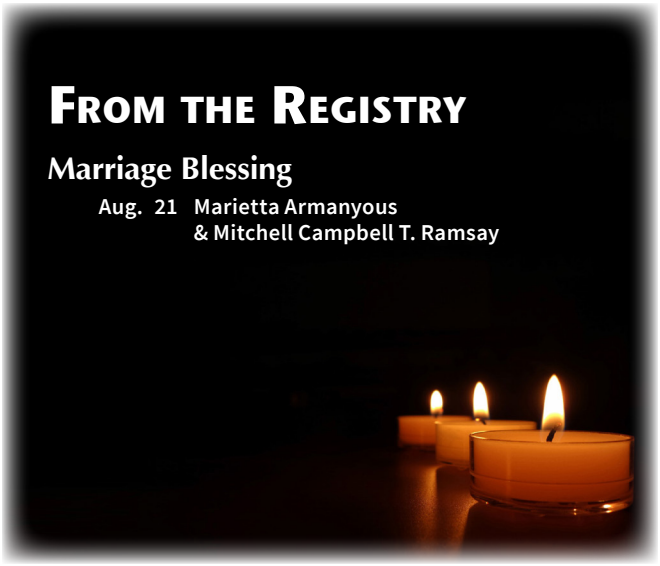
St. Christopher's
662 Guelph Line
Burlington

4.00pm
Free Will
Offering

From the Registry

Marriage Blessing

Aug. 21 Marietta Armanyous
& Mitchell Campbell T. Ramsay



Sunday Worship Times



We return to our regular service times
8.00am | 9.30am | 11.30am
on Sunday, September 13.
See you there!



Thursday Bible Study / Thursday Eucharist

Thursday morning programs will resume on October 1 with our rector, Penny Anderson. Bible study begins at 10.30am and the Eucharist follows at 11.30am.

Plan to stay and enjoy a tasty lunch at 12noon!



Mental Health Care Support

Providing care to loved ones experiencing mental health challenges can be overwhelming. Come join a safe and confidential space with others on a caregiving journey to share experiences, discuss concerns, and be supported by others confronted with similar situations. Facilitated by community experts, this group meets in-person in the Family Room. Next dates: Monday, Sep. 14 and Oct. 5 at 7pm.



Burlington Mindfulness

September 9 & 23 @ 7.00pm



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



Parish Council

Tuesday | 15 September | 6.30pm

Family Room



St. Christopher's Co-Operative Preschool

Spaces available for the September 2026 - June 2027 Preschool Year
Half-day Preschool (9.00am - 12.00noon)
Children 2.5 - 5 years of age
Contact: info@stchristopherspreschool.ca
Website: stchristopherspreschool.ca



Fall Clean Up

Sat. November 7 | *There will be treats!* | 9am - 12noon

Please contact Chris Jones at staff@stcb.ca
if you can be here!



Christmas Market Canning

As our planning for the annual Christmas Market has begun, we are wondering who has been working on perserves for donation this year. If you are canning to planning to do so, please contact Paul Shelton at staff@stcb.ca. Paul needs to know what to expect this year, what kind of perserves and how much. It would help greatly in our logistics planning. We also need to make sure all preserves have been tested in plenty of time before the event. Thank you.



Office Hours

beginning Tuesday, September 8
Mon to Thurs | 9am – 4.30pm
Fri | 9am – 12 noon

Climate Justice

Pray • Learn • Act • Advocate

Next Meeting

Tuesday | September 15 | 7.00pm

Youth Room



Watercolour Wednesdays

with Cheryl Goldring

Wednesday, 9 September at 12 noon

$40 per session. All materials are provided, including professional instruction. Gather with others in a warm and encouraging space. Light beverages are included. Registration required at staff@stcb.ca. If you are interested in attending an evening watercolour class, please contact Cheryl at staff@stcb.ca.



Bridge Group

Welcome to those wishing to join us for a game of Bridge! All are welcome but previous experience is appreciated. Light refreshments will be provided. You don't need to be a regular at St. Christopher's to join this group. Please contact Liz at staff@stcb.ca for more information. Upcoming meetings are: 14 & 28 September at 2pm.



Ginger Group

Calling everyone 55+ or retired! Our next gathering will be Monday, 21 September at 11.30am. Contact Winston or John at staff@stcb.ca for more information. Cost $15.



Prayer Shawl Group

Plan to join this passionate and caring group at their next meeting: 24 September at 1pm. If you have never knitted before, come and learn. Meet friends over shared creative skills.



Men's Cooking Groups

Men's Cooking Combined will meet on Monday, 14 September at 9.30am. Come and learn how to be a proficient cook. Share your skills and knowledge if you are already experienced in the kitchen. Please contact Bob or Gerry at staff@stcb.ca if you are interested.



Seniors' Social

Tricia Clarke and this warm and wonderful group of seniors meets Tuesday afternoons in the Family Room at 2pm, beginning September 8. Enjoy a time of refreshment, games and conversation. Bring your special energy to build some new relationships. (On the last Tuesday of the month, this group meets offsite at 1pm.) Everyone welcome.

OPEN DOORS
every person. every table.

Harvest Fest Dinner

Save the date: November 5, 2026



Fall start-ups at a glance



Watercolour Wednesdays
September 9 @ 12.00 noon



Burlington Mindfulness
September 9 & 23 @ 7.00pm



Parish Council
September 15 @ 6.30pm
Family Room



Sunday Worship
with Penny
October 4



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



JAZZ VESPERS
September 20 @ 4.00pm



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



Soup-er Sunday
September 27
after the 9.30 service



Youth Workshop
with Kristen Jackson Dockeray
September 26 @ 9.00am

st. christopher's

The Messenger is published monthly for the parishioners of St. Christopher's Anglican Church. All questions or concerns should be directed to the Messenger Editor, c/o St. Christopher's Parish Office, 662 Guelph Line, Burlington, ON, L7R 3M8. Call: 905.634.1809. Email: staff@stcb.ca. Website: https://stcb.ca/.

Thanks to this month's contributors: *Ken Beeby, Andy Elmhirst, Carrie Ford-Jones, Gail Grant, Carol Henley, Shannon Mac, Shannon Shuell, Joy Thomson.*



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Please remember to wear your orange shirt on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Wednesday, September 30th.

Burlington observance of the day will include a welcome by White Eagle Stonefish (Spencer Smith Park), a Walk for Reconciliation and Peace and a Traditional Tobacco Ceremony at Beachway Park.



Community Golf Tournament & Dining Experience
Friday | 2 October

Golf: Tyandaga Golf Course | Dinner: St. Christopher's Church.

- If you are registered, please ensure your payment is confirmed.
- If you would like to volunteer at the golf course or at the church, please contact Sandi Smith at staff@stcb.



BURLINGTON MEN'S SHED

All Candidates Debate

Thursday | 17 September | 6.30pm - 9.00

St. Christopher's Church | 662 Guelph Line, Burlington

6.30 PM – 7.15 PM Ward Councillor Candidates Forum

- Explore candidate display tables in the concourse, chat one-on-one with contenders across all six wards, and collect campaign info.

7.30 PM – 9.00 PM Mayoral Debate

- Listen to mayoral candidates discuss vital local issues. Moderated by Rishia Burke (Executive Director of Community Development Halton).

