

# **St. Stephen's United Church**

## **COMMUNITY OF FAITH PROFILE – LIVING FAITH DOCUMENT**

150 Village Way  
Qualicum Beach, BC  
V9K 1L1  
[www.ststephensucqualicum.ca](http://www.ststephensucqualicum.ca)

# **St Stephen's United Church of Canada, Qualicum Beach**

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St. Stephen's United Church is situated in the town of Qualicum Beach (pop 9,500) and is part of a wider region referred to as *Oceanside* (which includes Parksville, Errington, Nanoose, Bowser, Coombs and other small communities on the east coast of Vancouver Island) with a total population of more than 37,000. Our congregation consist of people of all ages, all walks of life who come from many different denominations of the Christian faith. Whether you have spent a lifetime going to church or are coming for the very first time, you are welcome at St. Stephen's.

### **ST. STEPHEN'S HISTORY**

The first resident minister was the Rev J. W. Dobbin. He came around 1920 and established a small church and congregation that joined the United Church of Canada in 1925. The second church was built in 1941 at Memorial Avenue and Village Way but was moved to Heritage Square by the railway station in 1994. The present church was built and dedicated in 1961 next to the Community Hall at Memorial and Village Way. St. Stephen's continued to grow and expand with the addition of the church hall and the completion of the basement in 1995.

We are blessed to have two ordained ministers. The Rev. Phillip Spencer is the 17th minister and has been serving at St. Stephen's since 1993. The Rev. Dianne Collery (who works three quarter time) is the second minister and has served as a Youth and Family Minister for 9 years and as an ordained minister since June 2018. At present we have over 250 members and adherents.

Throughout the years, St. Stephen's has served the community well, and remains intentional about establishing our values and goals for the future and prayerfully seeking ways to discern where God is leading us. **We are held together by one thing, our desire to follow Jesus.**

We have a mission and values statement and have identified core values and bedrock beliefs that we use to guide our lives and our decision making, not only within our church community but also as we witness to God's Grace and Love through our concerns for the local community, the nation and the world.

### **OUR MISSION:**

The mission of St. Stephen's United Church is to follow Jesus Christ.

### **OUR VISION:**

The vision of St. Stephen's United Church is to be a Jesus-centered, Spirit-led community, called and equipped to join in God's loving work in the world

## **OUR CORE VALUES:**

St Stephen's United Church is committed to:

1. Relationship to God through Jesus Christ
2. Transformational spiritual growth
3. Diversity in worship
4. Loving our neighbours as ourselves
5. Effective communication

## **OUR BEDROCK BELIEFS:**

We believe God loves us unconditionally.

We believe in the power of prayer.

We believe and trust in God, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

We believe God is faithful.

We believe the Lord Jesus is alive here.

We believe we are forgiven and called to be forgiving.

We believe God speaks to us and guides us through the Bible.

We believe God has a plan for us.

## **OUR APPROACH:**

1. **RELATIONSHIP** with God through Jesus Christ. We encourage young and elderly, using the gifts God has given us to become a warm, welcoming and joyful community of faith.
2. **PEOPLE:** We realise our mission through worship services, Bible study, children, youth and adult education, and in theologically focused discipleship.
3. **EQUIP** younger and older members to be followers of Jesus.
4. **SHARING:** A commitment to a strong and sensitive outreach program ministering to both local communities, world wide needs/solidarity for/with all people.
5. **ECUMENICAL SPIRIT:** As part of the fellowship of churches, which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, we seek to fulfill together our common calling towards greater unity 'so that the world may believe' (John 17:21:)
6. **CREATION/ENVIRONMENT:** Recognising God as the creator of the World and we, as followers of Jesus, declare our commitment to care and protect this planet through biblical insight and through local and global awareness and action programmes.

## LIFE AT ST. STEPHEN'S:



## CHURCH INFORMATION:

**Weekly Church Services:** We offer two Sunday morning Worship Services in an effort to provide a diversity in worship. The 9 am service is attended by families and others who enjoy a more modern style of worship with a range of musical styles using piano, guitar, drums and vocalists. Children's Sunday School meets during the 9 am Service. The 11am service is attended by those who enjoy traditional hymns, a choir and organ music. Each Service offers something special and both endeavours to bring us closer to God through worship. A few times each year we do a combined service at 10am with a special theme.

**Weekly Children's Education Programme:** Kids' Church is for children ages 3 to 13 years. It begins at the 9am service in the sanctuary and follows with special age-appropriate programmes in other parts of the Church. Our children join us for our monthly communion.

**Ordained Ministry Team:** The Ordained Ministry team is responsible for providing prayerful, consultative leadership in the overall spiritual life of the Congregation.

**Support Staff:** Administrator – part time; Office assistant – part time; Sunday school leaders; Worship leader; Choir director; Organist and Janitor.

**Prayer Ministry:** Weekly intercessory prayers team prays for the sick and needy in our community. After Church service prayer teams are always available. Intercessory prayers (Prayers of the People) are offered at Sunday Services for the local community, the region, the country and the world. Board members pray for individual members of the entire congregation at monthly board meetings. Prayer/meditation one-day sessions are held 4 times a year.

**Lay Ministry Teams:** **1. Church Board;** **2. Ministry & Personnel Committee;** **3. Worship Team;** **4. Service Team** (includes Community Meals, Outreach Teas); **5. Fellowship Team;** (includes bringing our church family together); **6. Education Team** (includes discipleship education, prayer events, children's education, library, creation care); **7. Resource Management Team** (includes Buildings and Finance); **8. United Church Women.**

*(For further details on the work and experiences of those involved in the various lay Team ministries please see the Appendix at the end of this document.)*

**Website and Facebook:** All details of regular activities and upcoming events can be found on the St. Stephen's website: [www.ststephensucqualicum.ca](http://www.ststephensucqualicum.ca) and on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/St-Stephens-United-Church-304690496313599/>

**Women and Men's Bible Study Sessions:** Weekly sessions of Bible study and prayer. Also, weekly lectionary bible study.

**Congregational Study Programmes:** Four or six-week discipleship study programmes twice a year and occasionally Alpha courses.

**Global/Social Justice Concerns:** The United Church Mission and Service Fund, The Mexico Mission, and the Parksville/Qualicum KAIROS.

**Support for local Community Agencies and Groups:** Including Supportive Housing, Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness, Manna Ministries, Forward House, Salvation Army, and Young Life.

## **LOOKING FORWARD: LONG TERM OBJECTIVES**

The Congregation has established five Goals as part of its Strategic Plan (see [www.ststephensucqualicum.ca](http://www.ststephensucqualicum.ca))

1. **Transition** - ensuring a smooth Transition to the new clergy leadership
2. **A Culture of Hospitality** – Be His light in the world by being a people that responds consistently to every individual with grace and warmth.
3. **Connect and Support one another** – Strengthen our congregation through awareness, appreciation, respect and care for one another
4. **Spiritual Growth** - Learn and grow deeper in our relationship with the Triune God and with one another through prayer, service, study and worship.
5. **Outreach** – Learn, discern and respond through service to the needs of our community and beyond.

In addition to these five Goals, St. Stephens United Church will:

1. Continue as a “**Living Faith Community**” that witnesses to the Love and Grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. God’s abiding Love and Grace is realised as we strive for a ‘Jesus focused community’ that expresses spiritual love not only to one another, but also to others, as we are inspired to live out the Kingdom of God here on earth. (Clergy Team, Lay Ministry Teams and Board oversight)
2. Encourage the growth and ministry with **Young Families and Youth** in and outside of our existing Church structures. (Clergy Team, Education Team and Board oversight)
3. Encourage our concern for **Creation Care** and the need to respect all forms of life on earth and to minimise the destruction of the planet due to the climate crisis brought about by our over exploitation and consumption of the world’s resources. (Clergy Team, Lay Ministry Teams and Board oversight)
4. Continue our support, through the **Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada** – the work of Indigenous Ministries, Faith Formation Ministries, and Global Mission and Service Ministries through the witness and service of our Global Partner Churches/Agencies throughout the world. (Clergy Team and Board oversight)

## Appendix – St. Stephen’s United Church Team Ministries

- 1. The Board:** In cooperation with the Ordained Ministry Team oversees the work and ministry of St. Stephen’s United Church. This consists of the work of the administrative staff personnel, the work of the Lay Ministry Teams, the buildings and financial budgets, and prays for the members of the congregation at all Board meetings. Clergy and a representative(s) from the Board participate in meetings and activities of Pacific Mountain Region of the United Church of Canada.
- 2. Ministry & Personnel Committee:** Is responsible for the monitoring and review of the effectiveness of staff in relation to the congregation’s mission, and to oversee the relationship between staff and the congregation. To ensure a healthy climate where constructive feedback can be offered and received in a positive way. The M&P Committee is the liaison with our wonderful and dedicated St. Stephen’s staff.
- 3. Worship Ministry:** The music at both Sunday services (9 am and 11 am) has a number of purposes: to offer love, adoration and praise of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit); to teach through good theology expressed in the lyrics; to express what we believe as a community of believers; to edify, unify, encourage, comfort and enthuse the congregation.
- 4. Service Ministry:** Is responsible for raising awareness of the congregation regarding emerging local and global needs. Activities include the monthly Outreach Tea; a time of fellowship with many seniors who have limited opportunities to be out of their homes and interacting with others. Folks love to come to this tea and to share in the entertainment. Another highlight is the weekly Thursday Community Lunch and a monthly Community Dinner. These are times when all ages come to enjoy a well-prepared meal and fellowship. It is a highlight of the week for many people living in our community. Other programmes include the Shoebox Programme and the Christmas Hampers.
- 5. The Fellowship Ministry:** Is responsible for bringing the people of our church family together, to foster and promote community within our congregation in order to build a stronger church. Both large and small group activities are offered, providing varied opportunities for Church members to connect with each other and with God. These include coffee and snacks after church services; weekly bag lunch gatherings with speakers; annual Fall congregational dinner; and other occasional celebration meals, bag lunch socials, and after service coffee times.
- 6. Education Ministry:** Is responsible for seeking out learning opportunities to help our Church family grow closer to God and to be better prepared to share our faith in a loving and grace filled manner. This Ministry also link with the local ecumenical KAIROS group that demonstrates their faith through social justice activities.

Sub-Groups with the Education Ministry Team:

**(a) Specific Discipleship Education Programmes:**

Twice-a-year discipleship congregational study programmes; Christian/Biblical Film events; Weekly Bible study small groups; '*Creation Care and Us*' and related small group programmes; Organizes and supports Alpha courses every 3 to 4 years.

**(b) The Church Library:**

The library consists of some 1200 – 1300 books, DVD's, etc. The content ranges from Bible study materials, devotional books, particularly by contemporary authors, through to biographies and Christian fiction. There are also sections for children as well as for older children and youth. New additions and books current to the season or topics under discussion are displayed on a cart during coffee times following the Sunday morning services. The Library volunteers are also responsible for the promotion of *Right Now Media* (Online access to Biblical/Christian studies and videos).

**(c) Children's Ministry:**

Our Children's Ministry is a growing and glowing light within our congregation! 'Kids' Church' is for children ages 3 to 13 years. Children begin at the 9am service in the sanctuary with their parents for a time of singing, prayer and welcome. Following the 'Prayer for the Children', kids move downstairs for special age-appropriate programming, led by Children's Ministry Coordinators and volunteers. Children will explore and interact with Bible stories as they learn and grow in their faith. Our activities include art, drama, science, videos and active games. The children are also involved in several other special events including the annual Christmas Pageant; Walk with Jesus Easter event; and family get-togethers and other social events.

**(d) Creation Care/Climate Change Ministry:**

Bible study series; 'Creation Care and Us' web page; Weekend workshop on Eco-Discipleship planned.

**7. Resource Management Ministry:**

The Resource Management Team Ministry is responsible for caring for the physical and financial resources of St. Stephen's. This ministry oversees the maintenance of the building and grounds including repairs and renovations. Environmental audit and consideration of a solar panel for the Church Roof planned. Also responsible for all the financial aspects of the church including budgeting.



## **8. United Church Women:**

The UCW Women meet monthly for fellowship and the opportunity to discuss various issues. They are also involved in providing refreshments for the local Probus club and funeral teas. They donate funds to a number of charitable organisations in the community on behalf of St. Stephen's United Church.

### **Living Faith comments from Ministry team leaders:**

**Gavin:** *I enjoy working with and chairing the Resource Management Ministry - a proactive and dedicated team. We meet monthly and under the guidance of Jesus, we discuss the resource needs of our church, both financial and physical - whether it be grounds or maintaining the building, the team comes up with creative ways to carry out repairs and improvements within our ministry budget.*

**Eileen:** *For me service is something we do to help those around us and St. Stephen's has wonderful programs in place which give all our volunteers a great sense of support for our community.*

**Janet:** *I feel fortunate to be associated with our group at the UCW – a small group of women working for the betterment of so many needy people.*

**Tracy:** *Teaching 'Kids Church' each week is a small thing that has had a great impact on me. I have found that whenever you teach – you learn, and usually more than you taught the children.*