



Advent, 2025

St. David's United Church

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REVEREND LEIGH: ST. DAVID'S DISCIPLESHIP EXPLORATION 2025-26

**This Advent, we will focus on daily prayer, a discipline of our faith.
You are invited this month to practice this habit by considering two aspects of
our prayer life:**

1. Try and make a firm habit of intentionally approaching God once a day with gratitude, needs and feelings. I will give you one way to do so each week. Try them out and see if one "fits" for you or use your current one.
2. The second is to remember that prayer is an ongoing conversation throughout the day with God. Always feel free to lift up anything – short gasps of delight, deep pleas for help and sending virtual hugs of love to someone in need.

December 4

This week (when Advent is calling you to make lists of other's needs and wants) I want you to try a spiral circle. With your finger or a pen trace a spiral on paper. Now go back to its very center – let it represent your heart and soul.

Pray right now: *Here at my center, God of my heart, come and hold me fast. No matter what has come before or what will happen next – hold me in love and remind me I am always your beloved child – no questions asked.*

Why pray for yourself first? “Not because I am more deserving than others, but because if God doesn’t awaken and strengthen and humble and fill my own soul, then I can’t pray for anybody else’s.” (John Piper)

December 11

This week, I want you to try a guided meditation practice drawn from Brad Jersak’s book, *Can You Hear Me: Tuning in to the God Who Speaks*. It’s a practice that asks us to believe God will use our imaginations to communicate with us. Read these directions and then close your eyes and give it a try.

- Take a few deep breaths, Imagine yourself in a safe place. The place you choose might be real or imagined, as long as it is a place you are safe.
- Imagine that Jesus has arrived to meet you in your safe place. Maybe he has arrived as a human being or perhaps Jesus arrives as a presence in some other form, or as a felt sense within you, or maybe some combination of these things. Welcome him and take a few more deep breaths.
- Jesus is now going to offer you a gift. It could be something physical or it could be a word or a prayer that Jesus has for you. Take some time to receive the gift.
- If you would like to ask Jesus why have he gave you this gift today?”
- I would now invite you to finish your conversation with Jesus with a short prayer of thanks to God for being present with you in this time, and after a breath, open your eyes.

December 18

This week is – for us in the Northern Hemisphere – the one with the least among of sunlight. It can be a time of feeling blue as we remember past and present challenges in the time when all over our community are signs of light and joy. Please join us December 21st at 7 PM for a prayer service marking Christmas without all the joy and bells. Here is a prayer for you to use this week.

God who is here in my heart, you promise joy,
in the midst of sadness—is such a thing possible?

I come weary but full of hope that this is true,
full of love for you and needing your love for me.

Joy, even when things are hard, this is the energy I seek today.
Come God, who promises to be born anew even on the long nights.

Come and bring wisdom to find those
glimmers of hope like stars in the night sky. For Christ’s sake, Amen.



December 24

The reason we are disciples will be found in the manger tonight, thanks be to God!
Thanks to Ann Weems for this prayer her 1987 *Kneeling in Bethlehem*.

The Christmas spirit is that hope
which tenaciously clings to the hearts of the faithful
and announces in the face of any Herod the world can produce
and all the inn doors slammed in our faces
and all the dark nights of our souls
that with God all things still are possible,
That even now
Unto us
a Child is born!



WORSHIP COMMITTEE

November 30	First Advent Sunday	Hymn sing at 10:15 am, White Gift
December 7	Second Advent Sunday	Communion, Baptism, White Gift
December 14	Third Advent Sunday	Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols:
December 21	Fourth Advent Sunday	Prayer Candles
December 21	Blue Christmas Service	7pm, St. Paul's Anglican 4416- 50 St.
December 24	Christmas Eve Service	7 pm, Carols and Light

White Gift Toy Drive

The tradition of collecting White Gifts during the Advent season began in the United Church in 1904 and 121 years later our congregation continues the tradition. Over the past several years we have been alternating where our donations are directed. This year we will be collecting **new toys** for the Bissell Centre's annual Festive Giveaway. If you wish to share the holiday spirit by purchasing a new toy for a child (0-17) please bring a **new, unwrapped toy** and place it under the tree in the sanctuary Nov 30th and Dec 7th.



Here are some gift ideas:

INFANTS (0-2): musical toys, rattles, shape stackers, board books

CHILDREN (3-11): picture books, graphic novels, sporting goods, craft & science sets, puzzles, art supplies, dolls, building toys, vehicle toys, animal toys

YOUTH (12+): gift cards, sporting goods, sealed cosmetics, board games, puzzles, art supplies

***Please no used items, food or candy**



Your generous donations will be packed up after church on Dec 7th and delivered to the Bissell Centre that afternoon. If you would like more information on the Bissell Centre and its programs, please visit their website

www.bissellcentre.org

Help Wanted

The worship committee is looking for help packing up toys after service on Dec 7th. We are also looking for someone with a truck or van that could deliver the donations to the Bissell Centre that afternoon 1-4 pm. Please contact Shauna Dittrick.



Christmas and Advent Events at St. David's



UCW Christmas Craft and Bake Sale, and Silent Auction
Saturday, November 29
10-3pm.

Chili and bun will be available for \$5.00.
Contact Judy (780-612-7974) or Janet (780-986-1497) if you
wish to have a vendor table at the sale.

UCW Annual Christmas Potluck and Worship Service
Monday, December 1.
Bring a dish to share for potluck dinner
All women are invited to attend.



5pm for the Potluck, with the Worship in the Sanctuary at 7pm.
We hope to see you there!

CHRISTMAS CAROL SING
Saturday, November 28, at 2pm,
the sanctuary of St. David's United Church

Come join us for an afternoon of music and joy.



Connections Coordinator and Pastoral Care

As we look back on 2025, we reflect on what was accomplished and look forward to what we have planned for the new year, 2026.

The Pastoral Care Committee is a group within a church or faith community dedicated to supporting the spiritual, emotional, and practical well-being of its members. Here are the main practices and work of the committee in 2025.

We responded with care and compassion to the needs of our church with providing these supports.

- Maintaining a list of members needing care or support
- Sending cards or notes for celebrations, grief, or illness
- Organizing volunteers for support activities such as meal supports
- Make in-person visits to homes, care facilities, hospitals and in the community
- Made Care calls where a visit was not possible.
- Collected and delivered prayer shawls
- Stayed connected to the Prayer Circle group for prayer requests.
- Organized delivery of devotionals, newsletters, cards, calendars and newsletters to shut-ins.
- Took part in a fund raiser for Lent. Let it Fly for Lent. Funds collected were allocated to the general church fund.
- Held a “Conversation” with congregation members to honour 100th church anniversary
- Organized Spiritual Walk at Telford Lake in the fall.
- To work closely with our minister and congregation to identify pastoral care needs.

The Pastoral Care Committee exists to nurture the spiritual and emotional health of the congregation and our faith community. We are grateful to all who donate their time and talents to craft prayer shawls, provide meals and extend loving prayer in times of grief, illness and other challenges.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Kruk

Pastoral Care Committee Donna Kruk, Care Coordinator
Stacie Gant, Mary Riseborough, Marlene Montney



SABBATICAL 2026

Rev. Leigh's and St. David's sabbatical will begin on April 5, 2026 after our Easter Worship service and will return on June 1, 2026 and lead worship again starting June 7, 2026.

What is a Sabbatical?

Sabbatical time is for learning through reflection, revitalization, and recreation.

It is a biblical and ancient practice.

It begins with God's example in Genesis 2:2. "On the sixth day God finished the work that had been done, and God rested on the seventh day from all the work that had been done." God's own actions shows that to "quit doing and simply be is divine." (Eugene Peterson).

The start of Jesus' ministry was marked baptism and isolation in the wilderness. He kept up this practice of separation and reflection throughout his ministry and commanded his disciples to physically separate themselves from the busy demands of ministry regularly (see Mark 1:12 and 6:31 and Luke 5:16). When Paul is struck down on the road to Damascus at the start of his journey of leading the church, he disappeared into the desert of Arabia for three years and emerged with a new vision (see Galatians 1: 15-18).

If any of this feels like a rude interruption of our routines and rituals, that is good. That is one of the reason for Sabbath: to challenge the assumption that our daily work makes the world go around (when really it is our gracious God).

Why are we doing a sabbatical?

Study after study show that clergy and congregations that occasionally rest and renew apart, have longer lasting and more fruitful relationships together. Time alone allows everyone involved **to go deeper and to re-commit** to the pastoral relationship. This is why it is a requirement in The United Church of Canada.

Let us go deeper: The very nature of being an effective pastor and a faith filled congregation involves continual spiritual growth which can only occur when depth is plumbed (needs a longer time frame than one Sabbath a week).

Let us recommit to our pastoral relationship: We all need renewal and learning opportunities. When congregants feel their pastor is exciting and spiritually alive, they are more likely to invite friends to come to church. When pastor's feel supported by and excited by their congregations, they are more likely to last in this vocation that can otherwise be emotionally draining over time.

What will we do differently during Sabbatical?

"We cease not only from work itself, but also from our efforts to be in control of our lives as if we were God."

(Martha Dawn's *Keeping Sabbath Wholly*)

St. David's congregation challenge for this sabbatical:

Share our gifts and talents in the area Leigh usually leads: worship. In April and May, we will practice the "Sharing of and Listening to Faith Stories." We will have more voices from the pulpit and more people helping to create worship. Please join in this discipline.

Leigh's challenge for this sabbatical:

To fully rely on God to take care of all of St. David's folks and to re-learn to listen for God's still, quiet voice in prayer, writing, moving and resting.



INREACH - OUTREACH

The Inreach-Outreach Committee had a great year! We had a number of events take place at St. David's. The Committee acted as facilitator and co-ordinator for ensuring the events that took place during the year.

Some of our first events were a Games Night in January and a special Valentine cookie sharing event after church on February 14. We celebrated St. Patrick's Day by having a pot luck luncheon featuring green foods. On March 14, the Affirming Committee, an adjunct committee of Inreach-Outreach, hosted a PIE Day.

We celebrated Easter with the help of the Easter Bunny, as he distributed chocolate eggs to all. The Pie Auction was held on May 4, with proceeds going to The Mission and Service Fund. Once again we offered slices of pie for a nominal price.

On the second Sunday in September, the Committee hosted the Welcome back Lunch. We also hosted the annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner, with 85 attending the event. Gert Reynar helped greatly with the continuing support through the Leduc and District Food Bank.

On Saturday, Nov. 29, the Inreach-Outreach committee and the Music committee will sponsor a Christmas Carol Sing, at 2:00pm in the Sanctuary. And Sunday, Dec. 7 will be the annual Write for Rights Event. Three letters addressed to Premier Danielle Smith and cced to Naheed Nenshi will be available to sign.

Thank you for your continued support of these events. Stay tuned for what is in store for 2026. Thank you to the members of the Committee, Kirby Dublanko, Janet Ramcharan, Shauna Dittrick, Robin Stuart, Stacie Gant, Rev. Leigh Sinclair and Ron and Linda Thompson for their dedication to this committee.

Inreach - Outreach Affirming Report for 2025

This year affirming held three events. We started off our year with our March PIE day that so many considerate people donated goodies for!



Our second event was spread over nine weeks where we featured the different episodes of the series 1946, the culture shift tour. The series of episodes was inspired by the movie 1946 the mistranslation that changed history. The episodes document the producers travels across America, showing the film as well as connecting with those in the Christian community of all sexualities and genders. An excellent series for digging deeper into our faith and beliefs. We wish to thank the producer of this series Sharon “Rocky” Roggio for granting us it’s use for free.

In the midst of that, we held a viewing party of the United Church’s apology to those in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This event lead to deeper conversation with those in attendance as we witnessed firsthand offensive images on a loop in the viewer piece of the online streaming platform. Those of us in attendance were reminded that being aware and vigilant about the continued hate directed at our siblings in the rainbow community is more integral now than ever.

This was a year for reminders of why our work is impactful, and it was a year of reminders that connection can come in a variety of ways.

In the upcoming year, we look forward to having our official affirm celebration and continuing our journey of loving all our siblings in Christ publicly intentionally and explicitly.

Submitted by: Stacie Gant



MEN’S CLUB

The St. David’s United Men’s Club has had a busy fall, and is looking forward to a busy winter.

The Men’s Club continues to meet at O’Brian’s, at 8:00am (please note the time change) on the second Saturday of each month for breakfast, fellowship, and interesting conversation. The breakfast is good and relatively inexpensive, and our waitress has even learned our preferences.



However, it’s not all fun and games for the Men’s Club. The Men’s Club cooked the burgers and hot dogs for the year end celebration in June. We also mowed the lawn and took care of the Memorial Garden over the summer, and cleaned up the yard this fall.

The Harvest Dinner was a great success! Once again we prepared the meal at the Shield's community Kitchen at the Leduc Food Bank. Thanks to the Food Bank in donated potatoes, squash and desserts. We welcomed 94 people to the dinner in the CE. Wing. The Harvest Dinner was followed by the Beef-on-a-Bun lunch at church the next day.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper is next on the agenda in the new year, on Tuesday, February 17. Check the Enews for more information

The Men's Club welcomes anyone who wants to join us on Saturday mornings.

Blessings in this season of generosity.



TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

As most of you will have notice, the sanctuary has a new video screen. This summer, the old projector began acting up again. Rather than trying to repair it, again, your Technology Committee decided it was time to replace it with a tv screen. We looked at our options, and settled upon an 85" screen. The only problem was the we hadn't budgeted for the replacement. However, St. David's community stepped forward: the Memorial committee paid for the screen itself, and the Men's Club paid for the cost of installation.

A heartfelt "Thank you" to those committees that covered the cost, and to the volunteers who worked on the installation. The new screen is a welcome edition to our Sunday worship



