



# The St. John's Messenger

Celebrate Christ, Proclaim His Gospel, Live His Love

**April 17, 2024**

56 Victoria St. E., Alliston L9R 1L5

**Church Office:** 705 435 6732

○ **Office Hours:** Mon. - Thurs.

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Closed 12:30-1:30 p.m.

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**Church Website:** [www.stjohnsalliston.ca](http://www.stjohnsalliston.ca)



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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*We acknowledge that we meet on Indigenous land, covered by Treaty 18. We thank the *Pew*, Anishinabek, and the Wendat, the most recent stewards of this place.*

## WEEK OF APRIL 18<sup>TH</sup> – APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup>

### Thursday April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024

2:00 pm Cribbage Group Shilton Hall  
Shilton Hall in use following cribbage until after UCW card party.

5:00 pm Children's Choir Sanctuary

7:30 pm Choir Practice Sanctuary

7:30 pm A. A. Faith Hall

### Friday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024

1:30 pm UCW Grace Unit Dermott Rm

### Saturday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

12:00 pm UCW Card Party Shilton Hall

### Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

10:30 am Worship Service Sanctuary

### Tuesday April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

4:00 pm Private event Shilton Hall

### Wednesday April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024

1:00 pm UCW Worship Planning Nursery

1:30 pm Library Committee Library

2:00 pm Grandmother's Embrace Shilton Hall

### Thursday April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

8:30 am Men's Breakfast Shilton Hall

## QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.

## WELL DONE!

The numbers for Pantry Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> are now available. St. John's donated 118 lbs. of non-perishable items to the Alliston Food Bank. Thank you.

*From The Joyful Noiseletter, March 2024*

"Christians, Jews, and Muslims can all trace the origin of their belief systems back to the prophet Abraham. This is the first known case of prophet sharing."

*– A Prairie Home Companion*

**National Volunteer Week, April 14–20** We recognize every volunteer and celebrate your contribution to the life and work of St. John's United Church. Thank you for all that you do!

April 14 Easter 3 Daniel in the Lion's Den

## PRELUDE

Acknowledgment of Territory

Lighting the Christ Candle

The light of these candles is a reflection of the light that brightens Western Ontario Waterway lands at this time of year, a reminder of the turning of the earth and the turning of the seasons, which are in such contrast in our latitudes.

**This light is light of presence, this light is light of clarity, this light is light of hope.**

This light is the Christ light among us.

**Amen.**

- *Peter Chynoweth, Cochrane, Alta*

WELCOME & Announcements

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Children's Choir

Call to Worship

Gather together, people of God! Come to this sacred space, this building, these pews, these floors, and this ceiling. Recognize the work of those who came before us!

**Yes, recognize ALL that those who came before us have left for us: the love of this community, the shared sacred story, and the ministry in the world we have shared.**

They shaped the world. We are shaping the world of today!

**Yes, you have shaped the world we live in. You've contributed to God's kingdom.**

Now let us explore how we shape the world of tomorrow, how we might use our worship to bring God's dream into reality, and how we might plan for the future.

**We come to encounter the divine presence and to let it transform us!**

- *Éric Hébert-Daly, Executive Minister, Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council*

Opening Prayer

Dear Creator God, we are filled with trust in your guidance. Nothing is possible without you. Our life journeys continue with you at our sides. Fears are scarce and worries few when we trust your presence.

**Guide us to a place of comfort when we feel forsaken and alone. Inspire us with hope when we start believing that the world is becoming a bad place. Let our confidence in your love overcome our fears.**

Your grace surrounds all people.

**Your love benefits everyone.**

Your mercy is infinite.

**Your compassion is unquestioning.**

Help us to reflect this understanding to each other when doubt fills us.

**In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.**

- Mark Dutkoski, St. Andrew's U.C., DeWinton, Alta.

\*\*HYMN VU # 175

This Is the Day That God Has Made

Prayer of Confession

Holy One, Maker and Keeper of Creation, Life of Life, we praise you! We sing joy!

**Open us to the new life you are creating in us.**

Forgive us when we choose our ways instead of your ways.

**Forgive us when we let our world get so small that there is no room for strangers or new ways.**

Free us from the fear that keeps us stuck, but do it gently, Lord—we like our routines.

**We like our security and our comfortable habits.**

Show us a new way, Loving God.

**As your Spirit moves among us, prune us where we have not been fruitful.**

Drive out fear that blocks us from confidence.

**Take root in us and help us to grow in love and in peace, until we are complete in your care. Amen.**

Our Father.... (singing) VU 959

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Daniel 6:10-22 – Daniel in the Lions' Den

10 Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open toward Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously. 11 The conspirators came and found Daniel praying and seeking mercy before his God. 12 Then they approached the king and said concerning the interdict, "O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that anyone who prays to anyone, divine or human, within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." 13 Then they responded to the king, "Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the interdict you have signed, but he is saying his prayers three times a day."

14 When the king heard the charge, he was very much distressed. He was determined to save Daniel, and until the sun went down he made every effort to rescue him. 15 Then the conspirators came to the king and said to him, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."

16 Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!" 17 A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, so that nothing might be changed

concerning Daniel. 18 Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no food was brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

### Daniel Saved from the Lions

19 Then, at break of day, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions. 20 When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?" 21 Daniel then said to the king, "O king, live forever! 22 My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong."

Anthem     Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel

### REFLECTION

Are you familiar with the story of Daniel in the lion's den?

The meaning of the name of Daniel is this: Dan (or Din) is 'to judge' in Hebrew, and El is the abbreviation of Elohim (God) in Hebrew. Daniel means that 'God judges alone' or 'God is my judge.'

The whole book of Daniel is about it. If you are righteous and truthful to your God, you would be safe in any circumstance, even in the lion's den.

Of many episodes, I picked up this story this morning for it is one of the most popular, and John Dodington wanted to sing it with the choir.

When I heard of it in my childhood, mainly through Sunday School, I was so amazed and excited and often raised a question to myself: Would God really save me in any condition like Daniel if I were truthful and faithful to God?

My answer was, "Yes," until I got severely bitten by a dog.

Ever since, I have had an instant fear - the trauma of facing animals, whether it is big or small.

(Emily, Kelly is exceptional)

"Me in the lion's den overnight under the protection of the angel of God."

I cannot handle it. I may pass out immediately, even before the lion's roaring.

Is there anyone here who can stay in the lion's den overnight with a 100% guarantee of safety and security?

How about with a prize of ten million dollars?

No, No, No. Don't be even close to the lion's den.

Daniel in the lion's den - What, then, is it all about?

It is all about Christ – the soul from God in the animal body.

It is all about justice in the unjust animal world

I want to remind you of what Paul says to people in Corinth:

2 Cor. 4:7 - **But we have this treasure in clay jars so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.**

Daniel, God judges alone, is in you, and dwells in your body.

Where was Christ born?

Christ was born in a stable in Bethlehem.

Why Bethlehem?

This is because Bethlehem is the House of Bread (Beth—house + lehem—bread in Hebrew).

Therefore, Jesus the Bread from heaven should be born in the Bakery of Bethlehem.

Why The stable?

For it is the place where animals dwell.

Without God, living bread, the law of God, judgment and righteousness of God, the lion, the king of animals, dominates and rules you and your life.

Who / what are the lions today?

Five giant companies such as Microsoft, Apple, Saudi Arabia Oil Company, Amazon, Meta, and Costco

And G-7 plus Russia and China are the lions in the den of the world.

Without Christ, the living bread, animals in the stable argue, fight, and even kill one another.

That is the world we live in now.

So, we have constant wars in the lion's den at present in Ukraine, Genocide in Gaza, and conflict between Iran and Israel just began.

We have, however, good news that Christ the babe was laid in the manger.

Eat the bread I gave you, and drink the cup I shed so that the babe Christ in us may grow.

Every baby born has the potential to grow to conquer the lion king.

What happened right after Jesus was baptized at the Jordan River?

**Mark 1:12-13 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 He was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him.**

See the parallel between Jesus with the wild beasts and Daniel with the lions in the den.

What are the wild beasts?

Paul defines it as such in Galatians 5:19-21: **Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, 21 envy,[a] drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

**22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.**

The Bible keeps telling us about human conditions in the lion's den.

Take another look at Matthew 10:16: **I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.**

Here, the Christ character is described as a sheep and dwells in the midst of wolves.

The picture of the gentle Christ spirit tenants the bodies of the wild beasts of earth!  
It is another metaphor for Daniel in the lion's den.

So, the Bible advises us to be wise like serpents and be innocent like doves.  
The serpent is not always a bad image in the Bible.

We find the sheep image such as kind, gentle, weak, innocent, dedicated and truthful  
to his Lord in the character of Daniel in the lion's den.

The story of Daniel, the man of the judge of God, tells us that the soul may safely  
reside in the animal's body or "den," if it holds true to its divine ideal.

So, the Psalmist says, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" – Psalm 23.

Can you declare it in the situation of the lion's den?

Who will judge and protect you?

Let me conclude with Psalm 91: **You who live in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,[a] 2 will say to the Lord, "My refuge  
and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." Amen.**

Hymn Psalm 91 VU p. 808-809 On Eagle's Wings (Soloist sings the verses and  
congregation refrain)

#### OFFERING INVITATION

As we are blessed by the God of wonder and love, let us share the gifts we have  
received in blessing to others. Let us commit ourselves to acts of love as we continue  
to worship God through the presentation of our offering. I invite you now to enjoy the  
music as you consider how you present your offering to God.

**\*\*OFFERTORY HYMN VU # 179 Refrain with verse 4**

#### OFFERTORY PRAYER

Take these gifts we offer, O God, and bless them as our hallelujahs!

**May they become hallelujahs for people near and far, our discipleship lived in  
answer to fear, to separation, and to inequity.**

In our giving, may we become hallelujahs for each other and for people we encounter,  
living signs of your love in the world. **Amen.**

- *Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont*

HYMN VU 660 How Firm a Foundation

#### Commissioning

Our Loving God calls us to follow as the sheep of God's flock, but God does not want  
us to follow impulsively, recklessly, or without thought.

**May we know God leading us with the light and wisdom of the Spirit, so that we  
may be light and hope for others. Amen.**

- *Wanda Winfield, Blenheim U.C., Blenheim, Ont.*

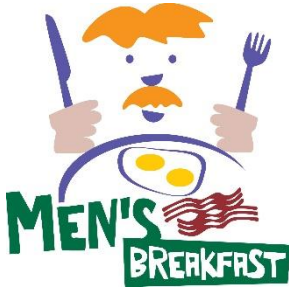
**\*\*Blessing: Go, Now in Peace**

#### POSTLUDE

**Next Meeting of Messy Church – April 28th**

Theme is “I am the True Vine” All are welcome.

Please indicate your intentions to attend by filling in the chart outside of Shilton Hall.  
Contact Andy if you have questions.



**Final Meeting of Men’s Breakfast:** Thursday, April 25, 8:15 – 10:30 am.

Guest speaker will be Dayna Dunn from Stevenson Memorial Hospital. Her topic is the Expansion to the Hospital.

Contact: Andy if you have questions

<https://clipart-library.com/clipart/914934.htm> #2689618

**ST. JOHN’S UCW CARD PARTY: Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> Noon**

**\$10.00 each – lunch/cards/door prizes**

**Tickets: Contact Jackie or Ann**