



September 2024 - "The DW Digest" Newsletter

Why Should I Attend A Bible Class?

Studying the Bible can be a challenge. We love God, His promises, and the incredible Bible stories we learned as children, such as David and Goliath or Daniel and the Lions' Den. However, many parts of the Bible are difficult to comprehend. Many Old Testament names of people, places, and events are so unpronounceable that we often struggle to understand who is involved and why. Additionally, it can be challenging for us to relate to many of the Bible's ancient laws and customs.

Even though the Bible isn't the easiest book to read, God still wants us to study it. Why? Because He promises to talk to us solely through His Word: not through dreams, feelings, or signs, but just through His Word. *Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.* (Romans 10:17 NIV84)

God wants you to study His Word, but how? I mean, we all want to grow in our faith and knowledge of God (anyone who wouldn't want that would be hard-pressed to convince me that they are truly Christian); but how do we do it if we find the Bible difficult to read and understand? By doing the same thing Christians have done ever since Pentecost: gathering together with other believers to study the Bible.

But don't we already do this at worship? Well, yes and no. Yes, when we gather for worship, we hear God's Word proclaimed to us and praise him for his grace. However, "once a week for worship" wasn't the only time Christians gathered to study God's Word in the past. For example, the Bible says: *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.* (Acts 2:46 NIV84). Regarding the Christians in Berea, the Holy Spirit says: *they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.* (Acts 17:11 NIV84)

The early Christians recognized that they needed to meet together more than just one hour a week for worship to grow in their faith and knowledge of Christ. They needed to study God's Word together as often as possible - asking questions and searching the Scriptures together for the answers. The same was true in Luther's day: people weren't just encouraged to come to the Sunday morning service, but also to Sunday afternoon, evening, and midweek "instructive" services. Luther also encouraged the princes and lords of his land to let common folk attend annual week-long seminars that would take the people through the Catechism.

My point is this: the Christian Church has always found it beneficial to not only gather for weekly worship with communion, but also to gather at other times to simply study God's Word. We keep this tradition in the form of Bible classes.

Bible classes are a fantastic way to strengthen your faith and gain a deeper understanding of the Bible. Studying Scripture together with other Christians can be incredibly enriching. I get it: some people are scared to come to Bible class because they are afraid that they might look stupid – not knowing as much as they think they should. But here's the thing: Bible class isn't about showing off; it's about learning. My goal isn't to embarrass anyone by putting them on the spot; instead, I want to inform, instruct, and encourage them with God's Word. In Bible class, we explore the culture, history, and meanings behind the passages we study, applying them to our daily lives.

Some people come to Bible class just to listen, and that's perfectly okay. Why? Because others come to ask questions. It's amazing how someone will inevitably ask a question that you've been too shy to voice. And guess what? You get to benefit from hearing the answer! It's also encouraging to hear about the struggles others face in their lives and the hope they've found in God's Word. I can't tell you how many times a topic I thought would be dull turned out to be incredibly fascinating, applying to my life in ways I never imagined.

Bible study isn't a chore or a waste of time; it's a wonderful opportunity to grow together in our understanding, faith, and love. But let's be honest, it won't always be captivating like a close NHL hockey game. Studying the Bible requires effort, and, sometimes, it can feel confusing, uninteresting, or even hard. What do we do during these times? First and foremost, we should pray, asking the Lord to help and bless our study. Second, we should actively participate and ask questions. Don't be afraid to tell me: Hey, Pastor: I didn't quite understand what you were saying. Can you explain it to me in a different way?' I'll do my best to help you understand.

Whatever you do, don't neglect the opportunities offered at Divine Word to gather with fellow Christians to study God's Word. I truly look forward to studying God's Word with you, remembering the Holy Spirit's encouragement:

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

(Hebrews 10:25 NIV84)

Voters' Meeting on Sunday, September 22nd, 2024

Our next quarterly voter's meeting is scheduled for after next Sunday's worship/fellowship (at about noon). Physical attendance is highly encouraged. Please let me (pastor) know before the meeting if you need to attend via Google Meet so I can set it up.

Sunday Bible Class

We resumed our study of the Gospel of John on September 8th, and are almost halfway through the Gospel. The Gospel of John is a simple yet profound book of the Bible – filled with wonderful truths and encouragement as it focuses our attention on Jesus. Because many of Jesus' miracles and teachings can be studied as stand-alone lessons, it is not too late to join the study. I am also convinced that you will be glad if you do.

Women's Online Bible Class

By Laura Sullivan

Women's Bible Class begins again on September 27th online at 3:00 pm. This fall we will be diving into the book of Romans. If you are interested in studying with us, please talk to me (Laura) to get the study packet.

Friday Fellowship Bible Class

We'd love for you to join us for supper and Bible Study on September 27th at Divine Word at 6 p.m. We're diving into some of the amazing things Jesus said during his ministry and exploring their meaning for us. For instance, have you ever wondered why he compared himself to the temple? Or what he meant when he said you can't sew new cloth on an old garment? Come and find out!

In-person Worship Attendance

June – An average of 41 for Sunday worship and 39 for communion,

July - An average of 52 for worship and 39 for communion

August – An average of 36 for Sunday worship and 27 for communion

Daily Prayers

I continue sending out daily devotions, links to other devotional sites (included in Monday's messages), Bible classes, Communion registration reminders, and announcements.

If you or someone you know is not receiving the daily prayers and would like them, please let me know their email address, and I will add them to our email list.

Note: Please let me know before unsubscribing if you do not wish to receive the Daily Prayer via email. The 'Unsubscribe' feature at the bottom of the daily email would remove your name from all congregational emails, including urgent ones.

Evangelism Notes

By: Jordan Alves

The Evangelism Committee would like to thank everyone who volunteered their time to help with the Summer picnic/corn boil. The picnic was a great success, and everyone enjoyed participating in the various activities (maze, fightfighters, games, live music). There were around 50 who attended the picnic, some even from St Paul. We look forward to future events.

Trustee Notes

By: Jeremy Doherty

The ramp on the South side of the church has been completed by Doulos Construction (Adrian's company). A final report for the Federal Government of Canada is still pending as is final payment and donation.

Other accessible related items will be deferred to a working group through the Long Range Planning group.
Photocopier is giving a 'Maintenance Required' code, Pastor will reach out to M5 Digital to arrange a service call.
Lighting replacement is still planned for the basement.
Quotes are being solicited for possible air conditioning options (5 ton unit, heat pump, ductless split, high efficiency window unit).
Lawn mower tire has been repaired, thank you to S. Drew.

Youth Education Report

By: Paul Reepschlager

Sunday school restarted after a summer break on September 8th. We presently have 4 children enrolled from preschool, grade 6 and confirmation, dependent on attendance.
Thank you to Anna Doherty, Laura Sullivan and Jason Pfothenauer for leading our children in Christian Education this 2024-2025 season.
We are looking ahead for anyone else willing to help with Sunday school as we anticipate some more children joining us in the season ahead. Please contact Paul Reepschlager for more information on how you may be able to help out.

Elders' Notes

By: Jeremy Doherty

Two lay led services were completed while Pastor was away in Aug, one with communion. The Elders continue to do outreach calls to members. However many attempts are going unanswered.

Updates from the Board of Stewardship and Treasurer / Financial Secretary.

By: Jim Neubauer

I. E-Transfer Process

We will be continuing to use the e-transfer process in 2024. There are more than 16 members using it regularly. If you wish to contribute monthly versus weekly to minimize the number of transactions that would be totally acceptable. Please don't hesitate to email me: jim.neubauer@sympatico.ca or call 613-258-6367 if you have questions. The etransfer email is divinewordetransfer@gmail.com

II. Regular Offerings and Budgets

Regular Offerings: Please find below the financial summary as of September 8, 2024 of all regular offerings collected to date being applied toward our Current Church Operating budget requirement of \$134,630 for 2024 increased from \$131,250 for 2023.

As of Sept 8, 2024
Offerings Received - \$96,849
Offerings Budget - \$93,205

As of June 2, 2024
Offerings Received - \$61,071
Offerings Budget - \$56,959*

As of March 10, 2024
Offerings Received - \$24,011
Operating Budget - \$25,890*

*- modified actual budget number from previous reports – due to formula error

After 36 weeks we are approximately \$3,600 ahead of the budget projection. This number is slightly overstated since we normally receive all monthly donations during the first 2 weeks on any month and in addition there were a couple of one-time donations made that were higher than previous years. Regardless, this amount is approximately \$15,800 ahead of last year's total of \$81,033. So Great job!!! (Thank-you) Please continue to make your regular weekly / monthly contributions throughout the year and we have a good chance of achieving our budget for the year.

So overall, I am still giving the congregation an A- for the first 36 weeks of the year. However, remember all it takes is for a few people to miss a few weeks of regular giving and we will fall behind.

On the investments front our Sun Life investments have been doing ok this year – growing by over 3% YTD. With the drop in GIC rates we will continue to evaluate all options. We also have two GIC investments with Scotiabank – a cashable GIC that was at 4.75% (maturing Nov 25, 2024) and another that was fixed at 6.05% (maturing Feb 24, 2025). Our plan will be to renew these at the best rates possible when they mature. Continuing to provide flexibility for potential church expansion expenses. Our focus is still and continues to be Low Risk investments.

As another note, we are now trialling an online version of the existing donations software used for tracking members contributions. This will give us better flexibility in accessing the data and most importantly we will have removed any single points of failure with our data – either a person or computer. More on this after we have used it for 6 months or so and complete tax receipts.

Please continue to provide your offerings – whether in person or via e-transfers and let's try and stay ahead of budget.

As always if you have any questions – don't hesitate to contact me.

Upcoming Events

Long range planning meeting: After Church on October 27th
Church Anniversary Pot-luck: November 3rd

Thank you

I want to thank all the volunteers quietly working in the background at church by doing things like helping with the Social Media, setting up the Altar, watching over our finances and member offerings, keeping on top of administrative paperwork, teaching our children, providing dinners and snacks, making necessary facility repairs, taking care of the property, beautifying the sanctuary, helping me organize for services, watching over the finances, keeping the property in order, giving fellow members an encouraging note or call, and upholding DW's ministry in prayer. Know that your work is not in vain. I thank God for all of you and all that you do.

Are You Struggling?

Are you or someone you know struggling spiritually? If so, do not hesitate to contact me (Pastor). *Our conversation will be kept confidential.*

Pastor Sullivan's Contact Information

Home address: 81 Upminster Way, Ottawa, ON, K2J5G2

Email: pastor@divinewordottawa.ca

Primary (Mobile) Phone Number: (613) 255-2317

Home "Internet" Phone: (512) 887-8982

Feel free to use my mobile phone number as the primary way of contacting me. If you see "Texas Caller" or a number with a "512" area code on your Caller ID, it is probably me calling from my home Internet number. Do not be afraid to answer the phone.

May the LORD continue to bless you.

In Christian love,

Pastor Michael Sullivan