Festival of Faith

Welcome to the Festival of Faith 2025
And Celebrating 100 Years with the UCC!

Welcome to the Rock!

My name is John Joseph Mastandrea and I am one of the Co-Chairs of this year's Festival of Faith, with my stellar colleague, the very soon to be Rev. Steven Loweth, from the Canadian Shield Regional Council.

We look back to remember: the time in the Mutual Street Arena where 1000's gathered in the name of Christ to take their stand; we look back to recall the Methodists, the Congregationalists, the Presbyterians and the Union Churches; we look back to bring our voice, "O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing…again."

We see today: the call to be the United Church of Canada; we see today, the place where ALL ARE WELCOME; we see today, the people at the edge to invite to the centre… today the word becoming flesh.

Join us in **Sudbury June 13 to June 15, 2025** from the shores of Lake Ontario, the head waters of Blue Mountain, the portage of the Trent Severn… join us in sight of the Canadian Shield.

We want to see you, and the person on your left, and the person on your right. Hear the wisdom of John Bell. Hear the sound of a sacred song and be the story. Step right up to the threshold of Celebrating 100 years.

I am looking forward to my return home. Yes, I serve a Toronto Church Manor Road United. Yes, I celebrate over 35 years of service from Saskatchewan to the Eastern Shores of Quebec. Yes, I look forward to my return home, to Northern Ontario where I served St. Matthew's and St. Paul's Anglican United Church, 1989 to 1992.

It is time to come out and strike the rock. It is time to come to the well and drink from the cup of community. It is time to be deep, bold, and daring! It is time to stand at the threshold and know that GOD NEVER SLEEPS!

Blessings,
John Joseph Mastandrea

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Hello and Welcome!

My name is Steven Loweth, and I'm the minister at Westminster United Church in Thunder Bay. I'm also honored to co-chair this year's **Festival of Faith 2025** alongside my friend and colleague, John Joseph Mastandrea.

On behalf of the Festival team and the Canadian Shield Region, I'm excited to invite you to join us for this incredible event, happening **June 13-15, 2025 in Sudbury**. We'll gather at the beautifully renovated Holiday Inn near the Four Corners, nestled close to the shores of Lake Ramsey—a perfect setting to inspire our time together.

This year's theme draws on the powerful imagery of **Water, Rock, John's Gospel story of the Woman at the Well,** and Isaiah's assurance that **"God never sleeps."** Through **engaging workshops, uplifting worship, and moments of wonder**, we'll explore these themes together in ways that nurture both heart and spirit.

We're also thrilled to welcome **John Bell** as our keynote speaker! Coming all the way from Scotland, John will share his wisdom throughout the weekend, culminating in a wonderful sermon during Sunday's closing worship. Many of you may already know John's work—he's a Scottish hymn-writer, Church of Scotland minister, long-time member of the Iona Community, and a beloved contributor to *Voices United* and *More Voices* with 19 hymns he has written or arranged. John is genuinely looking forward to being with us, and we know his presence will enrich our gathering.

As we celebrate **100 years of the United Church of Canada**, this festival is also a celebration of us—our connections, our stories, and our shared faith as part of the body of Christ. Keep an eye out for more details soon, including an early bird registration option!

I can't wait to reconnect with familiar faces and meet new ones at the **Festival of Faith 2025**. Let's make it a gathering to remember!

Blessings,
Steven Loweth