



In Every Bulb There Is a Flower



"In dead and snow of winter, there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see."

*Natalie Sleeth
from "In The Bulb There Is A Flower,"
Voices United #703*

Human beings do not like uncertainty. It makes us feel very... uncertain. So, we spend a lot of time and energy looking for reassurance of what's ahead. We make detailed life plans, consult financial analysts, perhaps read our horoscopes. We're even prepared to take the advice of a groundhog each February if it means knowing a little more about what the future holds.

This isn't surprising. Life is challenging. And not being sure of what's around the next corner can be unsettling indeed.

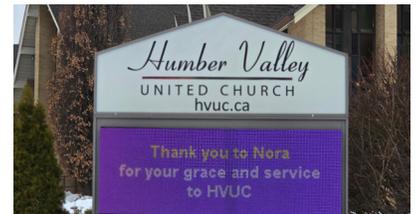
This feeling of uncertainty is being felt in many church groups today. It's hard to look ten or perhaps even five years into the future and have a clear, comfortable picture of what's coming next. And that can lead us to feel as if something is wrong. But... is it?

The Bible is full of stories of people who had no idea what was coming next. Abraham and Sarah are promised they'll be parents of a great nation but wonder how that's possible when they have no children. David is tapped to sit on the throne of Judea, but spends years being hunted and hounded by the reigning king. In the New Testament, the disciples are told they will build a new community of love and faith, but cower in fear after the resurrection, seeing no hope of even staying out of jail. In story after story there is a promise, but it seems impossible to see how God can fulfill it. And in story after story, God shows a way through.

As the words of the beloved hymn above remind us, our task isn't to divine the future, it's to faithfully take the next step, listening for guidance, doing our best to "lead with love." We don't know exactly what stock markets will do, when spring will arrive or what other uncertainties lie around the corner. We don't know what the ministry of our committed folks at HVUC will look like in the years ahead. But we do know one thing. Whatever comes, God is with us and can always use the verities of life to help us love each other and ourselves more deeply, more wisely and more profoundly. So, our task is to simply give this day to God. And God will look after our tomorrows. And that, we can count on.

Rev. Anne Hines

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Reconstructing The Lord's Prayer — *Belonging*

On Sunday, Feb. 22, the lesson was on creating "Our Own, Particular Prayer," an exploration of the Lord's Prayer including a chance for people to create their own, personal prayers to use during Lent! Some prayers are shown below.

Humber Valley has a group of approximately 35 people who offer prayers for those who are experiencing any sort of distress: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, etc. If you would like to make a prayer request for yourself or someone you know, contact Nancy.Roper@sympatico.ca

with the text that you would like to share. Prayer requests range from short anonymous requests to longer passages that include details and names.

If you are submitting the request on behalf of someone else, please confirm in your email that the prayer recipient has reviewed the text and given their permission to share the information.

Rest assured that Prayer Group members are careful to use the information for prayer and caring only.

"My dear Creator, All It is, may I remember who I truly am: the divine sparkle, placed in human body.

Please give me a daily opportunity to exercise my strength and endurance, and loving demeanour.

Help me to accept myself and others fully, with all mistakes and failures, we are just the learners here on the earth journey.

Guide all my ways. You are an eternal Love that never ceases. Amen."

~ Iryna Georgi

"Creator, Help me to find my meaning in this life, and to be the loving face of Jesus to those in my life.

Give me today what I most need, whether physical, emotional or spiritual.

Help me to let go of my mistakes, as well as those of others who have hurt or affected me in a negative way.

Help me to live a good life. I bring all love to you, as you give to me.

Amen"

~ Anonymous

New(ish) Custodians

Welcome to Miyanda Kasapu and Drew Grass, our new(ish) custodians at Humber Valley United Church!



Seeking Your Stories!

Editor Colleen Isherwood would love to hear from you. Contact her at 416-844-1519 or colleen.isherwood26@gmail.com.





Introducing Julie McMillan, Humber Valley's new Office Administrator. We are thrilled that our office is being staffed every weekday by such a capable, friendly, and welcoming person.

Julie was born and raised in Winnipeg – an amazing place to grow up where kids played outside in the winter even in the coldest weather. She attended Anglican church with her family (though her grandparents were United), sang in the children's choir, and was confirmed at 13. Julie loved gymnastics and from the age of nine competed at the national level. She and her mother had seasons tickets to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet where she discovered her life-long love of the Arts.

Julie earned a B.Sc. in Biology at the University of British Columbia. Inspired by her volunteering at Vancouver's Ronald MacDonal House she found her interest in child welfare and continued with an M.A. in Family Studies. She interned in the Child Life program at the B.C. Children's Hospital.

Over more than 15 years, Julie has held several positions in the non-profit sector. She worked for the Canadian Cancer Society as Coordinator of Volunteer Resources and for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation BC/Yukon Region as Director of Health Promotion. In Toronto, she was Lead Out-

door Educator for Roots to Rise Outdoors and later Project Coordinator for the LAMP Community Health Centre. She comes to Humber Valley after working for seven years as Administrator/Operations Manager at St. Margaret New Toronto Anglican Church.

Julie met her future husband, Glen, while in BC — as the result of an introduction by both of their mothers! Glen is a mining engineer whose work requires a lot of travel and they moved to Toronto from Vancouver when he was transferred here. During their children's younger years, Julie worked part time so she could devote her time to taking care of them. Their son is now in first year engineering at UBC Okanagan and their daughter is in grade 11, majoring in drama at Father John Redmond Catholic Secondary School and Regional Arts Centre.

Here are some fun facts about Julie:

- Julie goes swimming two or three times a week.
- A favorite family activity is surfing in Tofino, British Columbia.
- Julie loves to bake. For Christmas, she bakes 250 chocolate crinkle cookies, and she has an amazing recipe for banana bread that includes cream cheese.
- Julie's favourite colour is blue like the colour of distant mountains when the sun is low.
- She loves musicals, attends them at Mirvish, and her current favourite is *Juliet*.
- Julie loves hiking and has done both the west coast trail in B.C. and the east coast trail in Newfoundland.
- She has binge-watched *Derry Girls*, *Bridgerton*, and *Schitt's Creek* (multiple times!).
- Julie's favourite season is the fall: nothing compares with the beauty of the prairies when they are resplendent with glorious autumn colours.

Humber Valley is so blessed to have found such a wonderful new church administrator who has years of relevant experience in everything from social media to outreach, from staff/volunteer coordination to managing day-to-day operations.

Julie is thrilled to be with us; she loves all the activities that are happening at Humber Valley and is looking forward to working together with our staff, congregation, renters, and visitors.

Be sure to say "hello" when you are at Humber Valley.

Susanne Hynes



Nora's HVUC Experience: "Priceless and not to be forgotten"

Humber Valley held a good-bye party for Nora Cutcliffe after church on Feb. 15, 2026. Here are highlights of her response to words of farewell from Deb Turnbull, Susanne Hynes, and Rev. Anne Hines.

Thank you to everyone for your kind words and gifts. I feel very much appreciated by all!

I want to start by sending a shout out to Cheryl Drake, who gave me the tip-off for this job in the first place. I also wanted to thank my hiring committee: David Kitchen, Brian Goodman, Charlotte Browning, and Deb Turnbull – and for your encouragement to accept the position.

It feels great that I was able to help fill the gap between Kelly Wells' retirement and when Rev. Anne arrived, so Rev. Anne had the opportunity to provide input in selecting the new full-time Church Administrator, Julie McMillan. Together, I think they'll make an unstoppable team.

Overall, my four and a half months in this role have been like a whirlwind in turbulent times. I daresay I speak on behalf of all of us by saying that the pace of change left our heads spinning.

- When I arrived in late Sept, Rev. Trevor Brisbin had already left, and Rev. Ted Reeve was the supply minister, working in tandem with Kate Brown.
- It was soon announced that Rev. Anne would be the new minister, and there was great excitement about her arrival in late Jan.
- Deb Turnbull did a superb job at the helm in the interim, organizing several guest ministers for Sunday services.
- Sadly, we hosted a funeral for Ted Louwen's son Greg,

and we all felt the sudden and shocking death of Dragan Mrkovic, and the tragic loss of Dr. Anton Yeretsky's wife, Daria.

- We saw Erin Billowits step down as Board Chair, and Sharon Dowdall step in as Interim Chair.

If I could share one fond memory, it would be the joy of hearing the Carillon bells at Christmastime from my desk, despite the hubbub and never-ending list of demands. This was God's clear message, reminding me of what all this work is actually for. Thank you to Catherine Ireland and other Carillon players for that divine gift, and especially to Sally Jo Martin for encouraging more of this in days to come.

And how would I rate my experience here at HVUC? Priceless and not to be forgotten! Thank you to each and every one of you for the opportunity to serve. It's been an honour and a privilege to get to know you as individuals, and our one-on-one chats in the corridors have meant the most to me. It's crystal clear to me that the strength and power of this church lie in its fabulous people.

I ask for your patience and blessing now, as I hand the torch over to Julie. And with your support, I know she'll do a fine job. Thank you and God Bless!

Nora Cutcliffe





I have had the pleasure of joining the Board, attending many committee meetings, spending time with our new minister Reverend Anne, participating in hiring interviews and engaging with various staff members in the past couple of months.

What I always enjoy in coming back into the maelstrom and minutia of helping to

govern Humber Valley United Church is the people contact, the many evidences of caring and kindness, and hope that all these people trying to travel together in a Christian environment, reaching out to community, reaching into their individual faiths. Here we find the joy, the laughter, the differences, and the commonalities that make life so interesting.

I hope that each and every one of you understand that my door is open, my email and phone and home across the

street from the church are available to discuss whatever needs to be discussed.

Those who have gifts and skills that they wish to offer are most welcome. We are always in need of new ideas, new energy and help to accomplish our community outreach, the pastoral care, the sharing of God's teachings, the musical expressions that are relevant to delivering Jesus' message, the social justice issues to be explored and acted upon in the local and wider community.

I hope in the next months, with the help of the Humber Valley Community, to explore some of the shortcomings of our civil society so that, together, we can find ways to alleviate them. I hope you will be interested and encouraged to join in by providing those connections with the disadvantaged and the programs we can participate in by using our talents.

Thanks for your support of all that we do and for your support of the people working in this church to accomplish its Mission and Ministry.

Sharon Dowdall

West End Affirm Film Series

Seven United Churches have come together to form a shared West End Affirm committee. Our purpose: to support one another as we live out our commitment to being affirming, welcoming, and inclusive communities.

Our first project is a 2SLGBTQIA+ film series. All screenings begin at 7pm and are FREE. (We invite you to register on Eventbrite. There will also be a freewill offering to help cover costs.)

We hope you'll join us, and bring others along, as we learn, listen, and grow together.



1946: The mistranslation that shifted culture (2022)

This feature documentary follows the story of tireless researchers who trace the origins of the anti-gay movement among Christians to a grave mistranslation of the Bible in 1946.

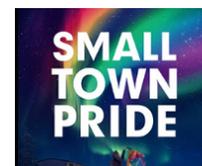
Friday, March 13 at Royal York Road United Church, 851 Royal York Rd.



Prayers for Bobby (2009)

Mary Griffith (Sigourney Weaver) is a devout Christian who raises her children with the conservative teachings of her church. When her son Bobby (Ryan Kelley) confides to his older brother he

may be gay, life changes for the entire family after Mary learns of his secret. Based on a true story. **Friday, April 10 at Islington United Church, 25 Burnhamthorpe Rd. or Monday, April 20 at Humbercrest United Church, 16 Baby Point Rd.**



Small Town Pride (2021)

Small Town Pride offers an intimate look at the joys and challenges of being queer in a small town. Filmed in Alberta, Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories, the film follows LGBTQ2S+ people and allies as they prepare for their local Pride celebrations.

Tuesday, May 5, Kingsway-Lambton United Church, 85 The Kingsway

*Brian Thomson,
HVUC rep, West End Affirm*



Choreography part of May 3 Event

Circle your calendars for Sunday, May 3 at 7pm. Valley Voices have started practising for BELONG: a SING-A-LONG 2026. The Sanctuary has been rocking, as leader Kate Brown works hard to teach the group some choreo moves!

Other Valley Voices plans include Retirement Home Sing-a-longs at Parkland on Eglinton, and Chartwell Scarlett Heights Retirement Residences in March.

Some of the Valley Voices have been participating in HVUC church services, and will be singing some Celtic songs to go along with Rev. Anne Hines's lessons on Celtic Christianity.

Do you like to sing in a relaxed and fun environment? It doesn't matter if you're a shower singer or have lots of training and talent. It doesn't matter how old you are — choir members range in age from kids attending with their parents to members who are in their 90s — everyone is welcome to come to practise on Wednesday nights from 7:00 to 8:00pm. Refreshments are served from 8:00 to 8:30pm.

BELONG:
a SING-A-LONG
= 2026! =
7:00pm
Sunday May 3rd, 2026
Humber Valley United Church
Silent Auction and
Sparkling Reception to follow!
 76 Anglesey Blvd, Etobicoke, hvuc.ca



Fundraisers/Events for 2026

Wednesday, April 22: Bids and Bites (UCW Fundraiser). 12-3pm. Lunch served.

Sunday, April 26: Covenanting Service for Rev. Anne Hines and HVUC during the church service that morning beginning at 10:30am.

Sunday, May 3: Valley Voices Concert with Silent Auction. Starts at 7pm. Sparkling Reception to follow. Cost \$25.

Saturday, May 23/ Sunday May 24: Doors Open Toronto, 10am to 5pm both days. Free. Coffee and tea will be served. Special features and demonstrations each day.

Sunday, June 7, right after church: HVUC's Annual General Meeting.

Saturday, October 3: Shredding Day.

Wednesday, October 21: Fashion Show (UCW Fundraiser).

November 13 or 14: Trish and Paul Dance Evening. Starts at 7pm. Snacks. Cash Bar.

Saturday, December 12: Concert with the Great Lakes Philharmonic. Sparkling Reception during intermission.

Other Fundraising (ongoing)

- Sale of Soups/Cookies
- FundScrip Gift Card Fundraiser
- Pedalheads Registration Collaboration

Dance Classes and More

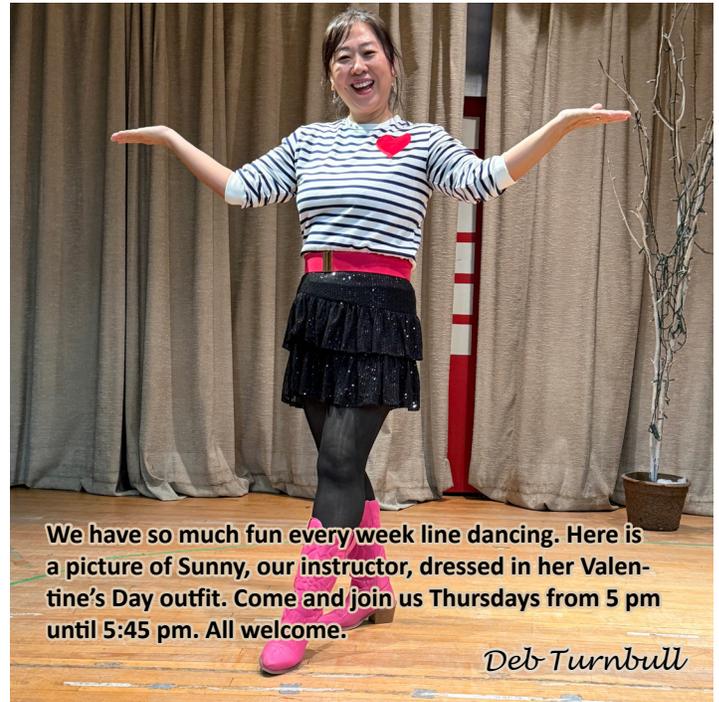
Drum Fit is every Tuesday at 5pm to 5:45pm. All are welcome. If you have not tried drum fit, come and enjoy the fun!

Tai Chi is held every Thursday beginning at 10am. All welcome. Even if you have never come, give it a try!

Fitness Class for Seniors. This is a new program and runs Fridays from February 20th until March 27th from 10:30am to 11:15 am in Steed Hall.

Zumba, every Friday from 1pm to 1:45pm. Our instructor, Cathy, has slowed it down and made it more accessible for seniors. Do not miss it — it's very fun. Go at your own speed and dance to the music at your own pace.

All the dance and fitness classes continue to be \$5 per visit (if you are able) to help pay for our instructors. No attendance is taken. Come whenever you can.



FundScrip has raised over \$7,500!

Ever wondered what those deadlines for FundScrip orders were all about in KIT? This is a very simple fundraising project, where our supporters purchase gift cards from over 270 vendors with a portion of each card credited back to the church. You can purchase cards for essentials like groceries and gas, or restaurants/coffee shops, apparel, business/office supplies, children/toys, department stores, electronics, entertainment, health & beauty, home and garden, sports and leisure, travel and even specialty stores and shopping centres. Our most popular cards seem to be the grocery stores, followed by restaurants and coffee shops.

The Fundraising team is happy to report that last year a total of \$1,378.01 was raised for the church! However, since we started in the fall of 2020 we've raised \$7,508.95, just by our supporters buying gift cards to use for their everyday purchases and gifts. Payment is easy, you can either send an e-transfer to the church once you've submitted your order or forward a cheque; please ensure the memo line mentions FundScrip.

For more information, please contact Kathy Kitchen or Lynn Manning. If you are ready to place an order, please click on this [link](#) to download the most recent form. Our next deadline is March 24th to ensure you get your gift cards before Easter.



WEST END AFFIRM FILM SERIES

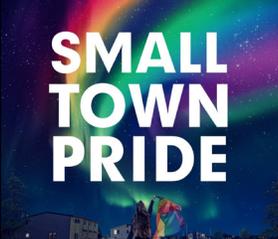


March 3
Kingsway Lambton
United Church

March 13
Royal York Road
United Church

April 10
Islington
United Church

April 20
Humbercrest
United Church

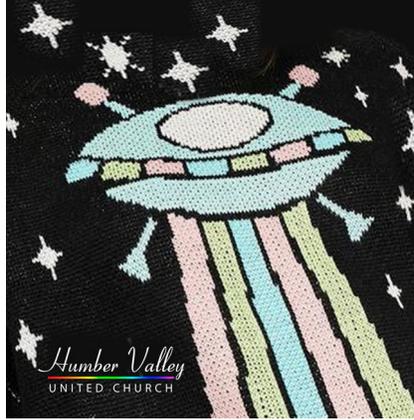


May 5
Kingsway Lambton
United Church



7 pm | Free
Register on Eventbrite
or contact church office

UFOs (UnFinished Objects)



**Sundays
noon- 1pm**

Meet up in person
or online with a
welcoming group of
people as we work
on our different
projects together.

Details in "Keeping in
Touch" newsletter at
www.hvuc.ca

• Sobeys • Instacart • Chalo! FreshCo Staples •
 Simons • Victoria's Secret • Gap • H&M • Old Navy •
 Roots • Target • Home • Build-A-Bear • Amazon • Giant
 Tiger • Hudson's Bay • Marshalls • Winners • Best
 Buy • Fünd Charters • Cineplex • Famous
 Players • Scrip **Gift Cards** • Esso •
 Shell • Petro-Canada • Metro
 • Loblaw • to provide a donation towards our store •
 Chef's fundraising goals at no extra cost to you. •
 • Rexall • Bath & Body Works • Sally Beauty • ARU •
 Home • Canadian Tire • The Home
 Depot • Second Cup • Boston
 Pizza • The Keg • McDonald's • Elep
 Thai • Spa •
 Starbucks • Montana's • Doordash • Canoe • New
 York Fries • East Side Mario's • Original Joe's • R&D

For gifts or daily purchases, buy
Fünd Scrip Gift Cards
 to provide a donation towards our
 fundraising goals at no extra cost to you.

Contact [Kathy Kitchen](#) re next
 orders deadline.
[CLICK HERE FOR ORDER FORM](#)
 or copies in the church lobby

Humber Valley
 UNITED CHURCH
FUNDRAISER



Come, Sing.
Valley Voices
 COMMUNITY CHOIR

Wednesdays 7:00-9:00pm

Beginning Sept. 17, 2025
Fun, Uplifting Music

Do you love to sing?
 Everyone is welcome to join Valley Voices
 Community Choir! No audition is required,
 just show up and you will be warmly welcomed.
 We have loads of fun performing locally
 under the professional direction of Kate Brown.

Humber Valley United Church, 76 Anglesey Blvd., Etobicoke hvuc.ca
 Contact Colleen.Isherwood26@gmail.com

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Bids 'n Bites

Luncheon and Cards
Wednesday, April 22, 12-3pm
 Tickets: \$35 through Ticket Line
 416-231-2263, ext. 39

Fancy Sandwich Lunch
 Bridge, Euchre or Card Game of Choice
 Door Prizes | Silent Auction
All Welcome!

Humber Valley
 UNITED CHURCH
 76 Anglesley Blvd. | Etobicoke
 Proceeds to benefit UCW Charities

Save the Date: Wed. April 22

BIDS 'N' BITES, the UCW's annual spring fundraiser is on for an afternoon of cards and games (bridge, euchre, canasta, possibly Scrabble — whatever your table of four wants to play) from noon to 3:00pm

Ladies and Gents are welcome to this fancy-sandwich-and-sweets lunch, silent auction and door prize chances. Tickets are now available for \$35 at 416-231-2263 Ext. 39 or see Jill Kershaw on Sundays.

Also, can you participate with a helping hand? Volunteers are needed to post flyers in the community, starting about mid March. Contact Cheryl Drake at cheryldrake@sympatico.ca

There are opportunities to do coffee and tea, help with the silent auction, source door prizes from local businesses, wrap gifts, help with set-up, kitchen cleaning and take-down... and more.

AND most of all, spread the word, pull your friends together to make up a foursome of afternoon fun.

Carolyn Whiteside



Elderberry Jamboree Duo

This is your official invitation to the rescheduled free Elderberry Jamboree Duo community concert. Please join Beverley Conner and Paul Gandhi from 3pm to 4pm on Friday, March 20 in the Hearth Room of Humber Valley United Church.

We've got Big Band sounds, with Paul's orchestral keyboard playing popular songs from the '30s to the '60s. We encourage audience participation — sing, dance, clap, tap

and play along with a selection of rhythm instruments from around the world

In addition to the main duo, a couple of guest artists will spice up the entertainment. A few of you have already confirmed you will be attending on March 20th.

To help us estimate numbers, please let Bev know if you (and anyone else you wish to invite) can make it. We guarantee a good time and appreciate your support. Please reply by March 10 to beverleyconner@gmail.com.

Please note that we will be filming parts of the event to create a short promotion video for future Elderberry Jamboree programs. Videos will be posted online. By attending, you consent to possibly appearing in the video.

If you prefer not to be filmed, just let us know when you arrive and we'll make sure you are seated off camera.

Beverley Conner and Paul Gandhi



Unit 6 Hosts All-UCW Valentine's Day Party



Dianne Locke Awarded UCW Life Membership at UCW Annual Mtg.

At the UCW Annual Meeting on December 7th, Diane Locke was awarded Life Membership in the United Church Women. Last year's winners, Ruth Johnson and Colleen Isherwood, presented Diane with her award. Diane is a longtime member of Unit 6, who helped with Donna McCorquodale for several years running the vintage fashion boutique. But there's more...

Carolyn Whiteside, who has worked extensively with Diane, wrote this in an email read at the Award Presentation.

"I was attending a UCW Executive meeting, maybe 10 years ago, when this new woman said she would take charge of the annual Fashion Show. She started by giving it a new name, "Ladies Night Out," and changing up the food to give our stalwart "Men-in-tuxedos" a rest from passed appetizers. She convinced us to change the feature every now and then, with inspirational speakers — and a Dance Party? There was a lot of skepticism over that one, but people loved it so much so that we repeated it again just this last October, to rave reviews with a record-breaking profit of \$12,000.



"As a leader, she found people to chair all of the various parts of 'Ladies Night Out'. She also had input with catchy flyers and fun décor, ranging from fancy shoes and purses from her own collection of vintage wear, and a store of vinyl records to go with the music theme," Carolyn wrote.

Thank you very much, Diane, and congratulations on your Life Membership!

Colleen Isherwood & Carolyn Whiteside



Operation Burrito!

At our January meeting, Friends in Faith, a unit of the UCW, took on the challenge of making burritos to donate to the homeless through a downtown charity, Seeds of Hope.

Led by our inimitable Shelley Scarrow, we made very yummy looking (no, we didn't eat them) burritos: beef burritos, vegetarian burritos, and vegan burritos! These were then frozen in our capacious freezers, to be handed out when needed to unhoused people, via a downtown network who go out in vans to find people in need.

It was a full evening, very fun, but we were tired at the end. Shelley even made chili from the leftovers, that also was made available to the homeless.

A very warm thanks to all who came, and for the leadership of Shelley Scarrow. By the way, if you didn't know, Shelley is the screenwriter and a producer of *Finding Her Edge* — a heartwarming series now on Netflix. Check it out!

Constance Crosby



The Welsh Male Voice Choir Sings at HVUC — *Belonging*



The Sanctuary at Humber Valley was packed as the Welsh Male Voice Choir performed on Sunday, March 1. The program included songs in Welsh and in English, starting with the Welsh and Canadian National Anthems and ending with "Guide Me Now, O Great Jehovah." There were fun songs, including Sweet Caroline, and one about a pirate who missed his fair Sally (photo below), amazing organ playing, and many haunting and beautiful harmonies.

Colleen Isherwood





Communications Team: Walking Together

Humber Valley's Communications Committee began its work just before the Rev. Mark Winger became HVUC's minister. Chaired by David Dallimore and Susanne Hynes, its goal was to support Rev. Winger's ministry and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. It was a very busy committee whose initiatives included creating a Church Style for print and electronic materials including our current logo, creation and maintenance of the church's Web site and social media, updating signage and bulletin boards in and around the church, editing our newsletters, *Connections* and *Keeping in Touch*, and overseeing the design and distribution of various church promotional materials.

Another major achievement was commissioning the two outside electronic signs that inform our neighbourhood about this active church.

You will be happy to know that *Connections*, which appears in print and online, is financially self supporting. The advertising revenue covers printing costs. If you know of someone who might like to place ads in *Connections*, please contact its editor, [Colleen Isherwood](#).

The Committee was reconstituted in November 2025 to build on its earlier initiatives and to support the ministry of Rev. Anne Hines. It operates both as a strategic and operational team through the work of its volunteers and church staff. It has been granted a budget of \$2000 for this fiscal year.

Members of the team and their primary focus are:

- Deb Turnbull. Messages for outside signs, congregational emails about worship and events, proofing editor of our publications.
- Kay Blakely. Representative on the church's Board.
- Carolyn Whiteside. Promotional material distribution and press releases; Doors Open.
- Colleen Isherwood. Editor of *Connections*.
- Julie McMillan. Church administrator, (ex officio). Compiling and editing *Keeping in Touch*, creating promotional materials, creating slides for services, posting messages on outdoor signs, maintaining bulletin boards and generally supporting the team.
- Rev. Anne Hines, (ex officio). Inspiration and spiritual support.
- Susanne Hynes. Chair.



The team has been busy. Since November it has designed and created materials for the pews: *Connections* cards, I Give Online or via PAR cards, and *About Humber Valley United Church* flyers both generic and seasonal for placement in the pews and for general distribution.

Susanne has led the new name tags initiative which has provided everyone with neat magnetic or pinned tags featuring our first names.

Carolyn has worked with Nancy Roper planning Humber Valley's Doors Open event in May of this year. Team members have continued updating the website and social media, creating and distributing promotional materials, keeping the outside signs timely and relevant, editing *KIT* and *Connections*, etc.

High on the list for the next few months is updating and coordinating the church's social media presence, updating church signage, and helping our church have a healthy communications environment.

The team has agreed that our theme for this year is *Walking Together*. As we begin our years of ministry with Rev. Hines, let us consider this time an invitation:

*To slow our listening,
To deepen our relationships,
To let the teachings move through us before we rush to
name the outcomes.
May this time be one of gentle courage.
Of remembering that we are best when we are together.
Of walking together — not ahead, not behind — but side
by side.*

*Susanne Hynes
Chair, Communications Committee*



Outreach members Cheryl Drake, Lynn Manning and Sylvia Cohen.

Souper Sunday

Deliveries of many boxes of soup to the St James United Church Food Basket and Youth Without Shelter. In addition to soup cans, Tim's and grocery gift cards were also given to Youth Without Shelter, purchased from monetary donations. Many thanks to all who responded with care for those less fortunate.

Water For Life Advent projects.

Cheques have been sent to the following charities:

- GAIN — wells in Africa: \$1,040
- Water First— water projects in Ontario of indigenous communities: \$1,350.

March for Hospice on May 24

Humber Valley has supported the Dorothy Ley Hospice since the early years of fundraising. The goal was to raise funds needed to build a 10 bed facility for end of life care in Etobicoke, which opened in 2009. Many of our families and friends have benefitted from community in-home and in-hospice care.

The congregation has participated in the annual Hike for Hospice which this year will take place on May 24. Watch for more information in upcoming editions of KIT.

Sally Jo Martin

Easter Daffodil Display volunteers

The Easter daffodil display needs extra volunteers this year for very special roles. Can you come to the rescue?

One volunteer is needed to pick up 40 pots of daffodils from Thorncrest Foodland, some time between Palm Sunday and Good Friday. The daffodils are not installed in the church until immediately after the Good Friday service on April 3.

Three volunteers are needed after the Good Friday service, to arrange the pots into a beautiful pyramid, on the chancel stage for Easter Sunday, April 5. For those planning to be at the Good Friday service, please consider staying a few minutes to help bring the pots into the sanctuary. For those attending on Easter Sunday, perhaps consider offering to help Pastoral Care committee members deliver plants after the service. Many hands make light work!

Linda Grass



"Drowning the Shamrock"



Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated in more countries than any other national festival. And it must be celebrated during Lent because it always occurs during Lent. Celebrations include parades, singing of Danny Boy, wearing of the green, shamrocks and leprechauns everywhere, people in bars drinking green beer, banquets with piles of food, and dances featuring jigs and reels. Christians also attend church services, and with any luck the Lenten restrictions on eating too much and drinking alcohol are lifted for the day.

According to the sources I read, St. Patrick actually was never officially canonized. A small detail, I am sure. You may not know that Patrick was born in England to Roman parents. He was taken into slavery in Ireland and by a circuitous route after studying Christian teachings in England returned to Ireland as a Christian missionary.

There are many stories about his life and works in Ireland including the one where Patrick teaches the Irish about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity by showing them the shamrock.

But I thought I would share with you the legend that initiated the habit of lifting a glass of liquor in Patrick's honour on his special day.

In this legend Patrick visits an inn and scolds the innkeeper, who isn't properly filling the whiskey glasses, for being ungenerous with her guests.

Patrick tells her that a demon is hiding in her cellar and being fattened by her dishonesty. He says that the only way to get rid of the demon is by mending her ways.

Some time later, Patrick revisits the inn to find that the innkeeper is now serving her guests cups of whiskey filled to the brim. He praises her generosity and brings her to the cellar, where they find the demon withering away. It then flees in a flash of flame, and Patrick decrees that people should have a drink of whiskey on his feast day in memory of this.

This is said to be the origin of "drowning the shamrock" on Saint Patrick's Day.

Ireland Park

Ireland Park at the foot of Bathurst Street commemorates the Irish Famine migrants who arrived on Toronto's shores between 1846 and 1849. During 1847 alone, at the peak of Ireland's Great Famine (An Gorta Mór), some 38,500 Irish men, women and children landed at Dr. Reese's Wharf in Toronto, then a city of just 20,000 inhabitants.

Weak from hunger and stricken with illness aboard overcrowded sailing ships, approximately 20 percent of those who embarked upon the long voyage perished at sea or shortly after their arrival at sites along the St. Lawrence River. Within months of the migrants reaching Toronto, the city recorded 1,186 fatalities due to contagious disease, including the deaths of compassionate local clergymen, government officials and medical workers who came to the migrants' aid. Their names are inscribed upon the park's sculptural memorial columns, which are composed of limestone from Kilkenny, Ireland. The site is only a short distance west of the site where, in 1847, Famine migrants landed at Reese's Wharf.

Most of the Irish immigrants found rudimentary homes in what is now downtown Toronto: The Ward, Cabbage Town and Cork Town.

(Continued on next page)



(Continued from previous page)

They were discriminated against and hired for cheap labour. But like the other waves of immigrants who came here to flee persecution and hardship, and had to live in substandard ghettos, by the second and third generations they were absorbed into the life of the city and of the country.

There is an Etobicoke connection to this story: Michael Power St. Joseph High School was named after Toronto's Bishop Michael Power who died on October 1, 1847 as a result of the typhus he caught caring for those Irish immigrants.



Danny Boy

In 1910 an English lawyer, Frederick Weatherly, wrote a poem that is by many considered the unofficial the national anthem of Ireland. Frederick's Irish-born sister-in-law sent him the beautiful Irish tune 'Londonderry Air'. Frederick was captured by the sweeping melody. He tweaked his lyrics and set them to the music. The result — Danny Boy. The emotional strains of this beautiful song make it a wonderful song for funerals and memorial services.

A retired Irish American police officer, Charlie McKenna, from Rhode Island, once said:

"I want 'Danny Boy' sung at my funeral mass, and if it isn't, I'm going to get up and walk out."

These stories are excerpts from HVUC's 2024 St. Patrick's Day Afternoon Vesper Service which you can view again at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEdrt7IM-vlo&t=4285s>

Susanne Hynes

Grieving the death of a loved one?

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Life After Loss Program

The Life after Loss program is designed for those who are dealing with the loss of a loved one. It allows you to move through grief with greater awareness, hope and health. This year it is being offered by Rev. Deborah Hart at Islington United Church.

"Deborah's approach to grief and the grieving process was very healing and comforting," says Lisa Webster, a Humber Valley Church member who took the course a few years ago.

"I don't think it matters what stage of grief you are in, this group and individual approach can be so helpful. Very grateful I attended."

"Attending weekly grief sessions was very helpful," says longtime church member Joan Schettler, who lost her husband Dennis a few years ago. "I also attended a second session to support friends who were experiencing the very difficult pain of losing loved ones. Time is a healer, but life will never be the same."

Kathy Kitchen



Valentines Dance gets rave reviews

The Second Annual Valentine's Dance with The Humbertones (shown in the top picture) has received rave reviews from those who attended, some of the participants who helped out, and from the band leader as well.

About 20 members of Valley Voices were on hand to sing Mama Mia, Twist and Shout and American Pie. One of the

most enthusiastic moments was when everyone sang and danced along to Sweet Caroline. Ba ba ba!!!

"Thank you to everyone who helped in any way with the dinner and dance last night. What an evening!" said Deb Turnbull in an email to some of those helpers. "From the set up, to the decorations, to the food, to the music, to the cleanup, to the handling of the monies raised—what a team.

"A special thanks to Tom and Robin for providing the music and the perogies and meatballs, for leading the line dancing, and for the bottle of champagne, which was auctioned off. A special thanks for all your donations," she added.

"Deb, once again your organizing everyone to make the event run smoothly is much appreciated. Tom, Saturday was the first time Dale and I have been able to enjoy the talents of your band. Thank you for making the dance so much fun!" said Lynn Manning.

Kathy Kitchen added a shout-out to Tom and the band members. "We loved the whole evening. It was one to remember. Your band is very so talented and fun. And Robin certainly added to the spirit of the evening out on the dance floor. A great big thank you! And where did you find the time to make those delicious perogies?! Keep on singing and dancing all! Cheers!" said Kathy.

"Deb, Thanks for spearheading a really fun community event... and to all the others for rolling up their sleeves, said band leader Tom Trottier. "The band really enjoyed playing and watching the crowd share their enthusiasm through their singing and dancing."





Shake Off that Winter Chill With 55+ Central Etobicoke!

The days are getting longer, and it's time to shake off the winter chill! Make the most of the season of renewal. The sunshine will soon give us an emotional lift and getting out into the fresh air has so many benefits for seniors. Temperatures can fluctuate at this time of year, so if you can't get outside, join one of the many fitness classes at 55+ In Central Etobicoke in Humber Valley United Church. There are so many choices to keep you flexible and moving — yoga, tai chi, dance classes, fitness for seniors. Try one or try them all!

No matter the season, social connection is critical to healthy aging. Research indicates strong social ties can dramatically increase life expectancy. Great news! There are plenty of opportunities to connect through the 55 + Program.

Have a look at our virtual programs. On-line meetings include Coffee Time Chats, Book Club, Current Events Discussion groups and more. If you prefer getting out to in-person events there are plenty of those too! Over the winter we played Euchre and Mah Jong, enjoyed hot lunches and guest speakers at Daytimers, shared meals and baked bread together, and there is more lined up for the spring.

Egg Dish from Pancake Tuesday

I promised a number of people that I would send the recipe (again) for the egg casserole dish served at Pancake Supper.

Big Breakfast

- 1 pound sausage or bacon, cooked (I used mild Italian sausage this year)
- 12 eggs
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 3 cups grated cheese (I used marble this year)
- 3 green onions
- 1 can diced chilies
- 1 cup whipping cream
- salt/pepper

Mix sausage, eggs, mushrooms, cheese, green onions and chilies together. Pour into greased rectangular baking dish. Slowly pour 1 cup whipping cream over top. Bake uncovered at 350 for 40 minutes.

Watch for the *55+ In Central Etobicoke Spring Program Guide* coming soon — stay active and connected. It truly is the key to successful aging. Contact jenny@hvuc.ca.

*Jenny Terwoord,
Seniors Program Coordinator*

Guys and Dolls

Join us for a Mary Morton excursion to Stratford.

Our luxury coach departs from Humber Valley United Church at 9am on Tuesday, June 9. We will stop for lunch at the Stratford Golf and Country Club, followed by a performance of the hit musical *Guys and Dolls*. We return at approximately 6pm. Snacks and beverages will be served on the way home.

Tickets are \$226 per person, and won't last long, so reserve early to avoid disappointment.

Contact Mary Morton Tours 416-488-2674 to purchase your tickets.

Please also invite your family, friends and neighbours.

Jenny Terwoord

Note: This recipe is great to make the night before. For a vegetarian option I substitute 1 chopped red pepper.

Lynn Manning



Jill Kershaw at the Pancake Tuesday dinner.



Josie Mullins – The Kindest Community Contributor

Josie Mullins and a friend were staffing the community booth at Cloverdale Mall several years back, sharing information about one of their groups for people who are visually impaired. The Humber Valley 55+ Mall Walking group was at Cloverdale that day and struck up a conversation. Josie asked if she could join the walking group and that day, a string of kindness began.



Josie learned about our other 55+ programs and the Valley Voices choir and she joined all of them! Then she started coming to church events and attending our Sunday service when she wasn't needed in the Sunday school at her own church in Weston.

Josie then told all her friends about our great programs and invited them to come join us. We now have many new friends at Humber Valley thanks to Josie.

Josie spends every minute of her day helping others. She connects people with programs that they will enjoy. When she shops, she has an eye out for things that would make other people happy and she saves her money so she can buy them. She watches for bargains so she can donate prizes to the various bingo groups that she attends. She phones people to check in on them. She adds people who are ill to the prayer group list at both her churches. And that's just a start to the list of kind things that Josie does.

Josie's hands are never idle — she is always knitting. In the early days, she made sweaters, blankets and hats, but now she focuses on scarves and dickie "chokers" which are neck warmers that are considered safer for children than scarves. Josie sells some of her knitting, but she donates the bulk of it. She sold her scarves at our church sale and gave the profits to our church. She donates to children in her apartment building who need warm clothes. She donates her handicrafts as gifts and prizes for her bingo group and some of the community meals that she attends.

She even made orange scarves for the election campaign volunteers in her riding.

Here are two of Josie's recent projects:

Welcome Scarf for Rev Anne: Josie has knitted many rainbow scarves for Kate. Anne admired Kate's scarf when she visited the church in the summer, so Josie offered to make one for Anne. That job became much easier when the church hired Anne as our new minister! Several folks have been watching in the stores to replenish Josie's stash of rainbow yarn, and thankfully, Vaughan Stoyka found a stash last fall. Josie had Anne's scarf ready to present at the Valentine's dance recently. Enjoy your new scarf, Anne!

Pop Tabs for Wheelchairs: Josie has a friend named Robert who works at the CNIB. He has been saving pop tabs since he was a kid, and using them to purchase wheelchairs for needy people. Robert is currently working on his TWENTY SECOND wheelchair donation! Josie has spread the word among her many friends and they are all collecting too. At Daytimers in December, Marlene Erskine brought in an ENORMOUS donation from all of her friends who are helping to collect. As an added bonus, we learned that Marlene's home church is the same one that Josie attends, so they can transfer pop tabs every Sunday, not just when they're both at Daytimers!

If you would like to help Robert and Josie buy more wheelchairs, please bring your pop tabs to Josie at Valley Voices on Wednesday nights, at Daytimers, or leave them on the

counter by the mail slots, just outside the office and Josie will pick them up the next time she is at the church.

Thank you, Josie, for all you do to make our community strong.



Nancy Roper



Marnie does Gilbert and Sullivan

Our own Marnie Bradshaw has been participating for many years in Gilbert and Sullivan productions. This year she was in both *Trial by Jury* and *HMS Pinafore* for seven performances in January and February.

St. Anne's Music and Drama Society has been perform-

ing Gilbert and Sullivan operettas yearly since 1964 and Marnie has participated in them for many years. Several Humber Valley people were lucky enough to see these great plays performed in historic St. Anne's Hall on Gladstone Avenue.

Marnie is fourth from left in the photo above.

Susanne Hynes

Auld Lang Syne Celebration

On Sunday, Jan 11, Humber Valley United Church hosted an Auld Lang Syne Celebration. Andrew and the McCorquodale family (shown below) talked about "Identity as a Promise" during the 10:30 service. Immediately afterward, church members gathered in the Hearth room for Scottish treats and beverages — including Scotch whiskey!





Onsite in Guatemala, Joe Coneybeare (middle row left in a blue ball cap) and Rev. Mark Winger (centre back in a yellow hard hat).

Meeting Rev. Mark Winger in Guatemala

Joe Coneybeare is a member of the Valley Voices Choir. He has a beautiful voice and usually does a solo for us at the choir concert in the Spring.

Last December, Joe went to Guatemala with Habitat for Humanity for two weeks to build a small house for a family in a remote Mayan village. There were 10 people in the volunteer group, including Joe and his wife, Kathy. While they worked on the house, random conversations flowed among the volunteers ... and by mid-week, Joe discovered that one of the other volunteers, was Rev. Mark Winger, who was the lead minister at Humber Valley for more than a decade prior to Rev. Trevor Brisbin.

Memories from Mexico

Kate Brown also had some fun coincidences in January:

Kate has met several other ministers who are active on social media. They have chatted electronically, but have not met in person. When Kate and Kevin arrived in Mexico in January, Kevin went to arrange a taxi. While Kate waited, she looked at the lady beside her and recognized her from her Facebook page – it was Kate Bowler, a minister from Winnipeg who has made a real name for herself via pod-

casts, books and her scholarly work on “prosperity gospel”. They got to chat until Kevin got back.

During the vacation, Kate attended a musical performance that was lovely, but short. When the performers left, Kate sat down at the piano to play, and the other guests joined in, singing along and dancing. As they got to know one another, Kate discovered that one of the ladies was a Broadway performer from New York City who was currently performing in a major role in Chicago. They compared notes and the lady asked Kate what she had been doing recently. Kate mentioned the show that she directed for her friend, Cary Shields, a year ago. The lady got very excited: she got her start on Broadway performing in Rent when Cary was the lead. She and her Broadway friends hung out with Kate and Kevin several more times during the vacation.

Nancy Roper





Gary Ward

January 7, 1937 - February 4, 2026

Gary Ward, a long-time member of Humber Valley United Church, died on February 4, 2026.

John Gary Ward was born on January 7, 1937, at Toronto General Hospital and spent his life deeply rooted in the city he loved, particularly the Bloor West Village community. From a boyhood shaped by curiosity and independence to a life defined by quiet strength and generosity, Gary lived with integrity, humility, and unwavering devotion to family. Above all else, he was a true gentleman—kind, steady, and respectful in every way.

Gary began delivering newspapers and groceries at age 12, eventually joining the family business, Cecil Ward's Menswear. Taking over from his father in 1962, Gary worked in the store for an extraordinary 70 years, remaining active well into his late 80s.



Gary met Janet in 1958, and they were married on May 5, 1962. Together they raised three children, Karen, Doug, and Chris. Family meant everything to Gary, and he cherished time with his grandchildren Emma, Callum, and Ethan, daughter in law Diana, and son in law Andre.

James John (Jim) Rayner

September 8, 1942 - February 5, 2026



Jim Rayner, Joan Rayner's dear husband, died on February 5, 2026.

Jim was devoted to his wife, Joan, a loving father of Matthew (Kristen) and Susan (Richard). Adoring grandfather of Noah, Alex and Meaghan Rayner and Charlie and Molly Cosburn.

He started his teaching career with the Toronto Board of Education at Western Technical-Commercial School. He later transferred to Harbord Collegiate Institute where he became Head of the Modern and Classical Languages Department. In order to stay aware of what learning a new language meant to his students, he studied German and Italian and Mandarin; then Russian for two years at the University of Toronto, where he first met Joan.

Jim was also deeply involved in the life of All Saints' Kingsway Anglican Church, an avid gardener both at church and at home, a member of the Kingsway Islington Probus Club, and Mensa Canada. He tried to keep fit with routine visits to Memorial Health Club, jogging, and cycling. In retirement, he took up water colour painting which he found very satisfying and relaxing.

Dragomir (Dragan) Mrkovic
July 17, 1953 - December 4, 2025

We are sad to inform you that Dragan Mrkovic died on December 4, 2025.

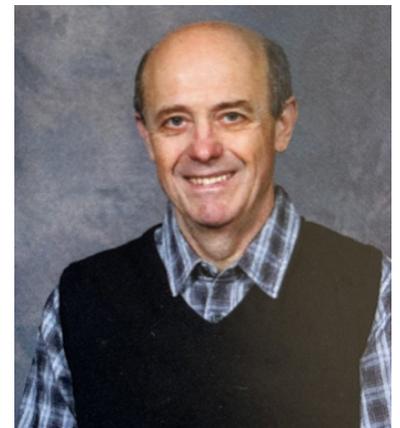
Dragomir Mrkovic was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia. He finished law school at Sarajevo University and worked for the Bosnian government for fifteen years. He spent three years in Sarajevo during the war before he came to Canada in the fall of 1994.

He spent most of his years of employment in Canada working for Islington United Church and Humber Valley United Church. Dragan had a kind word for everyone and could always be depended upon for any custodial work at Humber

Valley. Even though he retired from Humber Valley in April 2022, Dragan continued to fill in for us in the evenings and on weekends and when called upon because other staff weren't available.

Dragan loved watching basketball, tennis and Formula 1 car racing. He admired his niece, Andrea, and her children.

Our deepest sympathy to Dragan's brother, Zoran, and to their family and friends.



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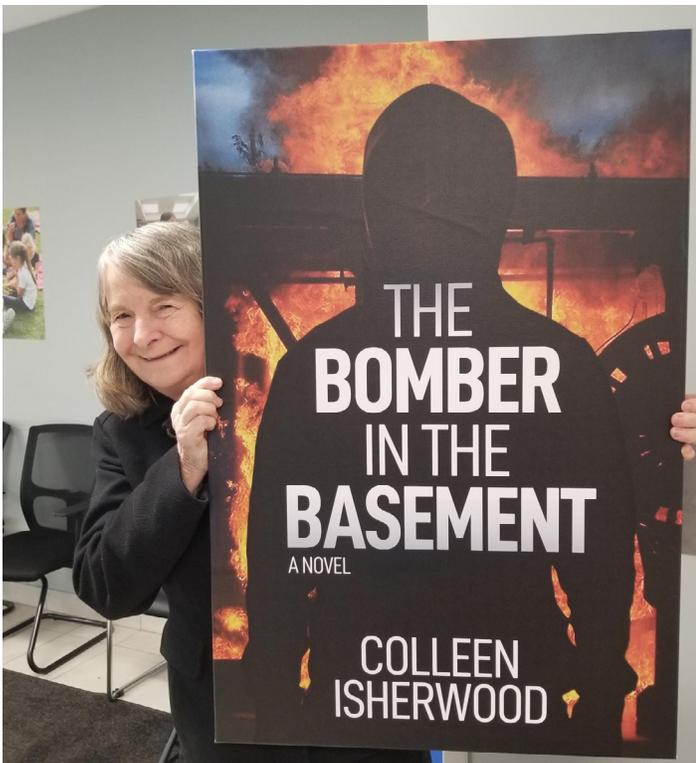
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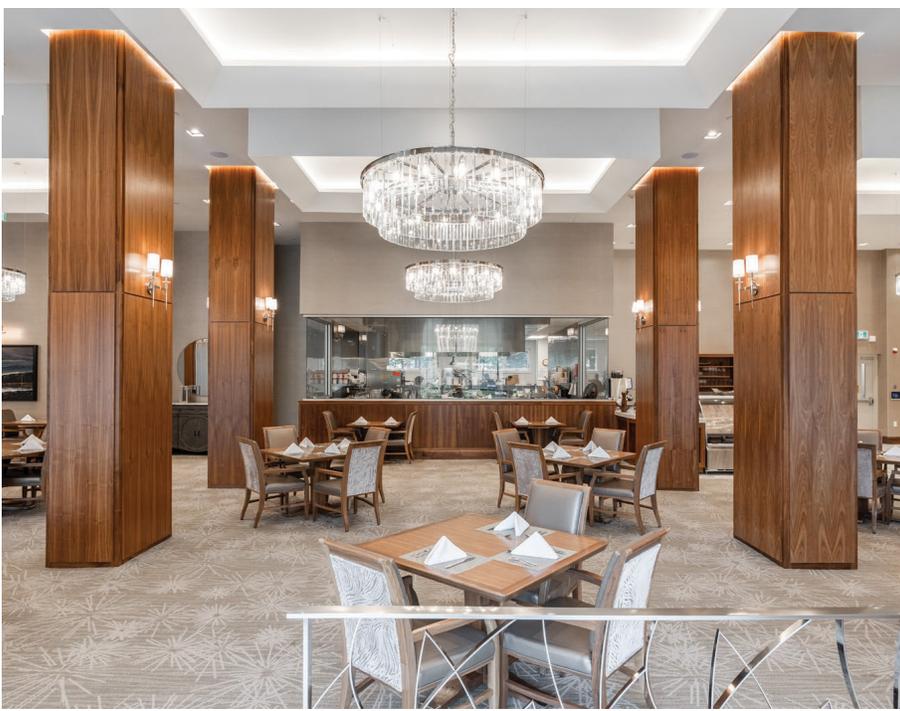


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SRES



Top Left: We had a celebration to honour our Supply Minister Rev. Ted Reeve for all his contributions to our church.

Top right: Nora Cutcliffe, Sharon Dowdall and Rev. Anne Hines on Rev. Anne's first day.

Bottom right: Pippa Van der Vliet and Deb Turnbull show off their Olympic Gear.

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