

# Connections

Justice \* Compassion \* Belonging



**JUNE 2026**  
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**Before Rev. Anne was ordained, she spent many years as a columnist for magazines such as Canadian Living and Chatelaine and also published five books. In honour of Pride month, we're sharing one of her articles that appeared in the Toronto Star.**

On a brilliant, balmy day one September, I married my ex-husband for the second time. This time was different from the first. Not because I'm older and wiser, though one of those is certainly true. Marrying Michael was different this time for one reason. I am now a United Church of Canada minister. I married him to another woman.

Many people find this odd. I have to admit, I used to be one of them. When Michael and Rena became engaged, they emailed from Paris asking if I would preside at their wedding. My first thought was, "Oh my gosh, of course!" But weeks later I called asking, "Are you sure? Won't people think it's weird?" Rena laughed. "In this family, there's no such thing as weird."

She's right. Portraits taken at Michael and Rena's wedding don't show your traditional family group. The bride is beautiful, of course. The groom is glowing. The bride's two teenage children are there. So are the bride's lesbian rabbi mother and her partner. And Michael and my two adult daughters, Becky, and our transgendered daughter, Jade, who transitioned from male to female. And me, the presiding Christian minister/groom's ex-wife. And my own spouse, Liz.

*Continued on next page*



*Humber Valley*  
UNITED CHURCH



# There's No One Way to Be a Family — *Justice, Belonging*

*Continued from page 1*

My image of a perfect family used to be more traditional; a married couple, son and daughter... who all stayed that way. Until, as a friend put it, my dream of a nuclear family melted down.

Even then, while I no longer had a traditional family, at least I knew the traditional way for ex-spouses to behave. We all experience disappointment, resentment and anger in life. The benefit of divorce was, now I had someone to blame it on.

There's a problem with this model of dealing with your ex-spouse of course. If you're going to spend the rest of your life being irritated and frustrated with each other, you may as well just stay married.

A therapist suggested, "You and Michael are going to be in relationship for the rest of your life. You can have a good relationship or a bad relationship."

I suddenly realized that how I relate to other people was entirely up to me. I could choose the traditional ex-wife role— stay angry with Michael for the rest of my life because things hadn't turned out as I'd planned. Or... I could not do that.

True, my life plan had been to get married and stay married forever. But my beauty plan had been to stay 28 forever. Sometimes we're forced to rethink. I decided to look for a new way of being family.

"Isn't it weird," was the question I was asked when, in the years after, Michael and I committed to sitting beside

each other at school events, co-hosted birthday parties and finally even turned to each other for help and advice. It was asked when, as a family, we banded together to support our daughter through her transition.

I've come to believe that the real difference between a traditional and modern family is this:

Modern family includes at least one gay, one trans-person, if you can manage it (trans is the new gay), one interreligious/racial marriage, unmarried parents of one or more children from different relationships, and at least one divorced couple with/without new partners.

Traditional family includes exactly the same mix. We just weren't allowed to talk about it.

A few nights before his wedding, Becky, Jade and I took Michael out for a Mexican dinner. We talked about our family, how it just seems to work for us and how, yes, others find it odd. It brought to mind a quote by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. "This is my way. What is your way? The way does not exist." Likely, Nietzsche's family dinner table included a few interesting relatives too.

Rena and Nietzsche are right. "The way" of being family doesn't exist. "Weird" is useful to describe the smell of the yogurt at the back of the fridge. But it should never be used to limit who we love.

So, on that glorious September day, I joyously married my ex-husband to his new wife and one happy family celebrated together. And there's nothing more traditional than that.

*Rev. Anne Hines*

**UCW Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 16th at 6pm in the Hearth Room, along with an opportunity to eat pizza and get some books for summer reading from Sarah, owner of A Novel Spot.**



**Seeking Your Stories!**

Editor Colleen Isherwood would love to hear from you. Contact her at 416-844-1519 or [colleen.isherwood26@gmail.com](mailto:colleen.isherwood26@gmail.com).



By the time you read this a new year in the church will be about to begin. Our leadership positions run from July 1 to June 30. Our AGM was held on June 7th. The Annual Report presented a summary of our activities in 2025 and our financial picture for that fiscal year. So much was accomplished with the help of so many and it is hoped that the congregation has been well served. We honoured in

the Annual Report a number of leaving Board members who have served us with their energy enthusiasm and hard work as volunteers during their terms. We are much appreciative of their contributions and service. At the Annual Meeting we added some new Board members who will invigorate the Board and add new and different perspectives to our decision-making.

Thank you to all who attended the AGM and participated in our exercise to collect perspectives on our go forward priorities.

Attendees were asked to rank the following matters to help establish priorities going forward. Anyone who did not get a chance to participate in this exercise is welcome to send their ranking of these items to myself, Sharon Dowdall, or Rev. Anne Hines or drop them by the office at their convenience.

The items to rank were as follows:

1. Sermons that make you think
2. Variety of music, worship arts and styles
3. Supporting social justice in and beyond the walls
4. Alternative church service for people who do not regularly attend, e.g. pet blessing
5. Maintaining and improving church facilities
6. Enhanced involvement with other churches
7. Your thoughts re another priority not listed

In addition I would like everyone's views on the following three questions.

1. Which priorities best reflect God's call to our congregation at this time?
2. Where should we focus our volunteer energy and financial resources?
3. What ministries are most important for the next generation?

These questions and your answers and the direction they steer us will be relevant for our 75th Anniversary Year Capital Campaign coming in 2027.

Please return your thoughts on these questions to Sharon Dowdall at [dowdall.sharon@gmail.com](mailto:dowdall.sharon@gmail.com) and to Rev. Anne Hines at [annemhines@gmail.com](mailto:annemhines@gmail.com) by June 30, 2026.

Thanks for your participation and looking forward to your contributions.

*Chair of the Board  
Sharon Dowdall*

## A/C Project Now Completed

Some good news as the weather gets warmer!

The Air Conditioning Project has been completed. This includes A/C in the administration office, the Minister's office and the Hearth room.

After seeing the results, please let me know if you have any observations and/or questions.

Now on to the elevator project. We will keep you posted.

*Allan Orr*





# Doors Open Attracts Almost 300 Visitors! — *Belonging*



Drum Fit classes. Some came for our music concerts (Sing-a-long with Elderberry Jamboree on Saturday and organ recital on Sunday). Many relaxed in our Hearth Room 'cafe' over juice or tea and a goodie. We hope they might return to visit us again. All in all a roaring success.



Special thanks to Nancy Roper who spearheaded the idea, to Deb Turnbull and Anne Hines, who co-lead the event with me, and to the volunteers who helped in all aspects of the event.



If you missed this opportunity, the Scavenger Hunt list is on page 5. Bring it with you the next time you come to church and spend some time looking for them! You'll experience this incredible explosion of colour, shape and form that we are blessed to have. A unique Etobicoke treasure.

*Carolyn Whiteside*

Humber Valley United opened its doors to the Toronto public on the weekend of May 23-24. We hoped people would come to enjoy our wonderful, unique set of contemporary coloured glass windows.

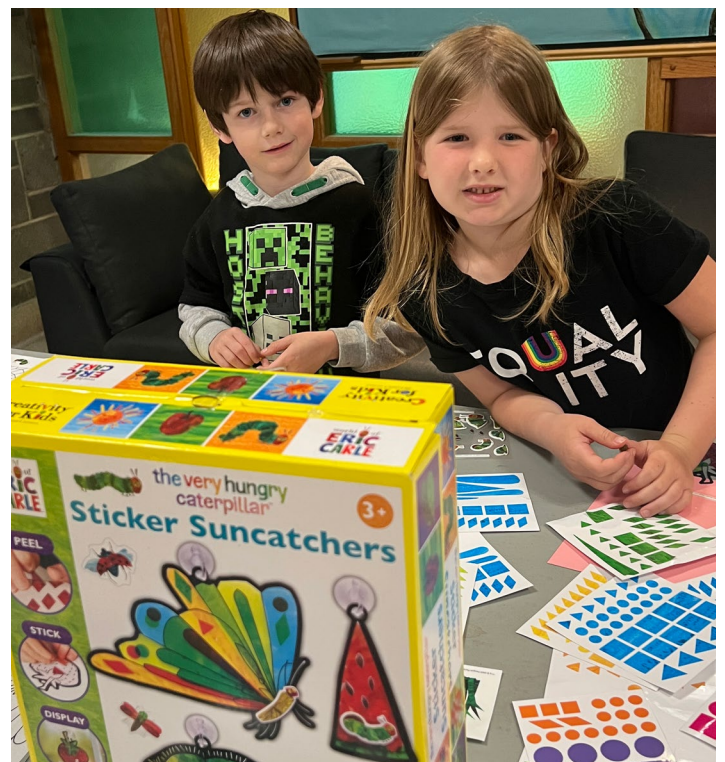
And come they did! The final tally seems to be just shy of 300 guests who viewed the windows, and learned about the artist Eric Wesselow's unique project that he called 'A Glance into the Heavens'. Some checked out our 55+ Zumba and





# Doors Open Windows Scavenger Hunt — *Belonging*

As part of the Doors Open event, Rev Anne provided activities for the children who visited: a suncatcher craft, colouring sheets of stained glass windows, and a scavenger hunt that took them through the sanctuary to see if they could identify objects embedded in the swirls of glass. Guess what? All the adults wanted to participate too! *If you'd like to try the quiz yourself, see the Scavenger Hunt questions below.*



**"A Glance Into The Heavens"**  
See how many shapes you can find!  
Write the window # beside the picture and win a prize.

1. Man and woman facing each other
2. Angel in a brown gown
3. An orange arrow
4. Pink wineglass
5. Bird flying in front of the sun
6. A pink sun
7. A brown church
8. Bright, 10 point star on night background

For those who really like a challenge!  
How many raised circles can you find? (Total number. You don't need to record the window #)



*To Kevin, Kate and Others:*

*That concert yesterday was JOYOUS for everyone involved, once again. Thank you SO MUCH for all your hard work to pull it off after such a hard, hard year.*

*I roved the reception room chatting with everyone I DIDN'T know to thank them for coming to our concert and ask them how they had enjoyed it. The response was UNANIMOUS ... THEY LOVED it!! Many of them want to join Valley Voices next year. A few said they were concerned that some members from their own churches might switch to Humber Valley after seeing our wonderful choir.*

*The mom of a new choir member said how glad she was that her daughter was out doing something fun for herself as a change from her job/family responsibilities.*

*So thank you, thank you for giving us yet another amazing concert and great memories. We can't wait to see what comes next.*

*Nancy Roper*

If you were looking for a variety of musical styles, the place to be was at Valley Voices' BELONG: A Sing-A-Long, held on May 3 in the Sanctuary.

Our amazing leader, Kate Brown, led the choir in singing songs of Peace, Prayer and Protest. Choir members danced in to Blues Brothers music, and soon the mood turned to reggae as Penny Skolski led the choir singing *One Love*, by Bob Marley, and *Know That I Am*, a song Penny wrote.

Then choir member Bruce Turner crooned *Moon River*, first sung by Audrey Hepburn in the early '60s. Other retro tunes included *Danny's Song*, *Both Sides Now*, and more.

We had a little bit of opera, as our choir's French opera singer, Amélie Halary, sang *La Vie en Rose*, and joined professional actor, playwright and singer Cary Shields, in *Con Te Partiro*.

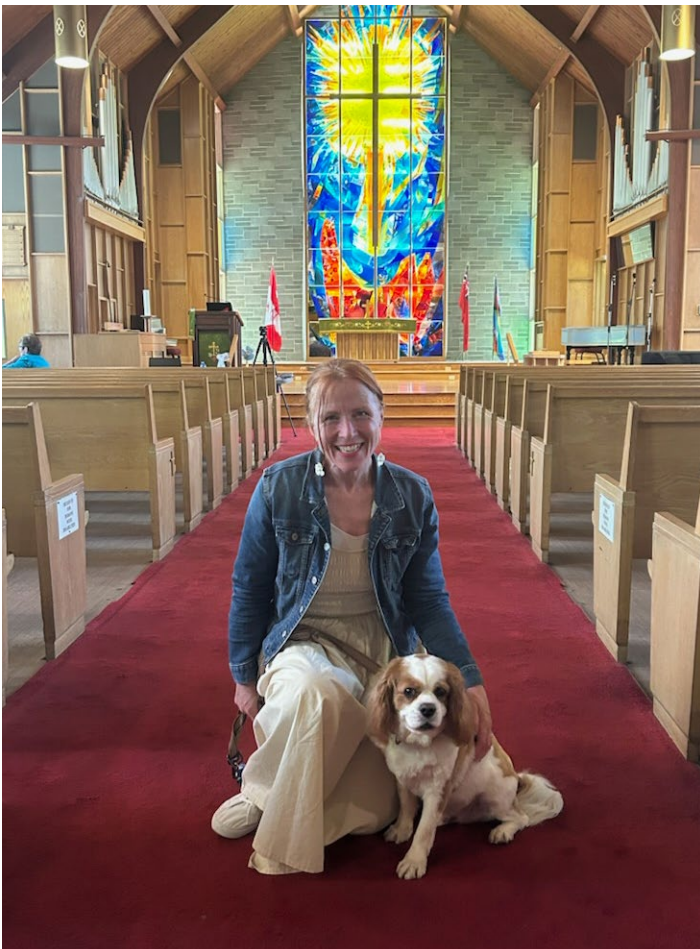
During the Prayer part of the concert, choir members donned choir gowns, and sang two rollicking numbers from *Sister Act*. A group of kids sang and danced to *Fight Song*. And in addition to Cary on guitar, we had musicians Colin Hassell on drums, Jonah Schwartz on keys, and Liane Seckington on flute.

The Concert made more than \$3,000.

*Colleen Isherwood*



# Special Sunday... Blessing of the Pets — *Belonging*



## PET BLESSING SERVICE

With special guest, juno nominated jazz pianist, Anthony D'Alessandro

**Sunday, May 3**  
**10:30am**

**All pets welcome!**  
(suitably leashed or caged please)  
If you have a shy pet, bring a photograph instead.




### Doggie Visitors Prefer Humber Valley

Top left: Pippa Van der Vliet and April Grieco with pooches Dante and Susie.

Top right: Michael Orr and Andrea Ostvik-Van der Vliet with Michael's dog, Woody.

Bottom: Kate Brown's friend Janine lives in downtown Toronto. She was doggie-sitting that week. She wanted to attend a church service, so she thought, "I can go to Kate's church... it's dog-friendly!" Remy, her brother's pooch, was very well-behaved and both enjoyed the service and the beautiful music.



## Kate ends HVUC employment but plans to stay as Valley Voices Leader

At the HVUC Annual General Meeting, Chair Sharon Dowdall announced that Kate Brown will be ending her employment with HVUC, but staying on as Music Director for Valley Voices. The choir will start up again on Sept. 16.

"I am thrilled that Kate plans to stay on as our leader, as she is the heart and soul of Valley Voices," said Colleen Isherwood, Stage Manager for the choir.

"Our church was so blessed when Kate Brown joined our church family," said Nancy Roper.

"She has made our lives FUN. She has a magical personality that makes every room better when she steps in. She is a strong ally to the LGBTQ community, and an advocate for marginalized groups. She is a strong supporter of the elderly and disabled. She understands poverty and mental health challenges. She has a huge network of friends that cover every demographic. And she is deeply religious.

"Kate shared those talents with our congregation via the choir, during services, at funerals, at Daytimers and at our choir concert each spring," Nancy added.

"She built a fantastic Valley Voices Choir that lets EVERYONE share in the joy of music, not just the folks who are



natural musicians. The choir is a joyous community where everyone is kind and supportive.

"Better still, Kate brought Kevin into our church community. Kevin not only engaged fully with our congregation, but he also became one of our most dedicated volunteers. He did AV for the church services and the choir; he spent hundreds of hours on Art Church and the Valley Voices Choir.

"We were blessed to have had Kate & Kevin and their family (Foster, Jayne and David) at our church for more than four years," said Nancy. "We are thankful that we will still see them weekly at Valley Voices. Thank you Kate and Kevin for making our lives joyous."

## Acknowledgement and Apology

**In case you missed the AGM on Sunday June 7, here are two items of other business which occurred: an Acknowledgement and Apology regarding Kate Brown as well as the Ranking of Priorities to inform future planning. Acknowledgement and Apology read by Board Chair, Sharon Dowdall, at HVUC AGM, June 7, 2026. Read the full text in the June 10th edition of Keeping In Touch.**

I stand here today as a representative of the Humber Valley United Church, as its current Chair of the Board.

During the period between early 2025 and the present, a number of events and actions involving Kate Brown occurred. I would like to acknowledge the following: In early 2025, Kate was on a medically approved leave of absence from her duties at Humber Valley United Church.

- A complaint was made by Kate.
- In the complex circumstances at the time, the policies and procedures of the United Church of Canada regarding complaints were not followed.
- The correct procedures were followed in late 2025 and

the investigation into that complaint, which is before the Office of Vocation of the National Office of the United Church of Canada, is currently ongoing.

- The training the Board of the church received in January of this year demonstrated how such complaints should be handled. Similar training has since been undertaken by the Committee Chairs, Elders, church leadership, ministry personnel and other leaders within Humber Valley United Church.
- Aspects of the complaint by Kate involved Kate being isolated and stopped from participating in things in which she wished to participate. These circumstances had a significant impact on Kate and her family, her husband Kevin and her dad Foster, and we apologize for the impact this had on her and her family.

A resolution with Kate has been reached. Humber Valley United Church and Kate have agreed to move forward in peace and grace. Kate will conclude her employment with Humber Valley United Church on June 30. Kate, you Kevin and Foster are welcome at Humber Valley. Kate is leaving her employment with the church with Love.

*Sharon Dowdall*



## Save The Dates

**Sunday, September 20:** Welcome Back Sunday with Blue Grass band, "The Barrel Boys."

**Saturday, October 3:** Shredding Day.

**Wednesday, October 21:** Ladies' Night Out, Fabulous Fall Fashion Show (UCW Fundraiser).

**November 13 or 14:** Trish and Paul Dance Party

**December 12:** Concert with Great Lakes Philharmonic

## August lay-led services: Your team, your theme

Your Worship & Music committee seeks love-filled, lay-led inspiration that will, God willing, sail us through August while Rev. Anne is off enjoying her holiday.

Here's how it works: Your HVUC team of volunteers choose a theme that will inform your selection of hymns and prayers, culminating in a Reflection that will flow through all of us like a summer breeze.

Here's why it works: Lay-led summer services in years past have showcased some remarkable (and often hidden) talents of our fellow HVUC congregants who found it a blessing to share worship in this way.

To find out more, talk to any W&M committee member: Colleen Isherwood, Deb Turnbull, Miyanda Kasapu, Gail Cook-Bennett, Bruce Boyd, or Brian Thomson.

UCW Unit 7 has volunteered to organize the service on Aug. 16 – but that still leaves four open Sundays, Aug. 2, 9, 23 and 30. We hope to hear from you!

*Brian Thomson,  
HVUC Worship & Music Committee*

## Shredding Day set for Oct. 3

Shredding Day will take place on October 3, 2026. With these first warm days of the year, we are all looking forward to a gloriously sunny summer. But there may still be the odd day when it rains, or the black flies chase you inside, or it is just too hot!

Why not use that bonus time to sort out those old papers and files, and get them ready for shredding? Getting rid of all that useless paper will not only help you declutter your home, it will be good for your soul. It is never too early to begin; October 3 will be here before you know it.

PS. Tell your friends and neighbours.

*Joan Belford*




## Origami Course on June 29

55+ IN CENTRAL ETOBICOKE is pleased to offer a special opportunity to learn ORIGAMI, the ancient art of paper folding which transforms a simple sheet of paper into a multi-sensory tool. Origami offers a wide range of psychological, educational and physical health rewards for people of all ages, especially older adults.

It reduces stress, improves focus, combats perfectionism, strengthens spatial reasoning, boosts problem solving skills and PROTECTS AGING MINDS! Great for fine motor skills and it's FUN!

Monday June 29 from 1pm to 3pm in the Hearth Room at Humber Valley United Church. There is a \$5 fee to cover materials.

**SPACE IS LIMITED, PLEASE REGISTER IN ADVANCE** by e-mailing Sharon Kawabata at [discoverourneighbourhood@gmail.com](mailto:discoverourneighbourhood@gmail.com) or Jenny Terwoord at [jenny@hvuc.ca](mailto:jenny@hvuc.ca).



**Liars At a Funeral**  
**Capitol Theatre, Port Hope**  
**Tuesday, June 23, 2pm**  
**Tickets: \$45, tax included**

Join friends from Humber Valley United Church!  
 Please order tickets from Lynn Manning:  
[lynnjmanning@gmail.com](mailto:lynnjmanning@gmail.com) or 416.233.8130 by June 11.



The Yvan Baker Community Recognition Awards honour individuals who have made a significant contribution of their time and talent to make a difference in the local Etobicoke community.

This year, the Humber Valley United Church recipients are Zoran and Dragomir (posthumously) Mrkovic, for their years of dedicated service to our church community, and Magnus Moffat-Johansson, for his dedicated service helping in our AV booth and at church events during his high school years. Congratulations to all three recipients!

These special awards were presented on Sunday, April 26 at Michael Power High School.

### Zoran and Dragan Mrkovic



Zoran Mrkovic and Dragomir (Dragan) Mrkovic are worthy recipients of the 2025 Community Recognition Awards in Category 4: Outstanding service by professional staff, employers or employees. Sadly, Dragan passed away while the nomination was being prepared. He was nominated, posthumously, along with his brother, Zoran.

Zoran and Dragan Mrkovic have worked, as employees, for Humber Valley United Church for a combined total of more than 45 years. They came to Canada as refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Both were sponsored by Islington United Church.

Zoran has been our Property Manager and Lead Custodian for more than 25 years and Dragan (Zoran’s older brother), our custodian for more than 20 years (Dragan also worked for many years as a part-time custodian at Islington United Church).

They have served Humber Valley United Church with

diligence, compassion, and professionalism every day of their time with us. They have provided support to hundreds of church and community events during this period in addition to the schools, camps, and other organizations that rent space in our church. They have kept the church clean and operating at full capacity, provided maintenance support, and have been the first ambassadors people meet welcoming them into the church. They always do kind things, like helping elderly and physically-challenged people to navigate the church and carrying supplies to and from peoples’ cars.

Zoran has played his drum in our church band over the years and been the lead sound and technical person in our Audio-Visual Booth since it was installed in 2009. During the flood in July 2013, Zoran and Dragan worked non-stop for 26 hours to minimize the damage to our church while congregants were busy bailing out their own homes. Both of them have always treated our church like it was their own home. Both men have been and Zoran continues to be critical to the effective and efficient operation of our church. Always with a smile and a laugh, they have been and Zoran will continue to be the heart of the church.

Humber Valley is blessed to have Zoran and was blessed to have Dragan on our staff. The church could not and cannot function without them.

### Magnus Moffat-Johansson



Magnus Moffat-Johansson received a 2025 Yvan Baker Award in the Youth Category.

Magnus has volunteered in the AV booth at Humber Valley United Church for the Sunday service every week throughout his time in high school – that translates to more than 200 hours of volunteer service over

four years. Magnus is 100% reliable and very capable in his work. He manages a 32-channel sound board, three cameras and three computers. We would not be able to live-stream our services without him. Meanwhile, he is gentle and calm and humble. We are so appreciative of all that he has done to keep our services running smoothly.

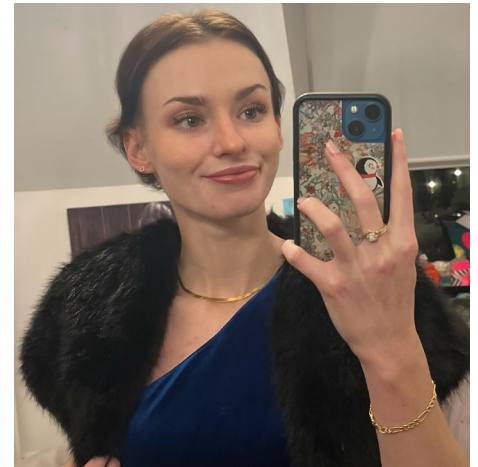


## Summer Students and Staff Changes — *Belonging*



### Ava Verner

My name is Ava Verner! I am a summer student working on the 55+ seniors program. I'm starting my second year at the University of Guelph in September, studying marketing. I work at a Dairy Queen when I'm not at the church, and I love to ski.



### Taylor Verner

My name is Taylor Verner, and I am in the final year of my undergraduate degree in Psychology, in the Research Specialist stream, at Wilfrid Laurier University. I am excited to be one of the summer students working at Humber Valley United Church this summer, and I look forward to meeting more of the members of the church community.

### Magnus Moffat-Johansson

Magnus is in Grade 12 and plans to go to college beginning in September. Magnus has worked for years in our AV booth on Sundays. He is helping with building and landscaping activities this summer.

Magnus is also a winner of the Yvan Baker Community Service Awards. See story on page 9.



## Farewell Claire, Madi and Michelle and Welcome Vivia!



Sunday, April 26 was the last Sunday that Claire Hatje worked at Humber Valley before she started a new position at St. Stephen's-on-the-Hill, and there was a reception in honour of her, Michelle Madill and Claire's daughter Madi.



Vivia Kay Kieswetter (left) has been hired as the new children's leader. Summer student Ava Verner will assist her. Claire has left a substantial legacy of crafts and materials and lesson plans to help with the transition.

We are grateful to Claire and Michelle for their wonderful contributions to our youth programs over many years and wish them well in their next placement.

*Sharon Dowdall*



## Constance Crosby Wins Gold

Friends in Faith member Constance Crosby won gold at the world powerlifting bench press championship held in Warsaw, Poland in late May. Here is what she had to say.

"My coach always said I could get to the world Powerlifting championships but I really didn't believe her. Powerlifting, like many sports, is divided by age and weight classes. So clearly young people can lift a lot more than older people," said Constance. "I am in Masters 4, which is 70 years and above. The competition in that class is a lot less than in Open, which is everyone up to 40.

"I started weightlifting a little less than two years ago as I was trying to heal a frozen shoulder and get my mobility and strength back. I ended up at a gym in North York with a really powerful coach who kept telling me I was strong, and that I should compete. When I eventually listened to her, I went through the process of competing in a local competition, then Provincial, then central Region, then Nationals. I won all of them and after nationals, I was invited to join the Canadian Powerlifting team.

"The first event was held in Warsaw, and it was limited to bench press only. That was held at the end of May and it

was quite interesting to meet people from all around the world.

"Then there are two big events coming up, which will be larger. The biggest will be in Reno, Nevada, which is the three-lift event meaning squats, bench press, and dead lift. That will be held in October. There is also the Commonwealth Powerlifting championship which this year is held in Winnipeg, which is quite convenient, and I will be going to that as well.

"So wish me luck on these next two! I am working hard."

*Constance Crosby*



## Unit 6's Meaningful and Joyful Mother's Day Project for Ernestine's



Carole Clarke and Diane Porter, longtime Unit 6 members.

Congratulations and thank you so much to Carole Clake and Diane Porter for organizing such a meaningful and joyful Mother's Day project for Ernestine's Women's Shelter.

How wonderful to have 20 members on hand with additional donations from those who couldn't attend! Thank you for making the delivery of 20 Wellness Bags. I was happy to hear that you were able to have a tour of the facility... such an amazing place.

The bags were beautiful and full of things that will bring comfort and pleasure to the recipients. We hope our personal hand written cards will supply some inspiration and assurance that they are not alone.

I know our whole group got great satisfaction from reaching out and having some fun at the same time!

*Wendy Oliver*

P.S. The snacks were great!!



## Unit 6 June lunch well attended

Twenty-seven members attended our Luncheon on June 3... one of our largest turnouts! Yorkshire Pudding provided the delicious food and the room was decorated with geraniums... a throwback to our "Geraniumania" days! As always, we enjoyed the fellowship and friendship that we have shared over the years.

"Thank you for organizing our luncheon yesterday," Diane Locke wrote to Wendy Oliver. "I particularly liked the beautiful pink theme. Plus thank you for all the planning you do for our monthly meetings. You are a busy gal!"

The program for 2026-2027 was finalized and we continued with our commitment to support women in our community by planning small charitable events for our monthly meetings. Once again we will be supporting Out of the Cold by providing "Baskets of Blessings", We will also have a Christmas Outreach project for the Food Bank, and "Wellness Bags" for Ernestine's. One of the new programs will involve examining a social justice issue and letter writing to encourage action from those in power.

We continue to put our faith at the forefront of our activities, support each other in good times and challenging times and have fun doing it!

*Wendy Oliver*

## Fun and Games at Crieff Hills

Unit 7 ladies have a decades-long tradition of spending time together on two- or three-day retreats. Being together to sing, talk, eat, swim, plan, play, and sleep has deepened our friendships so beautifully.

There was no swimming at this year's May 12 to 13 retreat at Crieff Hills, 68 kilometers west of Toronto. It was cool and rainy and the leaves were just starting to bud out. There were walks around Lake Puddle, Little Lake Puddle and all the puddlets that grew on the road. We couldn't play bocce because the grass wasn't cut and it was so wet. So we just had to enjoy ourselves indoors. And we did.

Carolyn made us do a women's rights questionnaire. At first we groaned: "Oh no! Not work!" But trying to answer those questions inspired some great discussions as we shared our experiences achieving equal rights in Canadian society. Since we couldn't play outside, we had a very competitive game of indoor mini-putt in the kitchen.

Susanne did a little presentation about old Ontario barns. The barn in use at Crieff Hills was built in the 1840s. Only bits of the stone foundations of another barn close to Dove House remain. It was home to a herd of pure-bred dairy cattle. Nearby the creamery building still exists. Lots of us had barn stories to add.

There were great walks to the School House for delicious meals. We learned (really learned) that the forecast isn't to be trusted: it said rain starting around 8. So we headed out with no rain gear, had a lovely meal, and stepped into a good downpour for the 15-minute walk back to Dove House.

Ten of us arrived in the afternoon of May 12 and spent the



**Above left: The overnight ladies in the School House for dinner.**

**Above right: It was dandelion season and those puzzles were impossible.**

**Right: Joan won the Mini-Putt that Kathy organized.**



night together. We sat around the table singing, colouring, puzzling, talking and munching. We all had comfortable beds in beautiful rooms and could open the windows for fresh air. The rest of the gang showed up before 11 the next morning. After our business meeting where we planned all of next year's programming, we had lunch together. We were thrilled that the same group of Fabric Artists we met last year were there again.

Crieff Hills is owned and operated by the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Many people stay in their various buildings for group meetings and personal retreats. Unit 7 has made a donation in gratitude for the lovely time we spent at Crieff Hills. Faith, friends, and laughter.

*Susanne Hynes*



Collage showing Sally Jo Martin's trip to The Philippines to distribute bedkits for Sleeping Children Around the World (SCAW).

### Fulfilling Murray Dryden's Dream

Six thousand children in the Philippines now have bedkit items to ensure "the comfort of a good night's sleep," which was Murray Dryden's hope for all children when he and his wife Margaret founded Sleeping Children Around the World in 1970. In the years following, the number of children helped reached one million in 2010 and now is approaching two million.

We expect a celebration of that milestone in 2027.

For three weeks in May I travelled with six other Canadian volunteers to work with Kiwanis Clubs in the Luzon province of the northern part of the Philippines. It was my third time there but the first for all the others. We interacted with the assembled children, took photos for the donors and handed over a bundle that included clothing, bedding and school supplies.

The photo shown above is a collage which shows me giving

a bundle to a child with a Kiwanis volunteer looking on. You can't see her expression but my broad smile tells how much this meant to me. Another photo has me doing a clapping rhythm to engage the children as they waited and demonstrating the cozy fleece blanket that was part of the kit.

It is impossible to convey the joy I experienced, but you can be sure that the happy faces of 6,000 children and their grateful parents will remain in my memories forever.

*Sally Jo Martin*





## Our Urban Garden — A Simple, Social, Delicious Adventure

It is the season of growing and we are off to a fabulous start! We got our hands dirty as we cleaned up, topped up, and filled up the HVUC urban community edible garden. It was glorious day and we are thrilled to be back together as a group.

Join us anytime you feel like gardening or wander over and grab some herbs, edible flowers, and/or veggies to enjoy when they are ready. There are no rules to this garden. It is a simple social delicious adventure.

Once a month we will head indoors to chop, sip, cook, and savour. From tea workshops and soup creations to sauces and desserts, Valerie Wood will lead the indoor and outdoor workshops.

Reach out anytime for more information or just show up. We would love to have you!

*Valerie Wood*  
[valerie@ert-cpr.com](mailto:valerie@ert-cpr.com)



Top right: HVUC urban community gardeners Wayne and Brian!

Bottom Left: Woodgreen Active Senior's Centre urban community garden members during one of our workshops.

Bottom Right: Community Centre 55 urban community garden members planting away. The CC55 250 crate edible garden is located along the community centre wall near Main Street and Kingston Road.





## See you in September!

In some ways, June feels like the end of the year. Even though it's Spring and everything is new, 55+ In Central Etobicoke winds down for a while. Daytimers luncheons go on hiatus for the summer. Fitness classes take a break, too. The summer months mean travel and hot days for a lot of people, so it's a good time to take a break. There will still be great programs on offer, but it feels different for a few months.

Just like at the end of the year, it's a time for reflection. We look at which programs worked well, which speakers were enjoyed the most and what we can look forward to in Fall. We ask for feedback and ideas from our community. The important work of applications for funding goes to the top of the To Do list, getting ready for the next phase.

This year, to end another season of 55+ In Central Etobicoke, we held a Volunteer Appreciation Event on May 28th. It was a time of celebrating all the dedicated people who make this program a success. We played games, laughed and enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship and pride in all we accomplished since last Fall. I hope to make it a tradition – a way of saying THANK YOU and see you in September.

*Jenny Terwoord*



## Weed Whackers Wanted!

Carolyn Whiteside has been working for the past couple of summers to attempt to turn the front lawn circular flower bed from one needing new annual plants each year into a perennial bed of yellow blossoms that will grow back every year and be a cheery spot between the two ornamental weeping beech trees.

It does need constant attention to keep the weeds at bay. Would you be able and willing to be part of a team of "Weed Whackers" to help taking turns at weeding out the non-desirables?

Contact Carolyn at [cwhiteside35@rogers.com](mailto:cwhiteside35@rogers.com) or 416-231-1771.

*Carolyn Whiteside*

## Hike for Hospice raises \$3,900

The Dorothy Ley Hospice is our local Etobicoke hospice, located across the street from Sherway Gardens since 2009. Over the years, many members of our congregation have received compassionate, supportive end-of-life care from the Dorothy Ley medical team and staff. Families are also emotionally supported with care and communication, continuing well beyond a loved one's passing.

Our government provides some of the annual funding that keeps the hospice open, yet they rely heavily on the ongoing financial support from the community and volunteers to continue offering their services year after year.

To this end, 2026 is the 11th year that Humber Valley United Church has been a major contributor to their annual fund-raising effort that happened in May and culminated in the Hike for Hospice on May 24. As of June 1, the amount raised for Hike for Hospice is \$3,900.

If you would like to donate, please see our [HVUC team page](#). Donate online direct to Dorothy Ley. Donations will receive immediate tax receipts. This is the easiest and quickest way to donate. You can also send an e-transfer to [finance@hvuc.ca](mailto:finance@hvuc.ca) or write a cheque to HVUC. Be sure to indicate the donation is for Dorothy Ley Hospice. Thank you again Humber Valley!

## Help Send a Child to Camp

The United Church owns a number of camp properties in Ontario. Humber Valley has strong connections to both Sparrow Lake Camp and Camp Scugog. Family members have attended as campers as well as counsellors for many years. Just ask the Kitchen, Messer and Martin families about their experiences! Both camps rely on fundraising to assist those who cannot pay the full fees. Check out the websites of these camps for more information: Sparrow Lake Camp at [sparrowlakecamp.com](http://sparrowlakecamp.com) and Camp Scugog at [campscugog.org](http://campscugog.org).



# Bids 'N Bites 2026: More Than Just Bridge — *Belonging*

April 22nd saw the church filled with the buzz and camaraderie of the UCW's annual Spring fundraiser. Tables of foursomes filled Steed Hall with bridge players, euchre players, Ma Jong players and even Scrabble players, enjoying delicious fancy sandwiches, sweets and coffee/tea.

A great Silent Auction provided distraction when players were 'Dummies'. Guests followed the message to 'Bid Often and Bid Big!' to help us realize a profit of approximately \$8,000. That's wonderful news for the charitable projects the UCW supports. It takes a big team to do this and thanks are due to the army of volunteers who sold tickets, made fancy sandwiches, baked sweets, managed the silent auction, solicited and donated prizes to that auction, wrapped them all in pink tissue, did set up and cleaned up at the end,...and more. Thanks also to the 'Men-in-Suits' who do a classic serving job!

Very special recognition goes to our Signature Sponsor, Venvi Kingsway Retirement Living, 4251 Dundas St. West. Their support is immensely appreciated.

*Carolyn Whiteside*





# Why I Love Humber Valley United Church — *Belonging*



Rev. Anne Hines with Clerk of Session Brian Thomson at the Covenanting Service on April 26, 2026..

## Covenanting Service for Rev. Anne

At Reverend Anne Hines' Covenanting Service on April 26, members of our church family were asked to share their thoughts on "Why I Love Humber Valley Church." Here is what they said.

- When I get into the car, the GPS comes up and advises that it is four minutes to Humber Valley Church—even if that's not where I'm headed that day!
- Most of our close friends are from the church.
- When we create our family Christmas letter, we recall the year based on the church events
- As my Dad got older and became house-bound, his highlight of the week was coffee time after church. Kind people included him in their conversations, even when his mind wasn't working too well.
- In 2017, I broke my shoulder when I was in the city alone. As I tried to figure out how I was going to get to the hospital with neither hand available to me, I realized that if I could just find the church directory, I would have a helper on my doorstep as soon as I caught someone by phone.
- In 2024, Kate and Kevin blessed us with Marley. Sadly, she was viciously attacked by another dog 20 days after we got her. She needed eye medication, but was fighting ferociously against it. Kate and Kevin played the role of my family, and invited me to stay over at their place. With THREE adults on ONE 4-pound puppy, we managed to administer the meds. Talk about FANTASTIC humans that we are so blessed to know via Humber Valley.

I'm so proud of our congregation, particularly our seniors, who chose to work to transform our church so it would still be here in the decades to come.



### Nancy Roper

Our family has a long history with the church. Mom and Dad joined Humber Valley when they were married in 1958. I was born 10 years after the church opened, so Humber Valley has always been my church.

I remember the early days when the sidewalks were

packed on Sunday mornings as families walked to church, with the little boys in suits with bow ties and the little girls in pretty dresses with frilly socks and patent leather shoes. All the girls and ladies wore hats. The Sunday school was booming with one class per grade and 20 or 30 children in each class.

The church is so important to our lives. Here is how I know:

### David Lang



Unlike many of you today, I'm still something of the new kid on the block—I've been a member of this church for about four years. But in that short time, I've come to love many things about our wonderful church.

It's hard to capture everything I love about Humber Valley United Church in three minutes, but it really comes down to two things: our passion and our compassion.

We're a passionate bunch—we laugh, we sing, we pray, and sometimes we disagree—strenuously. But we all agree

*Continued on next page*



# Why I Love Humber Valley United Church — *Belonging*

*Continued from previous page*

that we love our church, and we want it to be open to everyone—no matter who you are, what you’ve done or left undone, who you love, or even what you believe. To me, that reflects Christ’s message of love, tolerance, and inclusion.

And just as importantly, we are compassionate. We care for one another within our church, in our local community, and around the world. We live Christ’s mission to share and to care wherever there is need—and that’s why Humber Valley makes such a difference.

And now, with Reverend Anne agreeing to lead our church, I have another reason to love Humber Valley United. Reverend Anne, thank you for agreeing to be our minister. I look forward to working with you—and to getting to know you better—in the years to come.



## Marji Horner

I've been asked to speak about what I think of Humber Valley Church, and I don't know how I can end it because it's been wonderful for me. I've been here for 64 years, so David, hang in, okay?

I was married in Quebec and my husband brought me here to Humber Valley, and we sat over on the left

hand side by the windows and in the middle of the row ahead of us was a tall, good-looking man called George Turnbull, Deb's father. And Deb said he had curly hair, but he was always well dressed and his hair was well cut and he looked tidy, so I never got to see his curly hair, Deb.

My daughter was christened at the church. At that time, there was a teenage group that met periodically at the church, and she married one of them. So besides the teenage groups, there were also Ladies' Unit Groups. And Murray, I'm glad to hear about the men's having groups now, and thank you for inviting the women occasionally.

I'd like to thank Deb, and all the people who behind the scenes are also looking after our church. And the music.

Thank you for picking out the pieces today. We're always glad to see you back.

And Reverend Anne, thank you for being here and for bringing lots of people into the church. It's just lovely to see you all here today. We are a group of caring, loving members. I think one of the things I appreciate about our church is that people say "Good Morning" even if they don't know who you are. So thank you and I hope that we always are going to be a group of kind, caring people, and that we'll always be worthy of God's help.

Thank you for listening.



## Sandra Lawrason

*Sandra Lawrason spoke about her own thoughts on Humber Valley, and those of her friends, Briar Boake and Heather Harper.*

**Sandra:** Humber Valley United Church was a true sanctuary for me growing up—a safe haven for personal growth and life

lessons. Beyond the spiritual guidance, the community here fostered invaluable friendships that I still cherish today. When I returned after 40 years in 2014, I was moved to find that same sense of support and safety still present, rekindling so many happy memories.

IN the late '60s and early '70s I was a member of both the Junior Choir and Chapel Tone Choir. We rehearsed weekly and sang often in church services. I developed a deep appreciation for the music from Voices United and I especially enjoyed the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' which we sang every Christmas.

And there was also the annual Festival of Song in Steed Hall, where I discovered a love for performing and one time I was happy to try some choreography for the show which gave me the confidence to continue exploring my interest in the performing arts.

But beyond everything else, I learned the deep significance of generosity and the impact of volunteering time for the less fortunate. The church grounded me in the essential

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# Why I Love Humber Valley United Church — *Belonging*

*Continued from previous page*

teachings of Jesus, centering my life around compassion, forgiveness, faith, and the practice of unconditional love. I am deeply grateful to Humber Valley United Church; it was the foundation that allowed me to grow and the community that taught me so much.

## Heather Harper

My friend, Heather Harper, also shared her reflections on growing up at Humber Valley. She expressed deep gratitude for the church's commitment to the community, noting how much it taught us to believe in ourselves and others. She especially valued the wide range of programs the church supports—from Boy Scouts and Girl Guides to senior initiatives, exercise classes, and discussion groups.



## Briar Boake

Most of you know Briar Boake whom I actually met here in the church back in 1960s. Briar could not be here today but asked me to read her reflection on what Humber Valley meant to her.

**She said:** "This church played a big part in shaping my life.

Our family, two younger sisters and I along with Mom and Dad, joined the church right after we moved into the area in 1966. It was a time of many young families forming a foundation and hub here and I met many lifelong friends.

Thanks to Raymond and Marion Gould, we had a church full of music... four different choirs to add to various Sunday morning services and the opportunity to sing and play in The Festival of Song every November. We got dressed up in costumes, applied stage makeup and put on a show for three nights to a hall packed with friends, family and neighbours who would return year after year to be delighted and entertained.

In the teen choir, the Chapel Tones, Mr. Gould let us pick the music we wanted to perform and we added choreography and lighting and he hired a cute drummer, Danny Bodanis, to accompany us on those nights. (In a 40-voice choir with only three boys, having the extra male to swoon

over was something to make your heart flutter!)

Mr. and Mrs. Gould, choir with my two sisters, the Festival of Song, a chance to go on a bus trip to Montreal for a weekend and to sing the music from Godspell at downtown church. It was through these shared adventures that I formed friendships that have lasted a lifetime.

The weekends before the Festival, I used to sit in what is now Steed Hall and listen to everyone rehearsing their numbers on stage so that I soaked up all the songs. Little did I know that 50 years later, I would make my living singing many of those same songs!

Music is still making Humber Valley Church a special place to be with Anne Hines, our singing minister, Kate and the Valley Voices, Anton and Robert adding their gifts, a congregation that loves to sing along and a dedicated team of members supporting music and art as an expression of the divine in all of us.

## The Last Word: Gail Cook-Bennett (Read by Andrea Ostvik-Van der Vliet)



As we end our service, we will sing the hymn "In the Bulb There Is A Flower," the bulb and then the flower being a powerful metaphor for the potential of the spiritually nourished life and the resulting possibility of personal transformation.

Many of us are attracted to Humber Valley United Church by its community of people, and in particular, the depth of the supportive relationships forged by working together to help others.

The beliefs of members of this community vary but each person attending services reflects his or her interest in learning and engaging. Reverend Anne Hines is creating a broader tent through her reflections and cementing her relationship with us through her participation in the many activities of the church. Her leadership is a blessing.



## Getting to Know Andrea Nadeau — *Belonging*



Andrea attended elementary and high school in Goderich. She loved sports and played baseball, basketball and badminton on the town teams. She also did figure skating and was invited to move to Toronto to do pair skating but opted to stay home with her family. After high school, she moved to Toronto to attend what is now Toronto Metropolitan University, where she earned her Human Resources certificate.

Andrea worked in the provincial government as a Human Resources Advisor for 33 years. She volunteered to lead various charitable events such as the United Way Walk-athon and Federated Health.

After Andrea retired, she took on some fun part-time jobs at various retailers, including People’s Jewellers. You can currently find her working one or two days a week at Northern Reflections in Cloverdale Mall.

Andrea’s husband, Ron, has had a 31-year career as a Mapping Technician, working for the Provincial Government initially. He currently works for Teranet.

In 2023, Andrea Ostvik-Van der Vliet was walking her dog in West Deane Park. She met a young man named Brandon who was walking his dog, Bentley. They got to chatting and Andrea talked about her involvement at Humber Valley Church. She invited Brandon to come visit at the church and he did! Several weeks later, Brandon brought along his mom, Andrea Nadeau. We enjoyed both their company for several months, but then Brandon moved to Calgary to join his brother to experience the beauty of Alberta.

Ron and Andrea met while playing baseball in a fun league at the Ontario Government. She got a great hit, which unfortunately hit Ron in the knee and left her mark!

While they were booking their honeymoon in Hawaii, they discovered that they could do their wedding there as well, so they were married on the beach in Maui and then spent two weeks visiting the various Hawaiian Islands. They have been married now for 31 years and hope to return to Hawaii for an anniversary sometime soon.

Andrea continued to attend Humber Valley, and was accompanied by her husband, Ron. She became a member in May 2024. Here is Andrea’s story:

They have two sons named Ryan and Brandon. Ryan, their older son, is now 28. He works as Assistant Manager and is a Personal Trainer at a gym.

Andrea’s dad moved to Canada with his family from Belgium when he was 16. He worked as an Electrician at Champion Graders in Goderich, Ontario. Her mom worked as a Paralegal in Goderich. Andrea’s parents met at the Goderich Catholic Church. They have now been married for 64 years.

Brandon, their younger son, is 26. He is currently a Barber at “Westend Barber Shop,” which is on The Queensway between Kipling and Islington.

Andrea loved growing up in Goderich, a small town with a population of 7,500 people, on the shores of Lake Huron. It is known as the “Prettiest town in Canada”. It has a beach and beautiful sunsets. Andrea says the major industries in town are the Sifto salt mine and the grain elevator – ships pick up these items and deliver them worldwide.

Both boys were active in sports: Ryan played triple A baseball and single A hockey. He even got to play baseball in Cooperstown, New York. Brandon played single A baseball and single A hockey. As you can imagine, Andrea and Ron were busy, shuttling their boys to games and practices throughout their childhood.

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# Getting to Know Andrea Nadeau (cont'd.) — *Belonging*

Continued from previous page



Andrea and Ron with their sons, Brandon and Ryan.

Andrea and Ron continue to take care of their parents who still live in Goderich: Andrea’s parents are 86 and 85 now and still live in their own home. Ron’s dad is 99 and sadly, Ron lost his mom at the age of 89 last year.

Andrea enjoyed curling at the St. George’s Golf Club Mixed League, but the curling club there has sadly closed now. Instead, she has taken up golfing and plays at the Humber Valley Golf Club. She goes to Goodlife Fitness to do Zumba and Aquafit. She also likes to read and cook. Ron loves to golf.

Andrea enjoys how Humber Valley United Church is welcoming, inclusive and engaging with fun events she has attended.

We are delighted to have Andrea and her family included in our church community.



The “Getting to Know Our Church Friends” series of articles are written by Nancy Roper in memory of her Dad, Norm Roper, who died in June 2020. Norm loved visiting with people and hearing their stories. He never forgot the things that people told him, always remembering to ask how a special event had gone or checking in on people’s children and grandchildren, etc.

## Photos from Palm Sunday





Humber Valley United Church finished the financial year in 2025 with an operating surplus of \$17,783.

Revenue increased from 2024 to 2025 by \$23,962 or 4.1%. This increase was mostly the result of more Use of Church (rental income).

Other revenue was lower in 2025 vs 2024 due to lower fundraising.

Expenses increased from 2024 to 2025 by \$22,798 or 4.1%.

Payroll costs were lower in 2025 due to staff turnover.

Building expenses were higher in 2025 primarily due to required elevator repairs.

Other expenses were higher in 2025 due to Guest Ministers and Musicians as a result of staff turnover mentioned above. In addition, there were organ repairs required.

The 2026 operating budget has the church breaking even for the year.

*Allan Orr, Chair*

*Charlotte Browning,  
Treasurer*

## Stewardship & Finance (con't)

### Humber Valley United Church Financial Statements Year Ended December 31, 2025

Sources of Funds	2025	2024	Budget 2026
Givings	288,407	285,630	286,600
Use of Church	216,493	192,899	229,000
Trustees	37,842	33,130	36,000
Other	37,743	43,316	35,400
<b>Operating Revenues</b>	<b>580,485</b>	<b>554,975</b>	<b>587,000</b>
Government Subsidies	19,264	20,812	19,400
<b>Funds available for Church Operations</b>	<b>599,749</b>	<b>575,787</b>	<b>606,400</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Payroll & Benefits	412,793	419,915	436,200
Building Expenses	76,224	63,070	73,000
Office	20,368	28,869	20,500
Insurance and Bank Charges	21,367	15,332	22,800
Regional Assessment	23,905	24,418	25,000
Other	27,309	7,564	28,900
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>581,966</b>	<b>559,168</b>	<b>606,400</b>
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	<b>17,783</b>	<b>16,619</b>	<b>0</b>



For more financial information see Humber Valley United Church's Annual Report.



**Beverley Conner**

*Thank you Anne & Beverley – Still helping Humber Valley 3 years after retiring!*

Do you remember back to February 2020 when we welcomed Anne Pietropaolo to Humber Valley as our new Senior’s Coordinator? She put together a fabulous schedule of in-person activities that we were really looking forward to .... but then the COVID-19 pandemic hit a few weeks later. Anne marvellously learned how to use Zoom and moved all the programs online, even the Daytimers luncheon! While other seniors were losing ground since they were lonely in their homes, our seniors were EXHAUSTED because their calendars were so full!

The activity schedule was SO BUSY that Anne was invited to hire an assistant in September 2020: she went straight to her long-time teaching friend, Beverley Conner, who jumped on board and kept our program growing.

Beverley retired from Humber Valley in March 2023: the post-pandemic world was in full swing – the gym was open and music summoned. Since then, Beverley has explored a wide variety of activities, including spiritual/mindfulness retreats, fitness via yoga, figure skating and the gym, song writing, and a variety of musical initiatives. Beverley earned her certificate in “Music Care” by taking courses at an organization called “Room 2017”. Her “Elderberry



**Anne Pietropaolo (right)**

Jamboree” group did 26 shows last year in seniors’ homes across the GTA. She and Joanne Stenerson led Beverley’s local site for a global peace initiative called “Music on the Porch” at a transitional housing location in Beverley’s neighbourhood.

Anne retired from Humber Valley in October 2023. Since then, she has helped plan her daughter Emma’s wedding, taken her Mom on fun outings, started supply teaching in local elementary schools, attended Chautauqua, enjoyed other trips, led various workshops and retreats, and started volunteering on the board of directors at Back Lane Studios.

Even though neither lady is on staff any more, they are still very involved in our church.

Anne attended a training in North Carolina and then ran multiple sessions called “Our Daily Bread: a workshop on baking bread as a spiritual practice”. She worked with her cousin to run multiple pasta making classes. She taught a hot-crossed bun making class and a Challah-making class. The groups loved the beverages and treats that Anne supplied and happily took home the baked goods they made. Anne hosted an ‘Appetizer and Movie night’ where the

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group watched “Babette’s Feast”. Most recently, she has run a six-week series of potluck dinners called “Worship at the Table” whereby attendees enjoy a meal while discussing connections between food and faith and the significance of shared meals in the Christian faith. This session ran in the fall of 2025 and again in the winter of 2026, to the delight of attendees.

Meanwhile, Beverley has continued to lead the monthly “In the News” discussion group and works with Colleen Isherwood to lead the annual summer campfire sing-a-long. She has hosted us at 2 Elderberry Jamboree sing-a-long concerts with the help her musical partner, Paul Gandhi and a Christmas Music sing-a-long with help from Joanne Stenerson. For Doors Open Toronto, Beverley and Paul led the Elderberry Jamboree Sing-A-Long and Beverley even wrote and performed a song about our beautiful stained glass windows (see song words this page).

In addition, Beverley did an OUTSTANDING pro bono consulting project for the church over the winter. The church had three Zoom IDs from the pandemic days that had become problematic since they were tied to cell phone #'s and email addresses from staff and volunteers who were no longer involved in the 55+ program. In order to open a session, hosts needed to get a verification code from one of the inaccessible phones / emails. The church volunteers who had the computer literacy to research this problem were already over-extended, so Beverley kindly offered to help.

She worked with her son, GR, who is an IT professional and in just a few days she presented a well thought-out document with a list of all the Zoom ID's and their related contact and recovery information. She provided a project plan to consolidate all the programs onto a single Zoom ID that had contact information for people currently active at the church and then remove the other Zoom IDs for a saving of about \$1,000 a year. Beverley then managed the project to get to end-of-job. We are SO GRATEFUL for all Beverley's work on this urgent task.

Thank you to both Anne and Beverley for all their fantastic work while they were on staff, and also for all their contributions to our church in the years since they retired. You both arrived as staff and ended up as friends and wonderful volunteers.

Nancy Roper



## A Glance into the Heavens: The Wesselow Windows Song

### Chorus:

*Light shines through tinted shards of glass*

*Radiant pathways, lifting us up*

*Light shines through tinted shards of glass*

*Radiant pathway, portal to the soul*

### Verse 1:

*Glance into the heavens – an exuberant collage*

*Fragments of antique glass*

*A panoramic display, of colour, shape and texture*

*Creates a sacred space*

*(chorus)*

### Verse 2:

*Old broken glass has been transformed*

*Into a festive tapestry of gems*

*To extend an invitation, to glance into the heavens*

*Can you see the light?*

*(chorus)*

Beverley Conner  
May 2026



**Mary Oakes, KC**  
**September 9, 1929 – April 1, 2026**



We are sorry to inform you that Mary Louise Oakes, long-time member of Humber Valley United Church, passed away peacefully in Toronto at her residence in Briton House early April 1st, 2026.

Mary, born in Toronto, was the proud mother of Wally (Sue) and John (Jenn). Loving grandmother of Scott (Charlotte),

Matt, Collin, Allie and Cam. She was predeceased by her parents, Margaret and Norman Chisholm, and her cherished sisters Norma, Alice Forrest (and her husband Don), and Ede Birkett (and her husband Charlie).

Mary was a graduate of the University of Toronto, B.Sc., Nursing (1952), and was called to the bar as a graduate of Osgoode Hall (1958).

She was an avid bridge player and for many years a member of the Humber Valley Duplicate Bridge Club.

Condolences and memories may be shared with the family at Newediuk Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the *Toronto Star* Fresh Air Fund.

**Shirley Langstaff**  
**1929 – 2026**



Jim Langstaff's dear mother, Shirley, passed away in her sleep in April at the age of 96.

Shirley was born in 1929 in Montreal where she grew up. She graduated from McGill University in economics and was, for many years, the assistant to the president of a large Montreal company. When her children were in univer-

sity, she began a successful 25-year real estate career in Ottawa and later in Toronto where she reached President's Gold and Chairman's Round Table Awards.

She was predeceased on May 12, 2022 by her beloved husband, Howard, after 72 years of marriage. She will be sadly missed by their two children, Karen Langstaff Meslin and Jim; son-in-law, Brad Meslin; granddaughter Kaitlyn Meslin; brother, Raymond and his wife, Doreen; nephew, Michael; nieces Helen and Beverley; and numerous friends.

Shirley and Howard were long-time members of Humber Valley United. They were avid bridge players in the church's couples bridge club and also attended, over the years, many of the church's events. Shirley and Howard traveled extensively, including trips to all seven continents.

**From Zoran to Our Church Community**

Please accept our apologies that this note is coming a little later than we had hoped. The past weeks have been very difficult for our family, and we truly appreciate your patience and understanding.

Our family would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all of you who attended my brother Dragan's funeral and supported us during such a difficult time.

It meant so much to us to see so many members of our church come together to honour Dragan's life. Your presence reminded us that we are surrounded by a caring and compassionate community. We truly feel so blessed to have you in our lives.

We are especially grateful to Murray Smith and Laurie Beth Page who spoke and shared stories and memories of Dragan. Hearing those moments reminded us of how many

lives he touched and how deeply he was loved. A special thank you to Sheila Murray and Kate Brown for speaking and helping lead such a beautiful ceremony in honour of Dragan.

We would also like to sincerely thank everyone who made generous donations and contributions. Your kindness helped lessen the financial burden of the funeral arrangements and associated costs, and it means more to our family than we can express. A special thank you to Allan Orr and Deborah Turnbull for their generous donations and support.

Your prayers, kindness and compassion gave our family strength and comfort when we needed it most. Please know that your support will never be forgotten. Thank you for standing with our family and helping us celebrate Dragan's life.

*Zoran, Vesna and Andrea*

# Curious About What Your Home is Worth?

THE NUMBER MIGHT SURPRISE YOU!

The real estate market has shifted dramatically in recent years.


Even if you're not thinking of selling right now, knowing your home's current value can open up new possibilities:

- Tap into your home equity
- Plan for the future
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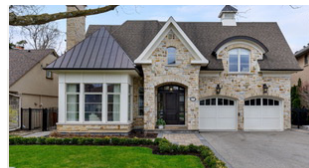
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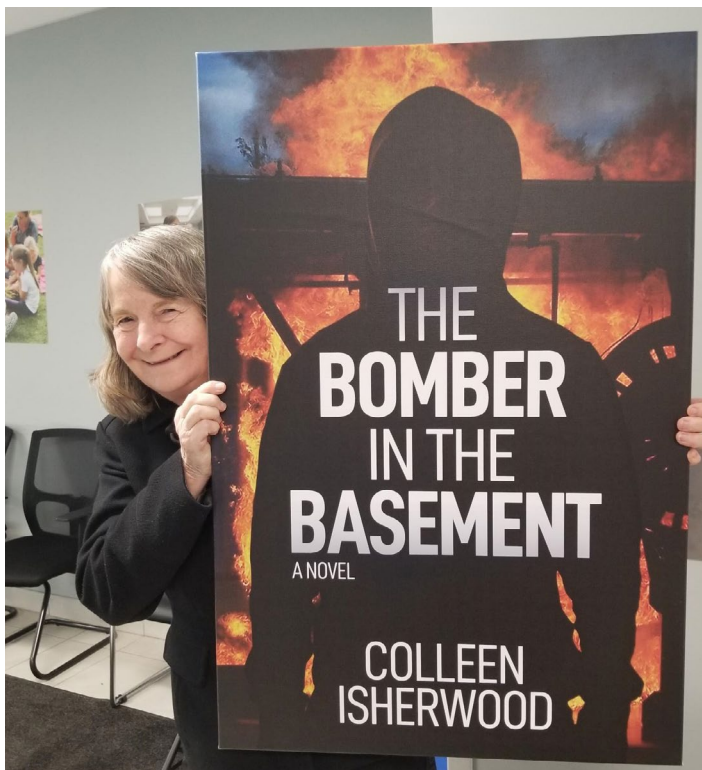
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SRES



Who are these three lovely ladies, who performed "Dancing Queen" from Mamma Mia in a talent show on November 24, 2018? And who made their costumes? The answer is upside down below!

Gail Cook-Bennett, Deb Turnbull and Constance Crosby were singing "Dancing Queen" and Lauren Kinnear designed and made their costumes!



### Stephen Ministers Recommissioned

Our Stephen Ministers were "recommissioned" in a ceremony on Sunday, May 31. From left are Andrea Ostvik-Van der Vliet, David Dallimore, Rev. Anne Hines, Lynn Manning and David Lang. Absent: Deb Turnbull.

Stephen Ministry is the one-to-one lay caring ministry that takes place in congregations that use the Stephen Series system.

Stephen Ministry congregations equip and empower lay caregivers, called Stephen Ministers, to provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care to people who may be hurting.

## Humber Valley UNITED CHURCH

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- Minister: Rev. Anne Hines
- Director of Inclusion and Engagement: Kate Brown
- Church Administrator: Julie McMillan
- Church School Leader: Vivia Kay Kieswetter
- Assistant Church School Leader: Ava Verner
- Seniors Program Coordinator: Jenny Terwoord
- Bookkeeper/Accountant: Anita Wakeman
- Supervisor of Custodians: Zoran Mrkovic
- Custodian: Comfort Bemah
- Custodian: Drew Grass
- Room Bookings Coordinator: Julie McMillan
- AV/Technical Coordinator: George Turnbull

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Published by Humber Valley United Church