

Rowntree Acorn – Fall 2025



From the Minister's desk:



Who knew that a random comment made to Brad McMurray last year as the London United Churches participated in the London Pride parade would grow as large as it did! I said, "isn't it too bad we don't have the hearts we have been handing out at Rowntree and Dundas Street Centre for various events to hand out in the parade"? Brad agreed.



I pondered afterwards about how to make this possible. I talked about it to the “Knit Happens” folk and spread the word through my UCC colleagues. I even provided them with patterns. Sheila Komink provided illustrated crochet instructions. That, and with several You tube videos, allowed me to master the “magic loop” and then learn to crochet as well as knit the hearts.

Many thanks to the early knitters and crocheters at Rowntree and Dundas Street Centre who started to work and in total provided about 1000 of the hearts to start. Many thanks to Laura Wilkes, who designed and made the cards the hearts were attached to and who asked many times,

“how many do you think we will need?” She kept making more.

The other United Churches got off to a slow start but came in strong in July. Rev. Doug Peck thought we should start a “knit in public” event to draw attention to our project and we did manage a post on the Antler River Watershed Facebook page. For several Wednesday nights we knit, crocheted, punched holes in cards and attached hearts to cards. One of my colleagues was heard to say, “they didn’t teach us this in seminary!”

From the Siloam United Church’s Facebook page:

“Some people have asked about the knitted and crocheted hearts we handed out at the **Pride London Festival parade...**

The Hearts for Pride idea came from Rev. Wendy Noble who serves Dundas Street Centre (DSCUC) and Rowntree Memorial United Churches. Wendy shared this outreach initiative with other local churches, and everyone got to work. In total, more than 3,000 hearts were made and distributed!

Each one was lovingly handmade by members of local United Churches, including Siloam! We



hope these sweet pocket prayer hearts remind everyone that we are ALL unique and beautiful children of God. ❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

So many different colours, a few different sizes, all beautiful and a visible reminder of God's love being shared, people being welcomed, accepted for who they are, and affirmed in their diversity ...”

Facebook comments:

“Thank you so much from Deitana's and my community, I have heard excellent feedback from different ones in the community. They felt seen, they felt heard, they felt loved.”

“This was the most meaningful Pride Parade I have participated in. Thank you for the little hearts.”

(photo- Maryjane Jolliffe, Rev. Wendy, Phyllis Brady)

Laura Wilkes made a last-minute dash to the Fairgrounds to deliver a total of about 1980 hearts and cards for the marchers. I brought about 1200 of the hearts and cards with me to the fairground.

In addition to those numbers Mt. Zion and Riverside provided their own supply of hearts.

Those of us on the float kept replenishing the marcher's supplies. It was a hot day, but overcast and there was a breeze. It was so heart warming (play on words intended) to see neighbourhoods out along the parade route and to hear the favourable and supportive comments along the way. I noted only 1 noisy detractor with a blowhorn at the beginning of the parade.

After the parade a few of us walked through Victoria Park handing out hearts to people along the way.

There were some hearts left over – so we have some to start for next year. For those who would like to take up the challenge, we have instructions and yarn! Many hands make for lighter work!

Blessings, Rev. Wendy

Doggie Tales by Ilka:

It has been a hot summer! Even the squirrels were taking it easy – especially in the afternoons. Rev. Wendy (Mommy) and I continued our neighbourhood patrols and networking with our other canine patrollers.

I had several adventures out of town. I was at Georgian Bay near Owen Sound and Sauble Beach (now Saugeen Beach). I got to go swimming at Owen Sound but not at Sauble Beach. I love going swimming! I cut my puppy teeth swimming in Lake Superior near Thunder Bay.





One of my repeat trips this summer was to “The Farm”, home of the Dunbar family. They have a new pup on the farm named Gillie. He is a black spaniel and very full of spit and vinegar. I had to teach him a few manners. But he forgets very easily.

Apparently, Gillie learned to play fight with the cats at the farm and so he likes to bat his paws a lot. I expect I will have to spend many more play dates with Gillie trying to get him to behave. Gillie and I get to run free at the farm – as long as we can be seen. I am very reliable on recall. Gillie, not so much, but he came with me! (Gillie – looking very regal)

Summer would not be complete without some Friday afternoons at our friend Mary’s backyard. Mommy used to put me on a rope when we were there but this summer they took a chance and let me loose. Mary has the best critters! Rabbits and squirrels. They aren’t used to a Westie in the yard and so provide me with lots of action. One silly squirrel actually ran down the tree towards me instead of up! I nearly got one!

This is a picture of one of Gillie’s cat trainers. There are 2 and they are all ready for the boxing ring. Hoping to have more adventures at “The Farm” and chasing critters.



Today I was in Grand Bend at the “Lakehound”. I was expecting hounds but there was only me. It is dog friendly with an outdoor patio area and water bowls all set up. I even got to chase a squirrel. Mommy slowed me down though, as I was on a leash. Next time squirrel, next time!

Doggie kisses, Ilka the Westie

What's Upcoming at Rowntree

Sunday Aug 31 – Rowntree is hosting a pot-luck lunch to mark the end of summer and our joint services with Dundas St UC. We've also invited LVAC - London Vietnamese Alliance Church: our fellow Vietnamese worshippers who meet at Rowntree. Worship service starts at 1030, lunch should start around noon Please join us !

Sept 7 – 9:30 am Sunday start time for Rowntree resumes

Nov 2 – Pot Luck lunch following our service celebrating 100th Anniversary of UCC & 70 years of Rowntree Memorial United. If you know of any former members please invite them.

Notes from Antler River Watershed Regional Council Meeting, May 30-31, 2025, Grace United Church, Sarnia

Commissions. The regional council has three commissions: Congregational Support, Pastoral Relations, and Discipleship and Justice. These commissions are very important to the life and work of the church in our region, but are currently operating barely at quorum. There are challenges in recruiting members to serve on these commissions. The commissions can add to the workload for ministry personnel, who are often already stretched in their positions.

Admissions. Admissions is the process by which clergy from other denominations and countries become eligible to serve in ministry in the United Church of Canada. This process has many steps for candidates and can take several years. These candidates come with a rich and wide variety of educational and ministry experiences, and have much to offer the wider church and communities of faith. There is a significant racial disparity occurring in how admissions appointments are occurring.

Over 90% of white candidates find employment with a community of faith, often within ten months of beginning their search. Only 10% of racialized candidates are finding employment. Many have been on the list of available ministers for three years, and some for as



long as seven years. Despite applying to dozens or even hundreds of positions, they do not receive offers of employment.

There are many factors that contribute to this disparity, including immigration challenges, difficulty finding full-time appointments or collaborative ministry arrangements, and relocation costs for communities of faith. However, these do not account for the gap. There is racism occurring, and more must be done to ensure racialized candidates who come through the admissions process to the United Church of Canada have equal opportunities to receive gainful employment and contribute their many gifts to the church.

At the meeting, several potential solutions were discussed and the Office of Vocation will continue to develop strategies to assist these candidates and communities of faith interested in these candidates. The real work however occurs within communities of faith seeking ministry personnel: it means asking some very difficult questions about comfort versus fear, stasis versus change, and what is easy to do versus what God calls us to do and be.

Canadian Bible Society. The Canadian Bible Society is one of our partners in Canada. They continue to help people hear God speak in Canada and across the world, by working in translation, publishing, distribution, and engagement for biblical texts. In Canada, this includes working with Indigenous communities to translate texts into Indigenous languages, including Blackfoot, Inuktitut, Inupiaq, Inuinnaqtun, and Plains Cree. The United Church of Canada Foundation and the Canadian Bible Society were important partners in the 2023 publication of the complete Mohawk Bible, a translation project which was started in 1804. Other Canadian projects include scriptures for the visually impaired, scriptures for the hearing impaired, and translation for diaspora churches. We are grateful for continued partnership between our church and the Canadian Bible Society.

Fire Alarm! Our evening in the hotel came with an interesting twist – at about 3:35 a.m., the fire alarm went off, for no clear reason. After waiting outside for about 20 minutes in the cool wind and admiring the fire trucks, we were able to go back to our rooms. It was a little difficult to sleep after that!



Celebration of Ministry Service. At this service, the region celebrated three candidates who have entered ministry, including two licensed lay worship ministers, and one ordained minister. Bill Butt, who attends Calvary United Church here in London is now licensed for lay worship. For 13 years Bill was Overseas

Personnel for the United Church of Canada, primarily in Angola and Mozambique. Perhaps we can invite Bill to lead worship for us in the future during one of Rev. Wendy's study leaves.

Next Meeting. The regional meeting this fall takes place online, October 3-4. It is important that each community of faith have a representative present if possible. I will be unable to attend - do consider attending if it interests you, and I am sure Rev. Wendy will appreciate the company!

Submitted by Ryan Baxter

United Church News

(From Broadview Magazine article) We welcome our **new moderator – Rt Rev Kimberly Heath** elected at a worship service in Calgary on Aug. 11 and installed as our 45th moderator of The United Church of Canada. In a pool of five nominees for the job, she was [elected](#) in three ballots. Her leadership comes at a time when the denomination is [projecting](#) a 65-percent membership decline by 2035 — while making plans to ensure its future. A longtime congregational minister from Brockville, Ont., Heath encourages the United Church to lean into its smallness. She spoke with *Broadview* about that call and her hopes for the denomination. Link to article [here](#)



United Church General Council update from Catherine Glover

June 6th, 100th anniversary celebrations in St. John's Newfoundland (which I attended)

Here we are packing snacks for kids. All of the General Council Executive and General Council Office, plus staff from the United Church of Canada Foundation and the Regional Executive Minister spent the morning on Friday volunteering in St. John's. We learned that one fifth of the population in Newfoundland depends on food banks.



These folks were making Chilli for a Community Meal



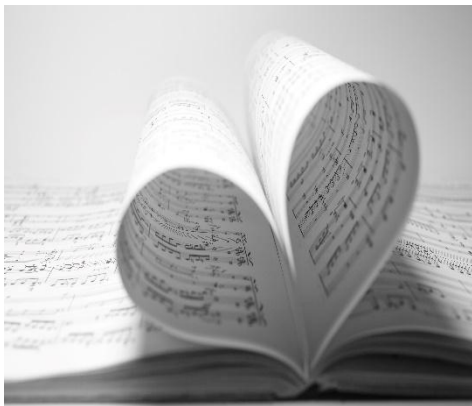
FUNDRAISING NEWS by Maryjane Jolliffe

“Project Green Rowntree” Game Day

On Saturday, May 10th, Rowntree hosted a game day of Pickleball, Pizza, & More. Pickleball players from our Wednesday morning and evening groups and Friday evening group were invited to attend. With 9 players registered, it was a fun day of pickleball play with prizes going to the top two teams. Prizes included golf packages secured by Lynn Patterson ... nobody can say “No” to Lynn, lol ... and tickets to Rowntree’s Ham & Strawberry Supper.

After the purchase of pizzas from local pizzeria favourite Pazoon’s including ... you guessed it ... dill pickle pizza, \$320 was donated directly to Project Green Rowntree to assist with the recent Brampton Street entrance renovations.

“Echoes of the Heart” with the Forest City Singers



On Friday, May 2nd at 7:00 p.m., the Forest City Singers performed their annual spring concert for an appreciative audience of 84. We were treated to an array of tunes from “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” to “Little Light of Mine”. Refreshments were served in the gym following the concert. Net proceeds from the concert deposited \$658.00 to Rowntree’s fundraising efforts.

Ham & Strawberry Dinner

Another successful year for Rowntree’s Ham & Strawberry Dinner! After a delayed growing season in the London area threw the fundraising committee (OK, probably just MJ) into a panic, we were able to special order local Tillsonburg strawberries from our neighbourhood Metro store. Together with applewood smoked ham, homemade scalloped potatoes and made-from-scratch baked beans a la Chris & Val Hodgins, a delicious meal was served to 94. Thrifty shopping netted \$1,535 for Rowntree fundraising.





We Be Jammin'!!

Once again, we are making a variety of jams which will be available for sale at our Christmas Bazaar.

On July 4th, we met for the first time to make strawberry jam and last year's big seller Merry Christmas jam which is a sweet and tangy combo of strawberry, cranberry and orange. If you didn't try it last year, you should definitely give it a go this year. And I've been told it is great for gift-giving.

On August 15th, we made peach jam featuring fresh peaches from Adelaide Farms and Robertson's ("A Taste of Britain") Seville orange marmalade which was also very popular last year. In September, red pepper jelly will be on the agenda ... with requests for more heat ... so watch for mild, medium, and hotter! And an additional batch of Merry Christmas jam.



Many hands make light work when it comes to jam-making. Spearheaded by Phyllis Brady and with a dedicated team of 5 or 6 fun-loving "jammers", we are a well-oiled machine just having a good time.

Fall Fling Yard & Bake Sale

Mark your calendar for Saturday, September 6th when we will once again participate in the Carling Neighbourhood Yard Sale. Rowntree's event will run from 9 a.m. to Noon and will include your donations of homemade baking and yard sale items including books, housewares, and everything in between. Donations have already been coming in ... thank you ... and volunteers will be needed from set-up on the afternoon of Thursday, September 4th to packing up on Saturday afternoon after the sale.



More to Come ... Watch the Fundraising bulletin board for news on upcoming events.

Saturday, November 22nd -- Annual Christmas Bazaar

Friday, December 5th – Forest City Singers Annual Christmas Concert

ELUCO News (East London United Church Outreach)

Nancy Howard ,community worker, continues to be busy in the Marconi area. She spends a lot of time helping people with appointments and trying to sort out money issues. She is organizing back to school supplies and collecting snacks for students.

Welcome Wednesday meal program here at Rowntree will resume in September.

The ELUCO Food Cupboard at Sandford and Huron is getting more new families and our numbers have increased. The clients really appreciate the fresh produce from Urban Roots. Thanks to anyone who has contributed to this worth while project.

ELUCO's 30 th annual Walk and Roll for Families fundraiser will be held on Sunday September 28th at Springbank Park at 2pm. All are welcome to join us.

Freda Owen and Judy White both have pledge sheets and would greatly appreciate your support for this worth while project.

Many thanks to the Rowntree volunteers who helped prepare the snacks for LUSO's Summer camp program on Monday mornings during the summer.
Your help was greatly appreciated.

Submitted by Judy White

A brief summary of Rowntree's outreach in 2025 – submitted by Freda Owen

L.U.S.O. – (lusocentre.org): donations for Summer Camp snacks

Rowntree Hospitality Tuesday meal – has been hosted and run here since 2010, 37,000+ guests served since then.

E.L.U.C.O Welcome Wednesday meal – organized by ELUCO and run by various church's in North-east London, the meal is hosted at Rowntree

E.L.U.C.O Food Cupboard: donations of food to Gethsemane Food Cupboard

E.L.U.C.O - we donate backpacks and money to ELUCO's Back to School backpacks program

E.L.U.C.O. - Annual monetary donation and we support their fall fundraiser plus many people bring in non-perishable food donations. (donation bin is close to glass door entrance)

United Church of Canada Mission & Service Fund – in 2024 we donated \$9520. In 2023 aprox \$24 million was donated to this fund which supports local charities such as ELUCO, Indigenous healing and also helps 68 global partners working in 23 countries.

Welcome Wednesday lunch program has taken a break for the summer but will resume again in September. A hot lunch is provided and most times it's a big meal. All are welcome!

Tuesday Night Hospitality Meal program has continued to run all summer.

Every summer, we have a School Backpacks program for families that are helped out by ELUCO. Backpacks along with school supplies have been coming in this month of August. Thank you to everybody from both Rowntree and Dundas St. Centre U.C. for their donations to this much needed program.

During the summer the group known as L.U.S.O. help provide snacks to all students attending city-run summer day camps in our area of the city.

Judy White attends their meeting as a Rowntree representative. We donate money from our Outreach budget. Other area churches help out as well. One Rowntree person picks up their food.

The United Church of Canada Mission and Service Fund goal for the year 2025 is \$10,000.

Donations can be made through our Sunday offering, PAR, Cash or

E-transfer to Rowntree. A monthly total is then forward on to M. & S. Fund.

At this time, approximately one half of the goal has been met and forwarded.

Our Garden – Our vegetable garden has not been as productive this year as in the past. The cool, wet spring meant most of it was replanted. Last year we had many squash that ripened,

the problem was the squirrels liked them more than we did, so most had at least a bite taken out of them. So this year the decision was made to try carrots and peas. The carrots are ok but the peas did not do well – the very dry summer likely didn't help.

Bottom line is we need someone with more gardening experience and more time... Could you be that person or know that person ? If so- call Brad at 519-439-4000.

Thanks to everyone who contributed and assisted with Outreach activities.

Property Update

Thank-You to the volunteers who mow the lawns, trim the bushes and keep everything neat and tidy. Here are some pictures of these people at work from our spring cleanup day last May. And a Big Thank-You to LVAC; London Vietnamese Alliance Church, who we share our building with. As well as helping at our cleanup day, they paid to fix a broken window and to replace 3 older toilets.



Our large **Outdoor cross** facing Elliott St is missing – what's happening? The cross is showing its age- 70 years old and one section of it fell down in August. The cross is made up of 5 pieces of marble- but some of these sections had a lot of cracking due to weathering, so in the interests of safety, the Property people removed the whole cross. So now we have to figure out if we'll fix it or replace it Stay tuned

Block Party – 2025

The Carling Neighbourhood Association, of which we are a part of, is very active group. This past summer they organized another block party- this time on St James St. These are great ways to meet our neighbours and to get Rowntree's name out in the community. We offered cold drinks, no charge, to the people who stopped by our awning.



Rowntree's new Vision Statement – as approved at our Annual Meeting this year

The idea of a tree as a background was inspired by the origins of the family name “Rowntree”



Rowntree Memorial United Church

for which our church is named. Simply, it is thought that the family probably lived near a tree ... specifically a rowan tree. In Canada the rowan tree is known as the mountain ash. In Old English folklore, the rowan tree symbolized wisdom, courage, and protection. In Celtic Mythology, the rowan is known as The Tree of Life. Lastly, using further symbolism of the tree, we drew from Ephesians 3:17 ... “Rooted and grounded in love”.

Write up as per Maryjane Jolliffe

The Acorn is published by the Communications Committee of Rowntree Memorial United Church and edited by Brad McMurray. Articles for the next edition are due Dec 1 , 2025. Comments or articles can be emailed to wbmcmurray55@hotmail.com or left in the Communications mail slot at Rowntree. Stories are much more effective with pictures, as ‘a picture is worth a thousand words. Visit our web site at rowntreechurch.ca to find the main parts of the past 4 Sunday services, more info on who we are, what we do, what we believe in and how you can support us. And look for us on Facebook.

Rowntree Memorial United Church is located at 156 Elliott St, London, 519-432-8075