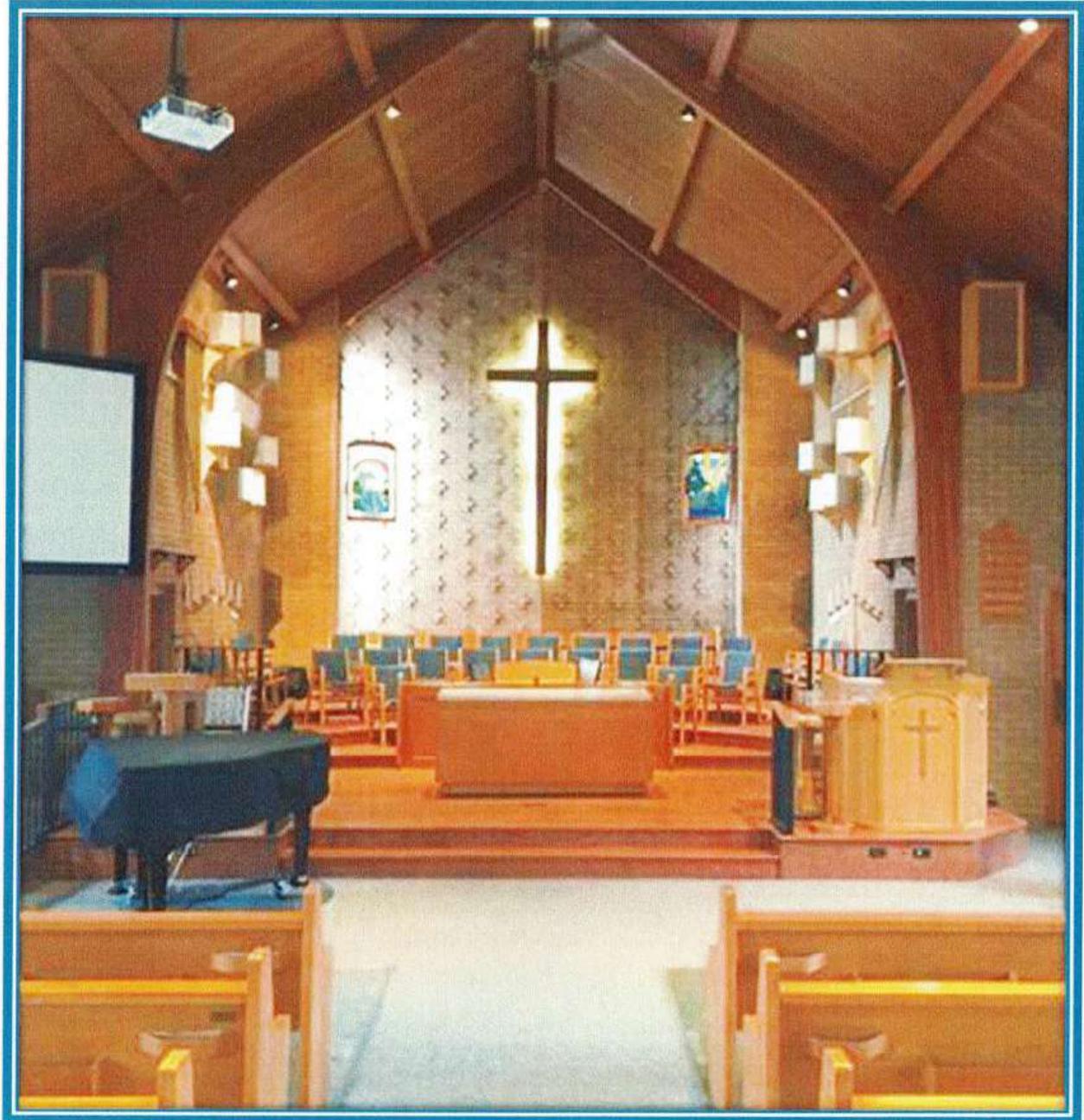


ROWNTREE MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Rowntree Memorial United Church Annual Report

2025

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Antler River Watershed Region	13
Board Members.....	2
Budget - 2026	41
Choir Report	35
Christmas Hamper Report	23
Co-Chair's Message.....	12
Communications Committee Report	16
Congregational Annual Meeting - February 23rd, 2025	4
ELUCO Board Report	24
Financial Statement as of December, 2025	40
Forest City Singers.....	21
Fundraising Committee Report	17
Garden Report	25
Hospitality Meal Report	26
Hospitality Meal Statistics	27
In Memoriam	3
Knit Happens	28
London Vietnamese Alliance Church (LVAC)	16
Memorial Fund Statement - 2025.....	39
Minister's Message	10
Ministry & Personnel Committee Report	22
Mission & Service Fund	39
Outreach & Social Justice Committee Report	23
Pastoral Care Committee Report	28
Pickleball	30
Project Green Rowntree.....	39
Property Committee Report	32
Spirituality Committee Report	34
Staff	2
Statistics	3
TOPS Reports	31
Trustees' Report	12
United Church Women (UCW) Financial Statement	38
Victorian Order of Nurses (VON)	31
Visioning Committee	37

Rowntree Memorial United Church

2025

Official Board

Minister	Rev. Wendy Noble
Co-Chairs of Official Board	Phyllis Brady, Brian Kominek & Brad McMurray
Co-Treasurers	Frieda Owen & Brian Kominek
Secretary	Joanne Hamilton

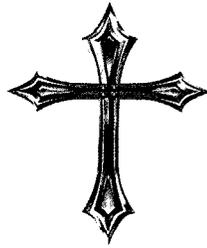
Committee Representatives

Communication Chair	Brad McMurray
Finance & Stewardship Chair	Bob Brown
Fundraising Chair	Maryjane Jolliffe
Ministry & Personnel Chair	Lynn Patterson
Outreach & Social Justice Co-Chairs	Jessie Morrice & Frieda Owen
Pastoral Care Chair	Phyllis Brady
Property Co-Chairs	Murray Currah & David Watson
Trustees Chair	Phyllis Brady
Spirituality Chair	Rev. Wendy Noble
Roll Clerk	Phyllis Brady
Envelope Secretary	Sylvia Brettrager
Antler River Watershed Region Rep.	Rev. Wendy Noble
Member at Large	Judy White
Privacy Officer	Glen Thompson
Nominations	Phyllis Brady, Brian Kominek & Brad McMurray

Staff Members

Music Director & Organist	Ryan Baxter
Administrative Assistant	Laura Wilkes
Custodian	Dirk Van Vrouwerff

In Memoriam
"Gone but not forgotten"



Annie Norman (102) (sister of Marion Isaac) - January 2, 2025

Nancy Jean Kominek (mother of Brian Kominek) - January 3, 2025

Kevin Darryl Coad (son of Rev. Wendy Noble) - January 29, 2025

E. Carol Ingleby - March 10, 2025

Irene Earle - April 21, 2025

Florence Anne Blair - May 17, 2025

Rose Reilly - September 1, 2025

Ross Wesley Taylor - December 7, 2025

STATISTICS

Transfer - 1

Marriages - 0

Baptisms - 0

Funerals - 2

Worship Attendance

Weekly Average – 40 people (in person and on Zoom)

Membership Numbers

93 members

**ROWNTREE MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH
IN PERSON AND ZOOM ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
Sunday, February 23rd, 2025**

1. Reverend Wendy Noble opened our Zoom Annual Congregational Meeting at the beginning of our worship service at 9:40 a.m. with approximately 41 people in attendance in the sanctuary and on Zoom

Reverend Wendy asked for nominations for Chair of the Annual Meeting.

***MOTION:** Maryjane Jolliffe; Glen Thompson

THAT Phyllis Brady be elected as Chair of the Annual Meeting.

- there were no further nominations - Phyllis Brady accepted the nomination and was acclaimed as the Chair of the Annual Meeting.

- the next order of business is to elect a Secretary to take notes of the meeting

***MOTION:** Judy White; Maryjane Jolliffe

THAT Joanne Hamilton be elected as Recording Secretary of the Annual Meeting.

- there were no further nominations - Joanne Hamilton accepted the nomination and was acclaimed as the Recording Secretary of the Annual Meeting.

- Rev. Wendy declared that the Annual Congregational Meeting was open for any business that comes before it and the worship service continued as usual until after the dedication of the offering

- the meeting was then turned over to Chair Phyllis Brady

2. - the Agenda for the Annual Meeting was included in the Order of Service for today's worship service

***MOTION:** Maryjane Jolliffe; Brian Kominek

THAT the Agenda as printed in the Order of Service be adopted.

CARRIED

3. ***MOTION:** Brian Kominek; Jessie Morrice

THAT we allow adherents to vote on financial and administrative matters.

CARRIED

4. ***MOTION:** Glen Thompson; Debbie Thomas

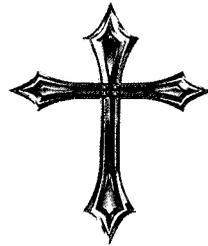
THAT the minutes of the Annual Meeting of February 11th, 2024 be approved as printed in the Annual Report.

CARRIED

5. - Brad McMurray provided a PowerPoint presentation of the year 2024 in pictures which was enjoyed by everyone

6. - the In Memoriam with photos was presented as a PowerPoint while Rev. Wendy read out the names - we acknowledge and give tribute to folks from our community who have died this past year:

In Memoriam
"Gone but not forgotten"



Dorothy Joan Mitchell - January 18th, 2024

Keith Lindsay - February 12th, 2024

Kimberly Anne Hill - March 30th, 2024

Laurie Van Vrouwerff - April 7th, 2024

Stanley Meredith Toal - October 18th, 2024

Bryan Smith - November 15th, 2024

Jean Thomson - November 20th, 2024

Jay William Whistlecraft - December 3rd, 2024

- Rev. Wendy offered our thanks and a prayer for those we have lost - Phyllis expressed our thanks to Brad and Wendy for the presentation and prayer

7. ***Annual Report Comments*** from Co-Chair Phyllis Brady

- thanks to Joanne for managing, assembling and copying the Annual Report. Thanks to Laura for your help. The report is beautiful with well written reports and summaries and photos. We'd hoped that you would receive the report last Sunday to have time to review it prior to today's meeting BUT the weather did not cooperate. Please take time to read the report at home and IF you have any questions or concerns or praise about the contents, please reach out to the most appropriate person or to me - I will forward to the appropriate person.

- we have been asked by the United Church of Canada (UCC) to compile the time we spend as volunteers for Rowntree Memorial United Church (RMUC) - so far the total reported

exceeds 8,200 hours!! and I have not heard from everyone. Amazing! Thank you to all volunteers. You work hard for RMUC. We are so grateful for your help.

- there are so many dedicated volunteers - almost every Sunday in 2024 Brad managed the AV, sound and Zoom presentation during our services. Thank you Brad! When he was away for a few Sundays, it took 3 of us to do it!

- the outreach programs of RMUC support many in our community - Tuesday and Wednesday meals, the ELUCO food cupboard and Hamper program - thank you dedicated volunteers for providing these regular and ongoing services to our neighbours.

- our website, newsletters, bulletins, pamphlets and email communication system works well to keep us connected. Special thanks to Laura Wilkes, Lynn Patterson and Brad for their creativity and efforts to keep us informed.

- the Fundraising team continued their amazing efforts exceeding their budgeted amount of \$5,000 by \$3,888 for a total of \$8,888. Thank you Maryjane for coordinating this extraordinary effort. Thank you volunteers for saying yes when asked to help at events or jam making or whatever else is asked. Thank you congregation members for supporting the supper, the garage sale, the bazaar and the Forest City Singers' Concerts. The funds are much needed.

- thank you Board members, Committee members and Trustees for all of your efforts throughout the year to ensure that RMUC is operating well. Brad and I are grateful to you for your attendance and participation in our meetings and your between the meetings efforts to make RMUC a vibrant, fiscally responsible organization. We hope that Brian's health improves so that he can participate more actively as a Co-Chair.

- thank you Frieda Owen for managing our bills and income. You spend many hours ensuring that we are up to date with our finances.

- thank you Sylvia Brettrager for managing our donations and receipts.

- the Committees have been busy in 2024 - especially Property - with the renovation to the entrance and lift area, new lighting in the gym and more. Our building is used nearly every day in many areas - LVAC, pickleball, meals, choir practices, scouting and guiding, TOPS, VON and more. We are grateful to Dirk Van Vrouwerff, Bob Brown and to the Property Committee for managing the additional use of RMUC.

- a special thank you to Maryjane for her oversight of the VON program at RMUC. We have MANY neighbours/London citizens who attend programs here and are impressed by our facilities.

- thank you Rev. Wendy and the Spirituality Committee for ensuring that our services and decor are co-ordinated with the seasons of the church year. This happens behind the scenes for many of us. The Choir continues to provide beautiful music with the excellent direction by Ryan Baxter. We also have fun together. Thank you choir members.

- thank you Knit Happens folks - volunteer hours reported more than 2500 - that resulted in many hats for babies, items for sale at the Bazaar and contributions to the Hampers.

- thank you Lynn Patterson and the Ministry & Personnel Committee for your work with Rev. Wendy and the staff

- thank you to the Pastoral Care Committee for staying connected with those unable to attend in person services/events

- thank you to all who volunteer for RMUC

Staff Appreciation

- we are most grateful to Rev. Wendy, Dirk, Laura and Ryan for providing meaningful services with thoughtful messages, beautiful music, and artistic power point presentations, all in a well cared for building.

- Rev. Wendy, we are grateful for your leadership and expertise

- Laura - you are always thinking ahead - co-ordinating our efforts

- Ryan - your music and expertise is very much appreciated. Glen - we are always grateful for your participation and assistance. Such beautiful music.

- Dirk - your presence in the building and your efforts to keep the building clean and inviting is very much appreciated.

***MOTION:** Ruth Kanu; Sheila Kominek

THAT we accept the entire 2024 Annual Report as printed and circulated.

CARRIED

8. **Financial** - Frieda Owen

(a) - the 2024 Financial report is set out on page 40 of the Annual Report - Frieda asked if there were any questions and none were forthcoming

***MOTION:** Brian Kominek; Lois Lindsay

THAT the 2024 Financial Statement be approved as published in the Annual Report.

CARRIED

(b) - the 2025 budget is found on page 41 - as in the past, we have used our investment funds to keep us afloat - Frieda asked again if there were any questions on the budget and none were forthcoming

***MOTION:** Frieda Owen; Beth Brown

THAT the 2025 Budget be approved as published in the Annual Report.

CARRIED

- everyone was thanked for their financial support each Sunday, by PAR and e-transfers - thanks was also expressed to Sylvia Brettrager for her hard work in keeping track of all of the givings

(c) - we did not reach our Mission and Service Fund objective this year - the goal was \$10,000.00 and we collected \$9,520.00

***MOTION:** Ruth Kanu; Glen Thompson

THAT our Mission and Service Fund objective for 2025 be \$10,000.00.

CARRIED

(d) - Dave Watson and Phyllis Brady have examined the 2024 financial records and have found them in good order - they are both willing to serve in that role again

***MOTION:** Sheila Kominek; Judy Watson

THAT Dave Watson and Phyllis Brady continue to check our financial records and present their findings at the next Annual Congregational Meeting.

CARRIED

9. **Nominations** - Phyllis Brady

(a) - we are lucky again this year because everyone who was Chairing a Committee or who was sitting on a Committee agreed to stay on in their positions - if anyone is interested in joining a Committee, please let Phyllis, Brian and/or Brad know

Official Board - 2025

Minister	Rev. Wendy Noble
Co-Chairs of Official Board	Phyllis Brady Brian Kominek and Brad McMurray
Co-Treasurers	Frieda Owen & Brian Kominek
Secretary	Joanne Hamilton

Committee Representatives (Chairs & Co-Chairs)

Communications Chair	Brad McMurray
Finance & Stewardship Chair	Bob Brown
Fundraising Chair	Maryjane Jolliffe
Ministry & Personnel Chair	Lynn Patterson
Outreach & Social Justice Co-Chairs	Jessie Morrice and Frieda Owen
Pastoral Care Chair	Phyllis Brady
Property Co-Chairs	Murray Currah and David Watson
Trustees Chair	Phyllis Brady
United Church Women President	Vacant
Spirituality Chair	Rev. Wendy Noble
Roll Clerk	Phyllis Brady
Envelope Secretary	Sylvia Brettrager
Antler River Watershed Region Rep.	Vacant
Member at Large	Judy White
Privacy Officer	Glen Thompson
Nominations	Phyllis Brady Brian Kominek and Brad McMurray

(b) - Brad McMurray has been our Presbytery/Antler River Watershed Region representative for the past 10 years and he has decided to retire from that position - Brad spoke about how serving as a representative is a great way to meet folks from other United Churches in order to exchange thoughts, ideas and knowledge - there is a meeting in May and one in the fall, and if you serve on a Committee, there could be a couple of other meetings - the meetings are held in person or they are available on Zoom as well

- Rev. Wendy is a member by virtue of her position as our Minister, but we should have a lay person to represent us as well

- if you are interested and would like more information, please get in touch with Brad or Rev. Wendy

***MOTION:** Lynn Patterson; Brad McMurray

THAT we accept the Nomination Report as presented.

CARRIED

(c) **Ad Hoc Committees**

- we usually set up an Ad Hoc Committee for our Welcome Back Sunday in September and our Christmas Hamper Committee - it was decided to ask for volunteers when the time gets closer

- Frieda Owen and Phyllis Brady have both indicated they are willing to head up the Christmas hamper project again in 2025

10. **Business Arising from the Minutes**

- none

11. **New Business**

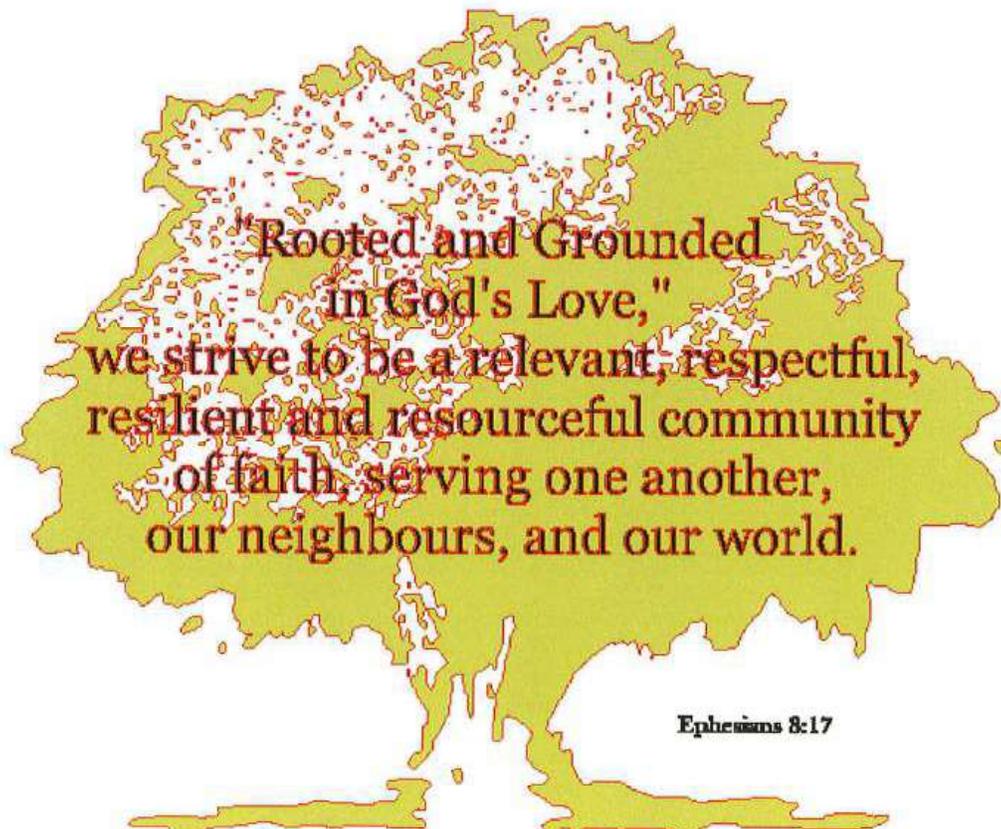
(a) **Vision Statement** - at the January RMUC Board Meeting, the Board endorsed the draft Vision Statement presented by the Visioning Committee

- **"Rooted and grounded in God's Love, we strive to be a relevant, respectful, resilient and resourceful community of faith, serving one another, our neighbours and our world" - from Ephesians 3:17**

- as a first step, the Committee discussed and agreed upon four words (characteristics) which represent what Rowntree, as a community of faith, aspires to be, those words being RELEVANT, RESPECTFUL, RESILIENT and RESOURCEFUL.

- next, those words were incorporated into a statement describing our goals as a community of faith. It was suggested that adding a graphic component to our vision would make it more recognizable and memorable.

- the idea of a tree as a background was inspired by the origins of the family name "Rowntree" 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".



Rowntree Memorial United Church

***MOTION:** Ruth Kanu; Judy White

THAT the Vision Statement and graphic as presented at the meeting, be approved.

CARRIED

- (b) - the Visioning Committee is concerned about our future as a congregation, as well as the future of the United Church in London
- the Committee is hosting a meeting here on Saturday, March 22nd, 2025 with representatives of the United Churches in London and facilitated by Lynn Allin from the Antler River Watershed Region - approximately 40 people have registered to attend the meeting
- more info will be shared after the meeting takes place

12. **Adjournment**

***MOTION:** Maryjane Jolliffe; Val Hodgins

THAT we adjourn

CARRIED

Adjourned - 11:14 a.m.

- the worship service continued with the singing of the final hymn, the Blessing, Commissioning and Postlude
- we then moved downstairs to the Friendship Hall to enjoy a luncheon of sandwiches and desserts provided by the members of the Official Board

"Phyllis Brady"
Chair - Phyllis Brady

"Joanne Hamilton"
Secretary - Joanne Hamilton

From the Minister's Desk

The world does not feel steady right now. Institutions we were taught to trust are unravelling. Power is being abused without accountability. Fear is being used as a governing strategy. Many of us wake each day bracing ourselves for what new harm will be revealed. We need to be honest about this. Naming the danger is not despair; it is sanity.

History tells us that moments like this are not new. Empires have fallen before. Moral orders have collapsed before. People have lived through seasons when cruelty was normalized and minorities were treated as a threat. In those moments, not everyone fled or fought.

Some chose something less dramatic and more enduring.

In the sixth century, as the Roman Empire disintegrated, St. Benedict of Nursia did not try to save the Empire. He also did not abandon the world. Instead, he

gathered people into a way of life rooted in stability, shared labour, prayer, and care for the vulnerable. The monasteries that followed did not prevent collapse, but they preserved humanity within it.

They became places where learning survived, where the poor were fed, where dignity was practiced when power had lost its moral compass. They did not do this by being loud or dominant. They did it by staying.

This is a different kind of courage than the kind we usually celebrate. It is the courage of remaining present when it would be easier to harden or disappear. It is the courage of tending life when destruction has momentum.

Benedict called this **stability**: committing to a place, a people, and a way of living that resists chaos without mirroring it. Stability is not passivity. It is disciplined faithfulness. It is the refusal to let fear decide who we become.

This matters for us now.

We are living through a time when many are tempted to withdraw, to numb themselves, or to believe that nothing they do will matter. But the Benedictine wisdom insists otherwise. It teaches that how we live in the midst of breakdown shapes what becomes possible afterward.

When we choose to stay human — when we keep telling the truth, caring for one another, protecting the vulnerable, practicing restraint instead of revenge — we become carriers of a different future, even if we never see its fullness.

This does not mean we ignore injustice or accept harm. Benedictine communities were not neutral. They were ordered around values that quietly but firmly contradicted domination: humility over power, shared resources over hoarding, hospitality over exclusion, care over control.

In times like these, courage does not always look like confrontation. Sometimes it looks like preserving what makes life worth saving.

If the world feels like it is burning, the invitation is not to match the fire with more fire. The invitation is to become places of shelter, memory, and moral clarity — to keep the human story alive until it can be told again more truthfully.

You are not weak for feeling afraid. You are not naïve for choosing tenderness. You are not irrelevant because you cannot fix everything.

The work now is to stay. We are in this together,

Blessings,

Wendy

Rev. Wendy Noble

Report from the Co-Chairs of the Board

2025 was another busy year for Rev. Wendy Noble, Laura Wilkes, Dirk Van Vrouwerff and Ryan Baxter, as well as the many volunteers of Rowntree Memorial United Church. Time seems to fly by as we move through the seasons in our worship, prepare for and hold fundraising and outreach projects, and celebrate milestones. Our Annual Meeting is the perfect opportunity to pause to say thank you to Rev. Wendy, Laura, Dirk, Ryan, all the volunteers and the financial donors who make the good works sponsored by Rowntree possible.

We are grateful for our relationship with the London Vietnamese Alliance Church (LVAC) congregation. They help us financially, as well as with their delicious food, technical expertise and person power. We appreciate their assistance for the spring clean up of our building and grounds. In 2025, LVAC members replaced several toilets in the building.

We are grateful for our relationship with ELUCO as we work with other congregations to provide the Welcome Wednesday meals and the Food Cupboard. They are so much appreciated by the clients.

We are grateful for our relationship with the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) in the provision of fitness classes, social times and healthy living advice. Many persons from the neighbourhood and other parts of the city regularly attend the VON classes.

Our building is well used for a variety of other programmes - Scouting, Guiding, pickleball, Taking Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), and the Forest City Choir. The Tuesday Hospitality Suppers and the Christmas Hamper Program are more examples of volunteers and donors doing their best to help our neighbours in need.

Rowntree participated in two Carling Neighbourhood events in 2025 - the Block Party was a beautiful day in July, with many enjoying our lemonade and knitted/crocheted hearts and the fall Garage sale was held in September – another financial success. Several Rowntree members participated in the Pride Parade in July. What a heart-warming experience for us to see the crowds joining in the spirit of love and acceptance. The knitted/crocheted hearts were distributed with joy and received with gratitude. RMUC's heart idea spread to the London United Churches participating in the parade.

Rowntree is a remarkable community of dedicated members supporting each other through difficult times and celebrating joyous occasions. "Come Celebrate" held on November 2nd, was a service of joy celebrating 100 years of the United Church of Canada, as well as 70 years of the Rowntree building. Many friends of Rowntree joined the members to sing and laugh and share a potluck meal. Thank you, Rev. Wendy, Ryan and the joint choir (with Dundas Street Centre) for creating the beautiful service!

*Submitted by Brian Kominek, Brad McMurray & Phyllis Brady
Co-Chairs*

Trustees

The Board of Trustees holds the legal title of all of the property of the congregation for their use and benefit. According to the Constitution of Rowntree Memorial United Church, the

Board consists of between 3 and 7 Trustees elected by the membership to serve for a renewable five year term. The Minister is also a member of the Trustees.

The main responsibilities are:

- to ensure that adequate insurance is maintained for the church and its varied ministries;
- to educate and encourage the Membership to participate in programs of Planned Giving;
- to invest monies directed to them by the Board.

The Trustees met via Zoom in June and dealt with two matters via email in January and September.

- a transfer of \$25,000.00 from Investments to the General Fund was approved in January and another transfer for \$18,000.00 was approved in September;
- the purpose of the June Zoom meeting was to discuss the level of property and boiler insurance coverage for September 2025 to August 2026. It was decided to change our level of coverage to 75% in order to reduce costs.

Phyllis Brady – Chair
Kathy Barber – Secretary
Frieda Owen
Brian Kominek
Bob Brown
Rev. Wendy Noble

Submitted by Kathy Barber

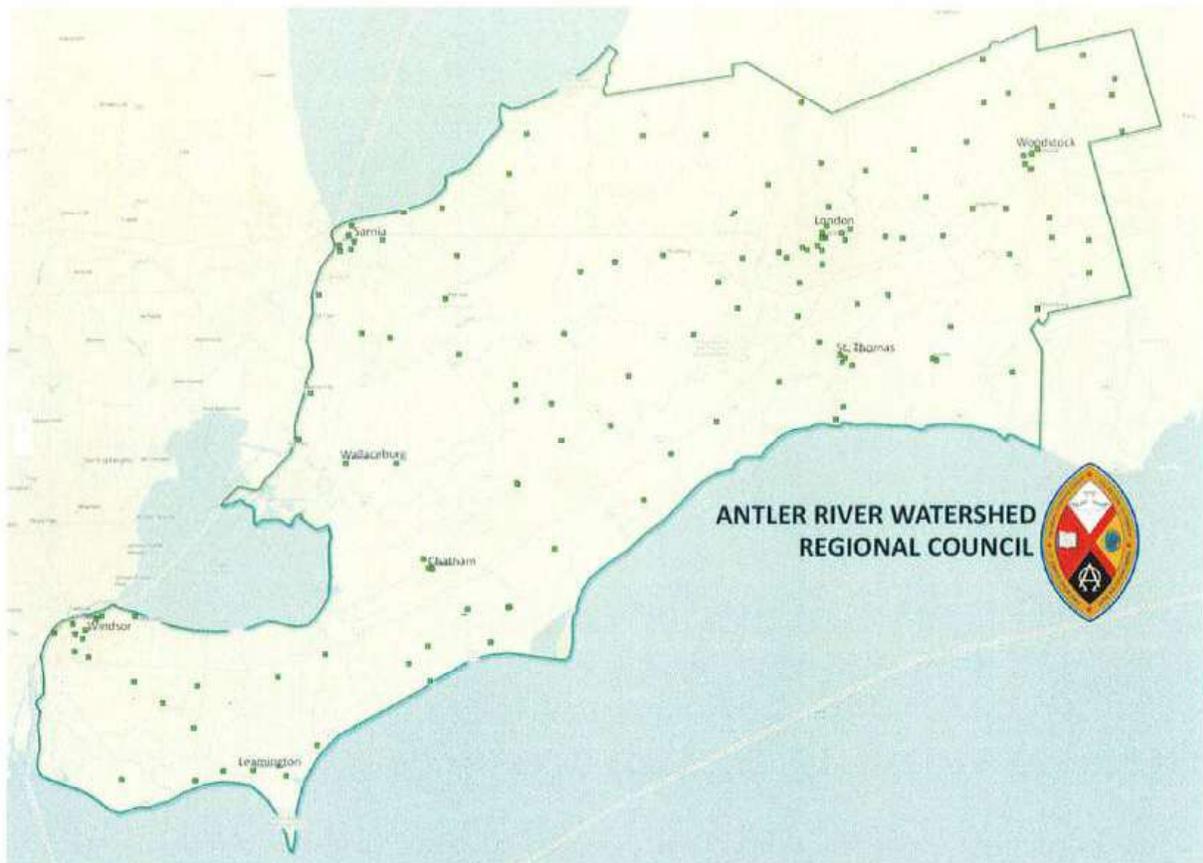
Antler River Watershed Regional Council

Antler River Watershed Regional Council is a decision making body responsible to serve and support Communities of Faith within its bounds, as well as to provide necessary oversight.

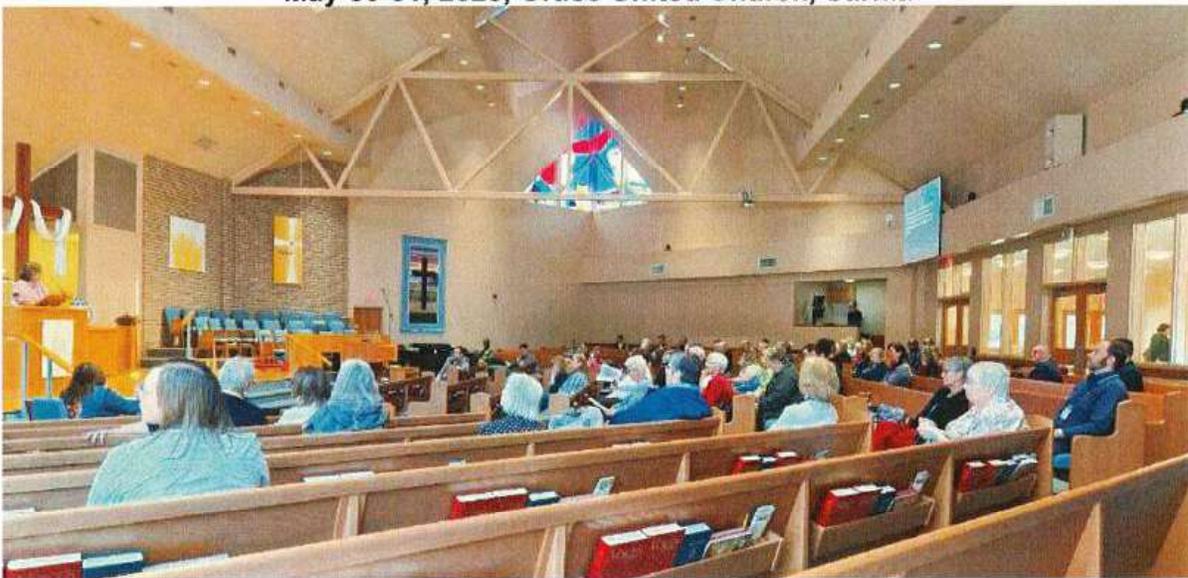
The purpose of Antler River Watershed Regional Council is 'Holding and Encouraging Communities of Faith'. This statement is both a communication tool and a standard against which to measure the work of the Regional Council. This statement was shaped by Oneida Elder, Rev. Grafton Antone recalling the Haudenosaunee creation story of Turtle Island (the Indigenous name for North America). Antler River Watershed Regional Council is the southernmost region of Canada and, as such, it holds the rest of the shell.

The ARWRC is composed of all ministry personnel within its geographic bounds; ministers of denominations within mutual recognition agreements while under appointment or call; and lay members elected by the Communities of Faith, respecting the balance of lay and ministry personnel where possible.

The ARWRC encompasses the counties of Elgin, Essex, Kent, Lambton, Middlesex and Oxford and is pleased to serve alongside the Indigenous ministries of Kettle Point United Church, Moraviantown United Church, Oneida United Church, St. Clair United Church and Walpole Island United Church.



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



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 - do consider becoming involved in the council. I am sure Rev. Wendy will appreciate the company!

Submitted by Ryan Baxter in the Rowntree Fall 2025 Newsletter

London Vietnamese Alliance Church

At LVAC, the London Vietnamese Alliance Church, we experienced God's abundant blessings throughout 2025. Our hearts were filled with gratitude for His guidance and care. Rowntree Church contributed to our joy by eagerly supporting us at every turn.

The additional space they provided enhanced our Children's ministries. Kids engaged with Bible stories and enjoyed games in a safe and fun environment. This allowed us to reach more families with God's love. The Mills Room was beneficial for our English ministries, where leaders conducted lessons and groups gathered for prayer and study. All this space enabled us to grow and serve more effectively.

2025 was filled with unforgettable moments. We celebrated our first wedding ceremony right here, with the couple radiating happiness as we honoured their union in Christ. We also celebrated a couple's 50th wedding anniversary, where guests shared stories of faith and love over the years. Christmas services were vibrant, with carols filling the air as families worshiped together. These events brought our church family closer together and reminded us of His goodness.

New individuals joined us and discovered faith in Christ. We witnessed baptisms and listened to testimonies that illustrated how God blesses us and uses us to impact lives.

We collaborated for a spring cleanup day, picking up trash, tidying flower beds and windows, and addressing anything that needed care. Breakfast gatherings with Rowntree were also vital for fostering relationships, filled with food and laughter. We all felt the blessings of God bringing us together.

As we enter 2026, we look ahead with enthusiasm. LVAC is committed to continuing our support for the Rowntree family and serving our neighbourhood. Our church is growing, and we have new opportunities to share Christ's love every day.

Submitted by David Ebert

Committee Reports

Communications

As listed in our Constitution, the purpose of the Communications Committee is to 'support the mission and goals of the Community of Faith by effectively employing the many forms

of communications available to inform the Community of Faith and beyond about the Official Board, Committees, groups, Denomination, Region, Conference, General Council'. In other words – we inform.

Our group is small – we have 3 main people pictured below; Lynn Patterson, Brian Kominek and Brad McMurray, Committee Chair, but we also get help from other Rowntree members.

The main focus of this group are to: produce our newsletter- the Rowntree Acorn; to oversee the technical parts of the worship services – i.e. the audio, sound & Zoom (so people can watch our service online); to manage our website - <https://rowntreechurch.ca/>.

The website itself is a library of information; the latest audio recordings from our Sunday services, our calendar, links to our Region: Antler River, histories of Rowntree, Wellington and Robinson Churches, info on our fundraisers and mission work - locally and further afield and background info on justice issues. We also keep our Facebook page up-to-date, again with help from others, especially Rev. Wendy Noble and Maryjane Jolliffe.

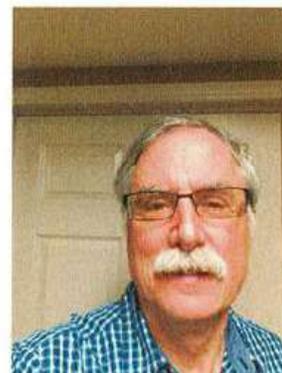
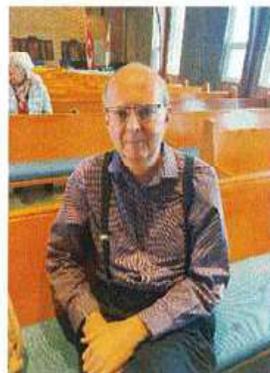
Looking forward to the second century of the United Church of Canada – social media is becoming the most important way for people to communicate we really need someone who is more knowledgeable about Facebook and Instagram to get our message out to more people. Are you that person or do you know someone who is ?

By the way, with so much of what this Committee does being linked to technology, are you curious what AI - artificial intelligence - says about communications in the bible?

'The bible provides timeless wisdom on communication, urging individuals to be mindful of their words, listen actively and communicate with love and respect. By following these principles, believers can foster healthier relationships and a deeper connection with God.'

Great words to live by!

Submitted by Brad McMurray



Fundraising

The year 2025 was music to our ears with The Forest City Singers opening and closing the fundraising year and our annual total reaching a post-COVID high.

Ham & Strawberry Supper

On Saturday, June 14th, ninety-four diners enjoyed a delicious meal at Rowntree. There were some challenges this year as our local crop of strawberries from Heeman's got a slow start. Fortunately, our local Metro supermarket was able to fill our order from their supplier in Tillsonburg. It was fun to work in the kitchen again with Chris Hodgins and our team of volunteers. A heartfelt thanks to all!



Ham & Strawberry Supper

Fall Fling Yard and Bake Sale

On Saturday, September 6th, we once again joined in with our Carling Heights neighbours for a yard (and bake) sale. Fortunately, we enjoyed much better weather this year.

A mini-event compared to our Christmas bazaar, we nevertheless had a very successful day with sales exceeding last year by 33%. 77% of the sales came from the bargains and baking in a 50/50 split.



Fall Fling Yard & Bake Sale

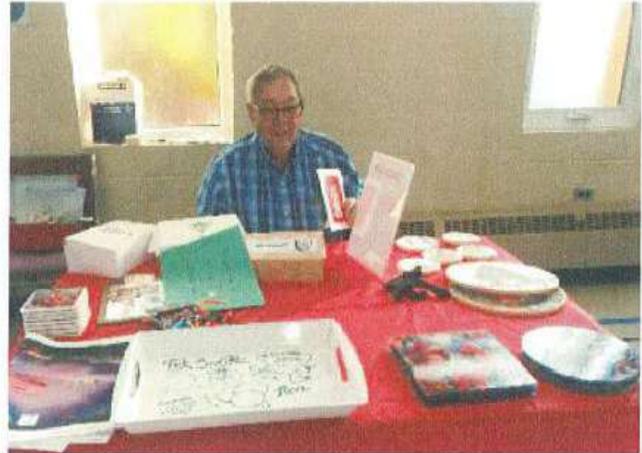
Of special mention was a generous donation of "like new" books, DVD's, and CD's received from a friend of the Barbers. Every available table was moved into the Mills Room to display the extraordinary number of books, etc.

Christmas Bazaar

Our annual Christmas bazaar was held on Saturday, November 22nd with the same set-up as last year taking advantage of both the upstairs and downstairs spaces. We had a couple of new vendors this year with Beth Brown and her daughter Lauryn, as well as Mark Jolliffe selling their crafts alongside the Lindsays and Gloria Leckie. It was pleasant weather and the event was well-attended.



Beth & Lauryn



Mark

Downstairs, many lunches were served and the bake table was almost empty at the end of the day; while upstairs, the Christmas treasures received a boost from items donated by friends of the Thompsons who are downsizing, and the Toonie Table had a record number of items on offer.



It was another busy year of jam sessions at Rowntree with strawberry, peach, orange marmalade, red pepper jelly, and Merry Christmas jam on offer. The Merry Christmas jam sold out halfway through the bazaar leaving some disappointed customers; but, fear not, we met again after the bazaar to make more Merry Christmas jam, which again sold out.

Some stock remains for sale into 2026 – mostly red pepper jelly with jalapeno and orange marmalade.



Pam & Margaret working on red pepper jelly

Thanks again to all the volunteers who helped make this event a success, including Joanne Hamilton for her soup/hot dog lunch, Phyllis Brady for heading up the jam sessions, and Glen Thompson for his festive music.

Forest City Singers Spring & Christmas Concerts

On Friday, May 2nd at 7:00 p.m., Rowntree hosted the spring concert, ***“Echoes of the Heart”***. Following the performance, guests and choir members were invited to the gym for refreshments. Eighty-five were in attendance for the spring concert, for which Rowntree receives 40% of the ticket sales.

Forest City Singers present ***“The Sounds of Christmas”*** took place on Friday, December 5th at 7:00 p.m. There was a little extra added to the concert this year with guest saxophonist Tim Lusher, performing mellow Christmas tunes with a sound reminiscent of Kenny G, prior to the concert and during the intermission, and Dave and Peggy Dunham on hand bells accompanying the choir on “Ring the Christmas Season”.

Attendance of ninety-two represents a 44% increase over last year. While the weather was cold, it was not snowing on the evening. Some people arrived late as they were caught in traffic for the Lighting of the Lights downtown. Again, refreshments were served in the gym after the concert.

As always, a big thank you to Michelle Brown, Allison O’Connor and the choir members.

In Summary

With five very successful events, we were blessed to surpass our goal of \$7,000 for the year. With your time, talents and treasures, we look forward to another great year of FUNdraising, while cautiously raising our goal for 2026 to \$8,000.

5-year summary with our main events for Rowntree

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
GOAL	\$ 5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 7,000.00
RAISED	\$1,618.80	\$5,971.00	\$7,209.15	\$8,284.32	\$10,419.39
Consists of					
Pop Cans			\$116.00	\$73.45	
Jam Sales	N/A	\$170.00	\$360.00	Included in Bazaar	Included in Bazaar
Ham & Strawberry Dinner	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$1,331.20	\$1,535.00
Fall Fling Sale	N/A	\$1,146.00	\$1,200.15	\$1,152.00	\$1,537.00
Poinsettia Bazaar	\$1,448.00	\$2,245.00	\$3,088.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,944.39
Forest City Singers	N/A	\$2,410.00 (1 concert)	\$2,445.00 (2 concerts)	\$1,727.65 (2 concerts)	\$2,403.00 (2 concerts)

Total amount raised for the 5 years = \$ 33,502.66

Pickleball & Pizza Game Day

In a separate fundraiser not for general funds/outreach, Lynn Patterson was instrumental in organizing an event which was held on Saturday, May 10th. Nine Rowntree pickleball enthusiasts signed up for pickleball play and a fun time was had by all. With a registration fee of \$40, this event resulted in \$320 after expenses (a.k.a. Pizza). These funds were donated directly to Project Green Rowntree to assist with the recent Brampton Street entrance renovations.

Submitted by Maryjane Jolliffe

♪ *Forest City Singers* ♪

The Forest City Singers meet most Tuesday evenings from September through April at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. The choir is open to men and women of all ages who share a love of music and enjoy choral singing. Membership is offered for a nominal fee of \$150 for the full season or \$75 for a half season, which covers our expenses. The choir is energetically and creatively led by Michelle Brown, B.Mus, B.Ed., and accompanied by the talented Allison O'Connor, B.Mus, B.Ed.

Each year, we present two themed programs—one at Christmas and one in the spring—performed at two or three venues, including Rowntree Memorial United Church. These concerts serve as fundraisers for the host churches while also helping to sustain the choir's operating budget. For the Christmas concert at Rowntree, 100% of ticket sales remain with the church, while 40% of the spring ticket sales go to Rowntree. Attendance at the Rowntree concerts increased in 2025, with spring concert revenue rising by \$102. Revenue from the December 2025 concert totalled \$1,724 compared to \$1,220 in

December 2024. Our tickets remain at the very affordable price of \$20 per ticket and free for children 12 and under.



The Forest City Singers are deeply grateful for the opportunity to rehearse in the sanctuary at Rowntree Memorial United Church and to collaborate with members of the congregation in making music together. We are also pleased to support the wider ministry of the church. In December 2024, the choir donated approximately \$240 to the Rowntree Hospitality Meal, and we hope to be able to offer similar support in the future.

Submitted by Michelle Brown

Ministry & Personnel

We thank you, Reverend Wendy for your faithful service and unwavering dedication to our church family ... Your leadership is a beacon of hope and strength to Rowntree.

Ryan, Laura and Dirk, we appreciate the countless hours you all give in service, whether anyone sees it or not ... Rowntree appreciates all of you.

Submitted by Lynn Patterson



Outreach & Social Justice

Canadian Food Grains donation
L.U.S.O. - Donation for Summer Camp snacks
L.U.S.O. - Donation to their Food Cupboard
Rowntree Tuesday Night Hospitality Meal
E.L.U.C.O. - Welcome Wednesday Lunch
E.L.U.C.O. - Food Cupboard
E.L.U.C.O. - Back to School backpacks
E.L.U.C.O. - Annual donation
Christmas 2025 Hamper Project
United Church of Canada Mission & Service Fund

During the year 2025, the above programs were supported by the Rowntree congregation, along with help of many non-members from our community.

We gathered up school **backpacks** starting in June for students who are supported through E.L.U.C.O. Both Rowntree and Dundas Street Centre United Church congregations donated wonderful backpacks and also school supplies. Thanks to all!

The **Welcome Wednesday Lunch** program continued in Rowntree's kitchen and Friendship Hall throughout the year. Hot meals are served from noon to 1:00 pm. Several east London churches take part in this program, each having a regular week in the month. Rowntree's turn was the first week and was headed up by Maryjane Jolliffe, along with many volunteers to prepare and serve the food.

The **Tuesday Night Hospitality Meal** program also continued in 2025, headed up by Joanne Hamilton with the help of many volunteers.

Rowntree gives a **monthly donation to E.L.U.C.O.**, along with an extra \$75 per month to support their **Food Cupboard** that is open at Gethsemane Gardens on Wednesday and Friday mornings of each week. Rowntree volunteers help at the Food Cupboard on Fridays. The Food Cupboard is located at the corner of Huron and Sandford Streets.

We were again able to offer **Christmas Food Hampers** to area families. This year we distributed hampers to 32 families who had registered for one. Thanks to our congregation for their donations to this program and to Phyllis Brady and her team for putting together the Hampers

The United Church of Canada Mission and Service Fund goal for the year 2025 was \$10,000. A total of \$9,695 was reached by the congregation. We thank everyone who contributed to the Mission and Service Fund, as well as the other Outreach projects.

The Outreach & Social Justice Committee is made up of Frieda Owen, Jessie Morrice, Ruth Campbell, Ruth Kanu, and Judy White.

Submitted by Frieda Owen



ELUCO Board

“With every change, a new chapter of our story unfolds.”

For ELUCO, 2025 was a year of change and the unfolding of a new chapter in our 41-year history. At the end of 2024 the ELUCO Board was faced with some tough decisions regarding its ministry. Financial constraints dictated that we close down the ministry, or reduce the hours for our Outreach Worker, Nancy Howard, to half time. The decision was reached to reduce Nancy’s hours to half time. Generous donations over the Christmas season allowed us to increase Nancy’s time to three days per week. With ever increasing demands on her time the challenge was to maintain programs and support while implementing these new time constraints.

In Nancy’s words, “It’s been a year of adjustment for myself and our ELUCO families with the reduction of my hours of availability. I’ve been able to retain the same broad support system with Counselling, providing Resources and Referrals, Assistance with Documentation (Annual Reviews, OW, ODSP, Government Forms), Support for Appointments (Medical, School Accommodations, CAS, Tribunals and Housing Stability), Food Security Initiatives (distribution and programs), plus Activities for Children and Families. What has suffered the most due to limited time is my ability to do check-ins with families as frequently as I once did. This gesture has always been a reminder that we care, building trust and an invitation to share their current circumstances when they might not otherwise have asked for support. Despite limitations, we are making this work and part-time hours are allowing ELUCO to sustain services. To better meet the needs of the community, I am now working Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday with flexibility to add or switch days to accommodate high priority needs and appointments.”

To adapt to Nancy’s new time constraints, the Board decided to meet every two months so she would be able to attend and report at our meetings. The Board sponsored two fundraising events this year. In April the Voices of Broadway performed in the sanctuary of Siloam United church. We are so blessed and thankful that Siloam permits us to use their sanctuary for both rehearsal and concert. Our second successful fundraiser, Walk and Roll, was held in Springbank Park at the end of September. We had perfect weather and a good turn out for this event. Our AGM was held at Rowntree Memorial United Church in April, and as well as conducting the business of the corporation, we recognized three of our volunteers, Gary and Barb from Welcome Wednesday, and Connie who assists Nancy with programming at Marconi. We are extremely grateful to all of our volunteers who selflessly devote hours to ELUCO. We couldn’t do it without you!

Welcome Wednesday

Every Wednesday from September to June, a group of dedicated volunteers gather at Rowntree Memorial United Church to prepare and provide a hot meal for 40 to 60 hungry community members from the area at noon. We are grateful for the fresh food and groceries that are donated weekly by the Food Coalition. Our volunteers serve tasty dishes

based on what comes in each week. If there is a surplus of groceries, the clientele is able to take items home and anything else left over is taken back to the Marconi community by Nancy. Twice a year a special meal is served - Christmas, a turkey dinner with all the trimmings and June, a picnic to end the program. Thank you Rowntree for the use of your facility and to all the volunteers who make this such a successful program.

ELUCO Food Cupboard

The ELUCO Food Cupboard based at the Gethsemane Gardens Housing Unit is open to local residents Wednesday and Friday each week. A long serving group of loyal volunteers meet the needs of our ever-increasing clientele. Increasing food costs make it difficult to keep our shelves stocked. We are grateful to the Sisters of St Joseph and the Harvest Bucks Program for augmenting the generous donations from our churches and individuals. A special thank you to Sharon Ashton for searching out the bargains and shopping for the items on our shelves.

In 2025 we served 654 families comprised of 1245 adults, 577 children and 1 baby compared to 635 families, 1123 adults, 519 children and 1 baby in 2024.

Our year ended on a very positive note financially and we are so thankful for the groups and individuals who continue to walk with us on our journey. Thank you to the United Church of Canada's Mission & Service Fund, our partner Churches and the other churches in the Antler River family, UCW's, May Court Club of London, Sisters of St Joseph, London & Middlesex Community Housing, London Affordable Housing, Middlesex London Health Unit, London Food Bank and our many generous individual donors. Justice and equality for the most vulnerable in our society is the change we need as a new chapter of ELUCO's story unfolds.

All submitted by Carol Langford on behalf of the Board

Rowntree's Vegetable Garden

For many years, our vegetable garden has supplied the London Food Bank with vegetables. When Jay Whistlecraft ran the project we donated hundreds of pounds of potatoes each year. Eventually the potato bugs took over, so the last few years we've planted beans, carrots and squash. Last spring was wet and cold, so most items needed to be replanted. Then the summer was hot and dry. So we ended up donating 21 lbs of carrots and 6 squash to ELUCO. Gardening help is always appreciated!

Pictured is a member of LVAC, the London Vietnamese Alliance Church, helping to get the garden ready in the spring.



Submitted by Brad McMurray

Hospitality Meal



***Then the sheep are going to say, "Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you; homeless and give you a room; shivering and give you clothes?" And he will say, "I'm telling the solemn truth -whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me - you did it to me."
Matthew 25***

On December 14th, 2010, Rowntree opened its doors on Tuesday evenings to provide a hot meal to anyone who needed it, a continuation of the meal that was started at Robinson Memorial United Church on March 5, 1996 until it closed in the latter part of 2010. We have served meals at Rowntree on nearly every Tuesday evening since 2010.

We provide our hamburger bean soup, chicken noodle soup and vegetarian soup, along with crackers, celery sticks, carrot sticks, apple, cookies, and a hot and cold drink in the Friendship Hall. On July 8th we switched to serving a choice of sandwiches - egg salad, chicken salad, or ham & cheese on white or whole wheat bread instead of soup as a take out from the class doors at the Brampton entrance. On October 21st, we switched back to serving soup full time inside.

As you will see from the statistics page that follows, we were able to assist 1,177 guests in 2025. The cost of providing the meal for the year was \$4,436.98, which when divided by 1,177 guests equals \$3.77 per guest, or \$86.71 per week based on an average of 23 guests. These numbers also include the extra costs involved in buying the take-out containers for the meals in the summer.

The funding for the programme comes from funds provided through your donations on the offering plate to the Hospitality Meal, which is supplemented by funds transferred from the church account each month. The church has also received donations from members of the neighbourhood who have supported the Hospitality Meal for a couple of years. In February, 2025 we received a cheque for \$580.00 from the London Lawyers Feed the Hungry Program that we applied for in 2024. We are very grateful to receive their continued support.

You can specify a donation to help offset the cost of the meal by including it with your weekly or monthly offering and just marking "Hospitality Meal" on your envelope, to have it credited towards the Tuesday meal and your yearly givings.

On December 23rd we were able to distribute a gift bag to our guests at our last meal before Christmas. Murray, Barb and I made up the gift bags on the night before. Each bag had 2 clementines, 5 Werther's candies, 5 pieces of chocolate, a candy cane, a granola bar and a pocket packet of Kleenex. Each of our guests received a gift bag and either a piece of apple pie or pumpkin pie along with their meal that night.

A **HUGE** vote of thanks goes out once again to our dedicated volunteers, **Murray Currah, Barb Caves, Sylvia Brettrager and Martha Jones** ☺. Thanks also to **Maryjane Jolliffe, Brad McMurray, and Dirk Van Vrouwerff** who have filled in when one of our regulars couldn't make it.

We could not continue with offering the meal each week without the help of the volunteers or the monetary support of the congregation and others. Thank you all for allowing this much needed outreach to continue.

Submitted by Joanne Hamilton, Co-ordinator

ROWNTREE HOSPITALITY MEAL STATISTICS

Number of people assisted by our outreach programme since December 14, 2010

	MEAL GUESTS										
	/15	/16	/17	/18	/19	/20	/21	/22	/23	/24	/25
Jan.	272/4	215/4	187/5	185/5	176/4	238/4	112/4	111/4	131/5	168/5	71/4
Feb.	225/4	223/4	167/4	161/4	182/4	217/4	115/4	109/4	117/4	154/4	67/4
Mar.	314/5	329/5	230/4	198/4	191/4	181/5	172/5	149/5	115/4	163/4	75/4
Apr.	264/4	260/4	235/4	170/4	195/5	103/4	196/4	142/4	136/4	153/5	106/5
May.	286/4	293/5	279/5	231/5	234/4	130/4	153/4	179/5	146/5	166/4	104/4
June	381/5	164/3	217/4	217/4	227/4	147/5	207/5	166/4	173/4	155/4	95/4
July	273/4	234/4	205/4	216/5	268/5	101/4	147/4	150/4	133/4	180/5	96/4
Aug.	270/4	278/5	284/5	182/4	217/4	114/4	173/5	202/5	203/5	139/4	94/4
Sept.	269/5	265/4	224/4	176/4	207/4	169/5	133/4	170/4	228/4	135/4	146/5
Oct.	228/4	216/4	256/5	220/5	280/5	138/4	151/4	165/4	222/5	156/5	138/5
Nov.	266/4	273/5	186/4	143/4	211/4	161/4	159/5	130/5	156/4	110/4	102/4
Dec.	257/5	141/3	102/3	105/3	143/3	128/5	119/4	92/3	130/3	38/3	83/5
TOTAL	3,305	2,891	2,572	2,204	2,531	1,827	1,837	1,765	1,890	1,717	1,177

NOTE: The numbers following the / above are the number of Tuesdays in the month that we served.

guests served from Dec 14/10 (3 wks only)	131
guests served in 2011	3,456
guests served in 2012 (closed 3 wks)	3,981
guests served in 2013 (closed 3 wks)	3,709
guests served in 2014 (closed 1 wk)	3,955
guests served in 2015	3,305
guests served in 2016 (closed 2 wks)	2,891
guests served in 2017 (closed 1 wk)	2,572
guests served in 2018 (closed 1 wk)	2,204
guests served in 2019 (closed 2 wks)	2,531
guests served in 2020 during COVID	1,827
guests served in 2021 during COVID	1,837
guests served in 2022 (during COVID & closed 1 wk)	1,765
guests served in 2023 (closed 1 wk)	1,890
guests served in 2024 (closed 2 wks)	1,717
guests served in 2025 (closed 1 wk)	<u>1,177</u>

TOTAL **38,948 guests served since moving to Rowntree**

TOTAL GUESTS SERVED since the outreach began at Robinson Memorial United Church on **March 5, 1996** is 49,106 + Rowntree 38,948 = **88,054**. **THANK YOU** to all of our volunteers and supporters who have made this outreach possible.

Pastoral Care

The Committee members are as follows:

Phyllis Brady (Chair)
Frieda Owen
Janice Barber (Secretary)

Brad McMurray
Rev. Wendy Noble

We thank Rev. Wendy Noble for meeting with us and giving us guidance. We met four times in 2025... all meetings were via Zoom.

We visit or call Rowntree's members who are unable to attend Sunday services. This includes members who are in Long Term Care Homes or their own homes. These visits and calls mean a great deal, as some people might not have any family nearby.

Frieda Owen faithfully sends sympathy cards, as well as cards to those who are celebrating life events such as special birthdays and anniversaries or who are recuperating from illnesses or injuries.

During the past year Committee members connected with people supported by the Pastoral Care Committee by making deliveries of the church newsletter.

We encourage all members to communicate changes of addresses or phone numbers to any Committee member and/or the church office.

We also welcome any suggestions and offers of assistance in order to better serve the Rowntree community.

Submitted by Janice Barber

Knit Happens

Our Knit Happens group meets on Tuesday evenings over Zoom. It is an open group that any and all are invited to join. Crafting is part of the experience, but not the whole experience. Conversations and comradery are a significant part of the time spent together. If you are curious – please contact me for the Zoom link and join the conversation.

During the year the knitters and crocheters have contributed hats to the LHSC Victoria Hospital Birthing Centre, NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) and the Paediatric Critical Care Unit. They have been gratefully received and enjoyed. Around 300 hats have been contributed by all our knitters.



Other endeavours have included the hearts project for the Pride Parade. Nearly 4,000 hearts were distributed to folks along the parade route and in Victoria Park after the parade concluded. We are most thankful for the many people who crafted hearts and those who tied them to cards reading, "God loves you. London United Churches". Our "knit ins" on the lawn at First Saint Andrews United Church brought many of our folks together and drew attention to the project. Many hands from several of our London United Churches made this project possible.



*Making hearts outside
First St. Andrews UC*



Pride Parade

Some may remember back in 2016 when women who were protesting comments made about sexually assaulting women, marched on Washington. This included many Canadian women who crossed the border to join in the march. Out of this protest the "Pussy Hat" became their symbol. It was a simple winter toque with little ears on the top. Knitters adopted this project like wild fire.

Knitting has never existed in a vacuum. Historically, it has been used as a form of expression, solidarity, and yes, protest, including during WWII in Norway, which is the historical reference behind the "Melt the Ice Hat". Discussing that history, or patterns inspired by it, is not off-topic for a knitting community. Please contact me if you are interested in the pattern or to know more about the Norwegian protest.

We are living through a time that is frightening and destabilizing. Some folks (including me) are choosing to engage with knitting as a way to respond to this moment, including supporting charitable efforts. Knitting, crocheting, and crafting are a way of creating a tangible result of your mindfulness, your care and compassion, as well as your protest and the support of a cause.

As the saying goes – ***“Stay calm and Knit on!”***

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Wendy Noble

Pickleball

Pickleball has been enjoyed by all...here are a few comments from some players...

Alice ... joined as a beginner and says she loves the interaction, loves the game, it's not crazy busy although you may have to look out for your opponents, great banter and it can be quite physical.

Celeste enjoys meeting new people, enjoys the challenge of the game, both mentally and physically.

Anne ... says it's a sport she has never played because she has never played a sport before, loves the group because of the understanding we all show to newcomers, and because it's near her home she is reconnecting with her neighbours.

Phyllis ... says it's really fun, good exercise, meeting new people, and a great activity indoors for a winter sport.

If anyone feels they would like to give pickleball a try, please come join the fun filled group ... Wednesday mornings 9 to 11 and evening 6 to 9 and Friday evenings 6 to 9. Cost is \$5.00 per session. All are welcome!

Submitted by Lynn Patterson



TOPS Ontario Chapter #2718

Meeting time: Thursdays 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Group Members: 9

'Taking Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS)' - As you can see, we have a small group of members now. Previous to COVID we had approximately 35 members. Our group is made up of many ages, all but 1 of whom is over 70 and the oldest is 86, making 3 at 80+. Sadly, we had one of our present members pass away quite suddenly and for that we were deeply shocked and saddened.

This group is set up to help women focus on losing their excess weight. We have weekly weigh-ins and this helps us see just how we are losing or gaining, and lots of times just standing still. We support and encourage one another when we are disappointed in the weekly result and congratulate those ladies who have had success!

We don't just show up to weigh-in, but we have a small program on many subjects from nutrition, discussions on fad diets, games that we gain points on when we do lose weight which results in a small prize. New recipes have also been shared.

Thank you to Rowntree Memorial United for allowing us to use your facilities for these meetings.

Submitted by Carol Howarth, Leader

TOPS Ontario Chapter #5465

Meeting time: Mondays 5:00 p.m.

Our Group has been meeting at the church for 10 years now on Monday evening. We are a not for profit organization and support the public in their weight loss journey.

Our group is small in numbers at 6 members, but we are mighty. Members are weighed in privately, then we go to our meeting room (Kindergarten Room) where we have a brief discussion about how our week went.

The Leader, Jean Ellis, or the Co-Leader, Teresa Fyfe, when Leader is not able to be there, then carries on with a meeting, encouraging members with new food ideas, exercises, contests, motivation, and inspiration - it varies weekly.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet here.

Submitted by Teresa Fyfe

Victorian Order of Nurses (VON)

Since November 2022, Rowntree has been pleased to offer a home to VON (Victorian Order of Nurses) for a weekly free blood pressure clinic and social hour for seniors 55 and over, and VON SMART (Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together) exercise classes beginning in June 2023.

Blood Pressure Clinic (Thursday 10 am – 11 am) and Social Hour (Thursday Noon to 1:00 pm)

Julie McConnell-Goulbourne continues to be the program co-ordinator. When not calling bingo for a small group, she is preparing a once-monthly lunch for an average of 20 people who gather to visit, chat, and share a delicious, affordable meal.

Occasionally, we are invited to gather and be educated on topics affecting our community. In June, we were visited by the London Police who talked about scamming aimed at seniors. Julie advises that two gatherings are in the works for 2026, including a presentation on new driving rules in the city.

The EarlyON Baking programme also continues once a month with toddlers, parents, and VON volunteers baking cookies and muffins in the Rowntree kitchen.

VON SMART Exercise Program (Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 am to Noon, except select dates for summer breaks and Christmas holidays and Wednesday 1:30-2:30)

SMART is a specialized exercise program for Seniors 55 & Over and adults living with a disability who wish to improve their strength, balance, and mobility through low impact exercise. Rowntree's classes are a medium to high-intensity work-out, but most exercises can be adapted to suit your skill level.

In May 2025, a Wednesday afternoon class was added with Wendy Evans as the instructor. With Reena on Tuesday, Wendy on Wednesday, and Gloria on Thursday, each class is a positive experience. Attendance for most classes ranges from 10 to 40, depending on the day and the weather.

For anyone who has not attended VON SMART classes, pre-registration is required by calling the VON offices at 519-659-2273.

As always, VON offers opportunities for part-time fitness instructors, both paid and volunteer. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please spread the word.

Submitted by Maryjane Jolliffe

Property Committee

Members: Murray Currah, Brad McMurray, (David Watsonlimited availability)

We remember Ross Taylor, who recently passed away. He lead/assisted in multiple projects over the years, and shared his knowledge and skills of heating systems to keep our building warm during the winter months. We will miss him!

- a. Heating System: system start-up and operation passed inspection - replacement of condensate filters was completed last fall. The issue of water circulation needed for heating in the Brampton Street entrance still requires resolution.
- b. The east entrance area renovation is now completed and final grant money will arrive shortly. We are grateful for the assistance and financial support

(approximately \$18500 funding from the United Church of Canada/s Faithful Footsteps program)

- c. The water heater in the kitchen was replaced last January.
- d. Ongoing migration to LED lighting continues.
- e. Rowntree has received approval for a grant from the Ontario government to address anti-hate and security issues. New computer work stations have been acquired as part of this process.
- f. Community use of the building continues unabated and has continued to increase over the year:
 - 1. Mid-week groups resumed meetings and activities. These include a combined Cub and Scouting group, Girl Guides, 3 TOPS groups and two Community meal programs that are operational Tuesday evening, under the leadership of Joanne Hamilton, as well as the Welcome Wednesday noon-hour program shared by partner United Churches.
 - 2. Victoria Order of Nurses NGO has extended its program centring on health and nutrition. Beside the healthy lifestyle component, exercise and co-operative lunches are available on occasion.
 - 3. Pickle Ball groups continue to use the facilities in the gym (Tuesday evening, Wednesday morning and Friday evening). This continues to be a significant revenue source for the church.

Future Directions:

- a. The gate valve feed to the north outside water faucet has been rebuilt.
- b. Office air conditioning units need proper winterization to mitigate air leakage during the winter and security of building. An insulated aluminium-skinned panel would best fit this need.
- c. The east parking area shows a need to install an additional curb stop to prevent a car parking too close to the southern perimeter.

In order to keep costs reasonable, much work completed was accomplished in-house, thanks to the efforts of our 'volunteers '(Brad and Murray) who spend considerable time behind the scenes keeping our building in good condition. In general terms, the building and energy systems are in a good state.

Submitted by Murray Currah and David Watson - Co-Chairs

Did you notice our new outside cross facing Elliott St? The original cross, likely mounted with the original building in the mid-50's was marble but years of weathering had cracked it and parts of it came down this past summer. We had different ideas of what to replace it with but the costs were high: up to \$5000. Maryjane Jolliffe suggested composite decking - great idea. Even better – Patrick Taylor, Ross's son, donated the installation and materials. **THANK YOU PATRICK !**



Spirituality Committee

During the year we celebrated worship each Sunday in the sanctuary and over Zoom under the worship leadership of Rev. Wendy Noble and the musical leadership of Ryan Baxter and the choir. We celebrated communion four times this year. A “Blue Christmas” service was added this year on a Saturday afternoon for people who may find the hustle and bustle of the season of Christmas to be difficult. Through our shared worship services with Dundas Street Centre, the choir has been blessed with choir members from each congregation. The Good Friday and Remembrance Day services alternate between Rowntree and Dundas Street Centre each year, so that one service is held in each church during the calendar year.

Our services have been gifted by the Rowntree Choir and the musical leadership of Ryan Baxter, as well as with the many folks who serve as lay liturgists each Sunday. The dedicated work of the Spirituality Committee members: Maryjane Jolliffe, Margaret Thompson, Ryan Baxter and honorary member Glen Thompson, as well as the Zoom team of Brad McMurray and Power Point work of Laura Wilkes, contribute to our weekly worship experience. Many thanks and deep appreciation for all that you offer to the Rowntree Memorial Community of Faith!

These are some of the highlights of our church year:

- January 4th - Epiphany
- January 12th – Baptism of Jesus
- January 26th – Rowntree Anniversary Service – Guest Speaker Rev. Tracy Crick-Butler / Dundas Street Centre Invited to attend
- February - Black history month – stories of Viola Desmond, Laurence Hill
- February 23rd – Rowntree's AGM*
- March 9th - Lent One – Communion
- April 13th Palm Sunday
- April 18th - Good Friday – Shared service at Rowntree Memorial
- April 20th - Easter Sunday
- May 30 – 31st Antler River Watershed Regional Meeting

- June 8th - Pentecost – Communion
- June 15th - Indigenous Day of Prayer
- June 22nd - Pride Sunday
- June 29th – July 27th – shared worship at Dundas Street Centre. Resources used provided by “Together we Worship” - Lay led services
- August 3rd – August 31st
- September 7th – Fellowship Pot Luck Lunch Sunday
- September 28th- Blessing of the Pets – Truth and Reconciliation Sunday
- October 5th - World Communion Sunday
- October 12th - Thanksgiving Sunday
- October 19th - Dundas Street Centre Anniversary Service – Bill Butt LLWL as guest speaker (Licensed Lay Worship Leader)
- November 2nd – All Saints Day / 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada and the 70th anniversary of the church at Rowntree Memorial
- November 9th - Remembrance Service – shared service at Dundas Street Centre. Fraser Gibson guest piper
- November 30th - Advent One – Communion
- December 13th - Blue Christmas Service
- December 24th - Christmas Eve 7pm
- December 29th - Café style worship planned – service was cancelled due to weather.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Wendy Noble

Choir Report

As always, we began our year with food! At our first meeting each January, we keep practice short, followed by goodies and fellowship in the Mills Room.

Winter 2025 had some serious weather challenges, but we made it through to Easter and then onward to Spring. Our shared Good Friday service included a combined choir with Dundas Street Centre, and a guest clarinetist from Western, Kaitlyn Chambers. The spring cleaning day at Rowntree led to a much cleaner choir loft, which we all appreciated! Our annual choir barbecue party in June was hosted by honorary choir members Glen and Margaret Thompson. They have a lovely home that was able to accommodate everyone, and we really appreciate their generosity. After the summer break, choir resumed in September. In October we celebrated Thanksgiving, with reflection and gratitude. October also marked three years of Ryan being our music director and organist. In November we recognized the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada and the 70th anniversary of the Rowntree church building, in a shared service with Dundas Street Centre, including a guest pianist from Western, Jingquan Xie, who is Ryan’s duet partner. Our Remembrance Day service was hosted by Dundas Street Centre. Before long we were looking ahead to Advent and Christmas. Seven choir members joined Ryan for the Royal Canadian College of Organists annual Carol Festival hosted at Metropolitan United Church, which was a great afternoon of choir and organ music preparing us for the season. In December we hosted our Blue Christmas service, and for Christmas Eve we were fortunate to have several members from Dundas Street Centre join us in the church and in the choir loft. It was a joy to share the beloved carols and wonderful music of this season with everyone.

Through 2025 our membership has remained steady at 14 members attending both our 7:30 Thursday evening practices and Sunday services. Choir practice continues to be fun and lively, and we always enjoy having new singers to help us make a joyful noise – all are welcome, even for short periods of time. Our amazing choir director Ryan has such musical talent, and shares his expertise to make us better singers. We are so lucky to have him and appreciate everything he does for us and the church. Ryan has signed another one-year contract to continue working at Rowntree. We are all so happy, but are also aware that he is in his final year at Western. We have tried, but we cannot stop the march of time!

We offer thanks to:

- Glen Thompson for substituting during Ryan's vacation weeks, and for regularly contributing his talents to our worship services.
- our musical friends from Dundas St. Centre, for collaborating with us during shared services at both churches.
- Steve Davidson for playing his baritone horn at our Remembrance Day service.
- Dave Watson for continuing to keep our organ in great repair.
- Joanne Hamilton for keeping our choir library in excellent, alphabetical order.
- Rev. Wendy Noble for her spiritual leadership, and Laura Wilkes for keeping us organized.
- everyone else who contributed their musical talents throughout the year, and to the congregation for singing with us!
- Sheila Kominek for acting as our Treasurer and managing our funds, as well as remembering important occasions, life events and creating beautiful greeting cards for us
- we are grateful to God for the health of all our members, and for the community we share as a choir.

Our choir account had an opening balance for 2025 of \$741.18, expenses of \$243.41, and deposits of \$605.00, leaving a closing balance of \$1,102.77. Deposits come from the weekly collection. Expenses are for cards, gifts, flowers for our members, and supplies for our social gatherings.

Submitted by Sheila Kominek, Treasurer & Ryan Baxter, Music Director and Organist



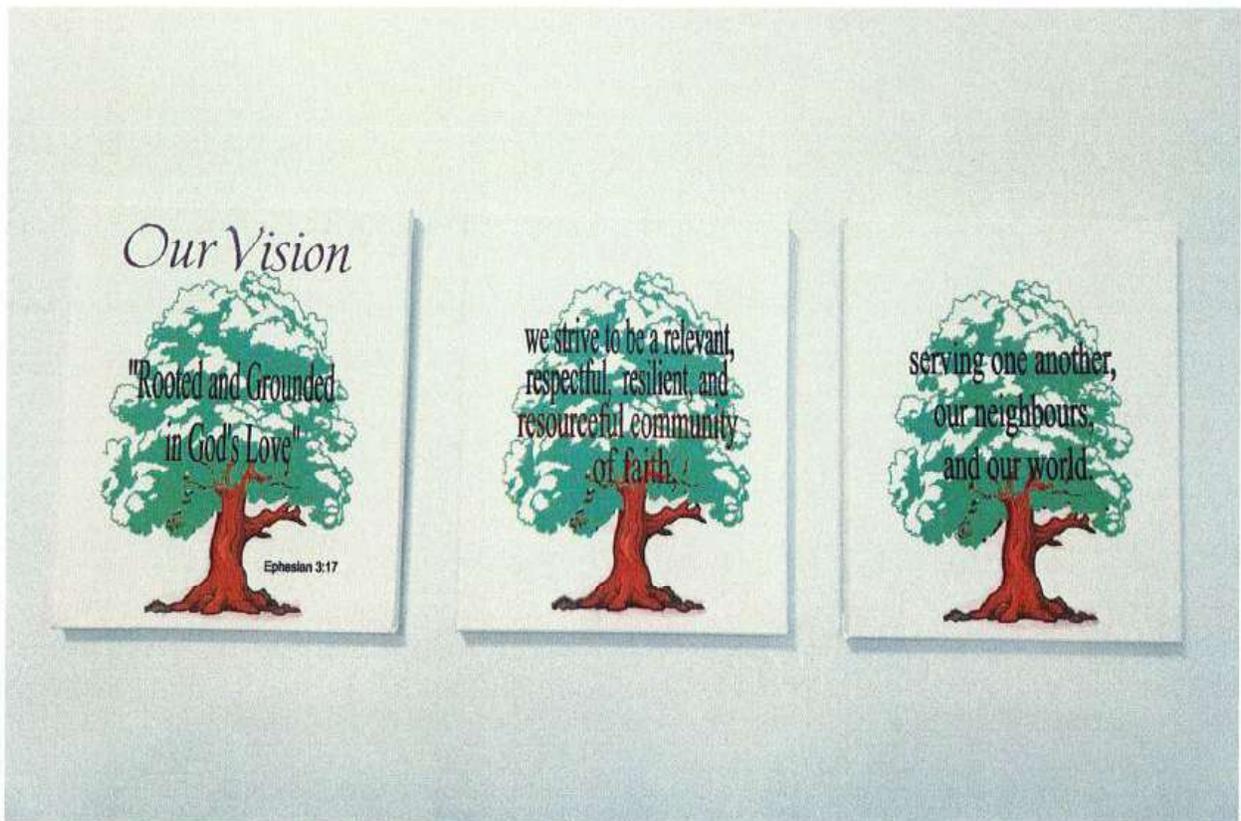
Visioning

During the last Annual Congregational Meeting in February, the congregation approved the Vision Statement for Rowntree Memorial United Church.

“Rooted and grounded in God’s Love, we strive to be a relevant, respectful, resilient and resourceful community of faith, serving one another, our neighbours and our world” - from Ephesians 3:17

Mark Jolliffe created a beautiful visual of our Vision Statement. The words of the Vision are shown in the Rowan tree connecting us with the origins of the family name Rowntree. 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”.

The art is displayed in the Brampton entrance. Thank you Mark!



Another action of the Visioning Committee was to organize meetings of the clergy and representatives of London United Churches to build relationships, discuss the future of the United Church in London, and to create opportunities to work together. We met in early March, end of April and in November 2025. Our first meeting of 2026 will be held via Zoom on January 28 and we plan to continue to meet regularly. We have support from Antler River Watershed for our meetings. Thanks to Rev Wendy, Ryan, Glen Thompson, Brad and Maryjane for their assistance with the meetings.



Visioning meeting

Visioning Committee – Phyllis Brady, Chair, Rev Wendy, Maryjane Jolliffe, Dave Watson and Brad McMurray

Submitted by Phyllis Brady



United Church Women (UCW)

As we are aware, the Rowntree UCW didn't recover following the COVID outbreak. Richards Memorial United Church UCW contacted our ladies and invited them to attend their meetings. They usually meet at 1 pm on the first Tuesday of the month. Three to five members from Rowntree have been attending at Richards and are enjoying the camaraderie.

Richards UCW have been most welcoming and it is great to be able to attend their meetings. They have a guest speaker and a short worship time followed by good food! You would be welcome to join any time for fun and fellowship.

ROWNTREE MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH WOMEN FINANCIAL STATEMENT – 2025

BALANCE – January 1st, 2025		\$503.75
<u>DEBITS</u>		
<u>Operating</u>		
Bank service charges	<u>\$20.00</u>	
<i>TOTAL DEBITS</i>	\$20.00	<u>\$ 20.00</u>
BALANCE August 31st, 2025		<u>\$483.75</u>

The UCW account at the Bank of Montreal was closed on August 29th, 2025 and after speaking with several of the UCW members, the funds were transferred to the Project Green Rowntree initiative in order to help with the payment of the renovation of the Brampton entrance work.

Rowntree Memorial United Church

Memorial Fund - 2025

Balance forward from December 31st, 2024		\$6,324.00
Contributions Received in Memory of:		
Nancy Kominek	}	
Kevin Coad		
Laurie Van Vrouwerff		
		965.00
Disbursement from Memorial Fund		
purchase of 3 computers		2,200.00
BALANCE OF MEMORIAL FUND at December 31, 2025		\$5,089.00

Mission & Service Fund - 2025

Goal		\$10,000.00
Received by Dec. 31/25		\$ 9,695.00

Project Green Rowntree

Final cost of Brampton Street entrance renovation (paid in full)		\$43,837.79
Received United Church of Canada grant	\$17,448.00	
Received donations from members	2,165.00	
Received donation from UCW	483.75	
Anticipate receiving further grant from UCC	<u>1,000.00</u>	
Total donations received to date	\$21,096.75	<u>\$21,096.75</u>
DIFFERENCE . . .		\$22,741.04

**Rowntree Memorial United Church
Financial Information**

Assets

	<i>Dec. 31/25</i>
General Fund	\$ 20,864.00
Investments - Frontier & Bank of Montreal	195,476.00
Hospitality Meal Acct	10,041.00
Memorial Fund Acct	<u>5,089.00</u>
Total Assets	\$231,470.00

Liabilities

	<i>Dec. 31/25</i>
Benevolent Fund	\$- 938.00
Christmas Hamper Fund-funds available for 2026	<u>905.00</u>
Total General Liabilities	\$ - 33.00

Rowntree Memorial United Church - 2026 Budget

	Budget 2025	Actual 2025	Budget 2026		Budget 2025	Actual 2025	Budget 2026
DONATIONS				Ministry & Personnel			
Envelopes	43,000.	41,448.	43,000.	Salaries & Benefits	107,000.	102,801.	106,000.
PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance)	17,500.	14,575.	16,206.	Con Ed & Life Long Learning	850.	523.	870.
Loose & Other	2,500.	3,512.	3,000.	Travel	400.	272.	500.
Initial	10.	-	-	Honorarium	200.	1,828.	1,000.
Fundraising	7,000.	11,278.	8,000.	WSIB	220.	251.	258.
				ADP charges	-	460.	472.
Total Donations	70,010.	70,813.	70,206.	Total Ministry & Personnel	108,670.	106,135.	109,100.
OTHER INCOME				Property			
HST Rebate	9,000.	7,968.	5,000.	Fire Equip Maintenance	400.	-	500.
Use of Building (Rent)	22,000.	25,685.	27,000.	Heating & A/C Maintenance	3,000.	5,520.	5,500.
Other-Zoom receipts from DSCUC	1,000.	692.	834.	Lift Inspection & Maintenance	2,500.	1,548.	3,000.
Total Other Income	32,000.	34,345.	32,834.	Electricity & Water	5,000.	6,294.	6,500.
				Enbridge (Union Gas)	8,000.	5,500.	6,000.
TOTAL INFLOWS	102,010.	105,158.	103,040.	Snow Removal	3,200.	2,850.	3,200.
				General Maintenance	6,500.	2,523.	3,000.
				Total Property	28,600.	24,235.	27,700.
EXPENSES				Administration			
Spirituality				Bank charges	175.	165.	175.
Copyright Licenses - Music	325.	253.	300.	Telephone & Internet	1,400.	1,669.	1,670.
Flowers/Decorations	75.	23.	75.	Copier	300.	-	1,000.
Guest Musicians	200.	255.	200.	Offering Expense	100.	61.	75.
Organ/Piano Maintenance	800.	700.	800.	Church Assessment	5,500.	5,147.	5,170.
Pulpit Supply	750.	665.	1,000.	Supplies & Postage	300.	281.	300.
Worship Supplies	100.	159.	300.	Insurance	9,240.	9,244.	9,250.
Celebration Events	200.	78.	150.	Regional Events & Travel	100.	-	300.
Choir Music	250.	-	250.	Miscellaneous	800.	17.-	200.
Total Spirituality	2,700.	2,133.	3,075.	Total Administration	17,915.	16,584.	18,140.
Communications				Outreach & Social Justice			
Go Daddy.com website host	850.	768.	830.	Supplies	100.	-	100.
Zoom payment (shared with DSCUC)	1,644.	1,644.	1,668.	Total Outreach & Social Justice	100.	-	100.
Miscellaneous repairs	250.	392.	400.				
Total Communications	2,744.	2,804.	2,898.	TOTAL EXPENSES	161,529.	152,750.	162,113.
Pastoral Care Committee	100	-	100.				
Fundraising Expenses	700.	859.	1,000.	SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(59,519.)	(47,592.)	(59,073.)