



DECEMBER 2024



Open Hours over the holidays:

December 23rd 9-12noon

December 24th Worship at 4pm and 1lpm

December 25 - Jan 3rd Office Closed

Dec 29 & Jan 5 - 10am worship

Monday January 6th Office Hours resume 9am - 12pm Mon - Thurs

Tuesday Outreach is on Dec. 3, 10, 17 & 24.
No Outreach on Dec 31st.

(250)762-3311

MAIL TO: PO BOX 24042, KELOWNA BC, V1Y 9H2

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# WELCOME

#### **SUNDAY WORSHIP**

Worship together on Sundays at 10am - 721 Bernard Ave, Kelowna Zoom and Facebook Live options available.

#### **CONTACT ADMIN**

Delaine / E-Letter & Newsletter Submissions delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com

Saibun / Room Rentals, Bookings & Buildings saibunh@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com



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#### ADVENT & CHRISTMAS **SCHEDULE** Advent 1 With Communion **DECEMBER** Wind Jammers Woodwind Concert: Whirled Winds 6 12 Noon -Entry by Donation **DECEMBER** Christmas Lights - Twinkle Tour 4-6pm **DECEMBER** 8 Advent 2 - 10am Worship **DECEMBER** 15 Advent 3 & Cantata **DECEMBER** Here We Come A-Caroling - Sing A Long Evening. **19** 7pm - With the Alleluia Singers - Entry by Donation **DECEMBER** Ringing in The Season: With the Alleluia Ringers 20 12 Noon - Entry by Donation **DECEMBER** 21 Longest Night Service: 4pm A service of quiet reflection DECEMBER Advent 4 & Christmas Pageant 22 White Gift Sunday DECEMBER CHRISTMAS EVE: 24 4PM INTERGENERAIONAL WORSHIP

**DECEMBER** 

11PM CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION

29 10am Worship **DECEMBER** 

05 Intergenerational 10am Worship - Epiphany **JANUARY** 

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## \$50,000.00

# ProVision Grant Received!



Pacific Mountain Region of the United Church of Canada has awarded Central Okanagan United Church a \$50,000.00 grant to assist us with our Outreach and InterCultural/InterFaith Ministries. News of the grant was shared last week, with PMRs granting committee encouraging COUC to bring other community partners with us when we submit a further request next year.

The grant recognizes an increase in numbers of people seeking support at our Tuesday Outreach program particularly in those coming from other cultures and faiths seeking refuge in Canada from war and persecution. Folk from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Sudan arrived on the heels of a wave from Ukraine, while people from other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia are coming too. The world is in upheaval and the survivors are arriving on our shores. The grant is an attempt to help us meet physical, social and cultural needs.

Food security will be bolstered, Interpreters will be made possible, and a part time InterCultural and InterFaith Co-ordinator will be hired. While the position description has to be drafted by folk from COUC who have experience in: Outreach; Refugee support; Reconciliation; anti-Racism; InterFaith relationships and community building, the grant has high hopes. Someone to navigate Cultural relations and expectations, who can help out on Tuesdays, plan and support activities for congregation members and new arrivals and grow opportunities for all of us to become a strong and understanding community.

In awarding the grant Pacific Mountain Region expressed confidence in our ability to build on the good and faithful work that COUC has been part of for many years. Impressed with





#### Fluctuations and Changes in COUC Outreach

#### **Numbers**

One week we may have 90 individuals for a meal and groceries, and the next week me could have 145, with just a few less each week for groceries. Many reasons account for these variations: the weather, the arrival of monthly support cheques, what others in the community are offering, etc. These fluctuations make planning a meal a bit of a challenge but our wonderful volunteers do a great job of "s-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g" the food so everyone is fed, or making sure leftovers are frozen or shared with other community groups in our area.

#### **Diversity**

With our changing numbers we also see guests from different cultures and backgrounds who have different hopes and requests for meals and groceries and how they might be delivered. Two years ago, we could not give away a can of chickpeas no matter how hard we tried, and now we cannot keep them in stock. The same is true for rice, lentils and other beans. As a result, our meal and grocery offerings change from time to time. And interpreters and translations are often required to explain what and how we operate on Tuesdays.

#### Grants

This month we are wrapping up the \$5,000 grant from the World Day of Prayer that allowed us to hire an Arabic translator for two months, to provide Thanksgiving and Christmas meals and enough groceries for our guests, as well as offer training for our volunteers and our Tuesday morning guests. As one of our guests said:

Taking the food safe course meant a lot to me because now I have a credential in something that will be useful for finding jobs in the food industry. It also gave me more confidence in my own cooking skills.

The first aid course taught me valuable lessons that could be potentially life saving for someone. I appreciated having so much hands on activities, it really helped to put those words on paper to something actually physical and real. A lot of effort was put into this course.

Overall, I had a positive experience with these courses. The skills I learned along the way will be a valuable asset to my life.

And as that grant wraps up, we have received word that COUC has been approved for a ProVision grant in the amount of \$50,000 for activities running from February 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026. Planning is currently underway and more details will be coming soon on this grant.

#### **Individuals**

As the weeks go by, we get to know our "new" guests and adapt to their needs. When Ukrainians seeking refuge arrived we had to translate our grocery lists to Ukrainian and use Ukrainian interpreters. Gradually their English improved and all of a sudden we realized we no longer had Ukrainians on Tuesday mornings. When we asked Nick if the Ukrainian Church was offering something different for them on Tuesday mornings, he said no, they are all now working so not available during the day. So there are successes to celebrate!

Then there are individuals who greet you at the door and say, I know you - you used to work at the College; and you become reacquainted with a former student from your accounting class. Once you look closely you see that smile and intelligence of a top student that you knew 20 years ago, and you want to ask what he's been doing since he graduated but you know you cannot do so given where you are now meeting. For two weeks you share smiles and a few friendly words, and then you read about his struggles with mental health issues and addictions when you see his obituary, and you wonder if you could have said or done more; and you realize there is still so much to do.

#### Continued...

#### **Taxes**

I am sure that you all know that we offer free tax preparation services every Thursday morning in March and April. With three or four tax preparers present, approximately 600 tax returns were completed in 2024. But are you aware that the service continues year round with at least one tax preparer in attendance? And on some Thursdays, it not only involves income tax prep but also assistance from Services BC, Service Canada, and other organizations. The tax prep program is part of the Canadian Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) which is all done by trained volunteers and we thank them for their dedication. COUC acts only as a grateful host for these events.

#### **December Schedule**

Tuesday morning Outreach will continue in December with meal service and grocery distribution on Tuesdays right up until Christmas Eve on December 24<sup>th</sup>. There will be no Outreach on December 31<sup>st</sup> as the church office is closed that week.

On December 17<sup>th</sup> we will be serving a special turkey dinner and distributing groceries.

On December 24<sup>th</sup> we will offer a simpler meal and distribute groceries.

If you would like to be involved on either the 17<sup>th</sup> or the 24<sup>th</sup>, we would love to hear from you. On the 17<sup>th</sup> we will be looking for people to help with the meal, and for the 24<sup>th</sup> we will be looking for volunteers in all areas as many of our regular volunteers will be entertaining company or travelling for the holidays. Please contact Jayne if you would like to be involved: phone 250-762-9606 or email k.jaynebrooks@gmail.com.

Christmas gifts of mitts, toques, socks and grocery gift cards would be appreciated. Donations to the Food Pantry are always very welcome and now, in addition to our usual grocery list (below), we also appreciate gifts of beans of various kinds, rice and lentils.

#### Food Pantry Groceries:

Canned fruit, vegetables, chili, tuna, ham, chicken, soups, beans, and Chef Boyardee meat pastas.

Cereal, oatmeal packets, fruit cups, pasta, pasta sauce, crackers, peanut butter, coffee, sugar, mac & cheese, Mr. Noodle, granola bars

And of course, the ever-popular toilet paper.



# The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Craft Fair was a huge success! What does it take to make such an event, you ask? Well we think we might have found the perfect recipe for success!





# Recipe for a Successful Craft Fair

Ingredients

1 amazing Convenor-Coordinator!

30 tables

29 vendors

3 very, very full 6" tables of Christmas baking

27 volunteers to set up & run things

22 cooks to stock the cafe

7 new signs

5 door prize baskets

A dash of "The Square Card Reader"

A sprinkle of Christmas music on Spotify

A pinch of red balloons & good cheer

By popular demand, see the next page for Keith Crawley's Broccoli Cheddar Soup recipe from the craft fair cafe!

#### Instant Pot Broccoli Cheddar Soup



Prep Time: 20 minutes Cook Time: 1 minute (plus 5 minute NPR) Yield: 6 1/2 cups of soup 1x

Reminiscent of Panera Bread's broccoli cheddar soup this pressure cooker version has chopped broccoli, shredded carrots and celery simmered in a velvety smooth cheese sauce. I believe this version is just as good or better than you could order at any restaurant! Try it for dinner this week.

#### Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- · 2 or 3 celery ribs, diced
- · 2 or 3 carrots, match-stick style or grated or diced
- · 4 cups coarsely chopped fresh broccoli florets
- . 3 cups chicken broth (or 3 cups of water and 3 tsp of Better than Bouillon Chicken Base)
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1 (8 oz) block of sharp cheddar, grated
- 1/2 tsp salt
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- · Optional: cornstarch and water

#### Instructions

- 1. Turn your Instant Pot to the saute function ("more") and melt the 1 Tbsp of butter. When the butter is melted add in the diced onion. Saute for 3 minutes.
- 2. Add in the celery, carrots, broccoli and chicken broth.
- 3. Cover the Instant Pot and lock the lid in place. Make sure valve is on "sealing." Set the manual button (or pressure cook button) to 1 minute.
- 4. While the pot heats up and reaches pressure melt your 1/4 cup of butter in a glass dish in the microwave (you can also melt in a pan on the stove). Slowly whisk in the flour until a creamy mixture is formed. Set aside. If desired (to speed up the process) you can also heat up the milk at this time. Grate your cheddar and set aside.
- 5. When the timer beeps indicating the time is up on your Instant Pot let the pot sit there for 5 minutes and then move the valve to "venting." Remove the lid when you can.
- 6. Turn the Instant Pot back to the saute function. Whisk one cup of the broth from the soup into the butter and flour mixture. Then add that whole mixture into the pot. Stir until the soup thickens. Stir in the milk, until it heats through (this is why heating it beforehand can speed up the process). Stir in the cheese, until it melts. Stir in the salt and pepper. If you want a thicker soup you can mix 2 Tbsp of cornstarch with 2 Tbsp of cold water in a small bowl and then stir the cornstarch slurry into the pot. This will produce a nice, thick soup.
- 7. Ladle into bowls and serve. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week. Although I personally haven't tried freezing this soup, I believe that it would freeze well.

#### Notes

I used my 6 quart Instant Pot Duo 60 7 in 1\*

#### Nutrition

Serving Size: 1 cup of soup Calories: 320 Sugar: 6 g Sodium: 630 mg Fat: 22 g

Carbohydrates: 15 g Protein: 16 g



















#### **Our Congregation's PAR Program**

#### **How to Participate**

- 1. Prayerfully decide what you will give each year, and divide that amount by 12.
- 2. Fill out the authorization form, and attach a cheque marked "VOID."
- 3. Give this to our designated PAR contact person, or leave at the church office.
- 4. The amount will be transferred from your account to our congregation's account on the 20th of each month. You can modify or cancel your donation, change how it is designated, or change your information at any time.



#### Why Participate?

If you have automatic withdrawals from your bank account to pay your bills, taxes, or mortgage, then you already understand the PAR principle.

Besides being convenient, using PAR for your offering ensures regular monthly givings to help our church's ministry even when you are away. You will be providing our congregation a dependable flow of contributions, which increases our overall financial stability.

Your regular giving supports the ministry of Central Okanagan United Church (COUC) and the many programs that are offered, from worship services in church on Sunday to worship in Senior Care Homes throughout the week; from Sunday School and other children and youth programs to SongShine, book studies, and Walk and Talk for the young at heart; from the morning grocery and meal program for members of our local community to programs of education and support for Reconciliation, Inclusion, and Justice for all.

Your giving also supports the Mission and Service fund of the United Church of Canada and its work at home and abroad through its many vibrant and vital ministries for the healing of the world. COUC currently gives \$33,000 annually to UCC Mission and Service.

#### Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR)



Specify the amount of monthly donation to be deducted from your chequing account. Contact the office to join PAR or make changes to your current PAR contributions.

### Please contact Marg Brooks: contributions@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com

#### Cheques & E-Transfers

Please make out cheques to Central Okanagan United Church, and place in one of the offering offertory boxes in the sanctuary, drop off at 721 Bernard, or mail to:

> Central Okanagan United Church PO Box 24042 Kelowna, BC V1Y 9H2



E-transfer your donation to finance@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com



#### Donation of Shares

Contact Marg Brooks for information.

#### Bequests or Memorial Gifts

Include Central Okanagan United Church in your will or make a gift in memory of an individual.

Thank you for your generous and continued support!

#### **HOW TO MAKE YOUR DONATIONS DURING THE POSTAL DISRUPTION**

With the Canada Post mail strike into its third week, we wanted to share with you the various ways of connecting with Central Okanagan United Church (COUC).

During the postal strike, please do no mail anything to the COUC post office box.

To make donations to the church during the period of the strike, please use one of these methods.

**Drop Off:** Cash and cheques can be placed in the offering boxes at the church on Sundays or dropped off at the church office at 721 Bernard Avenue during office hours from 9 AM to 2 PM Monday to Thursday. If outside of office hours, please do not just leave cash in the office, but rather give it to an employee and be sure it is clearly designated as to donor and purpose.

E-transfer: E-transfers can be sent to

<u>finance@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com</u> Be sure to indicate what the money is for (donation, auction item, etc.) and who it is from.

Online: Donations of cash or shares can be made online through CanadaHelps or the United Church of Canada (UCC) Foundation. For share donations we recommend the UCC Foundation. Links to both of these organizations can be found on the COUC website.

https://centralokanaganunitedchurch.com/donations/

## Truth and Reconciliation A Year-End Reflection by Rob Riddle

In reviewing in some depth my professional and personal journey of 79 years I have become more aware of the complex issues involved in reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous persons in our country,

I was particularly struck by the silence. What I mean by that is the lack of awareness most of us had until recently about the history of indigenous peoples in this country of Canada.

Many of our early images of Indigenous people were learned from the American Western movies and TV shows (e.g. "Cowboys versus Indians") unless you happened to know some indigenous people. The true plight of indigenous people rarely came from the media or even from books or magazines until recently.

As a professional counsellor/educator for 44 years in the public and private sector and in three different provinces I had the opportunity to work with Indigenous people in rural and urban settings.

My own observations from these interactions were the lack of resources (e.g. foster and adoptive homes) that appreciated the specific needs of Indigenous children, the lack of awareness of the effects of residential schools on Indigenous people and on many of the professionals educating and helping Indigenous people, especially on reserves but also in the cities. As one of those counsellor/educator professionals myself I can see now my own lack of awareness when I was facilitating programs on the reserve and in many smaller communities in Alberta and BC. The numerous indigenous people with addictions, abuse and suicide issues was a constant reminder to me of the serious and long lasting effects of colonial ways of their past.

So I came to learn in my retirement years more about the history and culture of Indigenous people through courses, webinars, attending and volunteering at many Indigenous events (e.g. The Blanket Exercise, Pow Wows and museums). I have a greater appreciation for the incredible resiliency of Indigenous people who had, in the eyes of the colonists, no significant history, skills, strengths or wisdom.

More recently, during a trip to Winnipeg, I was impressed by the Human Rights Museum, The National Centre For Truth and Reconciliation and steps taken by Treaty 1 Peoples to increase understanding of different cultures. Also I became more aware of historical aspects though learning about the Doctrine of Discovery and the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People world wide.

Even though there are many aspects of the 94 Calls to Action from the TRC recommendations still to be implemented, I am encouraged to learn more about exciting programs that many Indigenous nations are working on (e.g. Climate Change projects that involve collaboration between Indigenous people, governments, private corporations).

Though I am not an Indigenous person I have also come to see how many of their world views (e.g. only take what you can use, all life forms are connected and human beings are not the most important part of our world, land is sacred, an emphasis on the common good, the importance of ceremonies and rituals, story-telling, family and the sense of community) can be beneficial for all people.

During the past year, these are a few ways I have deepened my understanding of Canada's history and of the path of Reconciliation. How has your understanding of Reconciliation changed?

From Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants: Robin Wall Kimmerer "Generations of grief, generations of loss, but also strength—the people did not surrender. They had spirit on their side, They had their traditional teachings." p.319

"For what good is knowing unless it is coupled with caring? Science can give us knowing, but caring comes from someplace else." P.345

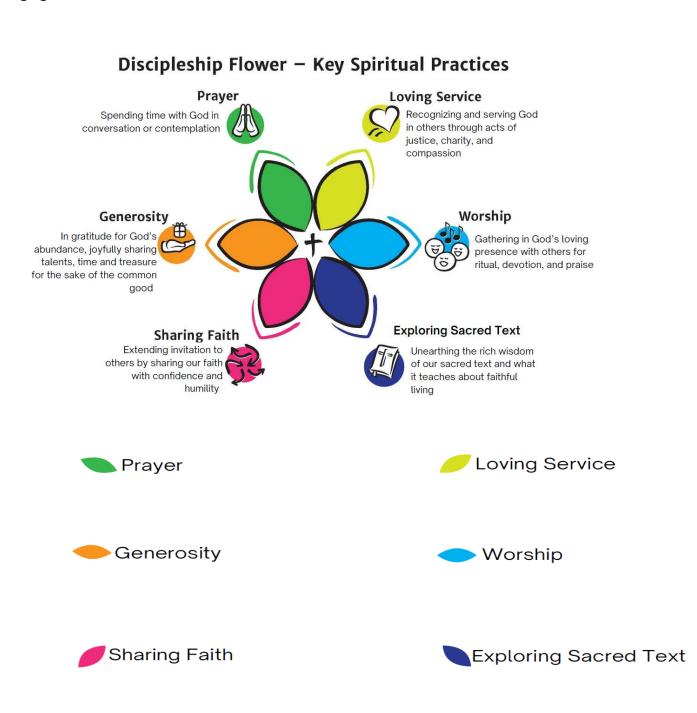
#### (Resources:

- 1. Reel Injun-an excellent tracing of the history of cinema involving Indigenous people on Knowledge Network)
- **2.** The Executive Summary of TRC Report
- **3.** The Doctrine Of Discovery (documentary)
- **4.** The UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People
- **5.** Power to the People (Knowledge Network)

#### An Intentional Stewardship of Becoming

On November 24<sup>th</sup> we celebrated the beginning of the new Church year with a potluck and Advent party after church. Advent brings a time of waiting, a time to slow down, turn inward and think about the peace, hope, joy and love that we wish for ourselves, our families, our church and the world. And yet Santa Claus and all the Christmas busy-ness interrupts our silence and waiting. What might we do?

We could make use of the Discipleship Flower! As the Church New Year starts, perhaps spend some intentional time in silence, thinking about goals for the coming year. Using the flower as a guide one could set goals within each petal. Each bringing its own focus and light to the year ahead as we live it with intention. While this is meant to be a personal exercise, it is fine to share it with others, if you choose. Try out some goals that are enjoyable, enlightening and encouraging.





# Oecember EVENTS

What's Happening This Month at COUC









## TWINKLE TOUR

Time to sign up for the annual Twinkle Tour! Saturday, December 7th, 4-6PM. Reserve a spot in your motorized sleigh! A volunteer from the church will pick you up at your home between 3-3:45pm, bring you to the church for refreshments and carols before taking you on a tour to see displays of Christmas lights around our city and then drive you safely back home! Contact the church office at (250) 762-3311 or by emailing admin@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com

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#### Central Okanagan United Church Welcomes You

Need some quiet space in the midst of "jingle bells" and "joy to the world"?

When loss, grief, depression,
pain or hopelessness fill Christmas...
our church is offering a service of hope and healing.
All are welcome!

Saturday December 21st @ 4:00pm 721 Bernard Ave.

Also on Zoom

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GLIMMERS OF LIGHT IN A TIME OF DARKNESS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8 
5:30 TO 7:00 PM

CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH

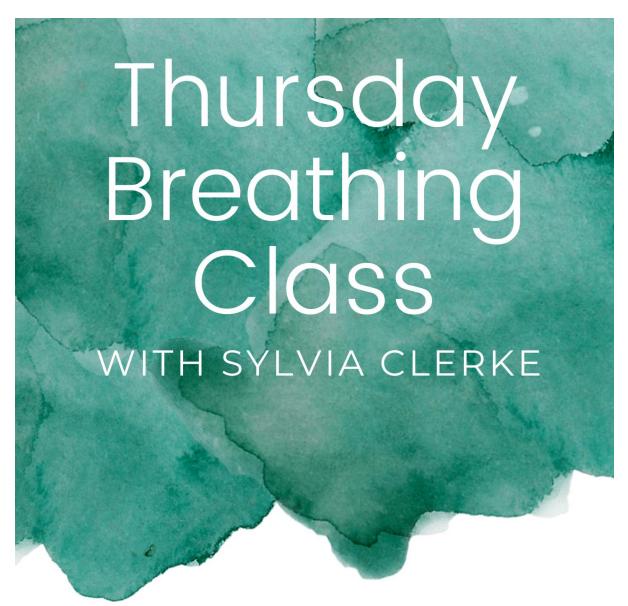
WE WILL GATHER OVER A BOWL OR CUP OF SOUP. FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE A HEART FOR BOTH JUSTICE AND PALESTINE, THIS WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO GATHER AND HARE WHAT 'GLIMMERS' WE HAVE HAD TO SUSTAIN US IN THIS VERY DARK TIME. WE WILL HEAR SOME REFLECTIONS AND LEARNING FROM DEBBIE HUBBARD WHO WILL HAVE RETURNED FROM HER RECENT TRIP IN PALESTINE. THIS EVENT IS BEING HOSTED BY CJPME:OKANAGAN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH.

LET US KNOW IF YOU CAN JOIN US BY CALLING DEBBIE AT 250-469-4468 OR BY SENDING AN EMAIL SOWINGSEEDSOFPOSSIBILITIES@GMAIL.COM.

No Breathing Class on December 19th, 26th or Jan 2nd.

December 12th is our last session in 2024

January 9th is our first session in 2025



Thursdays at 11am
Please have a non rolling chair
and a glass of water

ZOOM LINK AVAILABLE IN FRIDAY E-LETTER

"Come and find the quiet centre in the crowded life we lead Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed Clear the chaos and the clutter.

Clear our eyes that we can see all the things that really matter

Be at peace and simply be."

~ Shirley Erena Murray

# Walking the Labyrinth

It can help us calm our thoughts; focus on what's important; offer clarity of thinking; provide a method of reflecting on our life journey; guide us into next steps; and draw us closer to an intimate relationship with The Holy.

Some move slowly, some rush, some dance and others simply follow the path using our eyes. How ever we choose to journey through the path, we are sure to be gifted with a holy experience.

Wednesday Mornings, our labyrinth will be open for quiet contemplation on a weekly basis. Come and find the quiet center.

7:30-8:30am

All Welcome!







## Strengthening Voices. Inspiring Possibility. WHERE VOICES COME TO LIFE

No SongShine on December 23rd or 30th.

December 16th is our last session in 2024

January 6th is our first session in 2025

**Hosted by Choir Director Sylvia Clerke** 

# Keep up to date, watch worship videos and more. Find us online! Like and Follow us on Facebook & Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!

#### Website

https://centralokanaganunitedchurch.com

#### Facebook Page SUNDAY LIVESTREAM SHOWN HERE

https://www.facebook.com/Centralokanaganunitedchurchkelownabc

Facebook Group (Our Private Church Group)
(A Private Group for members & friends of COUC to share church news or discussion)

https://www.facebook.com/groups/319967703235745

United Church of Canada Private Group – Join in for all UCC chat & news!

https://www.facebook.com/groups/UnitedChurchCda/permalink/10167795547890401/

YouTube Channel (Worship videos posted weekly): <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJRqGV1Zra36gbm1jSlks1w">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJRqGV1Zra36gbm1jSlks1w</a>



