

# CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH NEWSLETTER —

February 2025

Planning for the  
UCC 100 Year  
Anniversary!



Send in your photos  
and news for the  
upcoming editions of  
our Newsletter.



# Central Okanagan United Church

FEBRUARY 2025

# WELCOME

## SUNDAY WORSHIP

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

## CONTACT ADMIN

Delaine / E-Letter & Newsletter Submissions  
[delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

Saibun / Room Rentals, Bookings & Buildings  
[saibunh@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:saibunh@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)



 (250)762- 3311

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

 [CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM](http://CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM)



# Church News

## What's Happening This Month

### THIS MONTH AT A GLANCE

Planning meeting for 100th UCC Anniversary, Feb 2nd after worship

Jazz Vespers, First Sunday of each month @5:15pm

Potluck Sunday February 23rd



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## **Heather Burton - Greetings for February!**

I thought I would introduce myself a little more in this newsletter. I'm very excited about travelling with you for a short stretch of your congregational journey. I've had many similar experiences – accompanying congregations who are in an “in between” time. Since I took (very!) early retirement, I've had the honour and privilege to be part of the reflection and visioning that are involved in looking ahead at a future that none of us can see clearly. Like Indiana Jones in The Last Crusade, when he took a leap of faith and stepped out into what looked like an abyss, we, too, move in the faith that our steps will be divinely guided.

I bring a breadth of learning to this ministry. I have been an active part of the wider church, at all levels, throughout my career – presbytery, conference (now region) and national. Each of those added to my experience and taught me a lot!

My own personal story includes growing up in Montreal, living both in French and English. My first vocation was teaching and much of my teaching career involved teaching in the French Immersion programmes for several school boards in Quebec and Ontario.

A mid-life call to ministry... subtle but insistent... led me to study at Emmanuel College in the Toronto School of Theology. While there, I earned a Master of Religious Education degree and a Master of Divinity. My time in ministry has included children, youth and family ministry (both in congregations and at the Conference level), as well as worship and pastoral care ministry, and the experience of being supervisor to a ministry student. In the wider church, I have served on the Conference Executive of Toronto Conference (as a member and as President) and of BC Conference, I have been part of the General Council Executive for a 6-year term and enjoyed taking part in many cascading appointments offered through that, and I have been a consultant with the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response team. Each experience has taught me much and I value having had those opportunities.

I have found it personally enriching being married to John, who is also ordained. It's such a gift to be able to share the joys and challenges of ministry with a partner who understands in a deep way.

I must also mention my children (3) and grandchildren (6), whose gifts and accomplishments I cherish and am proud of. My daughter, Julie, has worked in Human Rights work for over 20 years, the last 15 with the UN Development Programme. After assignments in danger zones and areas of need, she now works at UN headquarters in New York City as a 'Rule of Law, Justice and Human Rights Specialist'. My son, Christian, is a person of both analytical skills (in the construction area) and people skills. He's gifted with emotional intelligence, awareness, self-awareness, and deep faith and compassion. My youngest daughter grew up in Ghana. We met her when she fled to Canada at age 15 as a refugee claimant. She works with internationally-trained nurses in Halifax and has just completed a Master's in Health Care Quality Improvement through Queen's University. And as for my grandchildren, what can I say...they're all amazing!

## Stewardship



A Book Report (of sorts): Submitted by Jayne Brooks

### ***Loonie – Crazy Talk about Faith and Finances*** **by John VanDuzer**

While going a little stir-crazy when not being able to drive or easily walk anywhere, “Loonie” sounded like an excellent choice for a book to read.

And the fact that faith and finances were part of the title certainly worked into Stewardship, and my role as Treasurer.

Let me first say that this is a small book (5” x 8”) with 228 pages and it is a quick and easy read because of VanDuzer’s relaxed, conversational style of writing. It also has an easy font to read (very important to many of us!) with lots of white space on every page so it is a comfortable and enjoyable read.

Loonie provides lots to think about and a few chuckles along the way. It is Biblically based but with a refreshing way of looking at things.

Yes, there are some statistics and facts involved but not a lot. Besides, some of those statistics and facts are interesting and should be known.

- Did you realize that you are part of the 1% of the richest people in the world?
- Did you know that only about 6% of church members tithe 10% of their earnings?

VanDuzer covers many topics but one of the questions that I really liked was, “If you were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” That one definitely gave me something to think about.

And how about, why is it that those who are the richest are always wanting more? Despite having so much, and way more than so many others, why do they still yearn for more?

Why are the 1% of the richest (and that includes you and me, remember) not any happier than the poorest of the poor?

Our society provides a never-ending push to buy more and more stuff – to possess more stuff – but stuff does not offer fulfillment or make life meaningful.

Why do we have a love/hate relationship with money so that we can never seem to get enough?

Why are we such a disconnected people when we are living in a hyper-connected world?

This book, although it’s supposedly all about money, isn’t really about money at all. It’s really about you — you and your response to God for what God has provided. It’s not about stewardship, it’s about discipleship. We are called to give not because we are good stewards but because we are faithful disciples. And, it’s not what you give that matters, it’s what you hold back.

Loonie was a wonderful and quick read that provided a lot to think about, and I encourage you to read it too. It’s now available in our COUC library!

# Farewell Keith!



## Outreach Updates:

### **The New Year**

Our Tuesday morning Outreach started 2025 much as it ended 2024 with 80 to 110 bags of groceries and 90 to 120 meals distributed each week.

Our complement of incredible volunteers changed in January as individuals went back to school, changed work schedules, or went south for the winter and were no longer able to help; while others were suddenly available and came to join us. No matter what changes, we always seem to have enough and we continue to serve those who are in need in our community.

The big change in January was the departure of Keith Simmonds, our Community Ministry lead and definitely the biggest supporter and hardest worker for our Tuesday morning Outreach program. Keith will be greatly missed and it will be hard to fill his shoes. Keith made a difference in our community and his presence (even though he is absent) will be felt for years to come. We had a small celebration on Tuesday January 14<sup>th</sup> to thank Keith for all he has done for Outreach and to wish him well on the next stage of his journey.



We want to thank Ally Phillips for stepping in to fill the gap left by Keith's departure. Ally has been helping out for the last few months but now takes on the leadership role and we all look forward to working with him.

### **Grants**

The final report for the World Day of Prayer grant which wrapped up in December was submitted to the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada in January.

Starting in February we will be able to access the ProVision Grant approved last fall. Currently we are in the process of hiring an Intercultural/Interfaith Program Support Lead supported by this grant.

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, 18 individuals attended the Grant Writing workshop and it was great to see the interest in this initiative as many of the Community Ministry programs and activities, as well as other programs at COUC, could be supported by grants. We hope to eventually have an ongoing Grant Writing Committee in place at COUC to work on such initiatives.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

If you are interested in getting involved with the Tuesday Outreach program, we are always looking for volunteers. Right now, we still need shoppers and sandwich makers – both of which would involve one Tuesday a month. If you would like to get involved in any way, we would love to hear from you. And we invite you to come in on a Tuesday morning just to see what is happening and how the morning works. Who knows? You might want to stay and get involved!

Submitted by Jayne Brooks



# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

If you would like to submit a piece of news / information or photos for our weekly E-Letter or the Newsletter, please follow these guidelines. Unfortunatley, we cannot take on outside promotions unless expressly approved or linked to COUC. Email submissions to: [delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:delainec@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

**Please Note:** Placement order is determined by the season or theme of the publication. Seasonal church articles will always place first in order.

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**01** **Please edit**, spell check and double check your written articles before submitting. We unfortunatley do not have the capacity to do this for every article we receive.

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**02** **Article length:**  
E-Letter: Keep these to one short paragraph or 100-200 words.  
Newsletter: 350 -400 Words = One Page MAX.  
Due to the many articles we receive, please adhere to these limits.

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**03** **Photos:**  
If your article has a photo to accompany it, please include brief info / people's names etc. For photo collections, a short sentence of explanation of the set is fine.

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**04** **Deadlines:**  
Weekly E-Letter:  
**Submit by Thursday 10am, for Friday**

Newsletter:  
**Submit by the 21st of the month**  
for the following month's issue.  
ie: submit by March 21st for the April issue

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## 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.



Please contact Marg Brooks: [contributions@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:contributions@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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!**

## We Need Your Help

### **Receipts for Charitable Donations**

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) confirmed on January 23<sup>rd</sup> that donations made in January and February of 2025 can be used for either the 2024 tax year or the 2025 tax year, and the choice is yours. This is the same as the process for making RRSP contributions in the first 60 days of a year and knowing that those contributions can be used in either the previous or current year.

As a result, Central Okanagan United Church (COUC) will be issuing your January 1 to December 31, 2024 official donation receipts as usual in February.

We will then in March or April be issuing your January and February 2025 official donation receipts. This applies to everyone, not just those who might have designated contributions as being for 2024.

When you file your tax return for 2024, you must each then decide whether you are including the January/February 2025 donations on your 2024 return or whether you are keeping them for your 2025 return.

In February 2026, we will issue your March 1 to December 31, 2025 official donation receipts. For most of you, that will mean that you need to include the amount from both receipts when you file your 2025 tax return. And that means that you must put the receipt issued in March or April 2025 in a safe place where you will find it in the spring of 2026, because issuing a duplicate or replacement receipt under CRA rules is not an easy task.

All of this means that we are issuing twice as many receipts as in previous years, and with the increase in postage rates, that means we will be paying way more to get the receipts to you.

To keep our costs down we want to start sending the official donation receipts by email instead of by post, starting next year. To do that, **we need you to provide or confirm you email address.**

You can do this by contacting one of the following and leaving your name and current email address.

**Please contact either:**

- **the church office by phone (250-762-3311) or in person**
- **the Contributions Steward at [contributions@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com](mailto:contributions@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com)**

If you are not able to receive emails, please stop by the church office or phone 250-762-3311 to let us know that, and we will find an alternate way to get your official donation receipt to you.

If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please feel free to contact me at any time in person or by phone.

Jayne Brooks

Treasurer

Home Phone: 250-762-9606



Winter

**What's on at COUC  
Groups  
Events  
and More!**

celebrating

100

YEARS!

SAVE THE DATE!

NOT ONLY ARE WE CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE UNITED CHURCH, BUT WE ARE ALSO CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR ORGAN!

**JOIN ORGANIST SANDRA FLETCHER  
FOR AN ORGAN RECITAL TO CELEBRATE 100 YEARS!  
SUNDAY MARCH 9TH AT 2:30PM**

1925-2025  
  
10<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
Deep • Bold • Daring

The background of the top half of the image features several overlapping covers of Broadview magazine. The most prominent cover is red and white, with the headline "The Moment Everything Changed" and a sub-headline "When life took a sudden turn, these story tellers found courage and strength". Below the headline is an illustration of a person standing in a forest. Another cover to the right is black and white, featuring a portrait of a man and the headline "CANADA'S MOST FAMOUS STAPLES".

# Broadview Discussion Group

## Held on Zoom

Monthly Starting



**February  
12th, 2025**

07.00 PM – 08.00 PM

### 2nd Wed of each month

Join the Broadview Discussion Group  
Time: Feb 12th, 2025 07:00 PM Pacific  
Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85808933223?>

[pwd=Q5UQyBclidbbJRQP0fOsZP4mMlQX5il.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85808933223?pwd=Q5UQyBclidbbJRQP0fOsZP4mMlQX5il.1)

Meeting ID: 858 0893 3223  
Passcode: 319167

Broadview is a Canadian magazine focused on national and international issues of spirituality, justice and ethical living as well as United Church of Canada news and perspectives. Formerly The United Church Observer, the magazine was rebranded as Broadview in April 2019. It traces its roots back almost two centuries to The Christian Guardian, founded with Methodist minister Egerton Ryerson as the editor. The publication's long history makes it the oldest continuously published magazine in North America and the second oldest in the English-speaking world.

Whether you have a subscription or not, if you are interested in learning more about the United Church of Canada or if you simply enjoy reading and discussion, this is a great small group to join in 2025! Head on over to <https://broadview.org> and read "Broadview's top 10 stories of 2024" a round-up of the top ten stories that fascinated Broadview readers this past year. For our first discussion we'll invite you to weigh in on what your favourite article was and why. Brew a cup of something warm and join us Wednesday, February 12th for our discussion from 7-8PM on Zoom. (We will meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month.)

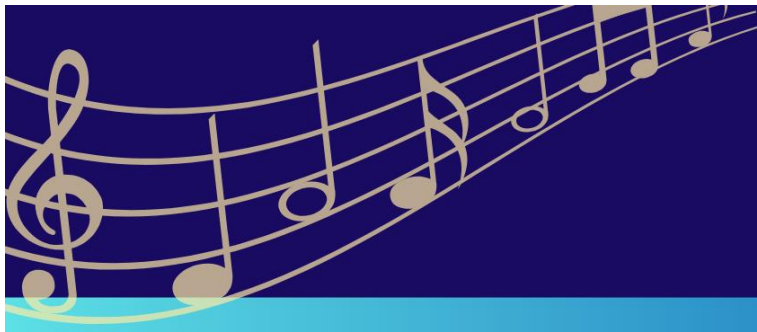


Welcome to the COUC

# Knitting Group

Join in on Wednesdays at 1pm in Room 14





# JAZZ VESPERS



MUSICAL PERFORMANCE BY  
LOCAL JAZZ MUSICIANS  
ALL WELCOME!  
ENTRY BY DONATION

FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH

@5:15pm

CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH  
721 BERNARD AVE, KELOWNA  
(PARKING LOT BEHIND CHURCH OFF RICHTER)







Hosted by UNJPPI (United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel). Questions? Reach out to Debbie Hubbard at 250-469-4468 or [sowingseedsofpossibilities@gmail.com](mailto:sowingseedsofpossibilities@gmail.com)

To Register: [CLICK HERE](#)



# It Didn't Start on October 7: Zionism and its Victims

**January 21 - March 18, 2025**

**Tuesdays at 4pm (pacific)/7pm (eastern)**

A series of 9 illustrated online talks that trace Zionist / Israeli efforts to take the land of historic Palestine, dispossess the Palestinian inhabitants, and deny them fundamental human rights and self determination. Each session is 60 minutes followed by 30 minutes of Q/A and discussion. The talks are introductory and non-academic and are suitable for anyone who wants to learn more. No prior knowledge of the history of Palestine / Israel is necessary.

## The Sessions

1. The Birth of Zionism (until 1919)
2. The British Mandate (1919 – 1947)
3. The Nakba (1948 – 49)
4. The Aftermath, Exile, Identity, Resistance (1949 – 1966)
5. The Naksa, Occupation, Recognition, Resistance, Camp David (1967 – 1979)
6. The Lebanon War, Exile, Occupation, Intifada, Declaration of Independence (1980 – 1989)
7. Hamas, Intifada, Madrid, Oslo, Second Intifada (1989 – 2005)
8. Gaza Wars, March of Return, Unified Uprising, and Normalization (2006 – 2023)
9. October 7, 2023, and Beyond (2023 – 2025)



**UNJPPI**  
United Network for Justice and Peace  
in Palestine and Israel



## WHAT? Us? A RACIST CHURCH?

**Did you know that General Council of the United Church of Canada committed in 2020 to becoming an anti-racist church?** Since April of 2024 Debbie Hubbard, Tanya Burke, Gerry Hewitt, Keith Simmonds and Shirley Piedt have been part of a National Church workshop series that explores this very topic. Each participating church has been invited to create an anti-racism action plan for our church community that would include five key areas: racial justice education and awareness; theology; advocacy; governance; and healing and accountability.

Here at COUC, our small group has begun to look at our own experience and understanding of what it means to be anti-racist, and to grapple with how to involve and hear from others at COUC before creating an action plan. We thought we would begin by sharing with you through this article and through the February e-letters some thoughts and questions and links to short videos to help all of us understand what becoming an anti-racist church is all about. At the potluck in February, we will have a short exercise focused on the theme of anti-racism.

The following link is a five-minute video where four church leaders speak about becoming an anti-racist church.


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPjGsm1KP14>

**And what is happening already?** Opportunities to continue learning about Indigenous stories and to share in the work of truth and reconciliation have been ongoing. We are an Affirming Church and look to continue creating safety and community for all. And last year during the Lenten season, a series of calendars created by the staff posed a topic and sometimes a QR code to link to further information. Some of the topics were reading a book about racism, doing something out of your comfort zone, changing the words of your favorite hymn to be about acceptance, examining white privilege, and our identities: places of oppression, places of power.

We invite you to examine other aspects of church life which include leadership and decision making as well as small groups and to wonder if everyone would feel welcome in those circles and whether we create space for all folks to share their views as decisions are made. And of course, what assumptions need to be examined as we move toward becoming an anti-racist church.

**Former moderator Jordan Cantwell said, “As Christians, we must root out fear and commit to...practices that help us to ground our actions... in love”.**

Please join us on this journey. For more information or to be part of this movement, contact anyone of us through the Church Office.




**Becoming an Anti-Racist Church: A Church Rooted in Racism**

The United Church of Canada  
6.12K subscribers

Subscribe

20 likes

Share

A teal watercolor wash with organic, irregular edges, covering the top half of the page. The colors range from light mint to a deeper forest green.

# Thursday Breathing Class

WITH SYLVIA CLERKE

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.

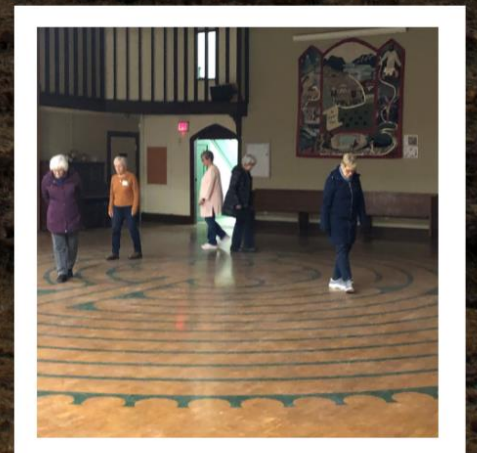
Some move slowly, some rush, some dance and others simply follow the path using our eyes. How ever we choose to journey through the path, we are sure to be gifted with a holy experience.



*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**

Welcome to *SongShine*, vocal music and creative drama-based classes designed for those who have communication issues due to Parkinson's, stroke, other neurological challenges, or aging. Our goal is to help you communicate more easily and clearly. *SongShine* harnesses the power of brain, breath, and emotion to reclaim voices. It creates community, camaraderie, and confidence

**...AND IT'S FUN!**

Meet: Mondays at 1pm, at Bernard Church, in Room 14

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):

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJRqGV1Zra36gbm1jSlks1w>



Thank You

For Reading!

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