

CENTRAL OKANAGAN UNITED CHURCH NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2025



SEND IN YOUR PHOTOS AND
NEWS FOR UPCOMING EDITIONS
OF THE NEWSLETTER!



Central Okanagan United Church

AUGUST 2025



WELCOME

A large, dark blue, serif font spelling "WELCOME" is centered over a background image of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water's surface. The sky transitions from a pale blue at the top to a soft orange near the horizon. In the foreground, dark rocks are visible along the shoreline.

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

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



 (250)762- 3311

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

 CENTRALOKANAGANUNITEDCHURCH.COM



Church News

What's Happening This Month

THIS MONTH AT A GLANCE

Jazz Vespers, First Sunday of each month @5:15pm - Aug. 3rd

Film Production on site at COUC:
Aug 13 - 16 (Hallmark Movie)

100th Anniversary Pub Quiz Night!
August 16th 7pm - 8:30pm

STAFF VACATION TIME

July 21- Aug 18 - Frances away

Aug 4- Aug 12 - Ally away

Aug 11 - Aug 29 - Delaine away

Aug 18-Sept 6 - Sylvia away



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Regular Weekly Gatherings

WEEKLY GROUPS - SUMMER BREAKS

Mondays 1:00pm - SongShine Vocal Therapy Song Group.
Room 14 (No SongShine in August)

Vocal music and creative classes designed for those who have communication issues due to Parkinson's, stroke, cognitive challenges and aging. SongShine harnesses the power of brain, breath, and emotion to reclaim voices. It creates community, camaraderie, and confidence...AND IT'S FUN! Zoom Link Available in our weekly E-Letter

Hosted by Choir Director Sylvia Clerke



Tuesdays 1:30pm - Scrabble Group - Room 14
(No Scrabble July and August)

All skill levels welcome! A fun social group. Meets Weekly.

Wednesdays 7:30am - 8:30am Labyrinth Walking

All welcome. Come to walk our indoor labyrinth for contemplation, meditation or reflective time.

Thursdays 11am - Therapeutic Breathing Class with Sylvia Clerke
(No Breathing Class Aug)

All welcome. An online Zoom class with guided breathing exercises for respiratory health. Social time and community. Zoom link available in our weekly E-Letter

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Welcome Ryan!

Ryan (he/him-il/lui) comes to COUC from St. Mark's (Cannifton) in Belleville, Ontario, where he was called more than 12 years ago. Ordained in 2010, he has served congregations in rural and suburbanizing settings, and completed an internship combining hospital chaplaincy with experience in a larger congregation.

Beyond the local church, Ryan has served as presbytery chairperson, helped plan Children at Conference programming for Bay of Quinte, and been a leader for youth/adult pilgrimages to UCC partner Iglésia Buatista Emmanuel in El Salvador. Currently he is co-chair of the United Church of Canada's Structural Change Evaluation Steering Group.

Before moving to the preaching side of the pulpit, Ryan chaired a church council and was the youth member of the board in his home church.

His post-secondary degrees include urban planning, civil engineering (both University of Waterloo), and divinity (Queen's Theological College, Kingston). Recently he completed a Diploma in Missional Leadership from the Atlantic School of Theology. He can preach a sermon and conduct a parking study, though preferably not on the same day.



When spare time arises, he enjoys skiing, hiking, and swimming or watching BritBox with spouse Julie and Star Wars spinoffs with sons Evan and Tyson.

Ryan believes COUC has the capacity to live into the vision of the United Church as a community of deep faith, bold discipleship and daring justice.

Ryan officially starts with COUC on September 1, 2025.



Stewardship

Did you miss them? The Stewardship Seconds? We forgot to put the July ones in the Friday e-letters and we wondered if you missed them. I did. They only take a second to read, but they always make me think. So, I decided to give them to you here in the August newsletter.

July 6: We may not be able to help everyone, but each of us can make a difference to someone.

July 13: Stewardship is as much about nourishing communities and nourishing spiritual health as it is about money.

July 20: How much is enough? Maybe you have enough already.

July 27: Is your “stuff” building a barrier between you and God? Try giving it away.

We know we cannot solve all the problems of the world but hopefully we all know that we can make a difference for some people. And at COUC, we do that through our inclusiveness and AFFIRM, through our Reconciliation efforts and Palestinian support, through our Pastoral Care visits and Tuesday morning Outreach, and in so many other ways. In fact, through every activity we offer whether it be providing a meal, education or simple fellowship and listening, as individuals and as a church we do make a difference. And that is worthy of support.

Doesn't it make you feel good when you give and support something worthwhile to help others? I know many of the Outreach volunteers leave exhausted at the end of their shift, but they also feel fulfilled because they know they have helped many people who needed a hand, and they received many grateful “thank you” and “God bless you” messages in return. While we support and nourish the needs of our congregation and local community, we also fulfill our own need to belong and to help others. In all that we do, we are truly blessed to be a blessing.

As to the last two Stewardship Seconds, do any of us really know how much is enough? It seems to me that we have been brainwashed for so long that the “need?” to have more and more is ingrained deeply in our society. While recognizing that our lives may not be perfect in all aspects, almost all of us at COUC have everything we really need to survive: food, shelter, security, family, friends, love, etc. Overall, we are very blessed.

Some of the refugees who attend our Tuesday Outreach and many of the families sponsored by CORC, have had a very different experience. While they may have lived comfortable lives at one time, before their lives were torn apart by war or drought or political upheaval, being forced to leave everything behind (taking no “stuff” with them) and spend time on the run or in hiding or in refugee camps has, without doubt, left its mark. Now, even though they have virtually nothing here and nothing to go back to, they are safe and able once again to think of a future, and most of them are very happy to be here with their families.

It makes us rethink our “need” for so much stuff. Does it really make us happy? Could we be just as happy with a simpler lifestyle? I do not have the answer. I just know that the Stewardship Seconds always make me think.

Submitted by: Still Pondering



Outreach

Tuesday mornings continue to be busy and our incredible volunteers continue to be amazing.

A special thank you to the new volunteers this summer. **We really appreciate the extra help!**

We keep talking about Tuesday mornings but let me give you an idea of what happens throughout the week so it is possible for Tuesday morning Outreach to happen.

Tuesday and Wednesday - Using the grocery slips (136 last Tuesday) a volunteer totals how much of each grocery item went out of the Food Pantry on Tuesday morning, looks at the count of what is left on the shelf and determines what we need to buy this week. Flyers are checked for any sales and specials in the coming week, and the shopping lists are sent to the shoppers.

Wednesday to Monday - Two shoppers go out on their own time to buy their assigned groceries with one shopper going to Costco where they spend \$600-\$800, while the other shopper goes to places like Walmart, Superstore and Dollarama and spends another \$500-\$600. These dollar amounts are high but think in volumes of about 90 rolls of toilet paper, 60 boxes of cereal, and 80 cans of fruit, because those are the quantities we are typically buying each week.

Thursday or Friday - An email reminder is sent to all volunteers noting their duties for the week. If any volunteer responds that they cannot make it that week, then the volunteer coordinator finds someone else to take their place. Right now, we have about 60 active volunteers.

Sunday - At least one volunteer and usually several more work in the Food Pantry after church to get the groceries unpacked and put on the shelves ready for distribution on Tuesday.

Monday - a busy time from about 10 AM to 3 PM

-Three volunteers are involved with picking up goods from the Lake Country Food Bank and The Salvation Army, delivering the goods to the church and putting the items in the Food Pantry, fridge, freezer, or kitchen depending on what is received

-Two volunteers and sometimes more work in the Food Pantry breaking down large containers of rice, sugar, flour, coffee, tea into individual servings

-The same volunteers ensure the grocery slips are printed and in the clip boards and the table is set up at the Food Pantry door and the signage is ready for Tuesday morning

-One person, and sometimes more, works in the kitchen getting everything organized and prepped for Tuesday morning's meal

-Meanwhile, three or four sandwich makers are at home making sandwiches and a cook is at home preparing the meal for the next day (except for KFC days!)

And that brings us back to Tuesday mornings where 18 to 20 volunteers provide our guests with a warm greeting and conversation, a meal, groceries and produce (and some thrift store items this summer!) - and then the weekly routine repeats again.

Your Tuesday morning Outreach Coordinators:

Jayne Brooks - 250-762-9606 - k.jaynebrooks@gmail.com

Susanne Marentette - 604-362-4433 - susanne.marentette@whitehall.ca



July



celebrating

100

YEARS OF THE
UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA



LET'S CELEBRATE!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR WITH THESE DATES AND WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS OF THESE EVENTS TO CELEBRATE THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

★ AUGUST 16, 7-8:30PM - PUB STYLE TRIVIA GAMES NIGHT
PRIZES! SNACKS! COME AS A SOLO OR TEAM!

★ OCTOBER 26 - HISTORICAL ORGAN CONCERT 2PM

1925-2025
100TH
ANNIVERSARY
Deep • Bold • Daring



We are now halfway through our 100 days campaign for the 100th anniversary!!!

Have you completed and submitted your card saying what you are doing to celebrate 100 years and to recognize all that the United Church of Canada and Central Okanagan United Church mean to you?

The cards should be in each of the pews on Sunday and there are extra cards in the church office. Many of them say something like “I want to celebrate by ...” or “My commitment is ...” but some are blank. Feel free to fill them in as you wish.

Here are some of the responses we have received so far. These individuals said they would:

- Donate 10 grocery gift cards
- Give \$100 to the church
- Bring items for the Food Pantry twice a month when I volunteer
- Donate 4 - \$25 grocery gift cards
- Make 100 sandwiches for Outreach
- Collect all the loose change in my car, at home, etc. and donate it
- Donate 100 Ziploc recyclable sandwich bags
- Buy 100 rolls of toilet paper for Outreach
- Donate 4 x \$25 gas gift cards
- Your Choice!

I know we have received other gift cards and we have had many new volunteers in various areas, and some of those may be 100th anniversary responses as well but there were no cards with them.

And for anyone who is interested in adding to the fund, there is now a Central Okanagan United Church Endowment Fund with the United Church of Canada Foundation. This fund can keep growing and once it reaches a certain level, our congregation will receive payments from it. Right now we need another \$5,000 to make that happen.

No matter how you choose to recognize and honour this 100th anniversary, we thank you for all that you do for this United Church of ours!!!

Your 100th anniversary celebration committee



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. Unfortunately, we cannot take on outside promotions unless expressly approved or linked to COUC. Email submissions to: 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.

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

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.

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.

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

MID-YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Our contributions from January to June are down compared to last year and to budget.

	Actual 2025	Actual 2024	Budget 2025
Contributions	\$176,983	\$182,561	\$199,515

Because our expenses are constantly rising, we need to increase our total contributions to enable the many active ministries of COUC to continue.

The above is the report you read and heard about in your July 18th e-letter and on July 20th at church. Since that time, we have received a couple of comments so thought we would share more with you.

Someone pointed out that COUC has experienced the deaths of several members over the last year and that would reduce the amount of our contributions. That is indeed correct. Contributions are lower because of losing these valued members of our congregation. To make up the difference in our 2025 budget, the remaining members of the congregation would have to contribute more to reach the agreed budget. We do also have new people joining our congregation throughout the year, which is wonderful to see, and their contributions make up some of the difference.

Someone wanted to know if any church ever broke even or made money in a year. The answer is yes, it does occasionally happen but in most of those cases the congregations are either heavily endowed with legacy gifts, or they set a break-even budget and stick with it throughout the year. If some emergency or exciting project comes up, the congregation gives more to support that specific project, so they can stay within their budget. But indeed, a lot of congregations are running deficits.

Across the United Church, the size of congregations is getting smaller – as we were finding in each of our four separate founding congregations. With amalgamation to Central Okanagan United Church, we found ourselves in a larger church - one that has a full and expanding calendar of events and activities that need to be financed, so our budget has been increasing. To support the vast array of programming and services that COUC offers to our community (our own internal congregational community and the communities beyond our doors – both locally and worldwide), our contributions and other revenues must also increase. Luckily, COUC has investments that can support our activities and last year (2024) we set aside a \$1million development fund to help us cover any shortages while we grow to achieve our Ministry Plan. However, we cannot rely solely on our investments. We must each do our part as well. Our budgeted contributions right now represent only about 40% of our total budgeted expenses, and we would like to eventually have that percentage at about 60%. We appreciate all that you do to help us fulfill the mission and work of COUC. Thank you!

Jayne Brooks, Treasurer
On behalf of the Finance Committee



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

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!

Centennial Legacy Campaign

We all know that centennial relates to 100 years. The United Church of Canada has existed for 100 years and so has the local United Church, now known as Central Okanagan United Church.

Legacy means many different things. It could mean a relic or remnant or something left over. While I do not think the United Church is just a relic or something left over in the sense of old and useless, it is 100 years old and, as an ever-changing church, it is not the same as it used to be.

Legacy also means the long-lasting impact of events or actions that took place in the past. And when you think of how the United Church has changed and all that it has accomplished over the past 100 years, the legacy of the church is truly something to be proud of: the changes within the denomination toward inclusiveness and openness to all, whether in the internal operation of the church or as a church in the wider world; the recognition of mistakes made and the apologies and moves toward reconciliation; and the many forms of Mission and Service provided at home and around the world that loved and listened and cared for others.

We each have our own memories of what the United Church has meant to us. To me it has always been a regular part of life. My memories include Sunday School (as a student and as a teacher), camp, CGIT, church picnics, church dinners, Christmas pageants, youth groups, women's groups, book studies, choir, Sunday services, special projects and events, outreach in the community, and way too many other activities and friendships to mention.

The United Church has definitely had a lasting impact on my life and I wonder if I have done enough for the church in return. I would certainly like to see the United Church of Canada and Central Okanagan United Church continue for another 100 years and longer, and I know my support is needed now more than ever before. So, the question remains, what legacy am I leaving to the church that has meant, and still means, so much to me?

Check out this link to learn more about the **United Church of Canada's Legacy Giving Campaign**.

<https://unitedchurchfoundation.ca/centennialcampaign/>

And if you think having to ask for more is something new to the church due to the current economic situation, you will enjoy reading the "**Everything Old is New Again**" article in this link.

<https://united-church.ca/blogs/round-table/everything-old-new-again>

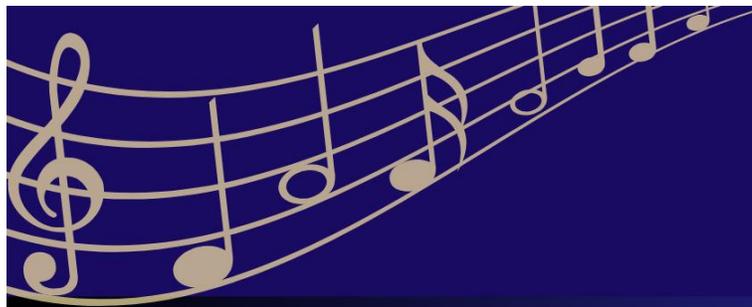
Your COUC **Stewardship Committee** is looking for new members. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Cheryl Perry. Thank you!

Your Stewardship Committee

Summer



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



JAZZ VESPERS

MUSIC THAT MOVES THE SOUL

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)**



QUIZ NIGHT



Saturday August 16th, 7:00-8:30PM.

**Come as a solo
Or a Team!**

**Prizes! Snacks!
Fun for all!**



Test you United Church history! Do you love trivia games? Come celebrate the 100th anniversary of the church! Join us for Trivia Night and snacks! There will be prizes to be won and a whole lot of fun!



Cultural Sensitivity and Communication Workshop

August 17th

11:30am - 1:30pm

Refreshments and Snacks provided

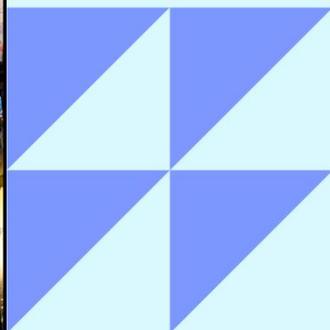
Central Okanagan United Church,
721 Bernard Ave

Room 26, upstairs with air conditioning.



RSVP TO ALLY
905 329 1552

allyp@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com



Queer Vespers

Central Okanagan United Church - 721 Bernard Ave

Monthly Evening Queer Vesper Worship at COUC

Worship Fellowship Community Connection



6:00pm



721 Bernard Ave.
Kelowna BC

Monthly:
August 17th
September 21st



centralokanaganunitedchurch.com



FREE!

TAX PREP SERVICE



Need Help With Your Taxes?

Free Tax Service – August Schedule

Thursday Mornings: 9 AM to 12 PM

Aug 7 – Tax Prep Only

Aug 14 – **CLOSED**

Aug 21 – Tax Prep and assistance from CRA and BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Aug 28 – Tax Prep Only

***First Come First Serve
No Appointment Needed.***

- For Canadian residents who have low to modest income and simple returns - as outlined by the Government of Canada.
- You will need your social insurance number and government issued photo ID such as BC Drivers License, BC ID card, Status Card.
- For preparation of current tax year returns & e-fileable returns for prior years.
- Non-English speakers please bring a translator.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



250 762 3311



admin@centralokanaganunitedchurch.com

An invitation to a film screening: [The Encampments](#)

Monday, August 25 – 7:00 pm (Doors open at 6:30 pm)

Rotary Centre for the Arts

The film is an on-the-ground accounting of twelve days in the Spring of 2024, when student activists at Columbia University, exhausted of stonewalling from the administration, set up tents on Butler Lawn. They were demanding that the university cease its investments in Israel and issue a call to end “the genocide in Gaza.” Encampments spread not only at Columbia but on campuses across the country, and then around the world.

Repression of student protest has found new life under the Trump Administration ICE has detained international students who were involved in pro-Palestine demonstrations, with no regard for their visa status. Themes of free speech, media bias and the right to protest are explored in the film.

Advance ticket price: \$15.00. Day of the screening ticket price: \$18.00.

For more information and to purchase your tickets click [here](#)

All proceeds from the screening will support the legal aid services provided by the [Legal Centre for Palestine](#) and the [National Council of Canadian Muslims](#) (NCCM).

Hosted by Community Ministry at Central Okanagan United Church in partnership with Amnesty Okanagan and CJPME:Okanagan.

Questions? Reach out to Debbie Hubbard at sowingseedsofpossibilities@gmail.com or 250-469-4468,



Thrift Store Summer Closure

The COUC Thrift
Store will be closed
in July & August

We will re-open Sept. 2nd
No donations until the Fall
Please!



OPERA
KELOWNA

discover
your voice



Voices In Bloom

Emerging Artists from Opera Kelowna's
Valley Opera Summer Intensive

August 8th 2025 | 7:00 PM | Tickets by Donation

www.operakelowna.com/production/voices-in-bloom-2/

**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

