



Snow Days . . . Memories

This winter has been atypical for our southwestern Ontario banana belt, hugging the north shore of Lake Erie in a band that usually remains temperate throughout the darker, colder months. Yet this season has brought an abundance of snow.

This sparkling white carpet softens the landscape, blanketing all with a soft, brilliant cover that belies the dark browns, greens, and waste of autumn's dying off of so much plant matter. Nostalgic memories of growing up in the snow belt of Northern Perth County in the simpler 1960s, where life seemed filled with the promise of an unending future: tilling the soil, working with extended family, celebrating the rhythms and high points of the cycle of life, the cadences of planting, spreading those aromatic natural fertilizers, products of our cattle and pigs, chickens and horses, garden and compost. We strung a rope from the house to the barn, so that we would not get lost, then frozen to death, on our way out to do the chores, to milk and feed the cows, to feed the pigs and the chickens, to pet the kittens and play with Trixie, my beautiful German Shepherd.

A hush fell over the land, leaving us feeling isolated, yet cozy, with our coal furnace and stove, cords of wood fueling our kitchen cook stove. Oh yes, that stove also had a boiler, where a ready supply of hot water was always on hand, to fill the hot water bottles that kept our toes snug and warm in our unheated bedrooms, where great sport could be had in the mornings etching our names and cartoons in the frost accumulated on the inside of our windows. Thawing frozen fingers and toes, cheeks and ears by the fire. The clothes on the line were frozen solid, and were brought in to stand up on their own, until thawed, and re-warmed by the potbelly, black stove. A simpler, slower time, when the frosty silver, bleached flakes

Thoughts from Rev. Larry

of uniquely shaped crystals absorbed sound, smells, worries and what passed for anxiety.

Against this still, peaceful backdrop, our Saviour Jesus was born. In a simple stable, much like those in our barn, where puppies, kittens, chicks and yes, even mice, were born, protected and loved, with entire emotive power of an eight year old boy. These rosy, frosted lenses, through which I view this panorama of simplicity and stillness, rest on my face again, summoning up wistful, misty remembrances of a time so far away, when the scene included my parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, neighbours, playmates and a one-room school house, with our village church, community hall, and a social and worship life centred on this blessed core. Frozen in time, in my memories, glowing with innocence and abundant love, which I summon up now, for a time blissfully ignoring the ways of the world, the conflicts, the wars, the poverty and horrid injustices. God provides a respite, a lull, a placid time of prayer and meditation, as we prepare to re-enter the workaday world, with its cacophony, its disharmony, its angst and its gore. I treasure this break and these recollections, renewing my heart's cistern with the flowing, melting, and thawing unconditional love of our Lord, of family

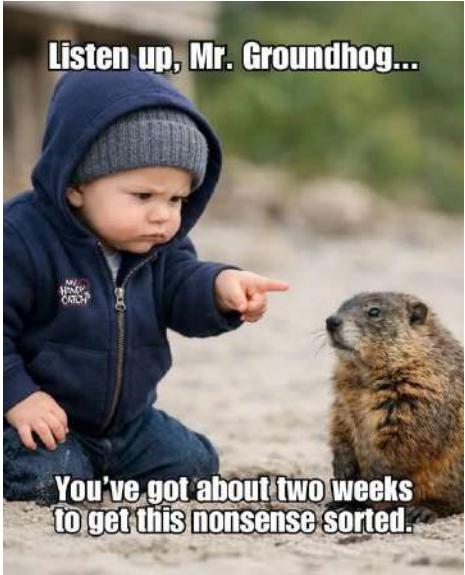
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**ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, MARCH 1,
2026
FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

**POT BLESSED LUNCH
TO FOLLOW**

Getting It Together

Stop Shaking the Snow Globe! I love snow globes – we have a couple in the house – but please . . . whoever is shaking the snow globe –



STOP! I have lost track of how much snow we have received this season

but I am positive it is more than we've received in the past few years. While we keep digging ourselves out around here though, we certainly haven't had as much snow as nearby London. One of our families has run out of front lawn to pile their snow!

As you read on the front page, it's nearly time for Dunwich's Annual Meeting. And with that comes the need for volunteers to fill our many teams and committees. Read all about that on page 4.

Church Secretary Anne is busy working on the Annual Report and is asking for reports. If you are responsible for a team or committee report, please get that to Anne as soon as possible. Annual Reports will be distributed after church on Sunday, February 22, a week in advance of the Annual Meeting, giving everyone time to read, digest, and be ready to discuss anything that requires discussion.

I'm sure if you drive by our church on any given day you will see cars in the parking lot. Have you ever wondered who could be using our building? Read all about our mid-week groups on page 5.

Thanks to Mary Gillett for taking so many photos of activities at our church. Keep up the good work. I've shared some of these photos on the back page.

Hope to see you soon. In the meantime: Be safe, be well, and always be kind. And stay warm too!



Thoughts from Rev. Larry cont'd. from pg. 1

gatherings, and of leading my flock, with God's good guidance, which saturated my childhood, with Sunday School Christmas concerts and plays, village Christmas carolling, and sleigh rides, skating on the pond which formed in our back field, attracting neighbours by the dozen, all steeped in a faith that sustained and gathered us together, to laugh, shriek, and fall, but in all things God's good graces allowed us to get back up and to carry on, through crop failures, through death, and through farm accidents of all kinds. And so we skated on, planned for the coming spring and the new births of animals, crops, and life in this existence grounded in an essential way to, and so respectful of, the land and all who dwelled upon it.

Snow days, a holiday from school, and now a time to watch the seasonal birds glut themselves on seeds and peanuts, a time to reflect, to pray, and to breath in so deeply...



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On Facebook:
Dunwich United & Friends

Check our website calendar often to keep up-to-date on upcoming events and activities. And check our Facebook page daily for inspiration!



Ways to donate to DUC



donation4duc@gmail.com





Dunwich UC is blessed in more ways than many people know!

We have at least one Anonymous Donor who delivers cash in a plain white envelope. What began in March of 2025 continued through the year. Some envelopes contained a message of blessing and thanksgiving which have been shared with our Church Family on a Sunday morning.

A thank you has been posted on the Dutton Dunwich: Cultivating Community Ideas Facebook page but it seems so inadequate. In 2025 our Anonymous Donor gave us \$3540.

On behalf of Dunwich United Church, I offer here a huge thank you for your generosity and for sharing your blessings with us. Thank you!

That's a Lot of Dough!

2317 – that's the number of beef pies the Fundraisers made in 2025! Beef pies are our best fundraising project for Dunwich UC. Ted McCready generously gives of his time to come to the church to cook our beef; a crew of men cut up the meat, ready to make pies, then an assembly line sets up to finish the job. In about an hour and a half, the seven or eight helpers can put together 500 pies, bagged, and into the freezer. Alice and Rinus Veraart contribute by applying the labels to the bags providing cooking instructions for the pies.

We also made 309 turkey pies but it looks like that will be the last we make as the ready-made gravy is no longer available from our supplier. We no longer make our own gravy as the task is too arduous and cooling the large quantities required in a food-safe time is nearly impossible!

Two teams of workers provide a monthly dinner for the Lions Club, serving up to 25 some months, which provides another revenue stream for DUC. Headed up by Rose Leitch and Linda Giles, these monthly dinners will continue through 2026.

The only other activity our Fundraisers agreed to undertake is Funeral Luncheons. In 2025 we served six luncheons, all at the church except one. This is our way of giving the grieving families time to mingle with family and friends while providing some income for our church.

The Fundraisers are proud that we contributed \$17,745.38 to our church in 2025. Can we sustain that in 2026? Time will tell!!

Our Fundraisers are: Darlene Ford, Linda Giles, Rose Leitch, Jackie Littlejohn, Susan Loveland, Sharon Mannerling, and Barb Rodgers.

Family Washroom

Have you ever wondered who can use the Family Washroom at our church?

As part of our plan for a fully-accessible, barrier-free building a Family Washroom was included. Inside you will find a spacious room, big enough for a wheelchair and helper if necessary, a change table strong enough to hold an adult, a high-rise toilet, and a grab bar to help stand up from using the toilet. The Family Washroom is equipped with an alarm which can be activated if help is needed inside. A key to unlock the door in case of emergency is hanging to the top left of the door frame.

The door handle, when pressed down, seems to be locked but check out the push button to the left of the door. If it is green, the washroom is not occupied and is available to use. If the light is red, someone is inside!

So who can use this washroom? Anyone!! If you like a little more room when using the toilet, go ahead! If you need a little help of a grab bar to stand up, go ahead! If you would like a little more privacy than offered in the regular washrooms, go ahead!



A small group of women gather monthly for a UCW meeting which includes a devotional, discussion, business, and a social time. Topics of discussion vary from a trip through local historical sites, Grandma's apron, Remembrance Day, to gardening with native plants and helping the birds and insects.

An offering is collected at our meetings then, after paying the Antler River Watershed Regional Assessment of about \$30 annually, the funds are divided up to several favourite charities. In 2025 these were the charitable donations:

- Elgin-St. Thomas Christmas Shoppe
- Pearce Williams Christian Centre
- Violence Against Women Services Elgin County
- Hospice Elgin
- St. Thomas Second Stage Housing
- Fresh Start Support Services
- Daffodil Society Welfare

All women of Dunwich UC are members of the UCW. Why not join us Monday, February 2, March 2, or April 13, at 1:30 p.m. at the church to see what we are all about?

Time to Offer Your Services

With our Annual Meeting coming up March 1, 2026, it's time to ask for volunteers to fill our teams and committees. The work of the teams and committees is essential to the "business" of Dunwich United Church.

The ad hoc Nominating Team will be making calls asking for continued support on teams and committees. When you get the call . . . will you answer?

Here is an outline of our Council and Committees and Teams:

Council

Council Chair will preside at Council meetings, preserve order, take the vote, and announce decisions of the Council. **Council Vice-Chair** will assist or act in the absence of the Council Chair as required. **Council Secretary** will keep records of proceedings, receive and send correspondence on behalf of Council, ensure minutes and registration documents are up-to-date and kept safe, ensure minutes, membership roll, and other records are sent to Regional Council annually for review.

Teams

Worship: At least four (4) elected members plus Music Director to cover worship and spiritual matters: The Minister creates an outline of the Communion services, baptisms, and so on, for the year, and presents them to the Worship Committee for their coordination. The Worship committee prepares and sets up the communion elements, and assists the minister in serving them, following the Minister's directions about which format is being used. Christian Education is a part of all worship services, and is the responsibility of the Minister, with collaboration with other speakers, supply ministers, and so on. Our Scripture Schedule is an important part of this planning. The Worship Committee ensures that the spiritual and worship focus of the church remains constant. Pulpit supply: When the minister is not scheduled or is unavailable on short notice (illness) the Worship committee searches for and hires the supply ministers or arranges fill-ins from the Congregation. This is done with the M&P and Finance Committees being kept up to date. All Worship Team members must be full members of UCC.

Finance: At least four (4) members, one of whom is the Fundraising Coordinator. Responsibilities include preparing annual budget, authorizing fundraising projects, reviewing and investigating investments in conjunction with Trustees. Finance Team is responsible for routinely informing congregation of financial sta-

tus, directing any major fundraising campaigns in consultation with Council, appointing signing officers developing rules for distribution of Benevolent Fund, as well as organizing weekly offering counters.

Fundraising: The Dunwich United Church

Fundraisers exist to mobilize the power of volunteers along with the generosity of donors. We provide financial benefit to our church while bringing our community together. Additional volunteers are welcome and appreciated.

Visioning & Stewardship:

At least four (4) members who oversee and ensure communications to pastoral charge (newsletters, digital, web site), annually reviews Ministry and Mission Profile and Mission and Vision Statements, investigates and encourages mission opportunities as well as educates and encourages the congregation to participate in mission. Regularly reviews funds given for Mission & Service and works in collaboration with the Finance Team.

Ministry and Personnel:

Three to seven (3-7) members; structure and functions are detailed in The Manual B 7.8.5.

Chair of this Committee must be a member of UCC.

Pastoral Care:

Three to five (3-5) including Minister. Provide emotional, social, and spiritual support for our church family and serve as a communication line between the church and family to create a sense of belonging.

Lay Representatives to Antler River Watershed

Regional Council:

Two (2)** individuals elected to attend all Regional Council meetings to act as a liaison among Regional Council, DUC Council, and the congregation.

***Noted: The number of representatives is dependent upon the number of resident members.*

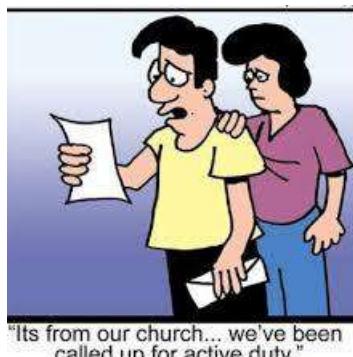
Trustees:

Individuals are appointed to the Board of Trustees which shall obey all lawful orders and direction of the DUC Council, congregation, or Regional Council, according to the Model Trust Deed of The Manual G 3. The minister is included on the Board of Trustees by virtue of office. The congregation is responsible for determining number of trustees with minimum of three (3) and maximum of fifteen (15) The Manual G 3. A majority of the Trustees must be members of UCC.

Congregation

Congregational Chair, a full member of UCC, will

Continued on pg. 5 - see Nominating



We Are a Busy Building

Do you know who and how many groups use our building? Dunwich United Church building isn't just used on Sunday mornings for worship.

Pathfinders is a group of young ladies, ages 12-14, and their leaders and are part of the Girl Guides of Canada organization. This group meets on Monday evenings, often sharing the building with another group.

Pathfinders learn and grow as they lead activities, plan events, explore their creativity and make a difference in their community. Pathfinders is a place where these girls can be curious and creative, innovative, and adventurous alongside old and new friends. -from girlguides.ca.

In 2025 many of our Pathfinders and leaders travelled to Our Chalet in Switzerland, completing a quest as part of their program.

Order of the Eastern Star, Adah Chapter, includes men and women; they meet in our building on the fourth Monday of every month except through the summer.

The Order of the Eastern Star is a worldwide fraternal, non-profit, charitable service organization that is an associated body of the family of Masonry similar to Shriners, Scottish Rite, York Rite and others. -from easternstar.org

Seniors' Cards meet twice a week: Tuesday evenings 7:00-10:00, and Friday afternoons, 1:00-4:00. Because our building is barrier-free, this is an activity for all abilities to join! Lively card games of Whip, also called Bid Euchre, ensue, often filling all of the card tables in our Gathering Space. Participants pay a small fee to play and the day's winner receives a small cash prize. Proceeds are donated to our church for the use of our building. In 2025 the Seniors' Cards group donated \$3302.50 to DUC.

Alcoholics Anonymous, sometimes called Friends of Bill W., and Al-Anon are in our building on Wednesday evenings, using separate entrances and rooms for privacy and anonymity.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who come together to solve their drinking problem. It doesn't cost anything to attend A.A. meetings. There are no age or education requirements to participate. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about their drinking problem. A.A.'s primary purpose is to help alcoholics to achieve sobriety. -from aa.org

Who Are Al-Anon Members? Al-Anon members are people, just like you, who are worried about someone with a drinking problem. -from aa.org

All of this activity is in addition to our many teams and committees who meet as needed as well as

choir and handbells. We are a busy building!

In 2025 we had 12 private rentals, mostly on Saturdays. Groups renting our building included birthday parties, baby showers, a jewellery appraiser, Agris Board meetings and luncheons, Christmas family gatherings, and even a Tupperware party. Members of our church are not charged rental; outside groups pay a rental fee per our Rental Agreement.

Part of our plan in 2018, when we purchased and renovated our building, was to be available for community use. We are doing a pretty good job!



Nominating cont'd. from pg 4

preside over congregational meetings, preserve order, take the vote, and announce the decisions of the congregation. **Congregational Vice-Chair**, a full member of UCC, will assist or act in the absence of the Congregational Chair as required. **Congregational Secretary**, a full member of UCC, will keep records of proceedings, receive and send correspondence as directed and ensure minutes and records are up-to-date and kept safe.

Decorating Team:

Volunteers to decorate the sanctuary and gathering areas each Sunday and for special occasions. Additional volunteers are welcome and appreciated.

Nominating Team:

Ad Hoc Team, consisting of Chair of Council, Chair of Congregation, plus any other members deemed necessary for input, the Nominating Team will be struck and meet prior to Annual Meeting to recommend people who are eligible, suitable, and willing to serve in positions in the congregation or pastoral charge. A list of all candidates for all Teams and Committees will be submitted to Annual Meeting for approval.

What's the Buzz - Tell me what's a-happenin'

This spot is for our Church Family to share news about families and what is going on in our lives. We need to celebrate all things!



Cameron loves to join our choir on a Sunday morning! He even has his own book. If you listen carefully while the choir is singing, you can hear Cameron's little voice too.

Dunwich Highland Ringers took our show on the road in December to Bobier Villa to entertain the residents.



DUC celebrated our 7th Anniversary in our building on Sunday, November 23.

Guests included: (from left) Pastor Gerson Berthault from Dutton Baptist Church; Rev. Daniel Mulema, our past minister; Rev. Larry Schneider, our current minister; and Dan McKillop, Clerk of Session at Knox-St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.



Share the Warmth 2025: our Church Family is so generous. Thank you! All of this collection was delivered to West Elgin Daffodil Auxiliary-Welfare.



The United Church of Canada