



**Carlisle
United
Church**

Newsletter



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Winter 2025

May Love Find You

I am currently reading "The Last Devil to Die", the fourth in the Murder Club mystery series by Richard Osman. One of the characters, Joyce, writes in her diary, "What is it about Christmas? Everything that's wrong seems worse, and everything that's right seems better."

Sometimes what seems wrong is our grief; grief over the loss of a loved one, And what Joyce says in the book seems true. If I could, I would solve all of your Christmas-time "wrongs", but I can't. I can offer some ideas for grieving the loss of loved ones at Christmas, and the loss of family connections. And I can and I will pray for the things I cannot change, but which time and compassion may, and I can support those good souls whose compassion volunteers during this season to be the hand that reaches out to those in need.

If this Christmas you are missing a loved one or family, create a new tradition. Remember them. Find a way to include them in this time of year. Honour them with something new: a candle, a favourite piece of music, a ritual, a journal entry, a letter written to them. My older sister, Sherry, had a heart of gold, but what she said went. We jokingly called her "the queen" – a title she good-naturedly accepted. I purchased a crown for my Christmas tree. When I look at it, I remember how much she loved Christmas, and us.

Joyce's statement about Christmas also made me think about how Christmas has changed since my first years in ministry, when

Christmas seemed "topsy turvy". Past Christmases with family hung in the periphery. The glow of the Christmas Eve Service, the warmth of the people who attended, came home with me. Over time, I began to cherish the quiet, savouring the love and energy of the candlelight "Silent Night" that followed me home. On Christmas Eve, I went to bed content and rose early Christmas morning to travel to family nearby. The highlight of my Christmas day was to speak to them on the phone, to hear their voices and know they were in the midst of their own celebrations.

Time passed, circumstances changed. My sons are near, but busy with families of their own. My sister now lives next door. I don't "over plan" Christmas. I let it happen. I wait to see what my sons and grandchildren are doing. We will connect in person at some convenient moment; we will connect by voice by whatever means on Christmas day; our hearts are always connected. The truth is, I like the quiet of it. I like that Christmas is now more about remembering the birth and its significance, about remembering love – quiet love, past loves, current loves, God's love, Christ-like love. The love that decorates trees, the love that fills the foodbank boxes, the love that volunteers to serve Christmas dinner to those who have none to go to, the love that knits mittens and hats or purchases them for others, the love that desires to have time with family even when they can't, the love that reaches across miles just to hear the voice that makes them smile, the love that gives itself over to possibility, to hope, to healing, to peace.

Paul reminds us that "Faith, hope and love, abide, these three and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13) And love is what the Christmas Season is really all about. The birth of love in an unlikely place. May **Love** find you this Christmas season and remain in your hearts, bringing you its other gifts – hope, peace and joy.

Love, Joy, Peace,
Rev. Gayle

"The Living Nativity" Advent Study

Thursday mornings at 10:00 am
November 27, December 4, 11, 18

Christmas Season can be so busy, with many preparations and events. Joining in our Advent devotional group will give you the gift of reflection and meaning – a time to pause and enter into an awareness of God in the midst of it all. Hope to see you there.

Nov. 27 "Approaching the Creche"
Dec. 4 "Feet on the Ground"
Dec. 11 "At the Edge of the Creche"
Dec. 18 "Is Everybody Here?"



The Season for Giving is Here

December 2 is World Giving Tuesday. This is a friendly reminder that your donations go a long way to providing ministry and outreach programs to our communities. Where you are able, please consider a top-up donation this month. Select an amount that will satisfy both your budget and your heart. You can make a monetary donation by cheque, online, sign up for PAR or a gift of securities. Your continued financial, time and talents support are greatly appreciated.

Christmas Season

November 30 ~ Advent 1, 11:00am
December 7 ~ Advent 2, 11:00am
December 14 ~ Advent 3, 11:00 am

Sunday December 21 ~ Community
Carol Sing, 11:00am
Singalong and refreshments
Bring the grandkids!

Wednesday December 24 ~
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service,
8:00pm

Sunday December 28 ~
Joint service in Kilbride, 10:00am

Sunday January 4 ~ Epiphany,
11:00am

Sunday January 11 ~ Baptism of
Jesus, 11:00am



Fran Quarrington brought some of her collection of international dolls to share on World Communion Sunday, October 5.

Sharing CUC Hospitality...

This year our congregation worked together to enhance the spirits of those attending the very popular United Church Women's "Christmas in the Country" Bazaar and Local Artisan Sale.

Many attendees commented on the warm greetings, helpful elevator rides, assistance way finding, and sharing of bookmark invites to upcoming seasonal events. The "Hospitality Treasures" sale was successful, both financially to aid outreach projects (i.e. Refreshment & Reflection in the Sanctuary, Community Carol Sing, Migrant Workers and Vacation Bible Camp), and emotionally with many commenting on the warm feelings of finding something special. More than 100 community members visited our beautiful Sanctuary for "Refreshment & Reflection". Warm welcomes, refreshing beverages, seasonal decoration, gentle music, and sunshine beaming through our incredible stained-glass windows created truly peaceful moments in an otherwise busy day.

Community members from near and far shared smiles, tears, thanks, and many heartwarming comments from about how our church was such an incredibly special place.

Special thanks to all who aided with donations of treasures, decorations, and time... once again we extended our special CUC hospitality to the community, sharing the blessing that is our church (the people and the building), and it was truly spirit filling.

Submitted with gratitude by Erin McBryde

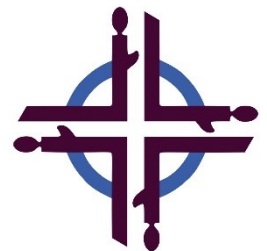
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The Church Sanctuary looked particularly lovely for the "Refreshment & Reflection" hospitality centre at the Christmas Bazaar. The sun through the stained-glass windows was a wonderful treat for many who visited. (Photo courtesy of Erin McBryde)

World Day of Prayer 2026

Mark your calendar for World Day of Prayer to be held at Millgrove United Church on **Friday March 6, 2026.**



The 2026 program is written by the Nigerian World Day of Prayer committee around the theme "I will give you rest: come" based on Matthew 11: 28-30.

Let's join together and be part of this global ecumenical movement that brings Christians of many traditions together to observe a common day of prayer each year. The motto of World Day of Prayer is "Informed prayer and Prayerful action". The proceeds from donations are used to provide grants to groups working for equality and justice for women and children here in Canada and around the world.

Linda Dodman and Erika Friesen

Transition Team Update

In mid October, the Transition Team's work during the summer months culminated in a presentation to the Joint Board of the pros and cons of each of three options. You will remember that these options consisted of three possible pathways towards discerning a future for our churches, namely:

1. Realignment. (dissolution of the Carlisle/Kilbride Pastoral Charge).
2. Engagement of a Consultant and a supply minister.
3. Appointment of an Intentional Interim Minister (voted by the Carlisle congregation earlier this year).

The research presented included the potential costs and possible consequences of pursuing each option. Following the Joint Board meeting, the Carlisle Board made the decision to continue on the path of option three and work with an Intentional Interim Minister (IIM). Our Kilbride partners have independently determined a path forward for their church and now wish only essential spiritual leadership. Going forward, both churches will continue to share a minister (and other staff), but with Carlisle only working with a Transition Team and an IIM. The Transition Team members were surprised and delighted by a very thoughtful thank-you from the Board in the form of beautiful colourful bouquets.

In the coming days, a new Transition Team will be recruited consisting of some existing and some new members, whose initial mandate will

be to search for an IIM, make a recommendation to the Board, and later to work with the chosen IIM to research possibilities that will help forge an optimistic future for our church. We are told that this process usually takes about two years.

These are exciting times for our church as we are finally taking steps to shape our own destiny. As plans unfold, we will do our best to keep everyone informed.

A sincere thanks to my teammates, Erin McBryde, Andrea McRae, Pat Miller, Linda Swance and Helen Callaway for their devotion, diligence and support during some challenging times.

Catherine Swatten, Chair, Transition Team



This year's Shredding Event on October 18 saw the delivery of confidential documents in all kinds of vehicles.



Special thanks to the faithful volunteers who put up the Christmas trees on Nov. 18.

Finance Report

THANK YOU for your continued support. To date, Envelope and PAR Givings are \$64,000. We need an additional \$23,000 in December to achieve our budget of \$87,000. Mission and Service donations are \$7,600.

The Operating Fund financial results to the end of October report a Deficit of \$15,591. This is less than last year's deficit at this time. Rentals of \$21,250 are a drop below last year's amount as we have not had any new film company rentals. Operating and Property Maintenance expenses are in line with budget, except for hydro costs which have increased significantly over last year. Staff salaries and benefits are less than budget and last year which offsets the lower revenue amount.

Our fundraising events have been very successful, thanks again to our many volunteers. To October the net profit from these events was \$17,900. In November we had two additional fundraisers – the Chili Cook-off raised \$690 and the Poinsettia sale approximately \$700.

Ontario's Anti-Hate Security and Protection grant of \$7,500 was spent on installing 3 new surveillance cameras, 3 solar motion sensor lights and updating our computer systems to protect against cyber attacks and make the systems more efficient.

The Planned Gift Fund investment has performed very well so far this year. The fund generated \$11,000 of investment income. From this fund we donated \$1,422 to the food bank.

REMINDER: The deadline for donations to be eligible for a 2025 tax receipt is **Wednesday December 31.**

Barry Gilbert, Treasurer

Chili Cook-off Contest

On Saturday November 8, we gathered at CUC for our first chili cook-off contest. The noon hour fundraising event attracted a large number of "judges" to purchase samples and vote for their favourite chili. The seven chili competitors battled it out with delicious and interesting dishes (as well as innovative presentation) enjoyed by everyone. All the chilies were deserving to be the winner, however in the end, Lori Stanski was voted the judges' choice. The event combined engagement with the community and a savoury lunch, raised funds to support CUC ministries, and we all had a lot of fun!

Based on this year's success, we've already started planning for next year's event! Hope you will join us.



*Mark Stanski, on behalf of
the Chili Cook-off
Organizing Committee*



The first annual Chili Cook-off was a real battle, with all participants having a lot of fun and also a lot of great chilies. Mark Stanski (left) and Bob Moulder (right) should probably not be seated next to each other next year. (Photo courtesy of Linda Dodman)



All the Chili Cook-off contestants having fun: (left to right) Bruce and Mary Ann Powers "Powers' Cowboy Chili", Margriet Sinclair "Chef Margriet's Chili", Mark and Lori Stanski "Champion Choice Chilli", Bob Moulder "Carlisle Festival Vegetarian Chili", Mary Gilbert "Magic Mary's Gourmet Chili", (front row) Andrea McRae "Chef James' Most International Chili", Linda Dodman "Just Like Mom's". Looking forward to next year already!

Words of Thanks from the Board Chair

Elsewhere in this newsletter Catherine Swatten has provided an update on the progress of "Our Path Forward" initiative and outlined "next steps". The process has involved much work on the part of Transition Team and we thank them for their efforts on our behalf!

As well, the Carlisle Board has spent many hours discerning our direction and determining goals and the steps necessary to achieve those goals. A heartfelt thank you to Rev. Gayle, Arlene Munro, Joan Eagle, Mark Stanski, Linda Dodman, Mary Gilbert, Andrea McRae and Barry Gilbert.

Earlier this year one of our Guest Speakers asked an interesting question: "What do you, as a congregation, do for fun?" In pondering the question, we realized that much of what we do has to do with fundraising! We resolved to plan some activities that focus primarily on "fun". To this end, the "Chili Cookoff" was organized. It featured delicious chilli,

"respectful" trash talk, and (what some people viewed as) signs with questionable claims. Despite some good-natured concerns around "voting irregularities", the participants and guests had a very enjoyable afternoon. Thank you to Mark Stanski and Andrea MacRae for organizing this event.

And once again, the ladies of the UCW put on a very successful Bazaar on November 22! It featured: preserves, baking, cabbage rolls and interesting vendors' wares. The ladies have been working tirelessly and nonstop for several months on producing goods for the event. Thank you to all of those involved!!

One special addition to the Bazaar and Vendor Sale this year was the "Treasures Sale" in the parlour and the welcoming area in the Sanctuary. Thanks to Erin McBryde for suggesting this initiative in hospitality and organizing it to a very successful conclusion.

Bob Moulder

News from Kilbride

Kilbride continues to be going strong. We had a very successful series for seniors and their families. Thanks to the Council on Aging, Dr. Nora Curran Blaney, and lawyer Emma O'Donnell of Martin and Hillyer, for participating. If you have any ideas for future talks, please contact us at kilbrideunited@gmail.com.

On Sunday October 26, we held an Afternoon Tea in honour of Sharon Banks. It was a sold-out event. Fern Darder played the piano as we gathered in the sanctuary. Heather Olavson entertained us with 'Name that Tune'. This was followed by delicious finger sandwiches and desserts. It was a lot of fun!



*Afternoon tea in honour of Sharon Banks.
(Photo courtesy of Bev Melanbacher)*

We followed that with our fall Maker's Market on November 15. This included over 25 vendors, BBQ by the firefighters, delicious bake sale, hot chocolate bar and greens for your winter urns. A big 'thank you' to all who came, volunteered, and of course Tracey Kraavanger, who organized the event again for us.

Looking into 2026, more information will come about our Robbie Burns dinner on **Saturday January 24**. There will be entertainment as we gather, piping the haggis, great food, a scotch tasting and more!

Helen Callaway

For the last 4 years, we have held a Festival of Floats in honour of Maureen Trenkler. Two years ago, we also remembered Finlay van der Werken. This will be our 4th annual festival on **Saturday December 6** at Kilbride Park from 6 to 8 pm. Come and join us, vote for your favourite float, plays some fun games and enjoy some free refreshments!

On **Sunday December 21**, join us for our carol sing service at 9:30 am. Yes, there will be a coffee hour afterwards!



It takes a village! Kilbride Maker's Market. (Photo courtesy of Tracey Kraavanger)

Milk Bag Mat Project

Here's a photo of finished Mat #105. Since that time, #106 has also been completed!



You can see many colours from different people that are supporting this Mission, helping people who need a dry spot to sleep. Now a sheet, blanket or top sheet, pillow, nice towel and a bar of soap goes into the roll. That is a must inclusion! I add other items; if it's for kids, school supplies, t-shirts, something warm for example when the roll is finished, I have to put on the outside "male", "female" or "child".

Thank You for your help in supplying us with flat, dry and clean milk bags. Thank you to Terry for sharpening my scissors which get very dull from the cutting. Thanks to Janet who is taking the mats, all of my 6 and 2 others from Nan, to Canadian Food for Children, who in turn sends overseas containers to Africa or wherever the need is. They also put beans, rice, lentils, etc. in the containers and our mats will be buffers, so the other items don't shift. The total for this year, as of the beginning of November, has been 3,731 mats. Some mats will be going to Jamaica, in a privately sponsored container. Mission work at its finest!

Erika Friesen

Prayer Circle

Our faithful prayer partners continue to hold concerns of our friends, our church community and our world in our daily prayers.

Anyone is welcome to join us for sharing and the updating of our prayer list on the second Monday of the month at 12:45 pm in the church parlour.

Dates for the new year are: **January 12, February 9, March 9 and April 13.** Thanks be to God for the blessings we receive in our daily lives. May our loving God pour out blessings on those who are needy.

Joan Eagle



Wesley Holiday Drive

Wesley staff and Holiday Gift Organizers were very grateful when the contribution of large fluffy bath towels and bath sheets was suggested. This was an idea borrowed from the request by the migrant worker's association in Waterdown. Thanks for your gifts to both Wesley and the Migrant Workers. I will deliver them to the Wesley Center in Hamilton after Church on **December 7**. Wesley staff will fill the Holiday Hampers following the wish lists of their many clients.



Large and extra large waterproof men's and women's gloves and mitts are in high demand for Wesley as well. These can be placed on the front pew of the Church beside the wooden mitten tree or on the tree at the front of the Sanctuary. All other mittens, scarves, gloves, hats, neck warmers etc. will be available for clients of the Flamborough Food Bank. This is a new tradition in our Outreach work which began last year at Christmastime. The mitten tree will remain in place throughout the Winter months to serve those who require the items. Jim who manages the Food Bank was pleased that we will continue to do so this year.

Kilbride school will join Balaclava in collecting food for the Food Bank. Traditionally Kilbride collected their food for Wesley, but as needs change so must we. Clients at Wesley are receiving groceries and toys from other sources and organizations since the COVID epidemic.

Your generosity and understanding of the need for our Outreach work to continue is greatly appreciated.

Lynn Gladstone

Cemetery Notes

Unfortunately, many boxwood bushes in the Cemetery were affected this season by the boxwood moth infestation which is affecting much of Ontario. Families are encouraged to check the vegetation on their plots in the spring in order to remove any dead or diseased plants. The moths and caterpillars are active from May to September.

As was the case last year, the Cemetery laneway will be closed from December 1 to March 31. There will be no winter maintenance of the road. If you need access, please walk in carefully or contact the Cemetery Manager (Cathy Moulder) for assistance.



Just a few of the beautiful bath sheets donated this month for the migrant workers who are staying in this area over Christmas and for the Wesley Ministry Holiday Gifts program. Thanks to everyone for your generosity!

Mark Your Calendar



- **Mondays Jan. 12, Feb. 9, March 9, April 13** ~ Prayer Circle 12:45
- **Thursdays Nov. 28, Dec. 4, 11, 18** ~ Advent study "The Living Nativity" 10am
- **Sunday November 30** ~ Advent 1: Hope
- **Saturday December 6** ~ Festival of Floats in Kilbride, 6 to 8pm
- **Sunday December 7** ~ Advent 2: Peace
- **Sunday December 7** ~ Christmas Cantata and Carol Sing at Freelton-Strabane 2pm
- **Sunday December 14** ~ Advent 3: Joy
- **Sunday December 21** ~ Carol sing service in Kilbride, 9:30am
- **Sunday December 21** ~ Community Carol Sing 11am
- **Sunday December 21** ~ Longest Night service at Freelton-Strabane 7pm
- **December 22 to January 4** ~ Flamborough Food Bank closed
- **Wednesday December 24** ~ Kilbride Family service 5:30pm
- **Wednesday December 24** ~ Carlisle Candlelight and Communion service 8pm
- **Sunday December 28** ~ Joint service in Kilbride at 10:00am
- **Saturday January 24** ~ Robbie Burns dinner in Kilbride, details TBA
- **Friday March 6, 2026** ~ World Day of Prayer, hosted by Millgrove United Church

Property

Once again this year, The Christmas Angel is standing guard at the gate to the Cemetery. The illuminated angel belongs to our neighbour across the road, Nina. Each year she offers it to add a "festive spirit" to the outside of the church. She also generously assists in its installation and upkeep. Thank you, Nina.



Update from the Food Bank

Dear Carlisle United Church Community,

As we embrace the spirit of Christmas and the Holiday Season, the Flamborough Food Bank is working diligently to spread joy and warmth to our neighbours in need. This year, we are excited to share that we have received Christmas wishlists for 154 children in our community. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community members, we have successfully matched each child with a secret Santa sponsor. Your support truly makes a difference!

In addition to our children's wishlists, we've also received requests from 83 seniors and adults living with disabilities. Together with Flamborough Connects, we are committed to ensuring that these individuals experience the joy of the season. If you would like to lend a helping hand, please reach out to Flamborough Connects at 905-689-7880.

As part of our holiday outreach, the Flamborough Food Bank is proud to provide festive meals to 300 families, including turkey, stuffing, and gravy. Turkeys will be distributed on **December 10 and 17**, bringing warmth to many tables in our community.

We also want to express our heartfelt gratitude to Carlisle United Church for their ongoing support of the Food Bank. Your contributions enable us to fulfill our mission and serve those in need effectively.

Thank you for your compassion and generosity this holiday season. Together, we can help make a positive impact in the lives of those around us. Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season filled with joy and love.

Warmly, The Flamborough Food Bank Team

Jim Leamen