Carlisle United Church

Newsletter

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Winter 2026

Cocoa and Carols

Ignite your Christmas spirit by joining in a community carol sing on **Sunday December 6 at 3:00pm**, hosted at Carlisle United Church. Musicians from Carlisle and St. James in Waterdown are teaming up to lead some of your very favourite festive tunes by request, and all are invited to "deck the halls" with joyous singing! Hot cocoa with marshmallows and other refreshments and baked treats will be provided, along with a children's craft to keep little hands busy. All are welcome to step in from the cold and press "pause" on the week's busyness to enjoy this free community event.

Heather Olaveson

Quiet Christmas at Carlisle

Christmas Eve
Thursday December 24 at 7:00pm

A quiet space in the midst of the bustle of the season. Drop in for a self-led service of prayer with an hour of gentle, live piano music.



Take time to rest, renew, remember.
Shed some light in the darkness of winter.
Light a candle in memory and in hope.

Christmas Season

November 29 ~ Advent 1 and Congregational meeting, 11am

Thursdays Dec. 3, 10, 17 ~ Advent study based on the poetry of Isaiah, 10am

December 6 ~ Advent 2 and communion, 11am

Sunday December 6 ~ Cocoa and Carols, 3pm

December 13 ~ Advent 3 and baptism, 11am

December 20 ~ Advent 4, Family Christmas Service, 11am

Thursday December 24 ~ Quiet Christmas, 7pm

Thursday December 24 ~ Christmas Eve Service, 8pm

Sunday December 27 ~ Joint service in Kilbride lead by Glenda DeVries, 10am

Sunday January 10 ~ Epiphany, 11am

Family Community Christmas Service

Due to last year's enthusiastic response, Carlisle United will again share our warm invitation to families and community to join our Family Community Christmas Service, **Sunday December 20 at 11:00am.** The casual family service will include storytelling, carols, a children's activity table, a Nativity Tableau for special photo op and treats. We hope to once again fill the Sanctuary with Christmas spirit, so please invite family, friends and neighbours.



The delightful Nativity photo-op will be included again in this year's Family Christmas service. Please bring your best little shepherds and angels.

An Abundance of Love - A Storied Message

"What I need," God said, "what I need…"
"Yes?" said a few of the angels, "Yes, tell us. What you need… Can we help?"
"What I need to do," said God, "is I need to be born in the hearts of people."
The angels stopped doing whatever it is angels do - stopped and stared - dumbfounded - and began to whisper among themselves.
"Whatever do you think God means?" said one.
"I don't know", said another, "but I'm not liking the sound of this."
"Uh oh,", said a third. "God is thinking again. That always scares me."
"Actually," said a fourth, "it excites me. "It could mean we're in for a surprise."
"That's what scares me," replied angel 3.

"Gabriel!!" roared God, "Where's Gabriel when you need a good messenger! Go find Gabriel!"
"I'm right here." said Gabriel. "What's the message and who's it going to?"
"What I need," said God, "is to be born in the hearts of people."
"I heard that part," said Gabriel, "what I didn't hear was how, when, where - all that stuff."
"I'm getting to that," said God. "Here's my thinking… "
"The angels rolled their eyes… which God noticed but ignored.
"To be born in the hearts of people, I need to be born into the world for real, for all to see - which means I need one human being to carry the heart of me into the world."

"God's mad!" whispered one of the older angels.
"Absolutely bonkers." agreed another.
"Yet," said the oldest angel (oldest in experience, that is, because angels really don't grow old), "Yet, God usually knows what God is doing - so let's wait and see."

"In order to be born into the world for real," continued God, "I need one human being to be born who will carry the heart of me into the world. One human being not yet changed by the world's hardship, but who will be able to bear the hardship without losing one ounce, one iota of love or compassion - a baby. I will be born in the heart of a baby."
The angels fell silent.

"But a human baby needs parents," God was pacing and thinking out loud, "Good parents - parents with loving hearts, brave hearts, with a thirst and hunger for justice; parents willing to risk everything for this baby that carries my heart, and for their people; preferably young parents, inexperienced parents who don't mind breaking a rule here or there so love can be born."
God hummed and hawed a bit and glanced around the earth to see who might be available.

"I know what my people are expecting, so we'll fill a few of their expectations, but to do this right I'll have to break a few of their rules, do the unexpected, burst the boundaries, let more

people in, maybe let all people in…"
God continued to pace, seemingly lost in thought. As God paced, the angels followed eagerly behind, straining to hear all of God's muttering.

"But I also need to sneak quietly into the world," God continued, "mostly unseen, so the that the child who carries my heart can grow in wisdom and in love… Hmm," said God, "Hmm, yes, I think that's it!"

God stopped pacing and announced: "Mary and Joseph, it is. They will do nicely. As a matter of fact, they are absolutely perfect!!!"

"Aargh!" said one of the angels, "I can't keep quiet any longer. I have to say something. Er… God, excuse me, I don't mean to question your wisdom… well, yeh, I do. Do you know what will happen to Mary? She's so young, she's not married. They'll stone her to death. You'll never get born."
"Joseph will see to it," God replied. "His love for Mary will be stronger than his initial disappointment. His compassion for justice is stronger than the ridicule of others. His faith is stronger than his doubts - and he will doubt" said God, "but he will also believe. And most important of all, he has a big, beautiful heart."
"I don't get it." said the Angel.
"What I need to be born in the hearts of people," said God, "is an abundance of love. I don't need wealth and I don't need power… I don't need military might or great beauty… as a matter of fact, those things would be a distraction.

I am Love - abundant, extravagant love - strong, resilient, unquenchable love - and so to be born I need an abundance of love. And Joseph and Mary, together with their family and friends - they have what is needed for me to be born. Deep faith and a hope for a more just, more compassionate world - and most important of all, to keep these things alive - to keep me alive - an abundance of love.

Gabriel, I need you to speak to Mary. Tell her not to be afraid. And I need Joseph to have a dream to explain things - he'll only need a dream to know the right thing to do.

And when I am born into the world, I want it announced - but quietly - something that will help Mary and Joseph understand - and the world too. Since Love will shepherd my people, let's tell some shepherds. You, angels, start practicing - for before the year is out I expect you will be surprising some shepherds… Yes," said God, "I will be born in the hearts of people, but first I will be born in one heart - and all I need - all I need is an abundance of love."

Rev. Gayle MacDonald



May an Abundance of Love find you this Advent & Christmas Season
Peace & Love
Gayle

Advent Pop-Up Choir

Feel like having a little more festive singing in your life this December? Join our Advent Pop-Up Choir for a few Thursday night rehearsals as your schedule permits and level up your Christmas spirit by experiencing choral music as part of the choir . . . without an extensive time commitment. Rehearsals start **Thursday November 26 at 7-8:30pm** in the Carlisle sanctuary, and culminate in a performance during our family worship service on **Sunday December 20 at 11am**. All singers are welcome, and no prior experience or music literacy required – just enthusiasm!



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905-689-8630 or secretary@carlisleuc.ca

Board Chair Report

Over the past several months, the Carlisle Church Board has been in conversation with their counterparts from St. James United Church in Waterdown. These conversations have had to do with whether there is a desire to work together on church events of mutual interest — events such as Messy Church, Vacation Bible Camp, Community Outreach initiatives and Migrant Worker events.

Over the course of these discussions, we have come to realize that we have much in common, including:

- Our desire to serve and pray for members of our congregations and community
- Fostering friendship and a sense of community in a nurturing environment
- Providing support and respite in a world facing increasing challenges, both locally and globally
- Creating opportunities to engage and support families and young people that they may grow in their faith and sense of community
- Prioritizing provisions for safe and inclusive spaces

There is consensus among the Board members that there could be benefits to collaboration between the two churches, such as in the areas of sharing of our volunteer resources or increasing our ability and capacity to fulfill our missional objectives. Our view is that we could be stronger working together!

The discussion has not been about amalgamation of the two congregations, nor did it involve any suggestions for changes to the Worship services of either church. We have agreed to continue the conversation and to keep our congregations informed, with the understanding that any changes will be approved by the members of both congregations.

Bob Moulder



Our Remembrance Day service on November 8 was enriched by the participation of members of the 1st Carlisle Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers. (Photo courtesy of Mary Gilbert)

Prayer For Acceptance of Change

O Loving Being,

As we continue on our path of questioning and discovery, keep me from being content with the way things are, recognizing that change elevates and challenges. It is God showing me a new path to all that is good.

I have decided I am ready for change; however, I know I must be willing to actively participate in the process, remain open and receptive to new ideas, comforted by knowing that You are my guide, my strength, my friend and will not lead me astray.

Give me the grace to realize that I don't need to give up on what was in order to embrace new dreams and visions for the future of our church.

Help us all to celebrate what was, live what is, be ready to move into what will be and be prepared that it might be something new.

I ask that You hold our minister, staff and all who serve our church in a leadership role, firmly in your Divine embrace as they live out all You are calling them to be during this time of challenge and change.

Submitted by The Transition Team
(Paraphrased from Norval Minute Nov. 25th and Psalm 55:19)

Carlisle United Ladies & Friends



Our weary bones are now resting. Our “Christmas in the Country” Bazaar, on Saturday November 21, was a fantastic success. Only a few treats remained. The crowds were amazing. Our hospitality team welcomed a very supportive community. A huge **Thank You** to everyone.

The efforts of our extra baking this year met with great success. Thank you to all bakers who contributed. In just four hours, our cupboards were bare! The crowd favourites were pies, cabbage rolls, quiche, assorted tarts, shortbread cookies and squares. Check out the very positive comments on Facebook!

In the craft area, the catnip mice earned smiles. Our crafters filled every space with their efforts. Scrubbies overflowed the basket, soup cozies attracted interest, tree ornaments decorated our tree, knit hats covered our model heads and the assortment of other special surprises for Christmas was abundant.

Thank you also to our Local Vendor and Artisan sale supporters. It was difficult to move around all the wonderful displays. What an amazing array of creative crafters.

We also want to thank some supporters who donated towards our event. Josling Farm supplied onions and cabbage for the cabbage rolls. Charkanai Apple Orchards supplied the apples for pies; Daniel’s No frills provided bags to help us carry our prized purchases; Fortinos helped reduce the cost of the meat.

Our annual potluck lunch is on **Wednesday November 25**. There is always laughter and conversation, teasing and compassion, as we pat ourselves on the backs for this fulfilled year, a small and mighty team.

In January, we will continue meeting on Wednesday mornings. Come join us from 9 to 11:30am. All are welcome to share in fun and fellowship with busy hands. Come and learn new skills and share your skills with others. Bring a friend. Chat may be about families, health, world news or local events. Some people come to work; some come to chat; some manage to accomplish both. Everyone brings their own strengths, skills and experiences. Special thanks to several wonderful new helpers who have joined us this fall. New members are always welcome.

Thinking ahead, the next Bazaar is only a year away. We also need helping hands for funeral teas, kitchen bees, crafting, making frozen pies, etc. We would welcome topics of interest for speakers. We are asking for all your ideas please.

See you all in 2027 – Wednesday mornings when weather cooperates with us.

Mary Gilbert & Lynda Speck

Property

We have been in conversation with the directors of the Jonathan Brown foundation regarding the construction of a “memorial” Pickle Ball Court in memory of Johnathan Brown. However, some questions arose as to the nature of our long-term plans for the use of the field and the suitability of these plans in terms of integration with the Pickle Ball Court. The project has been put on hold pending further discussions with the Browns.

There have been concerns expressed about the appearance of the side door vestibule. A team of volunteers have agreed to make recommendations as to how we can make the entrance more welcoming and inviting.

As part of our security upgrades, we engaged a contractor to replace the exterior Food Bank door. The work was to have been completed by the end of August; however there have been many delays and setbacks, and we are still awaiting completion.

As we start the budget process for the coming year, we are interested in any thoughts from the congregation about property issues.

Bob Moulder















Just a few of the many special moments at the "Christmas in the Country" Bazaar, the Local Artisan and Vendor sale, and the Treasure sale in the parlour on November 21. Thank you to all who volunteered and all who contributed to the success of the day. (Photos courtesy of Drew Mudge, Mary Gilbert and Cathy Moulder).



Milk Bag Mat Project

Some notes from Angela, the co-ordinator of the Ontario milk bag mat project:

"*So far this year, we have sent 2,448 mats to people in need. What an amazing accomplishment!...*

PLEASE... ONLY MILK BAGS!
Only milk bags can be used to make our milk bag mats. We have had donations of weaving strips made from other types of plastic bags, and I have also received two mats this month that contained bread bags.

Please remember that anything other than milk bags cannot be used in our mats. Other types of plastic break down differently and cause the mats to deteriorate and fall apart much more quickly. Thank you for helping us maintain the quality of our mats!"

Erika also notes that 400 milk bags go into a six-foot mat, saving them all from landfill. And she would like to give a special 'thank you' to Terry Swatten who sharpens all types of tools, in exchange for a donation to Carlisle United Church.

Prayer Circle

Our faithful prayer circle continues to meet monthly on Mondays to share concerns for our church, our community and the world, trusting that our loving God hears our entreaties and holds us in love. The prayers of all of us are important, as we in Carlisle seek God's guidance in finding our path forward as a congregation. God is with us in our journey! Coming meetings are at 12:45 on **December 14**, **January 11**, **February 8** and **March 8**.

Joan Eagle and Linda Dodman



Erika Friesen demonstrated the weaving of a milk bag mat at our 200th Anniversary Celebration. This was a wonderful opportunity to show another aspect of the Church's outreach to visitors. Thank you, Erika!

Finance

As always, we express our gratitude for your support in many ways. THANK YOU!

To the end of October, our Envelope and PAR Givings were $55,100 which is 3.6% below last year. To achieve our annual Givings budget of $85,000, we need donations of $30,000 in November and December. Rental income is $3,000 higher than last year. Salary and Benefit costs are higher than last year, but in line with budget. Operating and Property expenses are also in line with budget, with the exception of hydro costs. Fundraising events have generated a net profit of $17,600 to date. Our Operating Deficit is approximately $22,400, which is $3,000 higher than last year.

The season for giving approaches. Please consider a donations top-up this Advent and Christmas season and help us achieve our Givings target of $30,000 for November and December. December 1 is Giving Tuesday, an annual day of generosity. Your financial support is greatly appreciated.

Barry Gilbert, Treasurer

Wesley Holiday Drive

Dear Congregants, your faithfulness to our Outreach Contributions towards Wesley Urban Ministries is indeed inspirational!

This Christmas Season, either cash or a cheque to “Carlisle United Church” will be used to purchase Giant Tiger gift cards of $25 each. A tax receipt from our Church Office will be issued for gifts starting at the $20 level.



I am placing envelopes in a silver and red box along with a pen near the Mitten Tree on the front pew, either for a cash offering or a cheque. If yours is a cash gift, please remember to sign the back of the envelope and to return the pen to the box.

A red or silver gift bag will be added to the large trees at the front of the Sanctuary to represent the number of gift cards purchased… a cheerful reminder of your contribution to the wish lists of Wesley clients.

Mittens, gloves, hats and scarves (all sizes, materials and for all genders) may be placed on or under the Mitten tree. The Flamborough Foodbank clients and women of Interval House in Waterdown will be the recipients of these much needed items for the coming Winter months.

Thank you In advance for all that you do to help those less fortunate in the Hamilton/ Halton community ~ a long-standing tradition within our Church Family and one that we honour with humility and pride.

Lynn Gladstone

Seeds of Hope Grant

As shared previously, this past spring Carlisle United Church was awarded a United Church of Canada Seeds of Hope grant to invest in and expand our outreach to community families by offering seasonal programmed events through the year.

This grant has supported our church in the purchase of programming material and specific equipment for community family events with the hopeful focus of increasing fun and connection. In addition to re-establishing Sunday service youth activities, family events have included this summer's Vacation Bible Camp, our 200th Anniversary party in September, our Sanctuary "Refreshment and Reflection" opportunity at the Christmas Bazaar, Advent activities including the Cocoa and Carols sing-along and the Christmas Family Service, as well as plans for the coming seasons of Lent and Easter. We have also purchased a new camera to enhance our online connections and an official "Welcome" banner to post at upcoming events as an aid in wayfinding and to share our warm greeting to all visitors.

Judging by the growing number of participants and all the positive feedback at events, the ‘seeds of hope’ are starting to grow. Sincere thanks so all who have supported this vision as it becomes a reality.

Erin McBryde

Carlisle United Church, along with other United Churches in Hamilton and Halton, has supported Wesley Urban Ministries for **over 60 years**.

Thanks for Caring!

Mark Your Calendar



- **Mondays Dec. 14, Jan. 11, Feb. 8, March 8** ~ Prayer Circle 12:45
- **Thursdays Dec. 3, 10, 17** ~ Advent study based on the poetry of Isaiah, 10am
- **Sunday November 29** ~ Advent 1: Hope and congregational meeting
- **Sunday December 6** ~ Advent 2: Peace and communion
- **Sunday December 6** ~ Cocoa and Carols, community sing-along, 3pm
- **Sunday December 6** ~ Deadline for donations to Wesley and mitten tree
- **Sunday December 13** ~ Advent 3: Joy and baptism
- **Sunday December 20** ~ Cocoa and Carols in Kilbride, 9:30am
- **Sunday December 20** ~ Advent 4: Love, Family Christmas service
- **December 21 to January 3** ~ Flamborough Food Bank closed
- **Thursday December 24** ~ Kilbride Family service 5:00pm
- **Thursday December 24** ~ Carlisle 7:00pm quiet reflection, 8:00pm service with communion
- **Sunday December 27** ~ Joint service in Kilbride at 10:00am, led by Glenda DeVries



As part of the 200th Anniversary Celebration, we set a challenge to collect 200 cans of beans for the Food Bank. Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously. The grand total donated was 306 cans. (Left to right, Catherine Swatten, Terry Swatten, Bob Moulder, Dave Phillips).

Flamborough Foodbank Update

We are grateful to share a seasonal update as we transition from a bustling autumn into the busy holiday season at the Flamborough Foodbank.

The need in our community continues to grow, with family visits reaching 144 per week in October. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our local farms, neighbours and partners, we continue to provide fresh, nutritious food to every family who comes through our doors.

A heartfelt highlight of the fall was Thanksgiving, where we were able to provide 300 turkeys, all donated by Harvey's Waterdown, to local families. Now, we are busy preparing for the Christmas season! In partnership with Flamborough Connects, we will once again provide a Secret Santa program for seniors and disabled adults in our community. We are also hosting a Kids Secret Santa, which already has over 100 children registered.

Thank you, Carlisle United Church, for your continued partnership, generosity and compassion. Together, we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of many in our community.

Jim Leamen

Chili Cook-off Contest

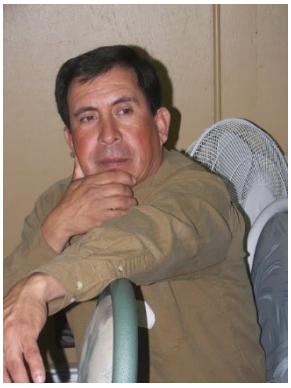


Sadly, we've had to postpone the chili cook-off due to a lack of competitors available in a very busy November. Hopefully we can put this fun event on at a later date. Hang on to those prize-winning recipes and competitive spirits…

Migrant Worker's Outreach

It is with sadness that we will witness the end of an era when Kraus Nurseries, on Centre Road near our church, closes its doors (gates). Three loyal Mexican workers recently retired and returned to their homeland and families for good, after working seasonally for Kraus for over 25 years. Terry Sciamonte (Hubbard), co-founder of Migrants Matter Flamborough, advocate and generous friend, posted the following heartfelt tribute to these three heroes on Facebook that I know will touch your hearts as it did mine:

*"Wishing the happiest of retirements to **Gerardo Lara**, **Victor Manuel Hernandez** and **Ignacio Lopez** of Kraus Nurseries.*
So many mixed emotions in saying goodbye to these three men. I have known the men at Kraus the longest. I cannot remember a time when they weren't a part of my life. I believe that there were 23 men when I first started going there a lifetime



ago. And now, only 3 left to leave for the final time, as Kraus Nurseries closes its doors for the last time. I cannot recall the year of our first Thanksgiving Dinner there. But yesterday, we had a reunion of those who came with me in 2011. It only seemed fitting that the same people would come together to wish them well in their retirement.
Paula, Sheny, Josie, Christine, Mary-Ann – and Sergio Cuellar – surprising the guys with well wishes from Mexico. The photos are from 2011 and yesterday. It feels like a minute in between. There were many years of laughter, hot dogs on their BBQ, Paula's Dominican food, English lessons (and homework) and making fun of me, because I still struggle with Spanish after all these years.
There were years filled with joy, celebrations, tears, overwhelming heartaches and sorrows. The average person will never, ever understand the degree of sacrifice our migrant friends make in order to come here. To anyone who insists that they are lucky to work here, I challenge you to live their lives. These 3 men have 100 collective years working in Canada. And that means 8 months out of every one of those years away from the people they love.
This goodbye is so personal for me. My heart is breaking, just as the hearts of every family member of every migrant worker must surely break each time they say goodbye.



There will always be room in my heart for every migrant friend I have been blessed to have. But I can tell you that Migrants Matter, Flamborough would not be here today, had I not first met the men at Kraus Nurseries.
***Gerardo Lara**, for so many years, I asked you to pick guys up from other farms for a church dinner or picnic. You never once said no. I don't know that you ever said no to anyone who needed your help. We will all miss seeing the little bus travel up and down Centre Road. You are my family. Always. Your kindness, your smile, your desire to always make things better for others is how you will be remembered by all of us. We have shared our families and become one. And one, we will remain.*
God Bless each one of you, as you begin the



next chapter of your lives – one that will finally be spent with the people at home who have missed you so. I am sorry that in all of these years, rules have not changed that would allow you to freely move your families here if you chose to. Funny that...100 years of working to make Canadian farms prosper, and you still don't have the right to live here. Canada still has far to go and much to learn. I can never repay you for all you have taught me.
Please, join me in thanking Gerardo, Victor and Nacho for all that they have given to our community. They retire with our respect and gratitude. May we honour them by respecting all migrant friends who work here. Te amo.
Terry"

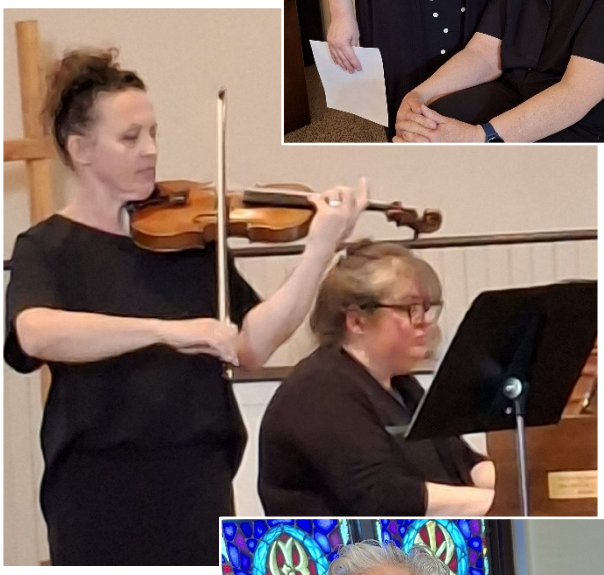
Submitted by Catherine Swatten

October's Beethoven Concert

On Sunday October 4, the sanctuary was filled with eager concert-goers, not only hailing from Carlisle and its immediate surroundings, but also bussed in from Klaudia's Music Studio in Oakville. At "Beethoven: The Man, the Mind, the Music," everyone had a wonderful time learning about a true classical giant and hearing some of his most enduring works for piano and for violin. The concert closed with an exuberant rendition of "Joyful, Joyful" that nearly brought the roof down, as it was performed by the congregation, organ, piano, and violin. Many thanks to all the volunteers who made this concert a success through their efforts in planning, advertising, preparing the space, providing refreshments and treats, greeting attendees, and providing tech support. We are especially grateful for the support of all who attended, and we offer a final figurative round of applause to the performers: Dr Deborah Henry (research/script, narration, organ), Dr Heather Olaveson (piano), Klaudia Thibault (violin), Filip Thibault (piano) and Rev. Will Wheeler ("the Voice of Beethoven").













Stewardship Message

We want to begin with a simple heartfelt THANK YOU. Your gifts of time, talents and finances make the ministry we share possible. Because you have chosen to invest faithfully in our congregation, lives are being touched, neighbours are being served, and our church is able to respond to God's call with courage and hope.

One of the joys of giving is seeing what becomes possible when we share what we have. Our gifts support the Minister's salary and expenses, our wonderful staff's salaries, keep the lights on and the building well-maintained. They support our Carlisle community outreach – Flamborough Foodbank, Scouts and Guides, Vacation Bible Camp, Wesley, Migrant Workers and more. Our God is generous – a God whose abundant love is revealed to us in Jesus. Our generosity is one way we respond to that love and participate in God's transforming work in the world.

Because generosity is already an intentional part of your life, we invite you to consider an increase in your financial commitment for the coming year. Not simply because there are bills to pay, but because there is ministry before us – and because growing in generosity is part of our own journey of faith.

Thank you for the many ways you help make our community what it is. Your giving reflects choices made with faith, intention and trust, and we are deeply grateful to share this ministry with you ~ "Go Make a Diff'rence"

Donations can be made in many ways – through PAR, weekly envelopes, online at the church website. Many United Churches across the country are now receiving gifts of securities and mutual fund investments.

In Advent Hope, Peace, Joy and Love,
Rev. Gayle and the Carlisle United Church Board



Thanks for your support! We sold 49 beautiful poinsettias this year in our annual sale, raising $413.39. Thanks to Linda Dodman for all her work on this project.



On November 22, we joined with family and friends to celebrate the milestone birthday of Muriel Lambert. Congratulations to a dear friend on 95 years lived well.