



eastside
united church

Annual Program Report

This Year: September 2025 – May 2026

May 31, 2026 Congregational Meeting



Eastside United Church

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Agenda

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Motion to allow adherents to vote.
- 3) Motion to adopt the agenda.
- 4) Motion to adopt the minutes of the March 1, 2026 Congregational Finance Meeting.
- 5) Programming Reports:
 - a. Leadership Team
 - b. Ministry and Personnel
 - c. Faith Formation
 - d. Congregational Care
- 6) Nominations and Elections
- 7) Enabling Motion: “that the Eastside Leadership Team be empowered to deal with and act on all routine and emergent matters until the next congregational meeting except those matters which, according to the Manual of the United Church of Canada, require congregational approval.”
- 8) Motion to Adjourn

Congregational Finance Meeting Draft Minutes – March 1, 2026

PROGRAM MEETING NOTICE: Notice for this meeting was part of the weekly announcements which are sent via email to Eastside members. As well, the meeting notice was given at the church services.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 by Janet Bjorndahl.

2. Motion to allow adherents to vote.

Moved by Ron Brandow. Seconded by Norma Wheatley. Carried.

3. Motion to adopt the agenda.

Moved by Leanne Sudom. Seconded by Elaine Hill. Carried.

4. Motion to adopt the minutes of May 25, 2025, Congregational Program Meeting:

Moved with a minor amendment to spelling by Heather Balfour. Seconded by Lucille Henderson. Carried.

5. Motion to adopt the minutes of November 16, 2025, Special Congregational Meeting

Moved by Brian Abrahamson. Seconded by Heather Balfour. Carried.

6. Living Spirit Council Report – Janet Bjorndahl

Janet updated the congregation on the current situation with the former St. Philip's Anglican Church that had shared our building until a few years ago. They have been invited back but are unlikely to rejoin us. At the time they left, they had equity in the building of about \$340K (rounded). Discussions are ongoing but part of the agreement between the partners in the Living Spirit Centre says that equity cannot be paid out if it will cause undue hardship on the remaining members. The Living Spirit Centre definitely does not have that kind of money and Bread of Life (and likely Eastside) do not want to borrow money to pay them out. Anonymous donors from Eastside have offered to pay them out over a bit longer than 10 years, although this offer has not been presented to the Anglicans yet. As well, should any other members of ES wish to contribute to that, they are welcome to. BOL has not offered any money yet, although they have "donor fatigue" as recently contributed quite a bit to resolve a deficit to the building funding. If ES's offer is accepted, ES's equity in the building would increase each year.

Q1. How is the amount of equity established?

A1. At the time St. Philip's, Eastside and Bread of Life joined in the Living Spirit Centre, St. Philip's and Bread of Life put money into the building. And, as funds were provided monthly by each congregation to cover the mortgage (and expenses), equity increased. Eastside has built equity since it joined via the payment of the mortgage. The amount of St. Philip's equity is based on their portion of the total amount of money that went into acquiring the property and building the church.

7. Finance Report – Janet Bjorndahl (included in meeting package)

Highlights by Janet:

- The collaboration has helped us save some money
- A reimbursement of funds for a staff member’s 2024 leave was made in 2025
- Becca is working a few more hours which meant a slight increase in pay
- The denominational assessment from the National Church was slightly higher in 2025
- Outreach – mainly Warm Welcome and Food for Thought. Budget was increased for 2026 and we are requesting that people no longer make donations designated specifically to Outreach programs. Instead, general (local) offering will be used to pay for local Outreach programs, as per the proposed budget. Therefore, people should make those additional donations as part of local offering. This will reduce bookkeeping and tracking efforts.
- All payments are up-to-date
- Projected estimated deficit for 2026 is just under \$5,000.00
- Future – Russell plans to retire in December of this year so plans will have to make within the Collaboration for that.

a) Motion to receive the Finance Report and approve the 2026 budget.

Moved by Leanne Sudom. Seconded by Elaine Hill. Carried

8. Motion to appoint reviewer of Eastside 2025 books.

Anita Tessier graciously accepted this assignment.

Moved by Wanda Barr. Seconded by Norma Wheatley. Carried.

9. Enabling Motion

“That the Eastside Leadership Team be empowered to deal with and act on all routine and emergent matters until the next congregational meeting except those matters which, according to the Manual of the United Church of Canada, require congregational approval.”

Moved by Heather Balfour. Seconded by Sonia Abrahamson. Carried.

10. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Anita Tessier. Seconded by Sonia Abrahamson. Adjournment – 12:56

COMMENTS AFTER MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

1. Elaine Hill voiced her appreciation for all the work Janet’s done this past year.
2. Norma Wheatley strongly urged the congregation to read the 2025 Annual Financial Report as said she and everyone else would be amazed at the amount of volunteer work done for Eastside and for this building.

Minute Taker: Bonny Manz

Minister's Report

As I write this report, I am coming up on my 40th anniversary of Commissioning as a Diaconal Minister in The United Church of Canada! This year I also turn 65, and most of you know that I will be retiring at the end of the year. While I will begin collecting my pension, I do hope to continue my ministry with you and the collaboration in a lesser capacity through the programs I enjoy offering following a 13 week break. Details cannot be worked out until after my retirement.

This has been a full year as we live into the Threshold United Collaboration, sharing 2.5 ministers among 5 congregations: Eastside, St. James, Heritage, St. Andrews in Lumsden, and Regina Beach. It has been a joy and pleasure teaming with Bonnie Morton and Roel Tolentino for this ministry we share together. While the Collaboration has resulted in less time needed to prepare sermons and worship services, it has meant more time for meetings as the Collaboration includes monthly Steering Committee and Worship Committee meetings, as well as weekly ministry team meetings. This year, as a result of evaluations and review, we planned for Joint Services to be the last Sunday of every month, instead of the occasional 5th Sunday. Also, as a result of feedback, we have stopped creating videos for the sermon until further notice. It seems that while our community mostly appreciated the video sermons, others preferred to have the sermons read by a leader. This is still being evaluated so your feedback is welcome.

This past year, I have been noticing some shifts in our congregational life as well as in society in general. I think that there has been more engagement lately from what we have seen since the pandemic. Church attendance has been slowly growing and it has been wonderful to see more families and children joining us on Sunday morning! The biggest challenge continues to be finding volunteers for committees or other ministry needs. This is a common experience across churches, especially since the pandemic.

One of the newer areas of my ministry that doesn't fall within any committee is the Food for Thought group I facilitate at the Queen City Wellness Pharmacy. The QCWP is a wellness centre that along with being a pharmacy, is also a drop in and support for the houseless in the area. Every Wednesday we provide a meal for those who wish to sit and have food and conversation. To call it a group may be generous as it is not the same people every week but there are regulars. Jenni Krall has also been helping me when she can, and her youth group has even made some meals that we are using some weeks. We let the folk who come know that we are ministers if they have any spiritual or faith issues they want to talk about, and that usually leads to some good conversation. Primarily, we focus on letting them know they are safe, loved, and supported. I am very grateful for Lana Brandow who is providing a meal for 10 people the second Wednesday of every month. I would welcome anyone else who would be able to provide a meal once a month or even every other month.

Related to Food for Thought is the Warm Welcome Coalition I continue to chair, which seeks to support the warming spaces and address other issues of houselessness and ending houselessness. Last year my co-chair resigned, and I have struggled to keep on top of the work since then. The committee has reviewed the need for the Coalition to continue. Each time we discuss this, those connected to the church affirm it is important because it is the only place where they can connect with and support these issues. I was unable to re-organize the food provision for Carmichael and I did not get a response from them with regard to their needs. We looked to support the Sunday Funday meal but my capacity never enabled getting this organized. We will be reviewing our goals and purpose as a Coalition this month as we look toward defining our ongoing work.

I continue to enjoy the richness of offering the programs of the Community Dinner, Film and Faith, Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Books Study and Courageous Faith. It is this ministry I hope to continue in my retirement. Messy Church has also been a meaningful ministry for the few families who participate. I appreciate the commitment and support of Kathleen Houston from Westminster United who helps plan with me and carries things out, and Mary Vetter from Bread of Life who often looks after the meal or finds someone who can.

In Continuing Education, I took a reading week in November and just returned from a ministers' retreat in Alberta that gathered ministers from three Regions and four provinces. In the wider church, I continue to supervise Grenfell United Church by attending their monthly Leadership Team meetings and have supported a few cases as consultant for the United Church policies of workplace harassment and sexual abuse.

I am so grateful to have Becca back with us as she is incredibly competent and efficient in the office. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Pastor Lynn Robertson of Bread of Life and am very excited that she has now been called to Bread of Life.

I also have deep gratitude for all the volunteers who do so much in this community that maintain and enrich our community. I am especially appreciative of all the work that Janet Bjordahl does not only as Chair of the Leadership team, but in acting as our financial officer and in her support and work with the Threshold Collaboration. I also want to acknowledge the hours that Bonny Manz spends in the office managing the finances for Eastside and the Living Spirit Centre.

It is a joy and privilege sharing this ministry together with you! As I look toward transitioning into retirement, I celebrate all that we have been able to do together and have truly been blessed to be able to be part of this ministry of Eastside United Church.

Many Blessings,

Russell Mitchell-Walker, Diaconal Minister

Leadership Team

Eastside United Church continues to be blessed with a variety of ways to:

- express our awe and gratitude for the world we live in and those who inhabit it with us
- explore our spirituality and our understanding of God
- deepen our understanding of injustices and what true justice might look like
- appreciate the wisdom of other cultures
- serve others, both as individuals and as part of larger communities
- engage in community

What a rich congregation we have!

Most of you already know that Russell retires at the end of December 2026, with a desire to continue half-time ministry beginning April 2027 (pension rules prohibit him from working for the church for 13 weeks after retirement). This future ministry will focus on social justice and education (not worship leadership). Russell is looking for grants to help support at least part of it.

Discussion has already begun in the Threshold Collaboration about determining our overall ministry needs and financial resources for 2027. Bonnie Morton's appointment has been extended for 6 months (until February 14, 2027). Roel's half-time appointment as a student minister might be similarly extended but some clarification with the Candidacy Board is required as he may need a different placement.

St. Andrew's in Lumsden is leasing their building to a new community group about which they are very excited, and decided to continue worshipping one Sunday a month. They continue to provide partial funding of both Russell's and Bonnie's salaries.

St. James and Heritage agreed to amalgamation but did not approve Heritage as the site for Prairie Skies United. This presents some challenges for moving forward. If amalgamation goes ahead, they will need a couple of months in the fall to gain an understanding of their financial resources (knowing that amalgamation is often a time when some people choose to discontinue church involvement). Therefore, decisions about calling/appointing ministers to the Threshold Collaboration for 2027 will wait until fall 2026. Please hold the Collaboration Steering Committee and the leadership of each of our congregations in your prayers.

Last fall, Eastside's Leadership Team held a workshop with members of committees and teams to review our programming. We determined that we value all of our programming and wish to continue it as long as feasible, knowing that Russell is very busy but that offering education and social justice programming is his special gift and passion. With Russell's retirement at the end of

December, we will need lay leadership (at least until April) if we wish to continue programs such as Open Books, Film & Faith, Courageous Faith, Messy Church, and Community Dinner.

Coming out of the workshop was a suggestion that we define Eastside's "brand" (something that could be put on our website, for example). Someone with expertise in this area has volunteered to assist with this, and we are looking for volunteers from the congregation to work with her.

The Leadership Team, Russell, and Becca also conducted a periodic self-assessment of governance and administration practices as encouraged by the Region. Coming out of this was a new policy on requesting (and paying for) Criminal Record Checks for volunteers in certain positions, and a new policy and process for removing members from the historic roll.

Last May, Indigenous Christian Fellowship (ICF) revised its membership structure and requested engaged congregations become members. Eastside chose to do so, with Doug Scheurwater volunteering to represent Eastside for the 2025-2026 year. Another representative is needed to meet this commitment.

Leslie Scheurwater stepped down from coordinating the making and delivery of sandwiches to the TLC Pantry (formerly Trinity Lutheran Church) and we need a volunteer to take on this important role. We are very grateful for Leslie's behind-the-scenes committed work to this project, a project that many in the congregation may not even be aware of.

In addition to being part of the Threshold Collaboration, Eastside is engaged in the Regina and area cluster of United Churches. One of the benefits of the cluster is the ability to combine resources to sponsor refugees. This is a specific ministry of Harmony United Church, with a focus on 2SLGBTQ+ refugees ("rainbow refugees"). They take the lead on logistical aspects of refugee sponsorship and provide much of the financial support, but it is more effective if they receive some financial support from other congregations.

To that end, the Eastside Leadership Team passed a motion declaring refugee sponsorship to be a ministry of Eastside United Church. This allows us to receive donations for refugee sponsorship and pass them on to Harmony. There is also an opportunity to offer hands-on support (such as driving people to appointments) once refugees arrive. One refugee is expected to arrive soon, and work is underway on sponsoring some queer refugees from Turkey. If this is a ministry that calls to you, please contact Harmony United Church.

On the LSC front, we invited Immanuel Anglican Church (the church into which St. Philip's amalgamated) to come back as partners in the Living Spirit Centre, but they declined. However, they are interested in working together in some areas like Advent and Lent services and Messy Church. We then made a proposal to the Anglicans for paying them their equity, which was received with interest, but haven't heard back on next steps.

I would like to thank all members of the Leadership Team for their support, as well as everyone else who volunteers on committees, teams or in ad hoc ways. We wouldn't be the community we are without you.

Thanks also on behalf of the Leadership Team to those who make our ministry possible: our minister, Russell Mitchell-Walker, our office administrator, Becca Anderson, our pianist, Michelle Dickie, our technical support person, Brayden Barrett, and our custodian, John Ashley.

Submitted by Janet Bjorndahl, Chair of Eastside Leadership Team

Ministry and Personnel Committee

The M & P Committee has had only three members for the past year. We would encourage anyone with an interest in this area to please join us!

Most Eastside members are probably aware that our Minister, Russell Mitchell-Walker, has indicated his intention to retire at the end of this calendar year. We hope everyone will join with M & P in the coming months to reflect on our time with Russell and celebrate his service to the church and the community.

The United Church Collaboration continues to evolve, with some impact on the Ministers involved. Our committee has been mainly an observer of changing roles and relationships at this level, but is very appreciative of the hard work being done by church leaders and Ministers to build this collaboration.

The position of Office Coordinator was re-posted last spring and Rebecca Anderson resumed this role in July 2025. All parties are happy to have Rebecca back!

While the Office Coordinator is an employee of Eastside United Church, in 2023 the position went from half-time to full-time so that one Coordinator can fill this role for Bread of Life Lutheran Church, the Living Spirit Centre, and Eastside. This year, the respective employers agreed that rather than merge tasks into a single job description, each employer will have its own job description and its own personnel committee/liaison to direct staff within the hours allotted.

This spring, administrative hours allotted to Living Spirit Centre administration were increased slightly, in recognition of the growing demands on the Office Coordinator's time for LSC logistics and venue rentals. Currently, the Coordinator works Monday to Friday, but Office Hours (when the office is open to the public) may be adjusted from time to time.

Members of our congregation may have noticed that you cannot always walk in to the Living Spirit Centre during the week. If you have business (during office hours), please ring the doorbell and someone will let you in. This arrangement is for the security of staff, Ministry and property.

Our committee would like to remind the congregation that anyone can share feedback with us about our Ministry and staff, and we will work with all parties to communicate, understand, and resolve any conflict.

Yours in faith and service, the Ministry and Personnel Committee: Lori Latta, Bonnie Yake, Lana Brandow

Faith Formation Committee

The Faith Formation team is comprised of Greg Thomas, John Bishop, Stephannie Banks, Russell Mitchell-Walker and Leanne Sudom. The Faith Formation team is responsible for Worship and Christian Education.

The goals for Faith Formation this year were:

- To facilitate participation in Threshold Collaboration joint services
- To facilitate participation in Threshold Collaboration non-worship events
- To recruit new members of Faith Formation.

Eastside participated in all of Threshold's collaborative services. There was limited participation in non-worship events. Faith Formation has not yet been successful in recruiting new members. New members are critical given Russell's retirement plans as of December 31, 2026. Continuing with the current number of members is not feasible.

A House Group Leader meeting was held in September and the five house groups were reduced to four as we were unable to find a house group leader for Dinah. The redistribution of Eastside members amongst the remaining four house groups facilitated a better balance of people to help with the monthly house group duties. A Communion Team and the Healing Team were re-established to support preparing for and offering communion.

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Books studied *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Poor Bashing* by Jean Swanson, and *Life After Doom* by Brian McLaren. The group was able to meet online with the authors of *Poor Bashing* and *Life After Doom*. Faith Formation also continued to support Film and Faith, Community Dinner, Courageous Faith, and Messy Church.

Children's Time saw regular attendance of 3-5 children each week. Stephannie Banks and Leanne Sudom were the children's time leaders.

The Eastside congregation provided outstanding support to the Rainbow Youth Centre through donations of hygiene products, socks, toques, etc. Eastside hosted a Public Intentional and Explicit (P.I.E.) evening on March 14 with other Regina churches in support of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

We also sold pies for P.I.E. on March 15 following the Bread of Life and Eastside services. A total donation of \$1006.70 was able to be provided to Lulu's Lodge to support LGBTQ2S+ youth.

Faith Formation was represented on the Threshold Collaboration Worship committee. Threshold Collaboration rotated monthly services amongst the five faith communities.

Three copies of Then Let Us Sing, the new United Church hymnbook, were purchased to review and incorporate in services.

Respectfully submitted: Leanne Sudom on behalf of Faith Formation

Faith Formation Programs

Community Dinner

The Community Dinner continued to meet monthly on the third Thursday of the month. I am very grateful to Doug Scheurwater and Suzanne Joyce who have been providing meals every other month. We still have some funds from the grant that enables us to cater the other months, often with Munch Café, but those funds are running out and we need another crew to prepare the meal the other months. Attendance has been around 20-30 people and has not returned to pre-pandemic numbers. To truly make this a Community Dinner, we need folk to invite friends and neighbours. We have had a number of engaging speakers and sessions including:



- September: Peace
- October: Poverty/Houselessness – Brenda from Food for Thought
- November: Transgender Day of Remembrance Service
- December: Christmas Dinner and Carolling
- January: Palestine - Valerie Zink
- February: Black History Month – ADPA
- March: Birding and Window Strikes - Jeffrey Gamble
- April: Mental Health – Nicola Kimber from the Canadian Mental Health Association
- May: Diakonia World Federation Assembly 2025, Tanzania – Jenni Krall

Thank you to all those who help with clean up and especially to Bonny Manz, Carol Hein and Barb Rio who help with set up.

Courageous Faith

Courageous Faith meets online on Thursdays at 7pm (when there isn't Messy Church or Community Dinner). We listen to a speaker who is a prominent theologian or church leader. In the fall we did sessions *From Darkness to Dawn*, which explored how we move through dark times, which was hosted by Matthew Fox and Cameron Trimble. Speakers with Matthew included Mirabai Starr, Yvette Flunder, Adam Bucko, and Andrew Harvey. In the new year, we have been hearing speakers from the *Made for These Times: Spiritual Leadership for a World in Crisis Summit*, including Brian McLaren, Diana Butler Bass, Bishop Mariann Budde, and Isa Gucciardi. We are a group of about 6 people and always welcome new folk. Each session stands on its own so you don't have to sign up for all.

Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Books



Our book study meets every Thursday at 1:30pm followed by snack at 3pm. There is a group of 10-15 people who have been part of the book study, with at least one person from out of town so online is always an option. This year we have been challenged and inspired by the following books: *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer; *Poor Bashing* by Jean Swanson; and *Life after Doom* by Brian McLaren. We were blessed to be able to have conversations via Zoom with authors Jean Swanson and Brian McLaren.

Messy Church

Messy Church gathers on the second Thursday of the month at 5:30pm for crafts, celebration and a meal. It is a family event for all ages that gathers 3-5 families each month. I have been very grateful for Kathleen Houston of Westminster United who has been working with me to plan and offer this program. Roel Tolentino, ministry student with St. James, worked with us in the fall but wasn't able to continue in the new year. I have deep gratitude for Mary Vetter from Bread of Life who offers the meal each month, or finds



someone who can if she is out of town. The theme each month is usually connected to the church season or other special days (e.g. Valentine's Day, Black History Month).

Submitted by Russell Mitchell-Walker

Congregational Care

We are just a few people who are trying to do our best to ensure that the people in our congregation are receiving support. We are very aware that there are many others in our Church who do just as much of this important work of showing compassion and providing care, but just aren't officially part of our team. We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank everyone for being a caring group of people. We also want to say that if anyone feels like they could join our team we would be so delighted. We make this appeal knowing that we have adjusted our tasks in such a way that each of us does the things that suits our specific strengths. In other words, not everyone needs to do all the things we try to accomplish as a group. But, as a group, our goal is that no one gets missed if they have a need. That's a huge task and we are aware that we can't possibly do this perfectly. But the more people and variety of strengths we can add to the team, the better we can be at providing support and care when needed.

Team Members

We are very grateful that we have 2 new team members:

- Hazel Padfield
- Katie Schutz

Longer time members are:

- Elaine Hill
- Delia Baidoo
- Sam Baidoo
- Russell Mitchell-Walker

This year our work continued with the following goals:

- To become aware or informed of people in need within Eastside
- Making monthly phone calls or sometimes visits to those who have an identified need (illness, grief, loneliness, isolated, etc.)
- Welcoming newcomers Sunday morning

- Coordinating and participating in the prayer chain (team members are part of the prayer chain) and we manage the list of those who wish to be on the prayer chain as well as the requests people submit.
- Grief support through offering grief booklets series and/or prayer shawls & visits to those who are bereaved
- Celebrating new babies in our community
- Supporting one another to carry out the ministry

During this year:

- Heather Balfour continues a grief support group which she now co-leads with Hazel Padfield
- Katie Schutz and Hazel Padfield are preparing wellness kits for people to take home when needed

We are committed to encourage the congregation to keep us informed when people are in need

Each Sunday we try to have one designated greeter who makes connection with any newcomers, and either that Sunday or the next time we see them, to provide them with a pen and newcomers card if they're interested.

Most months we meet Friday morning or at another time that works better if necessary.

Thanks:

- We truly appreciate and thank the prayer shawl knitters, crocheters, and contributors. We hear over and over how much these prayer shawls are appreciated, and how deeply meaningful they are!
- Thank you Sonia Abrahamson for sending sympathy cards on our behalf to those who have lost loved ones

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Congregational Care Team: Delia Baidoo

Affirming Ministry

Our Affirming Ministry season kicks off with the Pride presence at the annual parade and "Out in the Park," We organized the Welcoming Faiths contingent once again and had around 65 people walking and riding together from 6 denominations. The booth we had at the park with glitter blessings was



once again very popular and well received. We also gave away stickers, Starbursts, and information.

This year we marked the Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20 at our community Dinner, with a memorial service and slide show honouring those who had died or been killed because of their gender identity.

Crafting Creations was the theme for PIE Day, March 14, where we celebrated being Public, Intentional, and Explicit in our welcome of 2SLGBTQ+ folk. We celebrated creativity with displays of art and crafts and a talent/variety show which was enjoyed by all who attended! We enjoyed pie following the event, as well as after church on the Sunday, with all proceeds going to Lulu's Lodge for houseless queer youth. We raised just over \$1000 for Lulu's Lodge.

On June 7, we will be celebrating Pride Sunday with a worship service planned by the Collaboration Affirming Ministries.

While we don't have a committee, we do have a committed core of folk who step up to help with the above events and projects, for which I am grateful!

Submitted by Russell Mitchell-Walker

Active Supporters:

- Leanne Sudom
- Janet Bjorndahl
- Busi Mabhena
- Brian Mitchell-Walker
- Luc Huard

Gratitude Team

The Gratitude Team met on a bi-monthly basis over the last year. Our team said goodbye and thank you to Trina Fallows, who resigned in summer 2025.

Our current members include: Russell Mitchell-Walker, Teresa Strachan and Heather Balfour.

The activities in 2025-26 included:

- Preparing and distributing thank you notes to individuals for their donations of time, talent, or treasure
- Contributing to worship once a month with the Mission and Service message
- Providing Gratitude Images for the weekly LSC newsletter

We offer a special thank you to Heather's mom for designing, creating, and gifting this year's homemade thank you cards.

We are looking for interested people to join our team! Please let any of us know if you have any questions.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their truly generous support of Eastside United Church!

Submitted by Heather Balfour

ICF & TLC Pantry

The Indian Metis Christian Fellowship was established in 1978 by the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The ministry adopted the new name of Indigenous Christian Fellowship (ICF) in January 2018. The mandate of ICF is to build an urban community serving spiritual and social needs.

Since 2010, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Eastside United Church, and other churches and individuals have partnered with ICF. Partnership is an important principle for ICF as it seeks to walk with people who experience its ministry. While we do provide a small amount of financial support, volunteers from Eastside assist in the Saturday Morning Breakfast as well as Outreach Meals prepared on Fridays and delivered to the TLC Pantry.

The TLC Pantry (formally Trinity Lutheran Church) was established during COVID to provide lunches to less fortunate people in the Heritage area. Over the past 6 years, a small number of volunteers from Eastside have prepared over 30,000 sandwiches and delivered those to the TLC Pantry for distribution. Our participation in this beneficial outreach program is in jeopardy unless we can find more volunteers to replace those that are stepping down. It is hoped that you will consider participating in this program and assisting ICF and the TLC Pantry with their mission.

If you would like to help or require further information contact Doug Scheurwater.

Submitted by Doug Scheurwater

Living Spirit Centre Climate Justice Committee

Members included Russell Mitchell-Walker, Ron Brandow, Mary Vetter, Bonny Manz (Secretary), Brian Abrahamson (also liaison with Property and Maintenance) and Bonnie Yake (Chair). We met 5 times in 2025. We focused on climate and environmental education through the e-letter, and helped to host a potluck lunch after November 2 Shared Service with discussion questions from the *The Serviceberry* on gratitude and reciprocity. LSCC passed a motion from us that they "make a commitment to prioritize green solutions in all aspects of Property and Maintenance activities, such

as heat pumps, to reduce our footprint.” It was disappointing to learn this year that the LSC did not qualify for a “Faithful Footprints” grant from the United Church of Canada after they changed their criteria. However, we plan to move ahead with taking donations from members to install solar panels on the LSC roof in 2026 through the Wascana Solar Co-op. At our January 7, 2026 meeting, it was agreed the committee will focus solely on the LSC solar panel installation, putting on as many as we can afford, with plans to add more as funds allow. The committee will conclude its work when this project is complete.

Donations for the solar panels are being tracked on a poster on the east wall near the main entrance. Our current donation total is \$42,050.00. Please consider making a donation to help us save money on our power, and more importantly, reduce our carbon footprint and impact on future generations.

Work is currently being carried out with Wascana Solar Co-op. A couple of designs have been drafted, and some potential contractors contacted by them. As well, the Living Skies Region has been approached about a grant.

Submitted by Bonnie Yake

Living Spirit Centre Women’s Breakfast

We met on the second Saturday of the month from September 2025 to April 2026 from 8:30 – 10:30 am in the East Sanctuary. Two volunteers brought breakfast. We enjoyed visiting over breakfast and then moved into our program. In September, Heather Balfour led us in the history and spiritual practice of the labyrinth. We talked about the history of the LSC labyrinth which Rev. Dawn Rolke and volunteers built and we are thankful for the volunteers who maintain it. We had planned to walk it but it was pouring rain! In October, Jenni Krall told us about her experience at the World Diaconal Conference she had attended in Tanzania about the vibrancy of the ministry and of the country and its people, with a focus on wise women’s voices. In December, we coloured festive sheets and shared personal Christmas stories. It is lovely to hear of each other’s treasured traditions.

In January, Terri Cote, Principal and long-time teacher at Mother Teresa Middle School gave us an update on the Jesuit School, which is well-known to some of our members who have been regular volunteers there. She spoke of its mission and philosophy, choosing students who are economically disadvantaged but highly motivated, and building on their strengths. It was good to hear of student successes and its positive ripple effect on our community. In February, Dr. Brenda Anderson skilfully facilitated us in personal reflections on Truth and Reconciliation, and we wrote our own land acknowledgements. It felt like only the start of a rich and evolving journey. In March, Rev. Christine Burton from the Caring Crafters, a group who meets on Wednesdays at the LSC, told us about their

many projects and guided us in sewing draft dodgers to block out the cold. They invite sewers or wannabe sewers to join them.

We had a sharing circle in April to make decisions about the Women's Breakfast. After 28 years, The LSC Women's Breakfast has decided to make some changes! We are so thankful for Anita Tessier who has been our email communicator, breakfast coordinator, and impromptu volunteer when needed for so many years. She is letting go of these responsibilities; you will need to ensure you are signed up for the LSC e-letter for notifications. We agreed our gathering together to deepen friendships, our faith, and share our lives was important to us. We will meet from 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. on the second Saturday of the month. We will no longer ask for volunteers to make breakfast; we will simply make coffee. Bonnie Yake is also letting go of her role of coordinating speakers. We will no longer have a speaker but will have a starting and closing spiritual ritual and a sharing circle around a theme. People may invite special guests sometimes.

Next gathering is Saturday May 9 at 8:30. It's Spring!?! What is green and growing for you? All women are warmly welcomed. Stay tuned. A half day retreat is being planned for June.

Respectfully submitted by Bonnie Yake

Living Spirit Centre Visual Arts

Chair: Holley Schuman, no other current members

Occasional helpers: Ruth Gentile and Donna Lindskog

The Advent display focused on the anatomy of the Christmas Wreath while the Christmas display utilized the elements of a nativity scene that been donated to Living Spirit Centre. The display worked well and it was nice to see something different.

Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost followed previous patterns with few changes.

Over the summer I took sabbatical but returned at Thanksgiving. The Thanksgiving display was arranged at the front of the altar and on a table at the narthex.

Since I had some help with our work up until Ordinary Time, I would like to thank Donna Lindskog from Eastside and Becca Anderson for their help.

I now have some more help and thank Carrie Allen and Donna Lindskog for helping when they are able.

Respectfully submitted by Holley Schuman