

985 Pinecrest Rd., Ottawa, ON K2B 6B4

Telephone: 613-828-6018

Web site, Facebook, and X (Twitter) links:

http://www.britanniaunitedchurch.ca/

Peter Bain, Editor newsletter@brituc.ca

Leigh Bain, Assistant Editor

Editorial

Less is More

I have learned (the hard way) over the years I have done woodworking and home renovations, that sometimes, less is more. I thought that paint was a way to hide flaws in my work, but it just makes them more visible. Then I realized that if I prepare a clean and smooth surface first, a thin coat of finish on wood shows the natural beauty and dries faster and harder into the bargain. I slapped thick coats of drywall compound ("mud" in the trade) on the joints then sanded down the bulges and ridges and tried to remove the inevitable voids and bubbles. Eventually I learned from a YouTube video to make sure the drywall was properly installed and secured, then a apply only a thin coat of mud and trowel off all but the thinnest layer. No ridges and only light sanding were the result.

These principles - have a good base before I go to the next step, then do what needs to be done and no more - I try to keep in mind with everything I do. I hope we can do the same as we grow with Rev. Frank.

Peter Bain

Minister's Message

Dear Friends,

As we enter this holy season, I find myself reflecting again on the heart of the Christmas story and the astonishing way God chooses to draw near to us in Jesus. I am including a Christmas message in the newsletter that speaks about how love, like water, flows to the lowest places. The incarnation is our clearest reminder of that truth: God meets us not from a distance, but through stepping directly into the vulnerability, hope, and complexity of life. Christmas invites us to rediscover these roots of our faith, to remember that God's love is always moving toward the places and people who need it most.

I have seen that same love reflected in our own congregation. It is a gift to serve among such a warm and caring community of faith. To serve with people who show hospitality, compassion, and generosity: consistently rising to the challenges presented by the great needs around us. Your welcome here at Britannia is blessing to me, and it embodies the spirit of the season far better than any words I could offer.

This Christmas, we also carry that love beyond our walls. Through our White Gift offering, we have the privilege of supporting a family in real need, reminding them in a tangible way that they are not alone. These simple and faithful acts are signs of what the incarnation continues to do among us. God comes close, and we are invited to do the same for others.

As we journey through these weeks together, may we follow the path of love that leads us to one another and to our neighbours. May we find joy in the story that shapes us, courage in the hope that sustains us, and grace in the God who comes to us in Jesus.

Wishing you a blessed and meaningful Christmas season,

Rev. Dr. Frank Emanuel



I dream of a better world where chickens can cross the road without having their motives questioned.



LIGHT OVER DARKNESS

On International Human Rights Day

A Vigil for Afghan Women

Online but Watched. Offline by Force. Living Under Gender Apartheid.



As the UN calls for an end to digital violence, Afghan women are being systematically erased from every part of public life, including the digital world.

This is not just violence - it is gender apartheid.

Join us for a vigil, followed by updates on the state of women's human rights in Afghanistan, shared through art, reporting, and lived testimony.

Everyone Welcome. Free Admission.







WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2025 5:30 TO 8:00 PM

Human Rights Monument, 220 Elgin St. and St John the Evangelist, 154 Somerset Street West

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

ottawa@righttolearn.ca

The Britannian, Christmas 2025

A Tribute to Rev Jen

This is the speech that was delivered by Helen Hutcheson at the hand-over service on October 19, 2025. If you have not yet donated to the Mission and Service Fund in Rev Jen's honour, you may still do so, placing cash or a cheque in an envelope marked for M&S in honour of Rev. Jen on the collection plate at the back of the church before the service, or send an e-transfer to bookkeeper@brituc.ca, noting the amount designated for M&S in her honour.

Rev Jen, I'm honoured to be here today to celebrate the gifts of ministry that you have shared with Britannia United Church. You joined us in October 2022, and though your time with us was short, it was filled with energy, purpose, and transformation. Together, we grew — as an organization, as a community, and as people of faith.

Strengthening Our Foundation

You helped us take a thoughtful look at how we do things. Under your guidance, we reviewed our governance structure, simplifying it so we could work with more flexibility and ease. You encouraged us to develop a Communication and Behaviour Covenant — a shared promise about how we treat one another. And you guided us through discussions on property redevelopment, laying the groundwork for future decisions.

Reaching Beyond Our Walls

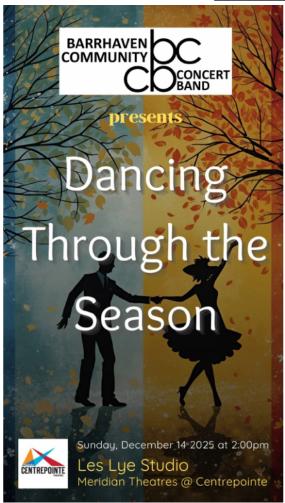
You also reminded us that the church isn't just a building — it's a community. With that firm Rev. Jen energy, you encouraged us to connect to our neighbours in fresh and creative ways. In the summer of 2024, Worship on Wednesdays (WOW) was born — a midweek gathering that brought people together around a meal, conversation and worship. You urged us to make our welcome visible, and the Pride sign at our parking lot entrance now speaks that message clearly. And through your vision, the West End Cluster was formed — connecting us with nearby United Churches for shared conversation and collaboration.

Discerning Our Identity and Vision

Perhaps your greatest gift was helping us explore who we are and what we're called to become. You walked with us as we refined our vision, mission, and priorities, and finalized our Community of Faith Profile. You facilitated listening circles where people could speak honestly about their hopes, concerns, and dreams for Britannia United Church. Under your leadership, we became an official Affirming Ministry — committed to inclusion, radical hospitality, and justice for all people. Week after week, you wove these themes into worship, challenging us to act — to care for the unhoused, to respond to food insecurity, and to give generously to the Benevolent Fund and the Ottawa Food Bank. You have modelled what it means to live the teachings of love, compassion, and courage — not just in words, but in daily action.

A Lasting Tribute

To honour that example, our congregation is making a donation in your name to the Mission and Service Fund — a gift that will help set more tables, share more bread, and create more moments of joy. These flowers are just a small symbol of our appreciation. Rev. Jen, thank you for the difference you have made — in this congregation, in this community, and in each of us. Your time here has left a legacy of openness, kindness, and purpose that will guide Britannia United Church for years to come.





SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 | 7 PM

CHRISTMAS CAROL SING

Led by Ernie and Lynda Cox Matthew Larkin-organ, Ernie Cox-piano

With Special Guests:

Garth Hampson, "The Singing voice of the RCMP" Gospel soloist, Rennatha Bernadin Soloist, Terri-Ann Wint

Solos, Duets, and all your favourite Christmas Carols

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church 82 Kent Street, Ottawa

Suggested donation of \$20 if able

Free parking available in lots to the east and west of the entrance to the Supreme Court





Financial Update

Here's a brief update on the Church's finances. Below is our Statement of Operating Fund Revenues and Expenses for the 9 months ending September 30, 2025.

The Church is experiencing a deficit smaller than budgeted at the beginning of the year. This is primarily due to reduced salary and benefit expenses, while we were searching for a new Minister. Revenues from rentals of the Church building continue to grow, boosting our revenues. Apart from the financial impact, I'm always encouraged to see the property being so actively used within the community.

We continue to manage expenditures as best we can, while supporting the Church to thrive and grow.

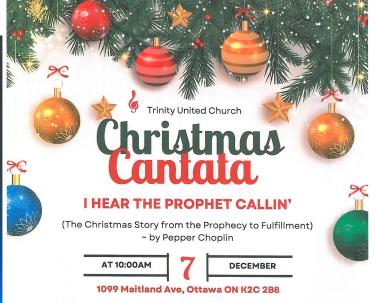
Colleen Chambers Treasurer

BRITANNIA UNITED CHURCH SCHEDULE 2 - OPERATING FUND REVENUE AND EXPENSES* YEAR TO DATE AT SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

	ACTUAL 2025	BUDGET 2025	ACTUAL 2024
REVENUE			
Offering	46,772	55,653	50,119
Rent	78,714	71,296	76,352
Projects	3,104	1,900	2,247
Other	3,165	2,575	3,871
	131,755	131,424	132,589
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Salaries and benefits	97,607	120,830	115,934
Property Expenses	32,090	32,924	26,594
Programs	7,615	7,882	7,139
Session	790	3,504	1,489
Administration	11,746	12,915	11,170
	149,848	178,055	162,326
EXCESS OF EXPENSES OVER REVENUE BEFORE UNDERNOTED	(18,093)	(46,631)	(29,737)
OTHER INCOME (EXPENSES)			F0.000
Bequest Capital expenses			50,000 (1,864)
Smith Fund Lawyer			(2,024)
EXCESS OF EXPENSES OVER REVENUE	(18,093)	(46,631)	16,375

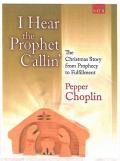
^{*}excluding mission and service revenue and expense





Please join us at Trinity
United during the service for
this joyful Christmas
performance.

Gifted composer Pepper
Choplin is widely celebrated
for creating refreshingly
different, original anthems
that resonate with traditional
folk qualities.

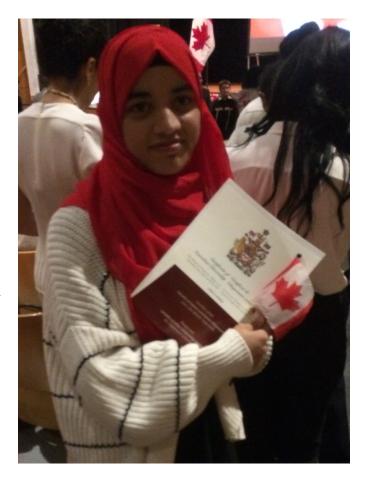


My Journey and Gratitude as a New Canadian

I feel proud and blessed to become Canadian. When I first arrived, I was already a permanent resident, and I quickly learned how difficult that step is for so many people. That made me even more grateful. One of the biggest moments for me was taking my oath — it felt emotional, powerful, and real. To me, being Canadian means being kind, being friendly, and being part of a community that respects and supports one another.

Canada has made a huge impact on my life. Here, I can work, I can study, and I can follow opportunities that are unfortunately not available to many girls in my home country today. I am deeply grateful for everything this country and its people have given me. I hope to give back in the future, no matter how small my contributions may be. Canada has opened doors for me, and I want to honour that by helping others and being the best version of myself.

Warm regards, Amena Sediqi



Beside Kimkim lay a drawing; he had drawn the chapel, but he had drawn a light through the window that wasn't there in reality. And who the hell can do that? Draw light?

- "Do you think God exists?" Ali asked her friends.
- "Yes," Kimkim replied, running his pencil across the drawing so gently that it was impossible to know if it made a difference on the paper or just inside him.

Joar was breathing hard.

- "Damned if I know...I don't even think all the people who go to church every Sunday believe in God. I think they just need company. To feel that they belong to a group." Kimkim nodded gently and replied:
- "But I don't think that means that God doesn't exist, Joar. I think maybe that's what God is."

Fredrik Backman, My Friends, ch. 52

Many diseases... aren't diseases

Many diseases are not diseases, but normal aging. The director of a Beijing hospital gave these pieces of advice to the elderly:

You are not sick, you are getting old. Many conditions which you think are diseases are not diseases, but signals that the body is aging.

- 1. Poor memory is not Alzheimer's disease, but a self-protection mechanism of the elderly brain. This is the brain getting old, not a disease. If you just forget where you put your keys, but you can find them yourself, it is NOT dementia.
- 2. Walking slowly and having unsteady legs and feet is not paralysis, but muscle degeneration. The solution is NOT to take medicine, but to move.
- 3. Insomnia is not a disease but the brain is adjusting its rhythm. It is a change in sleep structure. Don't take sleeping pills indiscriminately. Long-term dependence on sleeping pills and other drugs to fall asleep will increase the risk of falls, cognitive impairment, etc. The best sleeping pill for the elderly is to get more sun during the day and maintain a regular schedule.
- 4. Body aches are not rheumatism, but a normal reaction to nerve aging.
- 5. Many elderly people say "my arms and legs hurt everywhere. Is it rheumatism or bone hyperplasia"? Bones do become loose and thin, but 99% of 'body pain' is not a disease, but a slow nerve conduction, which amplifies the pain. This is called central sensitization, a common physiological change in the elderly. Exercise is the cure rather than taking medicine.
- 6. The elderly have slightly higher cholesterol levels because they have lived longer. Cholesterol is the raw material for synthesizing hormones and cell membranes. Too low a level can easily reduce immunity. The guidelines for the blood pressure reduction target of the elderly is <150/90 mmHg, not the standard of young people <140/90.
- 7. Aging is not a disease, it is a necessary path.

A few words should be said to the elderly and their children:

First, remember, NOT all discomfort is a disease.

Second, many elderly are afraid of being 'scared'. Don't be scared by the physical examination report or fooled by advertisements.

Third, the most important thing for children is not to take their parents only to the hospital but to accompany them for walks, sunbathing, eating, and talking and bonding.

Aging is not the enemy. It's another word for living .. but stagnation is the enemy!

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly but there were many cars ahead of him in front of the service station. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump. "Reverend," said the young man, "sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip." The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business".

The Britannian, Christmas 2025

A Brazilian oncologist said,

- 1. Middle age begins at 50 and should end at 70.
- 2. The Golden years begin at 70 and end at 80.
- 3. Old age begins at 80 and ends at 90.
- 4. Longevity begins at 90 and ends after death.
- 5. The main problem of an elderly person is loneliness. Usually spouses don't die together, someone goes first. A widow or widower becomes a burden to their family. That's why it's so important not to lose touch with friends, to get together and communicate frequently, so as not to be a burden to your children and grandchildren, who will probably never say so.

My personal recommendation is to not lose control of your life. This means deciding when and with whom to go out, what to eat, how to dress, who to call, what time to sleep, what to read, what to have fun with, what to buy, where to live, etc. Because if you can't do all these things freely and on your own, you'll become an unbearable person who will be a burden on others.

William Shakespeare said, "I am always happy!" Do you know why? Because I don't expect anything from anyone. Waiting is always agonizing. Problems aren't eternal; they always have a solution. We believe we are to blame for our problems. The only one for which there is no cure is death."

- Before reacting... breathe deeply;
- Before speaking... listen;
- Before criticizing... look at yourself;
- Before writing... think carefully;
- Before attacking... surrender;
- Before dying... live the most beautiful life you can!

The best relationship isn't with the perfect person, but with someone who has learned and is learning to live as interestingly and beautifully as possible. Notice other people's shortcomings... but also admire and praise their virtues.

If you want to be happy, you have to make someone else happy. If you want something, you must first give something of yourself. You need to surround yourself with good, friendly, and interesting people and be one of them.

Q... Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A.. Noah He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Q.. Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible?

A.. Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet.

From a TV listing: 'BBC2 at 9 pm "Tribes, Predators and Me" a programme where Gordon Buchanan learns to hunt crocodiles with his bare hands. Last in series.'

Christmas events

Christmas Bazaar Saturday, November 29, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. We are now accepting donations of Christmas items, books, housewares, and kids toys in gently used condition. Please, no clothing or shoes.

Advent Study Thursdays starting November 27th at 1PM. A series exploring the four themes of Advent. The study continues on December 4, 11, and 18.

Cooking Connections Next gathering is Tuesday, December 2. Register with Kate before the class is full!

Tree Decorating After our November 30 service we will have an opportunity to decorate the tree which will be in our sanctuary. Also after our service there will be hot chocolate and we will gather out front to raise a tree and sing a few Christmas songs. Rob is leading the songs as he did last year.

White Gift Sunday We are focusing on the needs of one family in our community who are in need at this time. Decorations will go up Sunday and will have an age and some likes for the person. Please choose one or more as suggestions for donations.

Advent 1: Hope Sunday November 30 10:15 AM

Advent 2: Peace Sunday December 7 10:15 AM

Advent 3: Joy Sunday December 14 10:15 AM

Advent 4: Love Sunday December 21 10:15 AM

Blue Christmas Service Sunday December 21 7:00 PM

Christmas Eve Service Wednesday December 24 7:00 PM

Service of Carols and Joys Sunday December 28 10:15 AM



Discounted Ottawa 67's Tickets

The Ottawa 67's are sharing a special discounted ticket link for us to attend their upcoming December 30 game at 3:00 p.m. This one-off game is perfect for families and groups looking for a fun afternoon out during the holiday season. You can purchase discounted tickets here: https://www.gofevo.com/event/Ottawa67sHoliday

Praise everybody, I say to such: never be squeamish, but speak out your compliment both point-blank in a man's face, and behind his back, when you know there is a reasonable chance of his hearing it again. Never lose a chance of saying a kind word. As Collingwood never saw a vacant place in his estate

but he took an acorn out of his pocket and popped it in; so deal with your compliments through life. An acorn costs nothing; but it may sprout into a prodigious bit of timber.

William Makepeace Thackeray, Vanity Fair

A Farewell and a Welcome to our Ministers

On Sunday October 19, 2025 we said farewell and thank you to Rev Jennifer Power, our interim minister for almost 3 years. We also welcomed the Rev Doctor Frank Emanuel as our new minister, together with his wife Sharon.

The Afghan Refugee Sediqi family that BUC has helped came to say goodbye and thanks to Rev Jennifer. This photo shows five of the family members with some of their BUC friends.

Eight of the eleven family members have recently become citizens of Canada. We extend our congratulations to them.



Rev Jen had requested no parting gifts, other than if folks wanted to honour her they could give to the Mission and Service Fund. As a result, a sizeable amount was contributed in October, and our target of \$6200 has been achieved. As of October 31, we have \$6305 in the Fund. A special thanks goes out to everyone who contributed.

By Don Cullen, Chair of Mission and Service

Would Jesus Love Hope Punk?

What is hope punk and why would Jesus love it. I've been reading science fiction since I was a teen but recently have found there is a name for the type of sci-fi I really enjoy. Hope punk. Punk refers to rebellion against the status quo and hope is the optimistic motivation to make things better. The plot may be situated in our near future on earth or on other planets in the far future, but it is always about characters making an active choice to make positive change and to work for something better. Hope punk acknowledges the world is not perfect and people are not perfect. But people can change and choose to make life better for everyone, there is hope for a better future.

What are some of the key points of hope punk?

- Radical kindness, compassion, gentleness and empathy as revolutionary acts of defiance against injustice or threats such as climate change.
- An intentional hope that motivates action to make things better for everyone.
- The emphasis on community action to solve problems. There are no lone wolf heroes in hope punk.

The Britannian, Christmas 2025

• A willingness to stay the course, to persevere, to refuse to give up the struggle to make a better world.

There are many examples of Hope Punk but you will be familiar with Star Trek, especially the Next Generation. A unified earth dedicated to peace explores the galaxy while combatting injustice and helping all those in need. Examples of books include the novels of Becky Chambers (A long Way to a Small Angry Planet, A Psalm for the Wild Built). Another book is The Half Built Garden by Ruthanna Emyrs. One early example is The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien where ordinary people, the hobbits, overcome evil by courage, companionship and perseverance.

Now we know what hope punk is, why would Jesus love it? What are the characteristics of the early Christian church and the teachings of Jesus?

- Radical empathy and kindness as a form of resistance. Think of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37). The Samaritan, the outsider rejected by the society in which Jesus lived, is the one to show compassion to the injured man beside the road. This Parable is rebellion against the norms of society. Another example of Jesus ignoring rules and doing what is right is when he touches and heals the ten lepers, a group of people cast out of society by their disease. (Luke 17:11-19).
- Choosing to care about others and to build community. When Jesus is asked by the Pharisee what is the greatest commandment, he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself". (Matthew 22:37-39)
- Persevering in the face of obstacles. In Paul's letter to the Galatians we are told, "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up". (Galatians 6:9)
- The power of community is seen in the early church's communal practices, as described in Acts, and through the Apostle Paul's metaphor of the church as the body of Christ, where every member is necessary and interconnected.
- The potential for redemption, for a transformed life, is possible through faith and the grace of God. Paul writes, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- The desire to make a better world can be seen in the Lord's Prayer. "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". Heaven is perfection and it is possible for us with God's help to create an earth that is a better place for all people, a place more like heaven.

The key features of both hope punk and the message of Jesus and the early church are very similar. It is true that most hope punk sci-fi does not mention any religion but God's message of hope for our world comes in many forms. We just need to look around, open our eyes and ears and listen. I hope that you will try reading a hope punk book. Just google "Hope Punk books". It is the type of literature that can give you hope in our future. I believe that Jesus would approve.

Dee McEwen

The Choirs of St. John the Evangelist and Woodroffe United, together with the Strings of St. John's present:

Magnificat

by John Rutter



Conductors
Nicholas Busch · Katarina Jovic



7 December, 3:00pm

Woodroffe United Church, 207 Woodroffe Ave., Ottawa

14 December, 2:00pm

St. John the Evangelist Church, 154 Somerset St. W., Ottawa Tickets \$20 online, or \$25 at the door.

What Love Does: A Christmas Message

In my Vineyard formation I was taught a simple but profound saying: love, like water, always flows to the lowest places. I've carried that image with me for many years. It reminds me that God's love is drawn naturally to the places where it is most needed. God's love flows into the cracks, griefs, longings, and vulnerabilities of life. If God is love, then God is to be found most deeply in those very places.

At Christmas, this truth becomes unmistakable. Rather than offering us a vision of a distant, lofty deity calling us upward. The Christmas story offers us a God who comes down, a God who chooses not power or privilege, but fragility and humility. Jesus enters the world not as a ruler or dignitary, but as a child born to an oppressed people in a land marked by occupation, displacement, and conflict. This is where love flows.

Mary and Joseph embody this humbling of self that mirrors God's own descent into our humanity. Mary, likely no more than fourteen, accepts a calling that will inevitably bring neighbourhood gossip and raised eyebrows. Joseph chooses to stand with her, absorbing the shame that polite society would inevitably assign. When they arrive in Bethlehem, the family's guest quarters are already full, and the young couple is offered a space among the animals in the lower room of the house. It is there, in that dark and crowded place, that Jesus is born.

This humble birth foreshadows the shape of Jesus' whole life. He will grow up among people who struggle to accept him, and he will gravitate toward those pushed to the margins: labourers, tax collectors, lepers, and women of ill repute. He will face the judgement of religious leaders and the suspicion of political powers. He will take into himself the full weight of human suffering.

Karl Barth once wrote that in the incarnation, "God made Himself what we are... assuming all the dark sides and burdens of human existence." That is the radical beauty of Christmas: God does not stand far off. God joins us here completely.

And so, this story invites us to do the same.

Christmas calls us to follow love to the places where love is needed most: to those who feel pressed down by conflict or loneliness, to those anxious for the future, to those shouldering burdens quietly. When we stand with one another in those low places, we participate in the very movement of God. We point one another toward hope. We look for the star together.

Jesus is the true gift of Christmas. He is the love of God come down, flowing like water into the depths of life, flowing to where love is needed the most.

This is what love does.

Rev. Dr. Frank Emanuel

The Britannian, Christmas 2025 A Message from our Sponsor

