A tree in front of a building

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**HANNA FIRST UNITED CHURCH**

**2025 FALL FUNDRAISING NEWSLETTER**

Hello Friends

Welcome Autumn! The days are getting shorter, nights are getting cooler, harvest is underway, kids are back in school and summer freedom is transitioning to fall routines. One fall routine for our finance committee and church council is to start budgeting for the coming year. To be honest, this task becomes more difficult each year, and we find ourselves asking for greater financial support from our church family – because our church will not survive without it.

As outlined in our 2024 fall fundraising letter, each year expenses grow as our buildings age, maintenance and upkeep costs increase, our congregation numbers reduce, and our volunteer base is stretched to the limit. Therefore, our request for your financial gift becomes more crucial. As you review this letter and the attached budget you will see that without the ability to supplement our offerings by withdrawing funds from the investment account, as well as the significant contributions from the Centre Street Thrift Store, the ability to keep our doors open and provide the services needed becomes more difficult each year.

Our Council Chair, Laura Creasy, organized an informal meeting with Rev. Dr. Karen Medland, Pastoral Relations Minister, Chinook Winds Region; Rev. Carrie Symondson and representatives of Finance, Worship, Thrift Store, Property, and the Board of Directors to review our financial situation. We faced the sad reality that without significant changes in finances and volunteer items commitments, we will not be able to operate as Hanna First United Church after December of 2026.

During the meeting, the members present discussed four major options:

1. Enter a Memorandum of Understanding to share services of our minister with one or more United Church congregations. This option could save us some money; however, services would look different as we would no longer have a full-time minister.

This type of agreement can provide new life and vitality, provided congregations are very clear about their expectations and understand the limitations of the agreement. Items including the following will need to be negotiated:

* Number of in-person services vs live-streamed services per month
* Christmas, Easter, Lent services alternate between communities
* Priority for weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.,
* Minister’s vacation, continuing education, etc.
* Community needs including pastoral care and ministerial association commitment

Chinook Winds Region staff will assist us in developing the Memorandum of Understanding based on our specific needs, however there will need to be increased commitment from our members to keep the church operational and maintain the agreement.

1. Sell the manse and/or park. This is a solution for the moment as it could give us a financial boost that would provide funds to operate for a couple more years, but during that time we would have to work hard to revitalize the church.  Also, as per the United Church of Canada, the Minister’s salary would need to be increased to compensate for not having living accommodations.
2. Centre Street Thrift Store support. As always, a huge thank you to the thrift store executive, manager and volunteers who work so hard and contribute significantly throughout the year to aid in meeting our financial obligations. We cannot adequately express our appreciation for the work they do each month to raise funds for the church and community.

The Thrift Store also donates to other non-profit organizations in our community. This is in recognition of the fact that not all the volunteers, supporters and donors are directly related to Hanna First United. To ask for more than the thrift store gives now is not fair to that reality.

1. Closure. This option is very difficult to consider, but it is a reality that with the way our congregation and finances are dwindling - it is not sustainable.  If we continue to operate as we are and we do not have any unforeseen expenses, it is projected that the church is sustainable until December 2026.

Having said all that, the members of church council, in consultation with Chinook Winds Region, have time to look at these options in depth before making any recommendations to the congregation. Council will make recommendations to the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting to be scheduled for February 2026.

Please speak to any of the members of Council or Rev. Symondson if you have questions, suggestions, or comments regarding the above. Council meets on the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the church lounge and the meetings are open to members of the congregation.

Now for the good news!

We are pleased to tell you about changes and successes since our last newsletter and let you know about some plans we have for the future.

At the Annual Congregational Meeting held February 23, 2025, Chair Winona Gutsche confirmed that council had accepted her resignation as Council Chairperson for Hanna First United Church. She thanked everyone for their support over the years and expressed her faith that the council will continue to move forward in serving the congregation. Winona was presented with a gift to thank her for her leadership, commitment, and unwavering faith which enriched our church family and helped guide us through numerous milestones.

How fortunate we are that Laura Creasy graciously accepted the nomination to serve as Council Chairperson. Laura’s dedication, knowledge, commitment, work ethic, and thoughtfulness will guide the council through the challenges we are facing.

The following people accepted appointments to the various committees of Hanna First United Church:

* Finance – Linda Quaschnick, Rhonda Lund, Richard Preston & Treasurer Neala-Rea Sprinkhuysen
* Board of Trustees – Tyler Creasy, Cliff Buchanan & Liz Gourlay
* Worship – Jean Lypka, Denise Weins, Gloria Hutton & Sandra Wade
* Pastoral Care – Linda Quaschnick, Gail Smigg, Donna Hickle & Liz Gourlay
* Memorial Park – Winona Gutsche, Lynette Barker, Gwen Snell & Clarke Snell
* Ministry & Personnel – Rhonda Lund & Gwen Snell
* Property – Gwen Snell, Alan Lund & Tyler Creasy
* Thrift Store Executive – Gloria Hutton, Linda Quaschnick, Charlotte Preston
* Funeral Lunch – MaryAnn Campion, Charlotte Preston, Karen Gordon & Rhonda Lund.

We are pleased that Rev. Carrie Symondson accepted the ¾ time position as an ordained minister, moving from being our student minister. On May 4, Rev. Dr. Karen Medland led the Covenanting Service for Rev. Symondson, to celebrate our pastoral relationship with her as the ordained minister for Hanna First United Church. We feel very fortunate to continue our association with Carrie, and appreciate her dedication, enthusiasm and spirituality in leading our congregation.

Rev. Symondson is excited to begin providing a Family Worship Service on Friday evenings at 7:00 p.m. beginning October 10, 2025. Spearheaded by Rev. Carrie and supported by the church council and Chinook Winds Region, the hope for this initiative is to bring children into a personal relationship with God, with their parents attending to provide support and supervision. We'll be exploring our spirituality through music, games, activities, prayers, biblical stories, scripture and discussions.



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The work of the church:

* Sunday Morning services are now held at 10:30 am, followed by a time for fellowship & refreshments.
* Rev. Carrie is available to meet with you, in your home or at the church. Please call or text her at 403-854-9190 to schedule a visit.
* A small, but dedicated choir leads the congregation with music each week. We have ordered some copies of the new United Church of Canada hymn book “Then Let Us Sing” which combines music from Voices United and More Voices with a collection of new music.
* A special service was held on June 8th to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada. A luncheon was held following the service and displays of photos and memorabilia were enjoyed by those in attendance.
* We hosted Bible Study sessions, and our congregation has held joint Lent and Advent services with the Redeemer Lutheran Church.
* Our Christmas candlelight service is always one of our most special services.
* Pastoral care is an important and valuable part of our church, whether it be a visit or a card in the mail.
* The Thrift store contributes to the annual financial pledge by First United to the United Church of Canada Mission & Service fund, helping people in Canada and throughout the world.

As always, we are proud to be a part of the community of Hanna and the wider community of faith in many ways:

* A Death Café held on the first Sunday of each month from 1 - 3 p.m. This is a place where people can discuss the difficulties in dealing with the death of a loved one.
* A Coffee Social is held each Wednesday morning at 10:00 a.m. in the fellowship room upstairs.
* The Center Street Thrift store operated by volunteers in the basement of the church is open to customers from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays & Saturdays. Through the efforts of the volunteers, funds have been donated to many local non-profit organizations in addition to the support provided to the Church.
* Memorial Park located east of the church is maintained by volunteers for the enjoyment of anyone who would like to wander through or sit on one of the benches to take in the beauty of the day.
* The church has provided space to host auditions, rehearsals, concerts and recitals that have been enjoyed by many people who attended and donated funds to the church.
* A Blue Christmas Service is held for any member of the community who is dealing with the loss of a loved one.

To provide all that we do, it requires a commitment of giving. Council remains unchanged in our financial vigilance in operating and maintaining the church and outreach to members, but it requires financial support.

Renewed attendance and other acts of support are crucial to the very idea of being a church to the community. To have a legitimate mandate to provide ministry, requires a congregation. We want to continue the important work of the church as long as we can, so we are inviting you to join us for Sunday Services at Hanna First United church.

Our church has been a cherished gathering place for so many in the community over the years; not just for Sunday services, but at the well attended Christmas Eve and Easter Morning services. Many people in the community have fond memories of momentous occasions centered around our church and we like to imagine families celebrating baptisms and weddings for years to come.

Our heartfelt appreciation to the members of our congregation who provided generous additional contributions, including memorial donations during 2024/2025. Also, to those who provide regular weekly or monthly offerings, we are very grateful for your ongoing support.

We have attached a commitment card for our fall fundraising campaign as well as the 2024 budget for your information. We would like to remind everyone of the various ways you can donate to the church (for the fall visit or any offerings throughout the year):

* Offering plate at Sunday Services
* Drop in at the church office or Mail to Box 940
* PAR (pre-authorized remittance) Program - just talk to Tricia in the office to set up
* Donate Button on our website ([www.hannafirstunitedchurch.ca](http://www.hannafirstunitedchurch.ca))
* Etransfer through online banking - using email [hannafirstunited@gmail.com](mailto:hannafirstunited@gmail.com) – no security questions needed as auto-deposit is set up.

If you have any questions about any of these options, please contact Neala-Rea Sprinkhuysen at 403-854-8146 or [nealarea\_veno@live.com](mailto:nealarea_veno@live.com).

In whatever way you are able to give, we thank you in advance for your support. God bless.

The Finance Committee:

Linda Quaschnick, Rhonda Lund, Richard Preston and Neala-Rea Sprinkhuysen

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