



# Okotoks United Church

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A N N U A L R E P O R T



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# Introduction

Okotoks United Church uses an annual report to update progress on the church's vision, show how donated funds are used, and give insight into how each ministry area specifically uses the funds designated for its purposes.

The desire of the staff and officers of the church is to use this tool to provide accountability to those who support our ministries.

For past annual reports, please check our website.

## Land Acknowledgment

Okotoks United Church meets on the lands of the people of Treaty 7. These are the lands of the Siksika (Blackfoot), Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), Stoney-Nakoda, and Tsuut'ina (Sarcee) First Nations as well as the Métis of Region 3 and the Otempisiwak peoples.

We acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality and culture of the Indigenous Peoples on whose land we worship. This site is of great spiritual significance to the Blackfoot people. We will live with respect on the land and in peace and friendship with its people.

## Diverse and Inclusive

Everyone is welcome to our services including people of all colour, race, ability, sexual orientation, religion, education, socio-economic status, or gender.

## Our Mission:

With God's help we are:  
Following Jesus,  
Reaching Others,  
Changing Lives.

# Message from the Minister

*Give and it will be given to you: a full measure – packed down, shaken together and running over – will be poured into your lap. For the amount you measure out is the amount you'll be given back.* - Luke 6:38

This is the scripture that my Dad loved and that we used at his Memorial Service. He deeply believed that when we give, we will be blessed in return.

As I reflect on the year past and regularly look around at the people in this community and read some of the reports going into this Annual Report, my cup overflows with thanks. The words I would use for this community are generosity, grace and compassion. You care – about each other and the world outside our doors. Together, we make an effort to show Christ's love in such tangible ways. I am in deep admiration of those who offer leadership to this Community of Faith and the people who never fail to step up when there is a need.

I am more and more convinced that the church is vital to the world, providing light, love and community. People need a place to belong, contribute and find purpose. Many have found this at Okotoks United. There are good things ahead for this congregation and though you may not know what this looks like right now, I believe that if you move forward together in faith and welcome new possibilities, the future is bright.

By now, you are aware I will be leaving Okotoks United at the end of July 2026. This has been my community for almost 19 years. It will be hard to leave. I have loved being a part of such a vibrant community. I do believe that there are good things in store for Okotoks and a new minister will bring new ideas and new energy

So many people have done so much I could not possibly thank everyone for the good work done in 2025. So thank you for all you have and will contribute to the life and work of this Community of Faith. I am blessed to have served you for the past 18.5 years and pray that you will continue to serve each other and the community for many, many years to come.

You never cease to inspire me.

With Love and Gratitude,

Julia

# Message from the Board Chair

 Our Church's Mission Statement is "With God's Help we are Following Jesus, Reaching People, Changing Lives". We try to keep that in mind every Board meeting.

**Following Jesus:** Everything we do on the Board and in this church is aiming to follow Jesus's commandments to love God and love people.

We seek to manage your donations ethically and wisely through careful spending and thoughtful investment. Our financial situation is sound due to your faithful and generous giving. We had the church property appraised to ensure that our insurance is sufficient. We have now adjusted our coverage to protect our property.

Part of loving God is loving God's creation. We continue to consider the environment as we maintain the church and grounds. We install environmentally conscious equipment and fixtures. The front landscaping is gradually being converted to more drought-resistant and native-to-this-zone plantings.

**Reaching Others:** We want to open our doors to our entire community and be a blessing to them. This summer we celebrated the United Church of Canada's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary by hosting as many of our community partners as possible at a pancake breakfast, complete with kids' activities, lively music and a worship service. Politicians, other faith groups, and social justice agencies, sent representatives to join the party.

Our new rainbow sidewalk and banners proclaim that we are an affirming church inside and out. We set up a booth at Pride Fest again this year.

**Changing Lives:** We do this by feeding body and soul through the ministries of our lunch program, Jacket Racket and the new Food Bank shelves as well as Sunday and mid-week service, Bible Study and gathering around a simple meal or snack after church. An exciting new ministry began this Fall - a weekly Sunday School run by our older kids for our younger kids.

Our building is just a container for what we are about. When the season is right and the sun is at the exact right angle on a Sunday morning, our stained glass windows light up the faces of the people on one side of the sanctuary. To me, you all look like that all the time. People lit up by love and unity. Thank you for being part of this community of faith.

*- Submitted by Karen Pryznyk*

# Report from Chinook Winds Region

Sally Salter, Judy Niven and Mark Dutkoski are the lay representatives to the Chinook Winds Region (CWR) for our pastoral charge. Mark and Sally, along with Rev. Julia, attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Regional Gathering in Lacombe from May 8 to May 11. The theme of the gathering was 'Flourishing: Where living waters flow'. We have to develop the capacity to think and to hope. In thinking about the future, we have to imagine the good and the bad. Hope is productive. Hope teaches us to dream in a way that inspires tangible action; it engenders bold ideas, strengthens the social fabric and sense of belonging, catalyzes daring connections, and creates a sense of purpose.

On June 4, Okotoks United Church hosted a CWR event entitled 'Fishing Tips with Rev. Dr. John Pentland'. John said people today are looking for a place to belong, eventually they may move to believing. It used to be that the church was Believe>Behave>Belong. Now the church is Belong>Behave>Believe. We need to create a space for people to belong no matter what they believe. People are seeking meaning not happiness. John shared a series of 17 'tips' that congregations can use to encourage growth in their communities.

The CWR hosted the 45<sup>th</sup> General Council of The United Church of Canada at the Telus Convention Centre, downtown Calgary, from August 7-11, 2025. General Council is the decision-making body of the United Church as a whole. It brings together Commissioners (those elected from across Canada to be members of this meeting of the General Council) to help set the course for the future of the United Church. The Commissioners reviewed and voted on proposals to strengthen The UCC. They also elected the next Moderator of The UCC, the Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath. A small group of people from our pastoral charge were volunteers at the meeting.

The Regional Council staff work diligently to keep our communities of faith in touch in many ways including virtual 'town-hall' meetings, other events, programs and webinars as well as weekly newsletters to keep us up to date on happenings in the Region and the wider church. The CWR supports and is home to many different ministries beyond local congregations. We recommend you take the time to find out what else our Region offers, check out their website <https://chinookwindsregion.ca>.

Our United Church creed states 'We are not alone, we live in God's world.' Being part of the Chinook Winds Region is one place we can practice this.

*Submitted by Sally Salter and Judy Niven*

# Report from Ministry & Personnel

The role of the Ministry and Personnel Committee (M&P) is to provide support and assessment for all of the staff and contractors of Okotoks De Winton Pastoral Charge. We aim to maintain positive working conditions and relationships for the team in their various capacities within our congregational life. Committee members for 2025 were Sally Salter, Jack Parsons, Stewart Thomas and Pat Rush. Jack Parsons is retiring after 5 years as a valued member of M&P.

As I reflect on 2025, I am filled with gratitude for our amazing team of staff, contractors and volunteers. Each person brings different gifts to their role and, in combination, we are what make our congregation such a caring and supportive community. Without all of you, we would not be able to be the presence in the community that we strive to be.

The year 2025 was relatively quiet in terms of staffing. After almost five years as our accompanist, we said good bye to Sophia Su who left in August to pursue her optometry studies in Ontario at the University of Waterloo. In October, we welcomed Joanna Gai as our new accompanist. Joanna brings her enthusiasm, musical talent and beautiful smile to worship every Sunday. A special 'shout out' to those who filled in as accompanist during our transition phase.

Some of our team are behind the scenes and some are people you see every week. Do you know who makes up our paid team? If you aren't sure, make a point of introducing yourself to these people. They each care deeply about the work we do.

The rest of the work of being a church is done by all of you – our volunteers. You do more volunteer activities than I could ever name....everything from washing dishes, preparing food, caring for the building, leading groups, playing the piano, providing care and the list goes on. On Sunday mornings, take a few minutes to look around you. These are your Okotoks De Winton Pastoral Charge volunteers.

There are too many people to thank individually, so on behalf of the M&P Committee and the congregations of Okotoks De Winton Pastoral Charge, let me extend blessings and heartfelt thanks to each employee, contractor and volunteer for your generosity of time and talent. Also my personal thanks to the members of the M&P Committee for their support and wisdom.

*- Submitted by Sally Salter, Ministry & Personnel Chair*



# One-page Summary Okotoks United

## Church Membership Update

### Membership Data (Jan to Dec 2025)

Full Members: - 104

Adherents: - 76

Average Weekly Attendance - 64

### Total Income Received - Various Sources

General: \$207,359.58

Fundraising: \$8,435.27

## Church Benefit to Community

- ♥ Served many lunches to Foothills students via the School Lunch Program
- ♥ Hosted Muslim, Jewish and Hindu faith leaders
- ♥ Offered TEARS baseball re Mission Possible for the fourth year
- ♥ Filled 192 Christmas bags for Seniors
- ♥ Our volunteers gave XXXX hours of their time
- ♥ Celebrated The United Church of Canada's 100th Anniversary
- ♥ Through sponsorship, created a rainbow sidewalk that leads to OUC's front door

## Volunteer Hours by Month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
214	214.5	371.75	452	276.25	623.75	98.75	108.5	272.5	582.75	493.25	284.75

## Rentals 2025

The following groups rented space in our building

- Alberta Retired Teacher's Association
- Al Madinah Calgary Islamic Assembly
- Big Rock Singers
- Mizbehavin' & Rumrunners
- Foothills Philharmonic Men's Choir
- Foothills Community Counselling
- Christ Commission Fellowship Calgary
- Chair Yoga
- Chinook Winds Regional Offices
- Foothills Advocacy in Motion
- Literacy Playground
- Memorials - 3
- Okotoks Youth Singers
- Okotoks Food Bank
- Piano/Voice Recitals - 4
- Recovery Groups - 8
- The Heartland
- True Colours Rainbow Alliance
- United Church Women

## Current Church Programs:

- Bible Study
- Book Club
- Foothills Spiritual Life Centre
- Harmony Group
- Healing Pathway
- Jacket Racket
- Mission Possible
- School Lunch Program
- Youth

**A Year  
In Review:  
Life & Work of the Church**

# Following Jesus

## Bible Study

Winter 2025 (January-February) saw the Bible Study Group carrying on the theme "The Origin of the Abrahamic Faith" as we explored where the monotheistic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam originated. Delving deeply into these traditions gave us greater insight into what we hold in common rather than the things that separate us.

In Fall of 2025, we started a new theme as we decided to explore A Song of Faith, the United Church's most recent statement of faith in poetic form. So far it has given us a better understanding of what The United Church believes and stands for. The group, composed of folks from Okotoks, St. Andrew's and Diamond Valley United Churches, gathered weekly from September to April to learn more about the bible, themselves and the work of the church.

Bible Study is led by Rev. Julia Kimmett and Rev. Robin Galey.

All are welcome to join our Bible Study. It is a good mix of study, sharing and fun.

*- Submitted by Reverend Julia*

## Foothills Spiritual Life Centre

Our small planning team has developed many events through the year to honour our objectives of curiosity, connection, and community. Curiosity for those who want to learn more about their human spirit. Connection for all of us who want to be true to ourselves and Community because community is life.

Our Centre has sponsored a speaker series that has presented spirituality from a Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Indigenous perspective and will continue with speakers in 2026.

We also had special events helping us feel the life-giving spiritual nature of water and the spiritual power of sound through crystal bowls and a drumming circle.

A special winter solstice circle was set up in our church's front yard to help people reflect on the past year and look forward to the new year.

Ongoing meditation sessions are now happening every Tuesday night.

We are excitedly looking forward to new speakers and new programs in the new year. Our goal for the Centre is to diversify our planning team and eventually become a community-based organization that can reach out to all of the Foothills region. However, we are proud to say that the Foothills Spiritual Life Centre was "birthed" by our United Church.

*- Submitted by Rev. Dean Salter*

## Healing Pathway

The Healing Pathway gathers to support individuals of the congregation and the community with bi-monthly healing sessions.

We welcomed a new member, Sally B., from High River and we all discovered this year a great need to offer healing sessions to each other!

Newly energized, we are looking forward to meeting new and familiar faces again.

- Submitted by Gisela Dyck

## Sunday School

In the fall of 2025, three youth leaders - Erica, Lily and Isabella - started Sunday School with a small but mighty group of kids.

The leaders create activities, celebrate milestones and provide learning on the teachings of Christ. This December, the Sunday School group, via a very successful craft/bake sale, raised over \$300 for the Okotoks Food Bank.

- Submitted by Traci for Erica, Lily and Isabella

## Did you know?

Board, Choir and Mission Possible volunteer hours are the highest!

# Following Jesus

## Midweek Worship

For a half hour on Wednesday mornings, we gather to enjoy the soft bells and soul-searching music of Taizé chants. We take the time to find a welcome retreat from the busy-ness of our lives and sink into silence, prayer and song. The Taizé songs weave their way into our busy, stressful lives to bring a moment of peace and unity.

Come join us - everyone is welcome to attend.

- Submitted by Karen Pryznyk

## Volunteer Hours

Having discovered that monthly emails to obtain volunteer hours worked well in 2024, I repeated this practice in 2025! My thanks, again, to those who faithfully remembered to contact me with their hours.

Our total number of volunteer hours for 2025 is **3992.75!**

- Submitted by Traci Fontana-Wegelin

# Reaching Others

## Benevolent Fund

The Benevolent Fund exists to support the emergency needs of the wider Okotoks community on a one-time basis. It is a confidential service managed and dispersed by Julia Kimmett, Minister of both Okotoks and St. Andrew's Communities of Faith and Traci Fontana-Wegelin, OUC Office and Facilities Administrator.

The Benevolent Fund is funded solely by contributions from both Communities of Faith. There are no operating funds designated to the Benevolent Fund.

People are very grateful for the assistance as it often buys them some time to access other resources if needed.

This year we were fortunate enough to realize more deposits than dispersals and our Benevolent Fund finishes the year with a healthy balance. With partnerships formed with Family Resource Centre and St Vincent de Paul, we work together to support individuals and families who continue to struggle.

Our wholehearted gratitude for your contributions. This fund means so much to us in that we are able to help, make a difference, and believe, in some small way, we make someone's day a little bit better. As always, we tell those who come for assistance that this support is only possible through your giving.

*- Submitted by Reverend Julia and Traci Fontana-Wegelin*

## Birthdays/Loonie Lunch

In 2025, volunteers agreed to celebrate birthdays once a month. This began as a way for the congregation to mingle, meet new members and to welcome everyone as a church family. This seemed to be a gathering many folks appreciated.

Since this had been successful, it was decided to try offering lunch following each Sunday service. Volunteers have provided a variety of lunches, from hearty chili to delicious pulled-pork to ham sandwiches and soul-warming soups. The "Loonie Toonie Lunches" were a resounding success! It has become a wonderful way to encourage community of faith members to get to know one another and welcome everyone. Thank you to Lucille McKee for organizing and for the many volunteers who pitch in to help with meal provision and kitchen duties.

*- Submitted by Traci for Lucille McKee*

## Book Club

The Fireside Book Club continued to meet on the second Tuesday of each month, July and August excluded. This year we celebrated our 10-year anniversary as a book club, initiated by the late Sharon Parsons. I like to think she would be happy that we hit this milestone and are still going strong.

Our book selections are chosen by our members, each discussion led by whomever suggested the book of the month. We generally choose books that have a socially conscious theme or based on historical events. Although this results in some serious discussions, it doesn't mean you won't hear laughter and the sounds of a good time coming from our room. I think we all agree this is a wonderful and diverse group who looks forward to our monthly meetings with each other.

*- Submitted by Janet Page*

## Harmony Group

The Harmony continues to be active with 14 members on our roster. In 2025, we contributed 661.5 volunteer hours. We are grateful for the helpers who are willing to help out with various projects. In addition, we were pleased to accept donations from the congregation for our Christmas Market bake table.

Our 2025 activities are as follows:

- ♥ January: a donation of \$9000 was made to Okotoks United Church;
- ♥ Two funeral lunches were done, one in April for Mauna Minue for 100 people and one in May for Jean Stone for 100 people, as well;
- ♥ In April and October turkey pot pies were made and sold out, 403 and 357, respectively;
- ♥ In June, coffee snacks and lunches were provided for approximately 30 people of Foothills South Cluster of United Churches;
- ♥ In September lunch was provided for approximately 30 ladies from the United Church Women;
- ♥ Also in September, 69 jars of antipasto were made with an additional 32 jars made in November;
- ♥ And, the annual Christmas Market was held in November with a total of 8 vendors.

We continue to meet at the Church at 1:30 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month and, as always, we welcome new members to our group.

- Submitted by Jean Jewer, Co-chair

## Reaching Others

## Jacket Racket

Jacket Racket ran from Oct 21 to Nov 1 with four evening and two morning open days.

The intake from our community partner collection sites (Sobeys, Main Street Market and More, Okotoks Library, Okotoks Fire Hall #1, Viking Rentals Centre, Foothills Cleaners, Better Than Home Laundry, Save On Foods and St. Andrews United, DeWinton was generous as always. The Western Wheel and Eagle FM, our media partners, spread the word on air and in print. In addition to our usual donors, we partnered with the Knights of Columbus who donated several bags of new coats. Our usual Christ the Redeemer School partner, St. Vincent de Paul, was unable to help out this year due to the teacher's strike and subsequent school closure.

We always have some jackets and accessories left over. Canyon Rigging, a local business, who also collected locally, took some of our excess coats and accessories to the Mustard Seed in Calgary. Several bags were taken into the Calgary Drop-In Centre. We passed on much of our remaining inventory to Diamond Valley United Church whose Jacket Racket starts after ours is finished.

Through the School Lunch Program partnership with the Foothills School Division counsellors, we were able to provide jackets, mitts and neck warmers to confidentially-identified students. A selection of winter clothing is stored at the church to be available as benevolent needs arise over the winter of 25/26.

Many thanks to the 20 volunteers from Okotoks and DeWinton who picked up donations, laundered items as necessary, sorted and displayed the clothing by size, and staffed the open days to help clients find appropriate clothing for their families. Client numbers were quite low this year – 162 – less than half of previous years. A warm autumn may have contributed. We are looking at options for improving the uptake in 2026.

- Submitted by Karen Pryznyk

# Reaching Others

## Seniors

One of our community partners is the Okotoks and District Seniors Club.

Every year we work with them to provide gift bags for seniors in our community. This year the Club collected enough supplies to fill 192 bags! Okotoks United Church's part is to produce a custom calendar for the Club with their activities and special days noted. Our talented photographer, Tamara Webster, took a series of beautiful shots of "Okotoks Up Close". Karen Pryznyk created the calendar, Carol Price folded and stapled 250 calendars, delivered them and picked up 30 bags for us to deliver to our seniors!

It's a great partnership and a perfect opportunity to check in with some of our seniors and wish them Merry Christmas.

(This wasp was featured as Miss August on the calendar)

*Submitted by Karen Pryznyk*



## School Lunch Program

The School Lunch Program had a successful year! We had 28 volunteers throughout the year and the program produced lunches comprised of meals and gift certificates for Christmas, Easter and summer vacations.

The School Lunch Program received excellent financial support from the community and we'd like to extend special acknowledgement to The George Golf Tournament for the fundraising efforts!

We remain grateful for our loyal, committed volunteers and for Okotoks United's generous donation of space.

*- Submitted by Shannon and Brian Olson*

# Changing Lives

## Affirming

November 2025 saw Okotoks United celebrate one year as an affirming church, which has been a milestone in the life of this congregation.

Besides this celebration, the Affirming Team met to plan other ways to support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This included offering a canteen at a Pride Event, a booth at Pride in Ethel Tucker Park in June as a major sponsor of the event, painting a rainbow sidewalk in front of the church building, selling Pride goodies at the Harmony Group Christmas Market, putting up large banners in the foyer of the church as well as an antependium on the front of the pulpit and a display in the foyer in order to be more visible to whoever comes into our building and community. We also wrote a letter to the Western Wheel to express our concern about what's going on in our province with regard to support for our queer youth.

A big thanks to everyone in the group: Beth and Joyce L for all their sewing, plus Beth for her baking, Ryan B for painting the sidewalk, Jennifer S-D for coordinating the Pride Booth and selling 'swag,' Betty L for keeping us up to date on events and taking notes and Jenn and Janet for their superb writing. If you want to know more about the Affirming process or join the team, please speak to any of these people.

*- Submitted by Reverend Julia*

## Listening Circle

Over six weeks in the Fall of 2025, four participants, along with Julia as facilitator, met to learn about and practice their listening skills.

It was an intense session as people shared their lives and listened to each other's stories. We learned to listen deeply and with compassion without the need to fix anyone. Some healing took place as participants felt heard and affirmed. Some even said that learning to listen better changed how they showed up in their relationships, making them stronger and better.

As we listened, we learned and as we learned, we grew. This is the joy of getting better at listening.

*- Submitted by Reverend Julia*

## Mission Possible

This year marks the fourth TEARS baseball camp in the Dominican Republic. The camp ran from June 21 through June 29. In the year's span since the 2024 camp, we collected shirts, hats, gloves, shoes, bats, balls, helmets, and bases to run the camp as well as to leave behind for the TEARS school and the barrio program.

In 2025, we had 6 coaches travel to Maria Auxiliadora. Gary Dzurka, John Dzurka and Curtis Carlson were back for their fourth ball camp, while Judy Shelstad joined her second camp. Megan Dzurka and Asher De Matteis were this year's rookie coaches.

In previous years, we had from 78 to 110 children attend camp. This year we had over 95 children registered and we ran the camp at two locations; the barrio baseball diamond as well as the TEARS soccer field. The barrio program included 68 boys ranging from 7 years old to 16 years old. The TEARS school program included 30 girls ranging from 9 to 16 years old.

On the first day of camp, we invited all the children to the TEARS Center for a skills competition. We created 4 groups based on sex and age and they competed in 5 events (best outfield throw, best infield throw, fastest runner, strongest runner and pitching accuracy). The competition was intense and we were very impressed with their skills and desire to excel. After the competition, we had lunch for all the children, coaches and volunteers, followed by awards for gold, silver and bronze for each age category and event.

Days 2 through 5 comprised of 3 daily sessions for the children. The morning session (8:00am to 11:30am) had all six coaches work with the barrio and TEARS boys ranging in ages of 9 to 13 years old. The afternoon sessions (2:30pm to 5:00pm) saw the coaches split into two groups to work with the barrio and TEARS boys ranging from 14 to 17 years old and a separate session for the TEARS girls ranging in ages from 9 to 17 years old. These four days focused on instructor-led drills that saw all the athletes build their confidence and skills.

At the end of each session, we had a fun competition for the children. We tested their fastest throw, their strength in running and accuracy of throwing the ball. We recognized the top three results and the winner received a small prize. The children looked forward to this challenge every day.

On Day 6 each group played a full baseball game to showcase their talents. We formed two teams with each sex/age group and they played against each other. The children were very excited to play the formal game and they battled hard to see who would prevail. In the end each child received a camp certificate along with their gold or silver medal.

*- Submitted by Gary Dzurka*

# Changing Lives

# Changing Lives

## Youth

This past year, the Youth Group

enjoyed a wide variety of activities both at the Church, and elsewhere in the community. We went bowling together, which gave everyone a chance to relax, have fun, and enjoy some friendly competition. We also visited escape rooms, where we worked as teams to solve puzzles and practice problem-solving skills in order to escape.

We also spent a few evenings at the Church, enjoying organized games and watching different movies together. At the beginning of the year, we spent two separate evenings watching and singing along to the movie *Wicked*. On Halloween, we carved pumpkins and laughed along with *The Addams Family* movie. We then wrapped up the year watching *Elf* on the big screen for our Christmas celebration with popcorn and snacks!

Our Youth Groups normally take place on the third Friday of each month, either at the Church or a different location, depending on the activity, from 6:30 - 8:30pm. Our numbers can vary from 6- 12 depending on how busy the season is or overlapping events.

Any and every Youth over the age of 8 is welcome! Please contact the Church office and we can be put in contact.

- Submitted by Oliva Herbst and Curtis Carlson

## Worship Key Moments

Easter Sunrise at Big Rock

Blessing of the Animals

River baptism

Christmas Pageant

# 2025 - A year in pictures



# 2026 AGM Agenda

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Opening Prayer – Rev. Julia Kimmett  
Opening Remarks – Welcome - Karen Pryznyk

1. Election of Secretary
2. Election of Chairperson
3. Motion by Members for Adherents to vote
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes from AGM Feb 23, 2025
6. Approval of 2025 Annual Report
7. Presentation of 2025 Financials
  - a) Motion to Approve 2025 Financials
8. Presentation of the 2026 Budget.
  - a) Motion to approve the 2026 Budget
9. Board Report – Karen Pryznyk
10. Election of Board members
11. Election of Trustees
12. Election of Chinook Winds Regional Representatives
13. Election of Committee Members
  - a) Ministry and Personnel
  - b) Nominating Committee
14. New Business
  - a) Search and Selection Committee
  - b) Other
15. Benediction – Rev. Julia Kimmett
16. Motion to Adjourn



**Okotoks United Church Annual General Meeting Minutes**  
**Date: February 23, 2025**  
**Location: OUC Sanctuary**

**Present:** Attendance list on file. There were 34 members, 8 adherents, 1 staff and 1 visitor.

**Opening Prayer:** Rev. Julia Kimmitt opened the meeting at 11:45 am. She thanked the congregation for their generosity of time and resources. She extended special thanks to Ian McNeill, Karen Pryzynk, and Sally Salter for going above and beyond on a regular basis. Rev. Kimmitt concluded with a prayer.

**Welcome:** Karen Pryzynk welcomed people to the assembly and thanked them for attending the meeting. She then thanked Julia for her prayers today and throughout the year. She thanked Julia for her guidance and teaching and for loving us. Karen confirmed that we have a quorum (minimum of 20 members in attendance).

Election of a Secretary

**It was moved by Betty-Lou Bayley, seconded by Ryan Schmitke, that Sally Salter be elected as Secretary for all Congregational meetings until the 2026 AGM. Carried.**

Election of a Chairperson

**It was moved by Carol Powley, seconded by Diane McNeill, that Karen Pryzynk be elected as Chairperson for all Congregational meetings until the 2026 AGM. Carried.**

Motion by Members for Adherents to vote

**It was moved by Heather Howarth, seconded by Audra Brown, that adherents be permitted to vote on all matters pertaining to the work of Okotoks United Church. Carried.**

Approval of the Agenda

**It was moved by Marian Leeson, seconded Ian McNeill, that the Agenda be approved as amended:**

Change the date in Item 5 of the Agenda to read February 25, 2024

**Carried.**

Approval of Minutes from AGM February 25, 2024

**It was moved by Judy Niven, seconded by Martha Webster, that the Minutes of the Okotoks United Church Annual General Meeting of February 25, 2024, be approved as circulated. Carried.**

Approval of Minutes from Congregational Meeting October 27, 2024

**It was moved by Ron Spice, seconded by Dean Salter, that the Minutes of the Okotoks United Church Congregational Meeting of October 27, 2024, be approved as circulated. Carried.**

Approval of 2024 Annual Report

Karen thanked everyone who submitted pictures and reports for making the Annual Report possible. She also thanked Traci Fontana-Wegelin for her design and hard work preparing it.

**It was moved by Audra Brown, seconded by Bill Calder, that the 2024 Annual Report minus the financials and the budget be approved as amended:**

**a) Change Cover Page, 2025 Annual Report to 2024 Annual Report.**

**Carried.**

## Presentation of 2024 Financials

Karen Pryznyk thanked Audra Brown, our bookkeeper. Audra is on top of all the financial reports that must be submitted, the ethical and proper financial standards we must uphold and is always ready to advise the Board or provide information so we can make good decisions. This year we particularly thank Audra for the many revisions of this year's budget that she provided the Board as we worked through it line by line.

Karen also thanked Carol Price, our Treasurer. Carol is retiring from the Board and her role as Treasurer as of today and we thank her for her work as Treasurer and her term on the Board. Carol has worked very hard to streamline the relationship between the Board and the Trustees regarding our investments, served on the Community Services Recovery Fund Grant team and oversaw the paydown of the RBC mortgage last year. We will miss her wisdom and energy on the Board.

Karen Pryznyk and Sally Salter presented the 2024 Financial Statement on behalf of Carol Price. Audra offered to change the Balance Sheet format for future reports to show the Harmony Group donation as a separate income line rather than including it with Other Income.

a) Motion to approve the 2024 Financials

**It was moved by Connie Cunningham, seconded by Ryan Schmitke, that the 2024 Financial Statements be approved as presented. Carried.**

## Presentation of the 2025 Budget

Karen Pryznyk and Sally Salter presented the 2025 Budget on behalf of Carol Price, Treasurer. Karen highlighted the Fundraising Income line. The budget is set with a lower fundraising amount however the Board has plans to host a number of fundraising dinners. For these to be successful we will need the congregation to volunteer to help. A reminder that volunteering builds community within a church. We could also invite some of our renters to join us in these endeavors.

a) Motion to approve the 2025 Budget.

**It was moved by Joe Muhle, seconded by Marian Leeson, that the Okotoks United Church 2025 Budget be approved as presented. Carried.**

## Board Report

Karen Pryznyk, Board Chair, noted that the Board Report is in the Annual Report for people to read. She thanked the Board members for their work on many projects during the year and for their leadership of our church.

## Election of Board members

The following candidates were presented to the assembly for election to the Board for a three-year term:

Sally Salter

Curtis Carlson

Ryan Schmitke

They join Karen Pryznyk, Marcella Pohve, Ian McNeill and Karen Jones.

**It was moved by Carol Powley, seconded by Betty-Lou Bayley, that Sally Salter, Curtis Carlson and Ryan Schmitke be elected to the Board of Okotoks United Church for a term of 3 years. Carried.**

## Election of Board Chair

**It was moved by Audra Brown, seconded by Heather Howarth, that Karen Pryznyk be elected to serve as Board Chair for a three-year term. Carried.**

## Election of Trustees

Currently serving are Gary Dzurka, Bill Calder, Pat Reader-Downey, Desiree Hart and Michael Scappaticci. There are no additions or subtractions for 2025. Karen thanked the Trustees for their work on behalf of all of us.

## Election of Regional Representatives

**It was moved by Beth Loucks, seconded by Ellie Shaver, that Sally Salter serve as the Chinook Winds Regional Representative for the year 2025-26. Carried.**

## Election of Committee Members

Karen Pryznyk encouraged people with ideas about who would make a good leader in our church to talk to any Board Member. We always appreciate the input.

## Ministry and Personnel

Current members are Sally Salter, Jack Parsons and Stewart Thomas. Stewart Thomas needs to be elected for a three year term.

**It was moved by Dean Salter, seconded by Ron Spice, that we elect Stewart Thomas to the Ministry and Personnel Committee for a term of 3 years. Carried.**

## New Business

## Okotoks Spiritual Life Centre

Ryan Schmitke presented an overview of the Okotoks Spiritual Life Centre. Since September 2024 a small group of people have been meeting to discuss the concept of creating the Okotoks Spiritual Life Centre (OSLC). The group has created the following Vision and Values Statements:

**Vision: To create a community centre that focuses on healthy spiritual development.**

**Values:**

**Community** - Creating healthy relationships in a safe place.

**Inclusiveness** - Openness to all spiritual seekers.

**Curiosity** - Openness to wonder and exploration.

**Connection** - Openness to self, others and the natural world.

For now the OSLC will work within Okotoks United Church but will eventually become its own legal entity.

Beginning in May 2025 the OSLC will be hosting a speaker series on 'Spirituality Within Different Religious Traditions'. The first event will be May 15 on Islam.

## Legacy Gifts and Memorial Funds

Karen Pryznyk distributed brochures on the Okotoks United Church Memorial Fund and Legacy Giving. This is the official launch of these two programs.

The Memorial Fund is a way to honour a loved one after their death. A memorial donation is deposited into a designated fund that is set up to benefit ministries of the church such as Worship, Music, Outreach and Christian Education (Kids Ministry)

Legacy Giving may include bequests through wills, life insurance policies, stocks, bonds, real property, personal endowments, etc.

Karen thanked Stewart Thomas for his hard work in bringing these two programs to Okotoks United Church.

## Other new business

Julia encouraged people to be curious about the Board and other church committees. What interests you? Where could you make a difference?

Karen thanked the Worship Team for providing the lovely stone soup lunch.

## Benediction

Rev. Julia Kimmett offered the Benediction.

## Motion to Adjourn

**It was moved by Beth Loucks, seconded by Pat Reader-Downey, that the meeting be adjourned at 12:55 pm.**

**Recorded by: Sally Salter**  
**Chair: Karen Pryznyk**

# 2025 Financials

**Okotoks United Church  
Harmony Group  
Financial Year 2025**

Opening balance as of January 1, 2025 \$10,546.24

Income:

Turkey Pot Pie Sales	\$4,416.99	
Catering	2,105.82	
Bazaar	3,057.11	
Interest	.12	
		\$9,580.04

Expenses:

Donation - OUC	\$9,000.00	
Overhead/Fellowship	646.99	
		\$9,646.99

Closing balance as of December 31, 2025 \$10,479.39

Respectfully submitted by Ellen Kneiss, Treasurer, Harmony Group

## **Okotoks United Church Benevolent Fund 2025**

### **Income 2025**

Financial – \$33,646.07 (2024- \$78,568.92)

Gift Cards on hand – approx. \$1395

### **Dispersals 2025**

Financial - \$14,174.86 (2024 - \$7323.89)

Breakdown:

- ♥ Shelter (Includes temporary [hotels]) - \$9,193.43
- ♥ Utilities (Gas, Electricity, Water) - \$994.04
- ♥ Transportation - \$1255 (gas cards)
- ♥ Other - \$1487.39 (Phone and Medical)
- ♥ Gift Cards - \$1245 (Groceries )

**Okotoks United Church**  
**Balance Sheet**  
Consolidated - December 2025

Note to reader: These financial statements do not include the 2025 year-end final entries from our accounting firm.

	Fund 01 - GENERAL FUND	Fund 02 - DESIG. FUND	Fund 03 - CAPITAL FUND	Total
<b>ASSETS</b>				
<b>BANK ACCOUNTS</b>				
<b>CHEQUING ACCOUNTS</b>				
RBC General Account	\$73,903.01			\$73,903.01
Temp Rest. in Cqg		\$192,025.41		\$192,025.41
Bank in Bldg - 03			\$12,388.00	\$12,388.00
Subtotal Chequing Accounts	\$73,903.01	\$192,025.41	\$12,388.00	\$278,316.42
<b>OTHER ACCOUNTS</b>				
Benevolent Ministers Acct		\$14,946.07		\$14,946.07
GIC Investments	\$48,182.50	\$110,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$165,182.50
Subtotal Other Accounts	\$48,182.50	\$124,946.07	\$7,000.00	\$180,128.57
Subtotal Bank Accounts	\$122,085.51	\$316,971.48	\$19,388.00	\$458,444.99
<b>CASH ON HAND</b>				
Petty Cash	\$100.00			\$100.00
<b>INVESTMENTS</b>				
<b>ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE</b>				
GST Receivable 2024	\$650.88	\$90.22		\$741.10
<b>CAPITAL ASSETS</b>				
<b>BUILDINGS</b>				
Buildings, Improvements			\$3,580,715.93	\$3,580,715.93
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>				
Furniture and equipment			\$154,339.41	\$154,339.41
Subtotal Capital Assets			\$3,735,055.34	\$3,735,055.34
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$122,836.39</b>	<b>\$317,061.70</b>	<b>\$3,754,443.34</b>	<b>\$4,194,341.43</b>

## Okotoks United Church **Balance Sheet 2025** (cont'd)

### LIABILITIES

#### CURRENT LIABILITIES

##### OTHER CURRENT LIABILITIES

Building Use Deposits	\$800.00	\$800.00
Unearned Rental Income	\$50.00	\$50.00

Subtotal Current Liabilities	\$850.00	\$850.00
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#### LONG-TERM LIABILITIES

##### MORTGAGES & LOANS

United Church Loan		\$450,683.17	\$450,683.17
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TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$850.00	\$450,683.17	\$451,533.17
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### EQUITY

#### UNRESTRICTED

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$121,986.68		\$121,986.68
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#### RESTRICTED

Equity in Cap. Assets		\$3,230,705.75	\$3,230,705.75
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#### TEMP.RESTR.IN CHEQUING FB

##### DONOR RESTRICTED

Mission Possible Fb	\$3,774.57		\$3,774.57
Benevolent Fb	\$76,033.00		\$76,033.00
School lunch program FB	\$149,327.17		\$149,327.17
Outreach Fund FB	\$23,429.62		\$23,429.62
Foothills Spiritual Life Centre	\$890.97		\$890.97
Community Services Grant	\$466.06		\$466.06
Healing Touch Fb	\$3,037.95		\$3,037.95
Grant Balance	\$25,000.00		\$25,000.00
AV Repairs / Replacement	\$800.00		\$800.00
Empowering the Promise		\$73,054.42	\$73,054.42
Kids Ministry Fb	\$2,594.11		\$2,594.11
Contingency Reserve	\$22,350.87		\$22,350.87

Subtotal Donor Restricted	\$307,704.32	\$73,054.42	\$380,758.74
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#### PASS THRU FUNDS

Mission & Service Fund	\$887.10		\$887.10
Memorials / Legacies	\$8,470.00		\$8,470.00

Subtotal Pass Thru Funds	\$9,357.10		\$9,357.10
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Subtotal Temp.restr.in Chequing Fb	\$317,061.42	\$73,054.42	\$390,115.84
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TOTAL EQUITY	\$121,986.68	\$317,061.42	\$3,303,760.17	\$3,742,808.27
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$122,836.68	\$317,061.42	\$3,754,443.34	\$4,194,341.44
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## OKOTOKS UNITED CHURCH FINANCIAL BUDGET 2026

Note to reader: These financial statements do not include the 2025 year-end final entries from our accounting firm.

FUND ONE	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
<b>INCOME</b>			
GENERAL FUND INCOME	185,500.00	207,359.58	208,085.00
INVESTMENT INCOME	1,602.50	1,300.27	0.00
PROGRAM INCOME	400.00	740.00	2,150.00
RENTAL INCOME			
Rental Income & Magazines	30,210.00	48,196.40	41,480.00
Chinook Winds Region	18,000.00	18,007.10	18,000.00
Wedding & Funeral Rent	5,650.00	5,208.00	7,000.00
OTHER INCOME			
Third Floor, Gift In Kind, Misc Income	5,620.00	11,176.86	8,900.00
White Gift	0.00	1,500.00	0.00
Harmony Group	9,000.00	9,000.00	9,000.00
FUNDRAISING INCOME	3,000.00	8,435.27	7,700.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>258,982.50</b>	<b>310,923.48</b>	<b>302,315.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
SALARIED STAFF	135,948.74	134,579.08	147,771.78
CONTRACT STAFF	32,171.50	34,548.00	32,665.00
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE	7,555.20	10,287.52	9,729.65
UCC EXPENSES / COSTS	14,259.00	14,237.14	15,263.00
CHURCH PHONES	3,600.00	3,640.85	3,700.00
WEBSITE	700.00	699.98	700.00
COMPUTER EXPENSES	1,400.00	105.54	1,400.00
BUILDING INSURANCE	9,664.00	12,774.42	13,000.00
UTILITIES & SECURITY	25,590.00	23,870.63	26,830.00
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	35,594.10	17,664.42	35,120.00
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	2,440.00	1,773.87	8,600.00
AUDIO VISUAL EXPENSES & FURNITURE	350.00	25.91	300.00
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	350.00	0.00	850.00
CHOIR / MUSIC	1,800.00	1,465.80	800.00
OUTREACH	0.00	1,525.00	0.00
FELLOWSHIP	200.00	656.61	3,600.00
MINISTRY EXPENSE	3,680.00	4,137.12	3,975.00
OTHER EXPENSES	600.00	1,546.16	15,500.00
FUNDRAISING EXPENSES	250.00	2,512.90	2,550.00
WEDDINGS, FUNERALS & RENTAL EXP	6,100.00	2,363.90	3,800.00
	282,252.54	268,414.85	326,154.43
Transfer to Contingency Reserve	2,400.00	2,400.00	4,800.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES (Not including Mortgage)</b>	<b>284,652.54</b>	<b>270,814.85</b>	<b>330,954.43</b>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>-25,670.04</b>	<b>40,108.63</b>	<b>-28,639.43</b>

## OKOTOKS UNITED CHURCH FINANCIAL BUDGET (cont'd)

FUND TWO INCOME	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
Banking Interest	0.24	0.53	0.36
Mission Possible	1,500.00	7,142.55	2,000.00
Benevolence (Min)	12,000.00	9,404.75	12,000.00
School lunch program inc	36,000.00	98,136.41	65,000.00
Outreach & Justice Fund	3,000.00	2,351.49	2,000.00
Foothills Spiritual Life Centre	0.00	1,784.25	5,000.00
Healing Touch	120.00	200.00	120.00
Grant Income	0.00	25,000.00	0.00
Special Appeals	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kids Ministry	150.00	550.00	600.00
Contingency Reserve	6,900.00	17,033.09	9,300.00
Mission & Service	10,000.00	11,051.00	10,000.00
Memorials / Legacies	1,500.00	5,050.00	1,500.00
<b>TOTAL RESTRICTED INCOME</b>	<b>71,170.24</b>	<b>177,704.07</b>	<b>107,520.36</b>
<b>TEMP.REST. EXPENSES</b>			
Mission Possible Exp	2,500.00	8,524.47	3,000.00
Benevolence (Min)	18,000.00	29,356.96	18,000.00
School lunch prog expense	32,000.00	48,109.59	65,000.00
Outreach & Justice Fund Exp	10,000.00	2,707.04	2,500.00
Foothills Spiritual Life Centre	0.00	893.29	3,000.00
Community Services Expense	466.06	0.00	0.00
Healing Touch Exp	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kids Ministry Exp	0.00	96.85	400.00
Contingency Reserve Exp	0.00	0.00	0.00
Special Appeals Exp	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mission & Service Exp	10,000.00	10,931.00	10,000.00
Memorials / Legacies Exp	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL RESTRICTED EXPENSES</b>	<b>72,966.06</b>	<b>100,619.20</b>	<b>101,900.00</b>
<b>EXCESS INCOME\EXPENSES</b>	<b>-1,795.82</b>	<b>77,084.87</b>	<b>5,620.36</b>

OKOTOKS UNITED CHURCH FINANCIAL BUDGET (cont'd)

FUND THREE		2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget
CAPITAL FUND (Building)				
	Mortgage Fund (EP)	22,000.00	17,618.60	17,125.00
	Interest	0.00	192.50	0.00
	Total Income	22,000.00	17,811.10	17,125.00
UCC				
	UCC Principle Paid	6,656.13	6,656.13	6,803.70
	UCC Interest Paid	11,343.87	11,343.87	11,196.30
	TOTAL PAYOUTS	18,000.00	18,000.00	18,000.00
	Surplus / (Deficit)	4,000.00	-188.90	-875.00

MORTGAGE SUMMARY	Dec. 31, 2011	Dec. 31, 2025
UCC Mortgage Balance	500,000.00	450,683.17
RBC Mortgage Balance	650,000.00	0.00
BALANCE	1,150,000.00	450,683.17
TOTAL PAID DOWN FROM 2011		699,316.83

# Acknowledgements

This annual report was prepared for Okotoks United Church.  
Thank you to all of the people who submitted reports and photos.

- Prepared by: Traci Fontana-Wegelin
  - Proofread by: Gerhard Dyck
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