



From the Minister

Exciting Times Ahead!

As I reflect on my final days among you it is with gratitude. First Wendy and I would thank you for your gracious acceptance of us upon our return after 30 years in other ministry situations. Somebody said, "You can't go back." There is no agreement on who said that but you let us come back, which was very generous of you. Six months stretched into two years until the Search Team's hard work paid off.

It is now my privilege to once again, as Paul did to Timothy, pass the baton of preaching and pastoral care on to someone else. Paul uses the illustration of the Olympics throughout his letters to the churches. People in the Greek churches were familiar with that image. Paul saw ministry as a relay race. The passing of the mantle of ministry from one person to another. There needs to be continuity and consistency in the preaching of the Gospel of which Paul was not ashamed but gloried in.

He also insisted that the church build on the foundation that has already been laid. Read 1 Corinthians chapter 3.

Carefully honour the good stuff that has happened in the past and work together to move forward being bold and creative together.

Rowena has responded to her 'call' to ministry and you have responded to your 'call' to be the church which began here 163 years ago. Everyone who is Fonthill United Church has been appointed by God to be channels of His love and grace to this community.

Rowena and I will have met by the time this newsletter has reached you and started to prepare for the transition.

Your job is to be open, honest and pray without ceasing. God will do great things.
"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit!" Romans 15:13

*Blessings,
Gordon*



From the Council Chair

Our congregation has much to be grateful for and much to look forward to as we transition into the summer months. Despite lacking a full-time minister for two years, it does not feel so due to the steadfast leadership of Rev. Dr. Gordon Crossfield, who joined us in September 2023. Initially, Gordon committed to a six-month term to assist with our amalgamation transitions. This was intended to be a short-term 20-hour weekly position. Currently, he is on his fourth six-month contract, often exceeding the expected hours. Rev. Dr. Crossfield has provided consistent, faithful, dedicated and caring leadership and his presence is invaluable. Additionally, Wendy has become an integral part of our church's community by participating in various committees and activities. We have really been doubly blessed. July 27 will be Gordon's last service, but we hope both Wendy and Gordon will join us when they can in the future. We owe them immense gratitude for their contributions, which have significantly strengthened our congregation. Further details about a planned celebration to properly thank them will be communicated soon.

In August of last year, a Search Committee was established to find a new full-time minister. Chaired by Dick Hamilton and assisted by Sandra Harding and Keith Rae, this team undertook the challenging task amidst numerous vacancies in the Niagara Region. Their diligent efforts led to the identification of not just any minister but one ideally suited to our congregation. On June 1, they presented Miss Rowena Heatherington-Wilson, a student minister, as their chosen candidate. Her biography is included in this newsletter. During the service, attended by 55 individuals physically and 9 via Zoom, totaling 64 attendees, Rowena received 57 affirmative votes, 1 negative vote, and 6 abstentions (which includes the search committee members). She will officially begin her duties on September 1, 2025, and will participate in the July 27 service with Rev. Dr. Crossfield. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Search Committee for their dedication, patience, persistence and determination. Job well done!!

The selection of a new minister marks a pivotal chapter in our congregation's story. It reflects both the dedication of our members and a shared commitment to preserving the essence of community while embracing a future of growth and collaboration.

Having a student minister presents unique opportunities to contribute to the future success of the United Church of Canada. Rowena, holding a master's in divinity, will be licensed to administer sacraments, perform weddings, and officiate funerals. The Horseshoe Falls Region will appoint a Supervising Minister to meet with her regularly and attend all Council and Congregational meetings. Additionally, a Lay Supervision Team, consisting of 3-4 members, will be formed to collaborate with Rowena on mutual learning goals, provide constructive feedback, and offer support. All of this is intended to lead to our student minister being ordained in the United Church of Canada in 2 years' time. This represents a valuable chance to learn and grow together with Rowena. Interested members are encouraged to contact me. Training by will be provided to help understand the goals, roles and responsibilities.

Summer Service Schedule:

We will be continuing with joint summer services with our friends from Fenwick United Church starting on June 29. All services this year will be held in Fonthill United Church at 10 a.m. Services in June and July will be conducted by Rev. Dr. Gordon Crossfield, followed by Rev. Dr. Garry van Bruchem in August. The lower hall will be available for coffee and functions as of

June 22 until a date in August which will be advised later. Regular services will recommence on September 7 at 9:30 a.m. in our sanctuary under the guidance of our new student minister.

Submitted by Lyn Taylor, Council Chair

An Intro from the Search Committee

Introducing Rowena Hetherington-Wilson:



Rowena hails from Guelph and will be serving Fonthill United as a Supervised Ministry Student beginning in September 2025. This leads to ordination as a United Church minister in two years. She just completed a Master of Divinity degree through University of Toronto at Emmanuel College. This follows her earning a Bachelor of Arts and Science (Music and GIS & Environmental Analysis) from University of Guelph. (The GIS involves Geography and Statistics).

On the academic side she has won several scholarships for being the student with the highest standing in such courses as Pastoral Theology, Christian Education, Christian Ethics, Public Worship and in Music.

Her work experience includes youth leader, summer farm assistant, lead event server, piano teaching, church camp leader, hospice worker, and campus ministry team player.

Voluntary experiences include membership in several university student boards, campus ministry, tutoring incoming students and giving academic support to fellow students.

In her application she states that she has “a deep love of liturgy and ritual while also hoping to create new ways to bring people of faith together”. She hopes to “bring out the heart of what brings your congregation to life through language, music and prayer and connection that meets the needs of your community.”

Her enthusiasm, energy and sincerity are contagious and we of the Search Committee are certain she will warm the hearts of everyone in the days and months ahead.

Please show Rowena a warm welcome as you get to know her and help make her stay at Fonthill a wonderful experience for all concerned.

Your Search Committee: Dick Hamilton, Sandra Cook Harding , Keith Rae



News from the Outreach Committee

The games afternoon was a great success. We did not have very many Church members attending, however, we did have as many as fourteen persons come out and enjoy the afternoon. As a result we will have new persons attending our Church. We are not going to meet during the summer but will resume in the autumn. Start-up date will be announced in the Bulletin.

The Nutrition class “The Sensible way to Wellness – Food and Lifestyle” was a great success. Diane Waters, a nutritional and weight loss consultant led the classes. There was much laughter and lots of information. There is to be two cooking classes with food provided and a dinner of what was cooked to follow. There will be a minimum charge for this but everyone seemed keen. We hope to continue with classes in the autumn. We had 18 persons in attendance, some from outside the Church, two of whom are very keen on joining us on Sundays.

The book club is growing. We will meet again in the autumn. Books that were chosen for autumn discussion are as follows: September, West with Giraffes by Lynda Rutledge, October, Hamnet by Maggie O Farrell, November, Fall on Your Knees by Anne Marie MacDonald and December, Forgotten Home Child by Genevieve Graham. We hope you will consider these books and join us for our discussion group. Bring a friend and enjoy a cup of tea and great conversation.

All our programs are for everyone so we would like you to attend and bring someone with you, they don't need to belong to our Church. We hope that it will assure them that we are inclusive and they will want to become more involved.

Respectfully submitted by Janet Hamilton, Chair



From the M & P Committee

Ministry and Personnel Committee Members include: Patti Keller, Alvin Penner, Marilyn Richardson and Sandra Harding (Chair).

Reflecting back on the first half of 2025, it's been a steady time within our church family.

Reverend Dr. Gordon Crossfield continued leading our congregation with his inspirational words on Sundays. He also supported and guided our church members and various committees.

Bill Outred, our Music Director, continued leading us and our choir with his musical gifts on Sundays. His music is inspirational to the spirit as is his witty sense of humour. We have also appreciated his leading us during the occasional Sunday service.

Sandra Palkowski, Bookkeeper/Office Manager has provided seamless operations and consistency in the church office and we greatly appreciate her. She is always enthusiastic and helpful.

The M&P Committee was busy offering support to staff. With two new members on the M&P Committee, they are appreciated for the knowledge and skills that both of these individuals bring to the table.

It is exciting times and we are looking forward to the many possibilities that the second half of 2025 has to offer.

Respectfully submitted, Sandra Harding, Chair, M&P Committee



The UCW has continued to meet and flourish as a meeting venue where all ladies of the church are encouraged to join or visit whenever they can. Our meetings are informative and relaxing where all are welcome. The last gathering before summer is a wonderful luncheon at the home of the Hamiltons on Wednesday, June 11th at noon. We will start again come September.

Blessings to all for a safe and enjoyable summer.

Betty Garner, UCW Secretary



It is hard to believe we are now approximately halfway through 2025 and Fonhill United continues to face a variety of challenges which, working together, we address and resolve positively. While we will miss Rev. Gordon and Wendy Crossfield, we are all anxious to welcome the new minister who should be on board by September 1st. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Search Committee for all their hard work over the past year.

For the first four months of this year, there is a surplus in the operating fund of \$6,068 compared to a budgeted shortfall of \$11,996. For the corresponding period last year, we incurred a shortfall of \$3,845. There are several reasons for this positive trend as follows:

- Member giving's at \$59,583 are \$9,583 above budget due to the fact we have received some annual contributions earlier than last year. These gifts, while positively impacting current numbers, will average out over the balance of the year.
- Rental income is up due to higher usage of the building. We received \$1,000 for the Ontario Election and a similar amount will be reported in June for the Federal Election.
- Compensation expenses at \$35,857 are \$ 8,741 below budget and \$ 4,511 lower than 2024. When completing the budget for 2025, we assumed a new minister would be on board by March 1st at which point we would be responsible for increased pension and benefit costs. These lower costs will continue until September.

- Total operating expenses amount to \$73,670 vs budget of \$77,679. Expenses are virtually the same as in 2024. While we saw savings in compensation costs, we had some significant increases in snow removal, \$4,314 over budget and utilities, \$ 2,221 over budget. For anyone who was in Fonthill in January and February, the increase in snow removal costs is self-explanatory. The increase in utilities costs relate to ongoing repairs in the heating system.

The YTD surplus is extremely positive and again largely due to the generosity of our members. With the surplus in the operating fund, day-to-day cash requirements are being met, and we do not need to use any reserve funds. At the end of April, total assets amount to \$273,932 of which \$ 269,664 comprises cash and liquid investments.

Property:

Over the past four months the usual issues with an aging property have incurred and include:

- When we turned the heat on last fall several issues arose with the pipes and rads and the total cost to repair, over 2-3 months, amounted to roughly \$3,000.
- Some work has been required to repair the sump pump under the elevator shaft to fix the odor in the lower hall.
- The fridge in the kitchen has finally worn out and will be replaced during the first week of June.
- Work to complete the installation of the new electrical panel was done in January and the cost of approx. \$11,000 was covered in fiscal 2024.
- The Pelham Carden Club will be working on all flower gardens in the week of June 3rd.
- The Scouts completed their annual spring cleanup of the property in early April.

We would like to once again Thank Rich Miller for all he does around the church. Please appreciate and acknowledge his efforts as they reduce our maintenance and other costs by a significant amount each year.

We will be meeting with Montessori School shortly to review their lease moving forward. We expect it will be renewed for a two-year term with a slight increase in the rental rate. Finally, and after the Annual Meeting, discussions have taken place with the Town Hall, The Trustees and Houseshoe Falls Regional Council re the long development prospects for The Fonthill United Church Property. We have also been working with a potential new consultant and can advise very preliminary concepts are exciting and will preserve Fonthill United Church well in the future. Be assured the Membership will be engaged once a preliminary longer-term plan is open for review.

Thank you for your continued financial and volunteer support. 2025 is shaping up to be a great year for Fonthill United Church!

Jim Bradley, Chair, Finance and Property Committee