

# Grace's Chatter – Spring 2025

## Stay the course – empathy is our strength

By Paul Scott

When Elon Musk recently stated that “empathy is the fundamental weakness of Western civilization”, I was shocked and puzzled because I thought he was a smart man! In this case he has it all wrong!

I've always considered empathy to be strength, something to be admired in a person, in a government and a country. Empathy is not a weakness. It is the glue that binds us together, that helps us look out for one another in kindness and love. Empathy builds community.

What happened to “Love your neighbour as yourself” and being “Your brother's keeper”. What about the Golden Rule that was pasted in the front of our Readers at Linklater Public School, “Do Unto Others as You Would Have Them Do Unto You.” That's how I was brought up at Grace United Church. Empathy manifests itself as compassion, kindness, looking out for others and volunteerism – the building blocks of our Canadian communities.

I came across an article in Broadview magazine which was written by Canadian psychologist Greg Depow, he makes the following observation -

“It is the absence of empathy that truly threatens civilization”. As a case in point simply look at what is happening in the United States right now. The Trump regime and its narcissist oligarchs show no signs of empathy as they systematically dismantle a 250 year old democracy.



As we watch and feel helpless and think there is nothing we can do, I am reminded of an article written by Rev. Ken Norman which appeared in one of our first Grace's Chatters in 2020. It is about staying the course; it's about the positive results that can come from showing empathy toward others. That is how we can make a difference.

Rev. Ken writes:

Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, in his book *Nine Essential Things I've Learned About Life*, makes this challenging statement – “My theology is less about who God is or what God

does, and more about who we are and what we do because of what God means to us".

Back in the late sixties, when we lived in Gananoque, one morning I received a call from a garage owner whose garage also served as a bus stop. He told me that a young lady had gotten off the bus and was sitting in his garage, and to use his words: "Mr. Norman, she is in terrible condition and I don't know what to do, can you help me?" I immediately responded to his request and found the young woman in her early twenties on the verge of committing suicide. I took her to our home and Shirley made breakfast for her; then put her to bed because 'she hadn't slept for several nights'. After we had time to talk and I listened to the story of her life, it was a story like so many that I heard from people I had known that led them to think that 'life was no longer worth living'. In spite of our attempt to get her to stay with us longer, she insisted on leaving the next day by bus. "Where are you going?" I asked. In tears, she replied, "I don't know sir; I just have to keep going".

Two years later, we received a letter from this young woman telling us how her life had changed; that she was now happily married and had just given birth to a little girl. She wanted to thank us for helping her, as she said 'to turn her life around'.

I have no recollection of what we said during the time we spent with that young woman, but the fact that she had a change in her life for the better, leaves me to believe that it is not so much what we said, but the impact that we made on her by simply 'holding her hand, drying her tears, and shedding tears WITH her', and the assurance that somehow was communicated to her by our actions that she was not to blame for the terrible experiences that she had endured.

To quote Rabbi Kushner again, "When someone feels rejected by God, by fate, by significant people in your life, the best possible medicine is to be in the company of people who give you the message that you are a good, competent person and that they care about you." Ken summarizes, "My hope is that that girl's short experience with us at a time of such distress in her life might have done just that."

### **Now that, my friends, is EMPATHY! That is what makes the difference!**

Rev. Ken concludes, "One of the joys and satisfactions of Ministry with the Church when one reminisces about it all, is to recall the many opportunities that come one's way to be with people not only during their occasions of happiness and joy, but especially when they feel that 'the bottom has dropped out of their lives", and during those times when for various reasons, they feel that life for them is no longer worth living. To learn later that you have made a small contribution to a restoration of their lives makes one's years in Ministry all worthwhile."

In his Broadview article, Greg Depow concludes, "empathy is essential to civilization's advancement, in particular across religious, political and cultural divides. When the Bible says "love thy neighbor" it does not add "but only if they share your political views".

And taking a much boarder approach he says, "The way forward isn't to abandon empathy but to develop a more comprehensive, and thoughtful version that considers the full impact of our decisions. It is the total absence of empathy – not its presence – that truly threatens civilization. Instead of eliminating empathy, cultivating thoughtful empathy alongside critical thinking may be our best path toward addressing complex challenges of our interconnected world."

Each one of us can make a difference!

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## **Extended Ministry at Carveth Care Centre and Fox Run By The River**

By Paul Harding

Grace United Church's ministry extends to two area Seniors residences. On a monthly basis, Tammy Fergusson and Joan Shaw have been conducting worship at Carveth Care Centre. Tammy is our Licensed Lay Worship Leader and also a talented pianist, so the fit is natural.



In addition, residents gather Sunday afternoon to watch our morning worship of that day on YouTube. We are proud of our streaming ministry.

Our services continue to be broadcast at no charge by Cogeco Cable. Morning worship is edited for length by Paul Harding or Julie Price and submitted to Cogeco – they broadcast our service the following Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Our Director of Music, Paul Harding, along with Colleen Harding and members of our choir hold monthly hymn sings at Fox Run by the River. The residents look forward to these events and always have favourite hymns to request.



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## **Visioning and Change the Key to Survival**

By Chuck Galway

I have not been a member of your congregation for very long but, it will be my privilege to be your Chairman of the Official Board for 2025. I will be asking for your patience and your guidance throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you have questions or concerns that you think I should address as chairman.

Grace United is an extremely important part of the fabric of the Town of Gananoque and equally an important part of the United Church of Canada.

As the United Church of Canada must be willing to make changes to how it operates nationally, Grace United must be equally willing to make changes to thrive in the future.

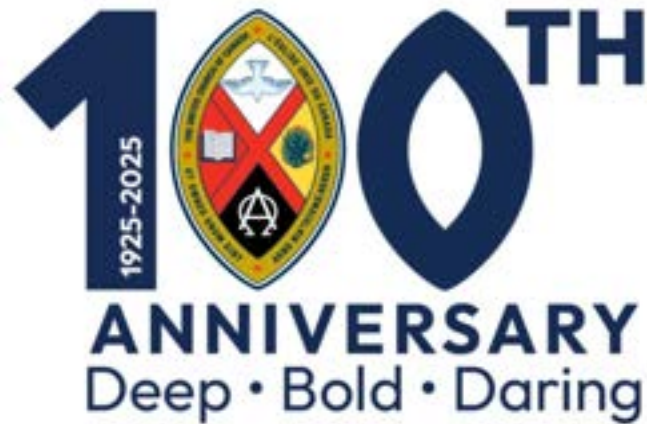
Change can be hard, but it is necessary.

Our amazing, enthusiastic Visioning Committee has been working extremely hard for the congregation. In recent months, we have had meetings with both Lansdowne and Seeley's Bay Pastoral Charges concerning potentially establishing a Clustering arrangement with either one or both of these Congregations.

These are ongoing discussions, and I am confident that we can reach an arrangement that will be beneficial to all.

Grace is blessed to have so many members and volunteers who truly care about the future of not only their own church and community but also the greater church community in this area.

That will be Our Strength Going Forward.



The United Church of Canada is preparing to celebrate its **100th anniversary in 2025**. The Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council is planning a significant worship service to commemorate the centenary on **June 15th, 2025 at 11 am**. It will be held at the **EY Centre in Ottawa**. They hope to have 1000 people from all parts of our region coming to sing, pray and celebrate together. The program will include a mass choir and a joint Communion service.

Grace Church has been invited to join other communities of faith in Ottawa on that day. Our Session is polling our congregation to find out the best way for us to participate. We basically have three options:

1. Cancel the regular service here at Grace that day and hire a bus to take everyone to the service in Ottawa.
2. Cancel the regular service here at Grace that day and organize a carpool using private cars to transport everyone who is interested to the service in Ottawa.
3. The organizers plan to have the service broadcast live. We can plan a “watch party” and join the service in Ottawa remotely from our building here. We can combine the service with our own celebration here.

Please let us know which of these options would suit you best. At the back of the sanctuary there is a clipboard with a sign-up sheet on which you can indicate your preference. Or you can email me at [colleen.g.harding@gmail.com](mailto:colleen.g.harding@gmail.com) and let me know your 1st, 2nd and 3rd preferences. The Session will organize what best suits the majority of the congregation.

Colleen Harding, Chair of Session

## **Report from Session**

By Colleen Harding

The newly appointed Session held its first meeting of the church year on March 19, 2025. Colleen Harding has agreed to take on the role of Chair of Session for this year, and Julie Price will continue in the role of Clerk of Session. As well, we welcomed three new members to our Session, Denise Wood, Jerri Heath and Christina Kaya.



One of the main jobs of Session is to organize and supervise worship services, working with the Worship Planning Team. Holy Week services will begin with Palm Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. We have ordered Palm branches from a local florist for that Sunday.

We will join with other communities of faith in Gananoque to commemorate Good Friday with the annual Walk of the Cross. The Walk will start with prayers at Christ Anglican Church at 10 am on Good Friday. Participants will take turns to carry the cross down King Street, stopping at the Town Hall and ending at one of the churches on Stone Street. All are welcome to accompany the cross through town.



Holy Week will end with the Easter morning service here at Grace United. Rev. Kathy Walton will lead this service and we will celebrate with a brass quintet to lead the hymns. Rev. Walton will also offer a Baptism as part of the Easter service. Session decided that we will present the child with a prayer shawl knit by our Nifty Knitters and a Children's Bible. Colleen will arrange purchase of the Bible.

Plans were discussed for the Christian Family Sunday and Mothers' Day on May 11<sup>th</sup>. The UCW will be presenting the Service that morning and we will continue the tradition of presenting carnations to the ladies of the congregation. Our next Communion service will be on May 25, under the leadership of Rev. Erin Burns.





Our Caring and Sharing Team continues to provide pastoral care to our community under the leadership of Joan Shaw. Members of the team provide visitation to individuals. Please notify the team if you know of a member of our church family who would appreciate a visit. Members of the team also go with Tammy Fergusson and Paul Harding when they go to Carveth Care Centre or Fox Run for monthly hymn sings and join the UCW at Edna's Cafe. Joan also sends out bereavement and get-well cards on behalf of the congregation. The Caring and Sharing Team can always use new members. If this is a way you think you could serve our community of faith, please speak to Joan Shaw or contact Laurie in the church office. I know you will be welcomed!

The Session would like to point out that there are also numerous opportunities for you to support our community of faith by sponsoring ongoing and special event expenses. You could dedicate a bulletin in memory of a loved one, you could contribute to the cost of musicians on special occasions such as the brass quintet on Easter Sunday or offer to pay for exceptional purchases such as the palm branches for Palm Sunday or the bible gift for baptism. You could even offer to pay for the coffee and cookies for coffee time or purchase the elements for communion. These are all expenses that would ordinarily have to come out of the church budget but are sometimes quietly covered by members of our church family. Every little bit helps to make ends meet here at Grace United Church. Donations would be handled by the church office and are eligible for income tax receipts.

Submitted by  
Colleen Harding, Chair of Session




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### **Pulpit Supply Report**

We have arranged pulpit supply until June.

#### **April**

- 6 Paul Whitely
- 13 Tammy Fergusson (Palm Sunday)
- 18 Walk of the Cross (Good Friday)
- 20 Rev. Kathy Walton (Easter Sunday, Baptism)
- 27 Tammy Fergusson (Holy Humour Sunday)

#### **May**

- 4 Tammy Fergusson
- 11 UCW Anniversary Service
- 18 Tammy Fergusson
- 25 Erin Burns (Communion)

#### **June**

- 1 Tammy Fergusson. (Pride Sunday – Request from Gananoque Pride Alliance)
- 8 TBA
- 15. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service in Ottawa

## Pies for God's Sake – Pie Sales

Pies for God's Sake

My wonderful volunteers keep making our delicious pies the first and 3rd Tuesday of each month. Our freezers are full and we are getting ready for Easter. We had to raise our pies to \$18 for fruit pies and mincemeat and Raspberry pies remain at \$20. As we all are experiencing increase costs at the grocery stores we too saw the prices for our pie ingredients rise! I cannot tell you how many pies we made last year, however, I can tell you that we usually make around 45 pies each Pie Bee and if you multiply that by possibly 30 pie bees a year, that's over 1300 pies. A lot of pies indeed. It is not just a fundraiser, we have a wonderful sense of community when we get together with lots of chatter, laughter, and we even get coffee breaks

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Davidson,

Former pie crimper,

Holy Roller and now Co-ordinator of this wonderful committee 😊

Grace United Church  
**Easter  
PIE SALE**

Apple      Blueberry      Bumbleberry  
Cherry      Peach      Strawberry  
Strawberry/Rhubarb      Rhubarb

Cost \$18 each  
Raspberry \$20 each  
Limited Quantities of Mincemeat \$20

Give Carol a call at 613-382-4376 to place your order. Pick up date is April 10, 2025, from 3 to 5pm

Note, with the increase in the cost of supplies we have had to raise the price of our pies.

## **Shrove Tuesday Supper, Enjoyed by Many**

The Annual Pancake Supper was a great success and enjoyed by many in the community. Thank you to Brian Brooks, and team for organizing this wonderful tradition. Proceeds for the evening were just over \$1,200.00.





# Upcoming Concerts at Grace United Church

By Paul Harding

All concerts are at 7:30 p.m. Ticket prices vary, so watch the Grace United Church Facebook page for up-to-date details. Tickets are available at Grace United Church, Beggars Banquet Books and the Gananoque Visitors Centre. Online purchase is available through the link on the church's Facebook page.

**Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Back Home Again** – a tribute to the music of John Denver and Jimmy Buffet. This is an encore performance of Cliff Edwards' Cabaret show at the Firehall Theatre. Featuring the talents of Cliff Edwards, Jeff Callery, Scott Burns, Ken Hall and Zak Colbert.

## Back Home Again



**The Music of Jimmy Buffet & John Denver  
Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm**



**CLIFF EDWARDS, and JEFF CALLERY with Ken Hall, Zak Colbert and Scott Burns come together to perform some of the greatest hits from these two superstars. Hits such as, "Leaving on a Jet Plane", "Country Roads", "Annie's Song", "Come Monday", "Margaritaville" and "Manana" to name a few.**

**Tickets are \$25 each**  
Available (cash only) at Grace United Church, Beggars Banquet Books and the Gananoque Visitors Centre.  
Online purchases can be made through the link on Grace United Church Facebook Event page.

## Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>

**Celtic Kitchen Party**, with Andrew Vanhorn on guitar and vocal , Brian Flynn fiddle and vocal and Colin Skinner on whistle and pipes.



Brian Flynn

Andrew Vanhorn

Colin Skinner

Conjure up that down-home feeling!

Boasting a diversity of talent, The Celtic Kitchen Party plays a mix of their own Celtic-infused originals, as well as traditional and contemporary east coast, Irish and Scottish music, with just the right dash of pop and classic rock.

The name conjures up that down home feeling where all your relatives and neighbors drop by for a traditional kitchen party. This ensemble group brings a lively high energy performance to any venue for a night you and your guests are sure to remember.

All of the lads' energy and experience has culminated in a three-album collection available in CD and digital through the band, and on all major platforms. These albums continue to be seated somewhere between original upbeat party tunes and beautiful storytelling to creative re-imaginings of traditional favourites.

## Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup>

**Hoozhere?** Blended vocals and beautiful harmonies with keyboards, guitars, percussion, electric and double bass, and saxophone. This versatile group of multi-instrumentalists are ages 15-19. Each musician demonstrates ability on a variety of instruments, playing as many as four, as they seamlessly moved around the stage from station to station.





They have immense fun with the music, presented with professional demeanour, but it was all business when it came to sharing the work of loading in and out and caring for each other on stage. Kudos to mentors Jack Flannagan and Crystal Lehtimaki, who are obviously held in high regard by their musicians. We are delighted to have them at Grace United Church for a return engagement.

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# Edna's Café Returns

By Denise Wood

The UCW hosted an Edna's Cafe in March !

Edna's Cafe is a fun afternoon of music and singing along to the old tunes we have all sung for years.

The Cafe is open to everyone and especially to folks dealing with memory loss and their caregivers.

In March several residents from Carveth Care attended as well as members of our Grace Church choir.

We are blessed to have Paul Harding accompany us on the piano.

The afternoon was a great success and all who attended enjoyed the fellowship and of course the treats and a cup of tea.

The next Edna's Cafe will be on May 14 at 1:30 p.m to 3:30 p.m.

Looking forward to seeing you there!



**Edna's Musical Cafe**

**A Sing-along and Afternoon Tea**

For everyone!  
A special welcome to persons living with dementia, and their caregivers.

**May 14, 2025**  
1:30 to 3:30pm

Music has the power to unlock memories by reaching parts of the brain in ways other forms of communication cannot.

Singing together in a social atmosphere is fun!  
Please come and enjoy old familiar tunes.

**No experience necessary.**  
**It's for everyone.**

**Free Admission**  
Grace United Church, 120 Pine St.  
(Corner of Stone and Pine Streets)  
Gananoque  
For more information, call 613-382-2161



Presented by Grace United Church Women (UCW)



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## Thank you for your continued support

By Vicki Leakey, Treasurer

We begin our year in 2025 with a reduction in expenses of \$19,106 and with an increase in operating revenue being offerings, fundraising and rentals of \$1,717 compared to the first 3 months in 2024. Therefore, we reduced the transfer from Trustee funds by ~ \$30,000 as of March, 2025. Even with service cancelled due to weather our revenues in the first 3 months held strong considering offerings, rentals and fundraising. We continue to monitor expenses to ensure that we focus on the costs required to keep our building maintained and that the appropriate supports are in place to allow us to continue with Sunday services and programs provided to the community.

Many church members are working hard to find options that allow us to continue with our worship services and be together as a church family on Sunday. All the time and funds that are donated weekly are much appreciated; together we will find new solutions that enable us to stay strong in the community.

We have several Offerings' options available for those that may not attend the Sunday Service but wish to support the many programs Grace United Church continues to work with. Families can sign up for Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) forms which can be sent to you from our church office or **E-transfer** from your on-line bank account is popular, you can look for "send an e-transfer" on your on line banking website and send to [grace.gan@outlook.com](mailto:grace.gan@outlook.com). Just follow the instructions given. **Offerings by mail** is another option – send by mail to Grace Church at 120 Pine St. Gananoque, On K7G 1C7.

Thank you to all that provide the strength and direction to help us follow our mission of working hard to help those in need. Grace United Church has a wonderful community reputation where we can be approached by community groups, for space for their programs, financial assistance etc. Hopefully many of you will find Spring a season of promise and new beginnings.

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## Giving back a big part of Generosity Matters

By Colleen Harding

In the United Church we believe that it is important that we turn our compassion into action. In 2024, here at Grace Church we donated \$13,496 to the Mission and Service Fund through our weekly offerings. For a congregation our size that is remarkable and your generosity truly matters. But that is not all we do. During Advent we turned our attention to some of the needs here in our own community and once again your generosity was amazing.

Every Sunday during Advent we filled our Red Wagon full to overflowing with food, treats and personal products for the Food Bank. Our special White gift offering raised \$930 to help support the Community Kitchen Program that uses our kitchen downstairs to help parents learn new ways to make nutritious, economical meals for their families.



On the Sunday following Christmas we had a baby shower for baby Jesus and invited you to fill the manger with things that a new mother would welcome for her baby. We took everything to our local Health Unit. They offer a Healthy Baby Healthy Children program of home visits for young mothers who need support to care for and feed their young ones. They delivered the shower gifts to the families in the area that need them the most.



You were invited to put a named decoration on our Memory tree and make a donation in memory of a loved one that could not be with you at Christmas time. The \$365 you

donated in this way will be used to further the work of our church here in our community.

From our Benevolent fund and the Special Grace Missions, we also donated \$500 cash to the Food Bank, \$250 to Toy Drive to help make sure there were toys under the tree for every child in Gananoque , \$250 to the Clothes for Kids to provide new, warm snowsuits, and \$250 to the Breakfast Club at Linklater School to help provide nutritious breakfasts. As well, the UCW made \$100 donations to the FoodBank, the Salvation Army and the Clothes for Kids campaign.

Your generosity does truly matter and we thank you for helping us put our compassion into action throughout the year but especially here in our community during Advent and Christmas.

*Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."* - **Luke 21:1-4** ESV

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## **Cogeco Installs First Three Antennae**

By Brian Brooks

As in the past the Maintenance Team of Brian Brooks, Chuck Galway, Ray Shea, Derryl Wood and Angus Fergusson were kept busy with the general upkeep of the Church facilities.

Monthly meetings continue the first Thursday of each month. During this time, we check each fire extinguisher to ensure it remains charged. Additionally, the emergency lighting is checked to confirm each light is in good order. We also set off the fire alarm after notifying the Town and the alarm company. The heart defibrillator is confirmed to be in good order. Any minor repairs such as light bulb changes, battery replacements etc. are undertaken at that time.

The kitchen dishwasher has been flooding of late. A technician was called in and the problem identified. The pump which draws the wash and rinse fluids from buckets under the sink was drawing water from the dishwasher into the buckets. This caused the buckets to overflow onto the kitchen floor. A new pump has been ordered. Once received it will be installed and solve the problem. In the meantime, a dish has been placed under the sink to catch any spillage.

COGECO has installed the first three of the antennas on the Church steeple. No time frame was given for the installation of the final three. The grass in front of the Church was damaged by the crane truck. COGECO has been advised accordingly and has committed to having the lawn repaired as soon as the weather permits.

The pancake supper on March 4<sup>th</sup> was a great success. The net profit to the Church was over \$1200. The Team greatly appreciates all the help we received. It would not have been possible without "a little help from our friends." We hope to carry on with this annual tradition.

The bench on the Pine Street side of the Church needs a new seat. The wood and paint have been purchased. We are just waiting for better weather so we can finish the task.



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**Celebrations for April, May, June** – Happy Birthday or Anniversary to all those who celebrating over the next few months.

**Happy Birthday** to Graham A., Jack H., Paul H., Dorothy M., David T., Betty Y., John C., Mackensie A., Maryfil H., Nicloe M., Max W., Angus F., Gloria P., Diane H., Betty M., Christina K., Shriley C., Alyn M., Tammy f., Mel W., Tom C., Doreen W., Nancy A., Eileen T., Laurie C., and Ann C.,

**Happy Anniversary** To Jim & Dianne W., Paul & Carolyn S., Brian & Cecile B., Steve & Connie T., Paul & Colleen H., Gerard & Laurie C., Bud & Betty W., Tammy & Angus F., and Brian & Susan T.

***Congratulations Everyone!!***







# Grace United Church

120 Pine St., Gananoque, ON

invites you to journey through

Holy Week and Easter Services



*Come Worship With Us!*

**Sunday April 13, 2025 – Palm Sunday –  
10:30A.M.**

(Marks the beginning of Holy Week)

**Good Friday Walk of the Cross  
April 18, 2025 – 10:00 A.M.**

(Starting at Christ Church, 30 Church St., Gananoque proceeding through town, stopping at Town Hall and ending at one of the Churches on Stone St.)

**All are welcome.**

**Easter Sunday, April 20, 2025 – 10:30A.M.**

**Worship with Rev Kathy Walton**

Special Music – Brass Quintet & Baptism

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

Contributors this month are:

Vicki Leakey, Chuck Galway, Colleen Harding, Paul Harding, Eliane Davidson, Brian Brooks, Denise Wood, Laurie Cadue, Paul Scott.

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**Deadline for the Spring Edition of Grace's Chatter**  
**June.13, 2025**

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**Session: Chair: Colleen Harding** 613-382-2405 [colleen.g.harding@gmail.com](mailto:colleen.g.harding@gmail.com)

**Board of Stewards: Chair: Vicki Leakey** 613-382-4012 [vickileakey@gmail.com](mailto:vickileakey@gmail.com)

**Official Board: Chair: Chuck Galway** 613-387-2026 [lyndwayhills@gmail.com](mailto:lyndwayhills@gmail.com)

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