

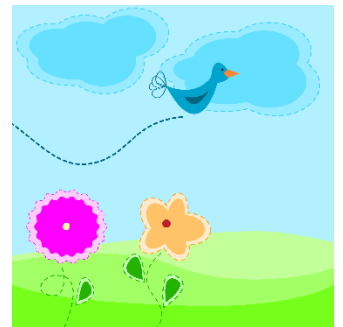
“THE SPIRIT”

North Kildonan United Church

March 2026

See, the winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing is come. ~Song of Solomon 2: 11-12

Looking forward/looking back. In this, our first newsletter of 2026, we celebrate a time of transition...from the frosty bite of the winter air to the first blooms of spring. At the same time, it provides us with the opportunity to reflect on all our activities and accomplishments here at NKUC over the past couple of months and to look forward with anticipation to the many exciting “happenings” that we have to look forward to within our vibrant faith community.



LOOKING BACK: Worship Services



Advent Services

Throughout Advent, the worship services leading up to our ultimate Christmas celebration considered a theme of “All the Earth Is Waiting”, as each service incorporated some degree of focus on anticipation. At the same time, each service encouraged us to reflect on one of the foundations of Advent...Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. The lighting of the appropriate Advent candle by

one of our families, along with appropriate readings, was integral to this. Thanks are due to all who decorated the Sanctuary and Christmas trees as we embarked on celebrating the Christmas season. Special thanks to Heinz for lugging all the Christmas paraphernalia down from the loft and locating any missing items.



Blue Christmas

We were pleased to welcome a strong contingent of our NKUC community and friends on December 10 for our annual Blue Christmas service. This service is intended not only to recognize that this is a time of year in which the loss of loved ones can be acutely felt, but also to recognize that we often need a time of re-focusing amidst the bustle of the Christmas season, as we find meaning in the celebration of Christ’s birth. Rev. Susan led us through this most meaningful service which helped us connect with those feelings of loss and turmoil, and also offered us hope, symbolized by the new beginning of Christ’s birth. All were given the opportunity to light candles to remember those we have lost or loved ones who are hurting. Following the service, we

appreciated the support of one another as we shared refreshments and memories.

Sunday School, Youth and Congregation Christmas Pageant



Choosing a Christmas pageant is always tough. This year was even more difficult since we have had only a few families attending church regularly. Nonetheless, when Wilma Fehr, as Producer and Director, made the decision to use **"The Amazing Story of Christmas"** as the script for the play, it was hoped that members of the congregation would be willing to be involved. And like every other time when our faith community is asked to help, the response was mostly resounding yeses! The script allowed the children & youth to be the narrators and members of the congregation to act out

the play. Everyone got into character and it was amazing to see! Thanks to all those who contributed in so many ways: Justin, Kat & Annie (baby Jesus) who kept everyone entertained; Grant, Sean, Sheila and Ron who drew on their rural experience in the depiction of the animals: our celestial angels, Karen & Valorie; our beautiful shepherds who left their fields to participate – Gay, Kelly and Barb: the star and the wisest magi – Kasey, Frank, Marie and Richard. And special thanks to the narrators: Sven, Taylor, Isla, Lilly, & Logan. Thank you also to Joanne for the accompaniment for all the carols sung during the play. It was a wonderful morning, remembering and re-enacting the first Christmas.



Christmas Eve Service

A strong contingent of NKUC members, their families and relative newcomers to our services turned out on Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of our saviour, Jesus, two millennia ago. As always, the familiar story of Jesus' most unusual birth in a manger was told, and a number of our favourite carols were sung with an attitude of true rejoicing. Of course, a highlight was the singing of Silent Night, as the candles each person held were lit in the darkened Sanctuary. This year the Christmas Eve service emphasized the theme of inclusion, as a key aspect of the Christmas message, noting the presence of a rooster among the worshippers found in the Creche. Rev. Susan paid tribute to said rooster in her thoughtful and timely reflection. A perfect way to remind us of why the celebration of Jesus birth remains important to us today.

Post Christmas Worship Service

Gay Todd and Marie Leskovjan, members of the NKUC Worship Committee, led the worship service on the first Sunday after Christmas, while Rev. Susan had an opportunity to re-energize following the rigors of the Christmas season worship activities. Instead of following the more typical format for our



services, this time the celebration of the Christmas season continued with much of the service devoted to singing a number of our favourite Christmas carols. Each one was introduced with some background about who the writer of the carol was, when it was written and the reason for the creation of that particular carol. We are indebted to Gay and Marie for blessing us with such a joyful and informative worship service.

Sunny Sunday

Our Sunny Sunday destination for this year was Egypt; certainly a much needed break from the outside temperature here of -35C, as we soaked up the intense rays of the sun as we strolled through the desert sand and lounged by the banks of the Nile in this land imbued with so much history.

We let our imaginations run wild as we donned our most comfortable warm-weather garb while we travelled (virtually) to the land of pharaohs, pyramids and exotic markets.



To help us absorb the mood of our destination, we were treated to a slide show of scenes from modern Egypt. That was followed by a mini-drama, entitled "Let My People Go", that took us back to the time of the Israelites enslaved in ancient Egypt. In it, God appears to the Israelite leader, Moises Alou, and commands him to negotiate with the Pharaoh for the freedom of the Israelite slaves. With the aid of such plagues as mosquitoes, social media and Golden Arches he ultimately ensures their freedom.

Thanks to all those (actors, costume makers, props-providers, technicians and more) who contributed to this unique take on the Biblical story. Throughout the service the important theme of freedom was emphasized through prayer, Scripture reading, reflection and music.

Since spending all this time under the hot desert sun stoked up our appetites, Dorothy and the Hospitality Team came to our rescue by serving up a delicious meal of traditional Egyptian delicacies. The menu included lentil soup, koshari (Egypt's national dish) and a dessert of chestnut cake and ice-cream. Thank you, ladies, for all your work in conjuring up such a special banquet for us.



Ash Wednesday Service



Despite the threats of a severe winter storm, a hardy contingent of NKUC members, along with a couple of first-timers gathered for our annual Ash Wednesday service. As Rev. Susan noted in her Reflection, Lent has often been viewed as a period of self-deprivation and sacrifice, but we were encouraged by her emphasis on Lent as a time of renewal...an opportunity to identify and cast aside old habits, which stand in the way of strengthening our relationship with God. As always, on Ash Wednesday, that sense of renewal was symbolized by each person present being marked with ashes in the form

of a cross. A truly meaningful experience as we embark on the season of Lent. While early traditions emphasize Lent as a period of prayer, alms-giving and fasting, the fasting aspect took a back seat, as those present gathered for refreshments provided by the Hospitality Committee and socialization following the service.

LOOKING BACK - CARING

Christmas Cheer Donations



Once again, this year the youth group engaged us in living out the Christmas message by planning and organizing our Christmas hamper donations for struggling families in our city. This year we agreed to up our support by providing hampers for three families, rather than the two we helped out the last few years. Not surprisingly, our faith community pulled through with overflowing donations to the hampers so that the requirements for the three families we were serving were met...and then some. Then on December 21, after the worship service, the youth pulled all the donations together into hampers for our three families and delivered them to those families, who were truly overwhelmed and grateful. Our sincere thanks to Grant McMillan who handled all the logistics of registering our interest in providing hampers, creating sign up lists, purchasing gifts, as needed, and organizing the delivery of the hampers. Thank you, Grant, and all the youth. We are grateful for you caring for our community in this way.

Mitten Tree

Instead of lights and glass ornaments, one of our Christmas trees in the narthex was festooned with hats, mitts, socks and scarves, thanks to the generosity of our faith community. The Outreach and Prayer Shawl Committees would like to thank everyone who donated to our Mitten Tree this past Christmas season. Amazingly, we collected three huge bags of these items and they have been donated to families in need of warm clothing in twenty-six indigenous communities throughout Manitoba, with their distribution arranged by the Southeast Resource Development Council. A card of thanks received and posted on our bulletin board emphasized how much appreciated these items were, especially during the January cold spell in our province.



Memory Tree



References to angels are found all around us during the Christmas season...stories of angels singing to celebrate Jesus' birth, Christmas carols featuring angels, even a beloved holiday movie in which an angel plays a key (albeit unusual) role. NKUC is no different, as we engaged in our Christmas tradition of placing glass angels with a card of remembrance on our Memory Tree in the narthex. In this way we remembered those who have been taken from us and whose lives we honour with the placement of these angels. This gives us confidence that those loved ones have found new life among God's angels.

Pancake Brunch

In order to get a jump on Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Tuesday), the youth of NKUC treated us older folks to a wonderful late morning meal of pancakes and sausages to fend off the hunger-inducing effects of the bitter temperatures outside. The food was great and the service was impeccable and friendly, contributing to a wonderful hour of socialization on a full stomach for everyone who attended. Deepest thanks to our youth and their leaders for their enthusiasm and culinary skills, making this such a fun event for all of us. We are certainly privileged to have the contributions of these young people who mean so much to our faith community.



Youth Sledding Outing



Not to be outdone by the athletes competing in the luge and skeleton events at the Olympics in Cortina, the youth of NKUC and friends gathered at Bunn's Creek Park on February 20 to display their own Olympic-caliber expertise on the toboggan run at the park. It was rewarding to see such a great turnout, enthusiastically supported by Grant McMillan who demonstrated his own feats of tobogganing daring-do to inspire the younger folks. The evening culminated with a much-deserved spread of dainties and other treats, prepared by the Hospitality Committee, to reward these young athletes for their efforts. Special thanks to Grant for organizing (and courageously participating in) this event, which emphasizes to the youth how much they are appreciated by our faith community.

LOOKING BACK – STEWARDSHIP

Fundraising Events



While the Christmas season is rightfully associated with seasonal decorations, carol-singing and other such festivities, it is also a time when we engage in a couple of much-anticipated fundraising events...our Morden's chocolates and our FundScrip fundraisers. These initiatives gave us an opportunity to complete our Christmas shopping with a delicious selection of boxes of the finest chocolates and nuts available and a wide-ranging selection of gift cards to meet the needs of even the most discriminating gift-recipient. Thanks to Barrie and Marvelle McPherson for co-ordinating the Morden's chocolates and Peggy Latimer for co-ordinating the FundScrip initiatives. Thanks also to those who assisted with both of these projects...and especially to all of those who purchased and sold items in support of these. Both were remarkably successful with profits from the Morden's chocolates amounting to \$1827.64 and the FundScrip amounting to \$826.50.

Improved Technology

Of course, you are familiar with that old adage "Don't mess with success". While our worship services would certainly fit the definition of success, the Building and Maintenance Sub-Committee of the Committee of Stewards determined that a few technological upgrades to our Sanctuary could provide us with a "Success Plus" worship experience. As such, thanks to Heinz, our technology whiz, and drawing on our Memorial Fund we recently acquired new speakers so that all aspects of our services could be heard more clearly, a monitor for the back wall of the Sanctuary so that Rev. Susan and the Choir can see where we're at in the service without shuffling through papers



and a new lapel microphone to enhance the Conversation Time segment of our worship services. All definitely contribute to a Success Plus rating for our worship experience.

Hospitality Contributions to Worship



At NKUC we love to eat and we love to socialize. We regularly enjoy both aspects of our experience as members of this faith community thanks to the efforts of our hardworking Hospitality Committee. Come snow, sleet or tsunamis, they are there each Sunday to receive the "goodies" prepared by the generous baking volunteers of our faith community, to set everything out and to prepare the all-important coffee as a way to encourage us all to socialize for a few minutes after worship services. Of course, after the rest of us have disbursed, they stay behind to clean up afterwards. What we would do without these folks!

LOOKING AHEAD

Annual General Meeting

NKUC will be conducting our Annual Meeting on March 1st. As usual we will start our worship service at 10:00 AM but the service will be reduced to approximately 20 minutes, a short coffee break will take place followed by the Annual Meeting. Upon conclusion of the meeting, we will close with prayer and our choral benediction. The Annual Meeting gives the congregation the opportunity to nominate and vote in new committee members, as well as an opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges of the past year. The Annual Report is available to all and we hope you will review the individual reports in advance and come with questions and suggestions. We look forward to seeing you then.



Curling with Atlantic Garden City U.C.

On Saturday evening, March 14 a contingent of curling aficionados from NKUC will travel to the West St. Paul Curling Club to do battle against our friends from Atlantic Garden City United Church in an exhibition of curling expertise that would put our Canadian curlers in the recent Olympic Games to shame. A great response to our call for curlers, as we have almost four full teams lined up to represent NKUC. You can believe the hosts from Atlantic Garden City will be gunning for us, as teams from NKUC are the perennial title holders. Grudge match anyone! Others wishing to take part, just contact Clayton Gording who can likely find a slot for you. Of course, non-curling supporters are most welcome to join us. Start time at 6 p.m. with a \$7 charge to cover the cost of the post-curling lunch. We will have the trophy shined up in anticipation of another stellar performance by NKUC teams again this year.





Irish Stew

On March 15 we, at NKUC, will honour those of Irish heritage, or those wishing they had Irish heritage or those relieved that they have no Irish heritage with our annual Irish stew luncheon, organized and hosted by the Men's Group. In deference to the occasion, greenery will be very much in evidence, and so all are encouraged to come dressed in their favourite green finery. After our worship service, which may contain references to Irish spiritual leaders, all are invited to gather downstairs for a delicious lunch of stew, coleslaw, buns and a green dessert (courtesy of the Hospitality Committee). No doubt this is the typical lunch enjoyed by residents of the Emerald Isle. Who knows, you may even find a leprechaun or two hiding out under your table.

Yard Sale

2026 is a Garage Sale year, so we wish to update you on this important fundraising event. The preparation and sale will take place the week of April 20th through to April 24th, with the actual sale times being from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Thursday, April 23rd, 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM on Friday, April 24th and Saturday, April 25th from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. We are asking that you consider donating items that you no longer need or use to this important event.



Items we cannot accept: large entertainment units, bookcases, tube type TV's, mattresses and badly worn furniture.

Items we can accept: Almost anything else, such as housewares, electronics, appliances, tools, hardware, clothes, jewelry, pictures, books, sporting goods, furniture, gardening equipment, etc.

We will also be looking for a lot of volunteer support for the event, so please consider signing up if you are able.

Annual Bedding Plant Sale



With spring rapidly approaching, preparations for our annual bedding plant sale are well under way. For almost twenty-five years, NKUC has supplied its members and friends with beautiful plants for their spring planting, and the tradition continues in 2026. In addition to this being a significant fundraising event for the church, it also provides an easy, stress-free way to obtain you bedding plants for spring planting. Order forms for this year's sale will be available on March 1st, with the final date to place your order being Sunday, April 5th. Your plants will be

available for pickup on Thursday, May 14th. We strongly urge you to support this fundraiser and we encourage you to invite your friends and relatives to order their plants from us as well.

Upcoming Events

International Women's Day: will be recognized at the March 8 Worship Service. Outreach Committee have invited a guest speaker, Marlene Britton, who is currently head of the World Diaconal Federation and has a wealth of international experience.

During the upcoming Easter season an engaging slate of special services are planned as we remember the passion and resurrection of our Lord, Christ Jesus. ***Palm Sunday service*** will be held at 10 a.m. on March 29; ***Good Friday service*** will be held at 10 a.m. on Friday April 3; ***Easter Sunday's service*** with the celebration of communion will take place at 10 a.m. on April 5, with an early morning brunch of fruit and hot cross buns available before the service.

Two other special services will be held during April: ***Holy Humour Sunday*** on April 12 and our ***Earth Day celebration***, led by the Outreach Committee on April 19.



NEWS FROM THE PEWS

Get Well Wishes to Kelly Nord, Lindsay Enns, Jen Babcock, Shirley Davie, Betty Clark, Betty Hamilton, Phyllis Deroche, Barb Welton, Heather Boroski, Shirley Codd's grandson Benjamin, Donna Price, Megan (Phyllis Dyck's daughter-in-law) Lyle Atkins (Grace's husband).

We extend our sympathies to the Miller Family on the passing of Sheron's husband Arnold. Please keep Sheron, Cindy, Richard and their families in your prayers.

Our sympathies are also extended to: Barrett family on the passing of Carol's first cousin Cory; Aldo and Jesse Santin and their families on the passing of Aldo's mother, Elisa Santin. We are saddened, as well, to hear of the passing of Embree McDermid, a long-time member of NKUC and a proud member of the Geritol Grannies. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Please keep the following in your prayers, Betty Clark, Betty Hamilton, Lindsay Enns, Jen Babock, the Goetz Family, Benjamin (Shirley's grandson) Kelly (Betty Nazarewich's son-in-law).

A special thank you received from Nora-Rae's grandma Sheron Wiebe. Grandma says Nora-Rae was discharged December 22nd, and is now at home, doing well, and weighs 9 pounds as of February 7th. Thank-you for your many prayers and support.

Finally, a sincere thanks to all who contributed to this mid-winter edition of the Spirit Newsletter, specifically Marvelle McPherson, Sheila Fortier, Wilma Fehr, Peggy Latimer and Clayton Gording, as well as those who provided photos...Liz Gauthier, Marie Leskovjan, Heinz Goetz and Peggy Latimer. A particular thanks to our Office Manager, Wilma, for her assistance in organizing, formatting and distributing this newsletter.

As we begin this season of Lent, let us be mindful of the supreme sacrifice Jesus Christ, our Saviour, made for us. Similarly, in his name, let us respond prayerfully and generously to those all around us experiencing discouragement and pain.



"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25: 35-36