

Merry Christmas!

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**TORONTO
UNITED
CHURCH
COUNCIL**

Merry Christmas from the Toronto United Church Council!

*The Toronto United Church
Council works with the church
community to connect
resources with ministry.*

*Offering access to
professional advice, financial
support and leadership
development, Council helps
our church address the social*

Thank you for your interest in the work of The Toronto United Church Council in 2016. It has been a fruitful year and we appreciate the efforts of the volunteer board and committee members, program participants, and partner organizations that do so much to make United Church

and spiritual challenges of the
day.

Contact us:

Toronto United Church
Council
24-30 Wertheim Court
Richmond Hill, ON
L4B 1B9
Tel: 905-771-5124
Toll Free: 1-800-235-8822
Fax: 905-771-5159
Email: mail@tucc.ca

www.tucc.ca

congregations and mission units in south central Ontario active and relevant.

As new directions emerge that will define our church in decades to come, Council has found itself at the heart of longstanding ministries and also offering leadership to some of the initiatives shaping our church for the future. A few examples are shared in the highlights below.

In the midst of this challenging world, we celebrate what God is doing through you - our partners in ministry - and give thanks for the privilege we have of connecting resources with those ministries God is enabling through you.

We wish you peace, joy and every Christmas blessing.

Here are some Highlights of our work in 2016:

With the active support of Council's Centre for Church Development and Leadership, the **Living Presence Ministry** in East Gwillimbury is strengthening existing congregations and establishing a new form of 'pioneer' ministry in a rapidly expanding community. Read more in

the latest [Living Presence Ministry Newsletter](#).

In the **east end of Toronto** a number of congregations have been actively exploring the possibility of a shared future mission. Four of the original six congregations have now voted to move into a transitional phase toward regionalization, sharing staff and resources.

Both of these projects illustrate some of the many ways in which Council has developed strong partnerships with presbyteries, congregations and social ministries over the past year, as well as serving ecumenical partners across Canada. During the year Council staff have worked on major processes with three Toronto Conference Presbyteries, worked on processes with eighteen congregations, and provided consultancy support to three Anglican dioceses, the national Anglican General Synod, as well as a led a visioning process for the Mission to Seafarers.

Council has also helped congregations honour their youth and young adult members. Seven younger church members received Council's [Baillie Award](#) for the excellence of their volunteer work at church, school, and within their home communities, bringing to 26

the total number of recipients (from 20 congregations) since the program was initiated in 2014. In the photo below, Logan Carmichael of St. Andrew's United (Markham) receives her award earlier this year.



Nearly \$150,000 has been received and distributed to the five camps with which Council works through the [Camping Opportunities Fund](#).

The **David and Anne Patterson/Toronto Conference Camping Fund** received another contribution, bringing that fund's balance to more than \$1 million. The fund will contribute to camping programs in perpetuity. Read more in the 2015 edition of Council's [Partners](#) newsletter.

Council plays the role of landlord to four children's camps. In October, Council hosted the camps for an interchange session focused on the innovations that are helping our

programs adapt in a quickly changing environment. At that meeting we wished the retiring director of Sparrow Lake Camp, **Rob Crew** goodbye (see photo below). Rob has been a regular fixture at Sparrow Lake all his life.



The Muskoka Housing Fund is a donor advised fund, established through a series of gifts over ten years totalling \$1.7 million. This year the fund made a grant to the District of Muskoka to establish its own program, [Gateway Muskoka](#), which helps low income, first time homebuyers.

Council's board of directors is undertaking a review of its historical and future program activity supporting the United Church of Canada's commitment to reconciliation with First Nations. The **2016 Heart and Vision Concert** recognized two Canadian leaders in this effort, **Dr. Marie Wilson** and **Dr. Roberta Jamieson** (see photo below). An article on the concert was published in [Insight](#)

[Magazine](#). Next year's event (May 15, 2017) will pick up the same theme when it recognizes the United Church's first moderator of First Nation's ancestry, **Dr. Stanley McKay** and the Executive Director of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, **Dr. Cindy Blackstock**.



Watch your mailbox or your inbox for the current issue of [Partners newsletter](#), which highlights the work that Council does to enable church families to invest in innovative ministries.

Council says Goodbye to Doug Varey

In September, Council joined with the wider church in mourning the death of the **Reverend Douglas Varey**, who died 27 August. Doug's life was dedicated to healthy camping programs, spectacular community development programs, and to creating healthy congregations, living the

Word. He spent part of his career in Africa and Nepal, always searching. Doug had served Council as a staff member, committee member and board member over the years. In December, Council received a gift as a bequest from Doug's estate in support of its work in congregational development. We thank God for Douglas's life and work.



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Our mailing address is:

Toronto United Church Council
24-30 Wertheim Court
Richmond Hill, Ontario L4B 1B9
Canada

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