



# EOORC News

Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The bi-weekly newsletter of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council

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### Advent and Christmas Message

Every year, I plan how I will make the Advent season a little calmer. I strategize: Any worship services I am leading will be planned *early*! The cookies will be baked and the presents bought *early*! I will meal prep and write the cards and make the phone calls and do all the things...*early*! Everything will be orderly, nothing will be rushed.

Every year, I make these plans. And every year, something comes up. A cold, a flu, or a virus. Snow, or freezing rain, or both. A pandemic. An unexpected opportunity to help welcome a refugee family – if the paperwork is in by December 31<sup>st</sup>. A pregnancy and morning sickness. A baby who won't sleep. An unexpected sense of call. More snow.

Yesterday, I was panicking about all the things left undone on my pre-Christmas to-do list. Today, I am remembering: This happens every year, right about now. Every year, I have this moment of Advent panic. And every year (even if it involves a late night, or too much tea, or dropping a few less-important things from my list), it is all ok. Every year, Christmas still comes. Our work matters – whether it is planning a holiday meal...calling someone who is lonely...choosing the hymns for Christmas Eve...putting on the coffee at church – it does matter. But at the same time, the wonder of God's love incarnate (thankfully!) does not rest on our abilities to check all the boxes by December 25<sup>th</sup>.

As we continue in this season of Advent, may the blessing of God be upon you. May the peace of Jesus Christ surround you. And in this season of waiting and cookies and flus and snow...may the Holy Spirit guide your way.

Rev. Natalie Matkovsky, Editor, EOORC News

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### Update from Éric and Scott Hébert-Daly

Éric's husband Scott is now home after two weeks at the Ottawa Heart Institute. He is scheduled for more appointments in the coming three months to get a better sense of the longer-term prognosis, but he is regaining strength. They are grateful for the prayers and support through the last few weeks.

### Morning Christmas Eve Service

St. Andrew's United Church in Cumberland is planning a Christmas Eve service at 10:10 am on Christmas Eve morning. It is a Lessons and Carols service. You are warmly invited to attend. We are sharing this invitation, knowing that for a variety of reasons (driving in the dark, work schedules, little kid bedtimes, family meals) the usual afternoon and evening services do not work for some folks. Please feel free to share the invitation.

### Course – Mental Health First Aid

Mary Louise Ireland is offering an online course – Mental Health First Aid, Supporting Youth - on Tuesday January 13th and Wednesday January 14th, 11 a.m to 3 p.m. EST. The course will also be offered on March 18<sup>th</sup> from 8:45 am – 4 pm EST. This course is for participants 18+ and is a great opportunity for those who work with youth or have youth in their life. Participants receive certification via the Mental Health Commission of Canada. An official course description can be found [here](#).

Please feel free to share with your contacts and reach out to Mary Louise ([mlcounselling@gmail.com](mailto:mlcounselling@gmail.com)) directly if you would like further information. For those in EOORC, the course is \$165. Through the Scriven's Baillie Fund, 1/3 of the cost of \$165 for the Mental Health First Aid, Supporting Youth course will be covered for participants in EOORC. Please contact Dana Ducette ([DDucette@united-church.ca](mailto:DDucette@united-church.ca)) for more information.

### Holiday Schedules

General Council and Regional Council offices will be closed from Wednesday, December 24, 2025 till Thursday, January 1, 2026. This is the last EOORC News of 2025. Our first edition of the New Year will be here on January 7<sup>th</sup>. If you have anything to share, please send it to Natalie Matkovsky ([NMatkovsky@united-church.ca](mailto:NMatkovsky@united-church.ca)) by Tuesday January 6<sup>th</sup> at noon. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

### Epiphany: The Moderator's New Year's Address

Mark your calendar! On **January 6, 2026, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. ET**, join The Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath, Moderator, for a transformative New Year's address. The theme is Epiphany. Executive Minister Jennifer Henry and the Growth team, including Rev. Cameron Fraser (Director of Growth and Ministry Development), and Emo Yango (Growth Coordinator), will offer insights into Toward 2035 and introduce new Communities of Faith. This event will be as bilingual in French and English as we can make it. Live interpretation to be confirmed. Find more information and register at [CHURCHx](#).

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### Warmth and Food from Salem United Church

Salem United Church in Summerstown was featured in [this article](#) in the *Seaway News*. The article talks about the church's community drop-in program and how the church worked with their local community to collect food for a family in need in South Glengarry as well as to knit or crochet 150 pieces of warm winter clothing (hats, mittens, socks and more) for donation to Centre 105 and Agape Centre. It is a joy to read about this congregation's ministry in the community.

### Bill C-9

We have been advised by the United Church of Canada's Government Relations staff that some clergy have received calls from Pierre Poilievre's office on the federal Bill C-9 and have thought this sharing would be helpful.

"We understand from regional colleagues that local ministers are getting calls about an amendment to the Criminal Code; these calls imply that the amendment will "stop them from preaching the gospel." This description may not be accurate. What the amendment would do is remove a legal defence that allows someone to rely on religious text if they are charged with **willfully** promoting hatred. We are analyzing the possible implications of that change. This particular amendment has been approved at committee level, but not approved by Parliament. Nothing will happen with this bill until Parliament returns to sit after the break.

The United Church of Canada has endorsed [this public statement](#) against the current Bill C-9. In the New Year, we will analyze these new proposals and plan to communicate our position before Parliament returns at the end of January."

Shared on behalf of United Church of Canada's Government Relations staff

### Message from the United Church of Canada Philanthropy Unit

During our Christmas break, the Philanthropy Unit is on call to respond to anyone who would like to make a gift in this tax year, as well as those with questions about 2025 congregational gifts for Mission and Service. Philanthropy Unit staff will be available on December 24, 29, 30, and 31 to answer and return calls.

If you would like to make a year-end gift by phone to the work of the church through Mission and Service, Gifts with Vision, or an emergency appeal, or if you have questions about your 2025 Mission and Service congregational gifts, call us at 1-800-465-3771. If you would like to contact the United Church of Canada Foundation, please call 1-866-340-8223.

Please click to make an online donation for [Mission and Service](#), [Gifts with Vision](#), [Global Emergency Response](#), or [The United Church of Canada Foundation](#). Donations must be made by December 31 to be counted in 2025 for tax purposes.

We wish you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas and New Year.

Glenn Waterman, Annual Giving Lead

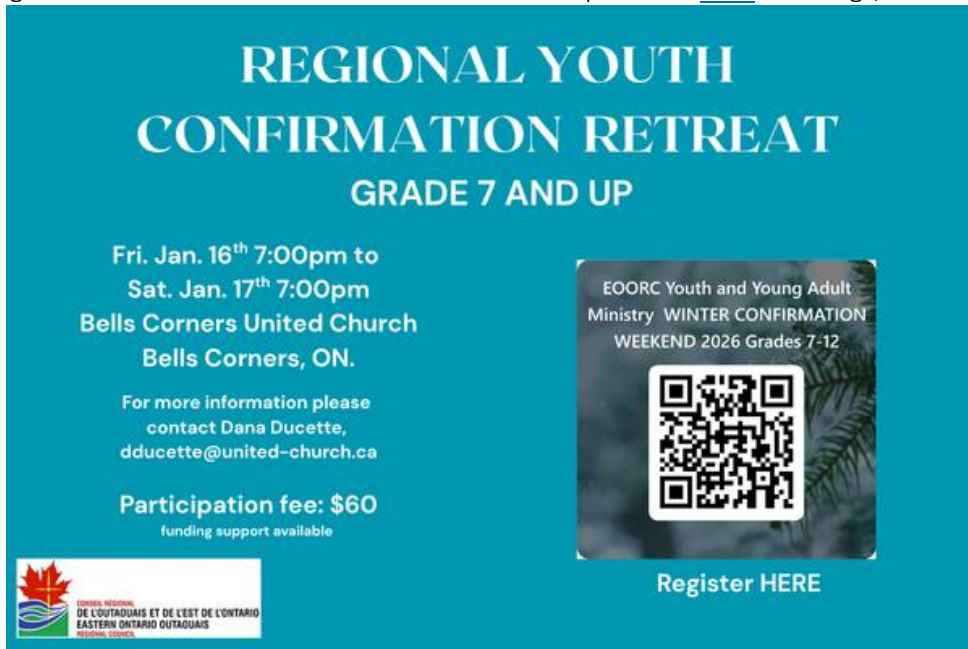
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## Confirmation Retreat

The region is hosting a Confirmation Retreat Friday, Jan. 16 at 7pm to Sat. Jan. 17 at 7pm at Bells Corners United Church. This is an overnight event.

This retreat is for youth beginning the process of confirmation within their own congregations and will boost the continuation of work. This event is not meant to be a complete confirmation program, and participants will need to be connected with a congregation to complete the process. Some of the areas discussed during the Retreat will be UCC history, social action, God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Spiritual Practices and different forms of worship experience.

The registration link is available via the QR code on the poster or [here](#). Blessings, Dana Ducette

A blue poster for the Regional Youth Confirmation Retreat. The title "REGIONAL YOUTH CONFIRMATION RETREAT" is in large white letters, with "GRADE 7 AND UP" below it. The dates and times are "Fri. Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm to Sat. Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm" at "Bells Corners United Church, Bells Corners, ON." Contact information for Dana Ducette is provided. The participation fee is \$60, with funding support available. A QR code is shown with the text "EOORC Youth and Young Adult Ministry WINTER CONFIRMATION WEEKEND 2026 Grades 7-12" above it and "Register HERE" below it. The EOORC logo is in the bottom left corner.

**REGIONAL YOUTH  
CONFIRMATION RETREAT**  
GRADE 7 AND UP


Fri. Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm to  
Sat. Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm  
Bells Corners United Church  
Bells Corners, ON.

For more information please  
contact Dana Ducette,  
dducette@united-church.ca

Participation fee: \$60  
funding support available

EOORC Youth and Young Adult  
Ministry WINTER CONFIRMATION  
WEEKEND 2026 Grades 7-12

Register HERE

 **CONSEIL RÉGIONAL  
DE L'OUTAOUAIS ET DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO  
EASTERN ONTARIO OUTAOUAIS  
REGIONAL COUNCIL**

## News From the Wider United Church

E-ssentials United Church Newsletter: [The December 16<sup>th</sup> edition](#) shares prayers for all Jewish Communities in the wake of the terrorist shooting at a Hanukkah event.

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