

Knox News & Notes



April/May 2026

We All Have A Story!

In February's newsletter I talked about our intention to collect up some stories Knox people tell. We have made a start on that. I have heard that some have the impression that we are only interested in "inspirational" stories: stories of great successes, or great courage or great generosity, and I can see how I may have created that impression.

Really, we are looking for stories that are memorable to you, that you tell over and over again. Your story may lead others to hear God's presence in ways you cannot. There is some reason we recount them, often because they instill in us some strong feeling, of joy or wonder or grief. Psalm 23 recounts how God is there in the valleys of the shadow, and that may come in something as small as 2 words spoken by a stranger, or a nurse.

We are constantly telling stories. I suggest that every day holds some kind of story worth recounting.

I have learned a very structured way to listen to someone's story. I once taught this to a group of leaders in another Presbytery, and the response was: "It was amazing to be able to speak without being interrupted; that hardly ever happens in my life!" A while ago, Session learned this kind of storytelling, and some found it quite moving. Here is how it goes:

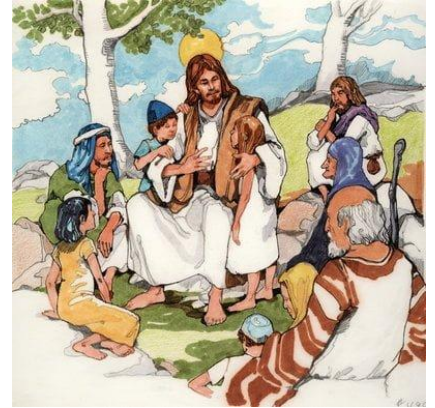
Someone tells a story. As they speak, a listener responds in 3 ways, with some silence in between

1. What word or phrase stood out to you as you listened?silence
2. What seemed most important to the storyteller? silence
[This is such an interesting question; we hardly ever ask this].
3. How might God's Spirit have been speaking/guiding through this story?
[This is the most unusual question; we are not accustomed to asking this question].

Here are some examples of ordinary stories

- Looking through documents in my mom's condo after she died, I discover that my great great grandfather was clerk of Session at Knox at its inception. I told that story in the Feb. 2025 newsletter. A listener might note (about what is important to me): "you feel more connected to Knox" or "you sense a continuity of faith running through generations". A listener might suggest (re how God's spirit is speaking): God is at work generation through generation; reminds us of the communion of saints.
- Super ordinary: You do a bone density test. Doctor's office phones: "Loss of density is a concern." You ask: "But how does it compare with the last one?" Doctor: "Oh, I don't know; when was that?" You: "I don't know; can you look it up?" Doctor needs to take a few minutes to find it: "Let's see....Oh..... very very little change from 3 years ago." You: "That is fantastic! That means that I am doing the right things to keep up my bone density." Doctor: "I guess so....." In other words, you would have not known this crucial piece of information if you had not asked the doctor to take a little time to search it out.
"What seemed most important to the teller?" Joy at health of her body; encouragement.
"How might God be guiding?" Maybe God is saying: "It is good to look after your body, and it is good, like the persistent widow (Luke 18), to ask questions of a person in authority (a doctor); it is good to love oneself!"

Can you imagine how this very ordinary story might be told around a supper table? Or during coffee with a friend? And it holds meaning related to faith, but maybe only seen if a question is asked. While the bone density story is likely not a story we would include in our Knox collection, each of us has some life story that we recount over and over again. We recognize it is a good or important story (it might be very sad), but we may never have asked those extra 2 questions of “What is most important to us in that story?” and “How might God be guiding or present?”



Would you like to tell one of your important stories? We are arranging a story-telling group (or it might be done individually, depending on the circumstances) to listen to stories, during May/June. Please call the office, or tell Rev Jen or Rev Cathy.

Real Estate Team - March 25, 2026

The Real Estate team, charged to sell the property at 20 Quebec St, was appointed by the congregation in mid-December, and started meeting early January 2026. Members of the committee are, Dave Hough, Convener; Tony Fishback; Phil Gordon; Karen Bellamy; Wendy Darroch; Howard Simpson, Rev. Cathy Stewart, Ex Officio. This team thus includes three members of the Property committee, two members of Session, two Trustees, a member of the congregation (as well as the Interim Minister).

Meeting approximately every three weeks, steps taken to date have included:

- Meeting with representatives of the Presbytery Team who are responsible for approving the sale of all properties within Presbytery. This team will need to approve our choice of a realtor, as well as the final sale.
- Searching for an appropriate lawyer who can handle the sale.
- Developing criteria for a realtor experienced and appropriate to sell a church property; sending out initial inquiries to recommended realtors. Developing interview questions and a process to interview and select potential realtors. Offering tours of the building to potential realtors.

As you may conclude, this team is very methodical and conscientiously considering each step so as to conduct a thorough work on behalf of the congregation. Knox is grateful for their work.



The Quiet Ministry of Checking In

One of the most beautiful things about a church community is the way people quietly care for one another.

Often that care doesn't happen in big or dramatic ways. More often, it happens through small gestures that say, "You matter, and you are not alone."

Sometimes it looks like noticing that someone hasn't been at worship for a few weeks and reaching out with a simple message: "We miss you and hope you're doing well."

Sometimes it's sending a card, offering a ride, or making a short phone call just to check in.

These small acts can mean more than we realize.

Many people carry joys and challenges that others may not see — illness, grief, loneliness, caregiving responsibilities, or simply a difficult season of life. A gentle check-in can remind someone that they are remembered and held in community.

Pastoral care is not only the work of ministers. It is something we share together as the body of Christ. Each of us has the ability to notice, to reach out, and to offer kindness.

If you ever find yourself wondering whether it would make a difference to send a message or make a quick call, the answer is almost always yes.

Small gestures of care are often the threads that hold a community together.

Thank you for the many quiet ways you already care for one another at Knox. It is a gift to witness.

And if at any time you would like to connect, share something that's on your heart, or simply have a conversation, please know that I would be glad to hear from you.

With care,

Rev. Jen Sokolowsky

Pastoral Care Minister

(Please call the church office for my cell number so that you can text or leave a message and I will return your call).

revjen@knoxguelph.ca



shutterstock.com - 2735529783

Presbyterian Sharing

At the AGM on March 22, the question was asked:

“Knox gives \$35,534 to Presbyterian Sharing. Does anyone know what this money goes towards?”

Here is the answer!

Each year every congregation across the country receives a requested allocation. It is based on a formula related to our dollar base.

While there is no enforcement to fulfil that request, Knox typically meets its requested allocation. We can think of those funds as what it means to be part of a national denomination; what it means to “belong” to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The funds support national Staff salaries, national resources, and national ministries.

See the breakdown below.

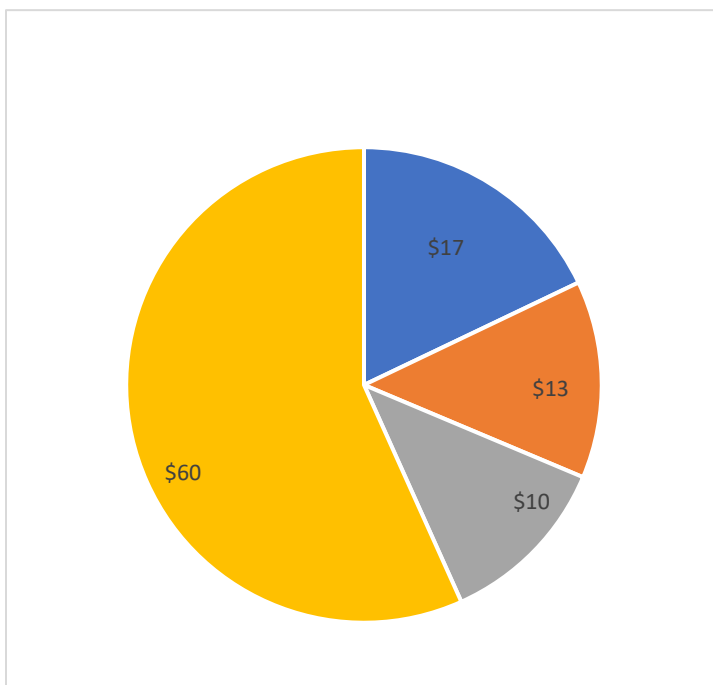
Out of every \$100 given to Presbyterians Sharing \$17 accompanies mission partners in Canada and across the globe \$13 supports ministries with Indigenous people \$10 stewards' gifts with strong finance and administration

\$60 equips ministries in Canada by providing grants for congregations, camps, theological colleges and other ministries; producing educational resources; hosting webinars and events; stewarding congregational investments and supporting governance and justice work.

\$17 accompanies mission partners in Canada and across the globe.

\$13 supports ministries with Indigenous people.

\$10 stewards' gifts with strong finance and administration.



AGM Thank You

Thank you to everyone who made soup, chili, dessert along with other donations to make the AGM luncheon a satisfyingly delicious meal. Thank you also to those who helped setup and cleanup, especially, our young adults who did an excellent job in the kitchen. With the free will offering and the addition of a \$220.00 donation from the Fall Festival Funds, the Mission Committee has an extra \$500.00 to donate to the Clean Streets program.



Snippets from Session

Spring has officially sprung! The snow has melted! Boots are back in the closet! Robins are in the backyard! Session is busy! There is lots to hold our attention through the upcoming Spring days, but let's not forget to take notice of the new life just starting to spring up around us.

Session's February agenda was partly business oriented and partly oriented toward nurturing spiritual leadership.

On the business side, Session took care of many quick items. Motions were passed that received the responses to the Human Sexuality letter, gave Rev. Glen and Rev. Cathy power to issue re: shared summer services, approved the removal of some names from the roll, admitted Arnold Bethune to the Implementation Team, added Kyla Poirier to the Rental Screening Team, and approved VBS from July 6th-10th.

The new Rental Policy was also accepted this month. Potential renters will now be able to approach the office for details in person or by e-mail. They will be screened by the Rental Screening Team and sign a contract before gaining access to the building. Something to note is that there will no longer be preferential pricing for members of Knox. This comes as direction from CRA. CRA maintains that churches exist for the greater good, not for serving their own members. If we offer preferential pricing for members, our charitable status could be affected. Session thanks Carrie Gordon and Tony Fishback as well as the volunteer editors for their many hours of dedicated work on this policy document.

To nurture the spiritual leadership of the elders, Rev. Glen led us through some different kinds of prayer, beginning with the contemplative Prayers of the Beloved and ending with evening vespers.

In March, Session had a packed agenda and had to add on an extra half hour of time to get through it. We continued to work on updating the roll and Session offered Rev. Cathy a contract extension until August 31st, 2026. We approved some funding for Music Director Tony Domzella's professional development and we received the Congregational Profile from the Search Team. We also had a stated hour with our Treasurer, Joanne Martin, to review and ask questions about the budget. Session thanks Joanne for her hard work on the 2026 budget.

Brian A. Redpath has let Session know that he will be taking a break from livestreaming during the summer from June 28th to September 6th. John Hirst has agreed to fill in for him as often as possible.

The Implementation Team has continued to work hard, (meeting every other week), at identifying future partners, defining what a partnership could look like and fact finding. We welcomed Arnold Bethune onto the Team in February. Our next meeting will be on March 30th with Rev Jeff Crawford joining us.

The Search team has completed the Congregational Profile and sent it off to Ministry and Church Vocations at PCC. We are hoping to see some applications soon!

All the members of Knox Session hope that you are able to approach the longer hours of daylight and the coming Springtime with a bright sense of hope for the future.

Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who sends the thunderstorms. He gives showers of rain to all people, and plants of the field to everyone.

Zechariah 10:1

Respectfully submitted by:
Nancy Stepien,
Clerk of Session.



Buy, Lease or Partner?

In one of my house-buying ventures in the past, we found a house that had been built in the 1970's. Very little had been done in the 40 years since. It felt dark. The main floor was covered with a grey (and now dirty) utility-grade carpet. The walls were a dull baby blue colour. The study had red shag. I am by no means an interior decorator, but I could readily see the changes needed: rip up that old carpet, put in some hard wood, add a bunch of new windows, give it a new paint job to complement the colours in the stone fireplace, put in a skylight. People were amazed at the transformation, but it seemed easy enough: each problem had an obvious and logical fix.

Knox decided to relocate because we had identified some obvious obstacles: no parking; underused; old building requiring complicated maintenance. It was relatively easy to identify the problems, and thus we made it through the "Should we relocate/sell?" question fairly smoothly in our congregational deliberations.

We have discovered that it is much easier to see the problems with the current site than to imagine a different site/different future. Should we now buy a smaller, newer building, (we should have funds to do so from selling 20 Quebec St, so we should not need a mortgage), or, given demographics and volunteer energy, should we look to lease in another congregation's building? This question has some pragmatic aspects to it: What kind of leasing arrangement is likely?; Would another congregation accommodate our space needs? This question of buy or lease is also *rooted in how we imagine the future, how we think a new site will create opportunities, and how we will be different or take up new practices in a new location.* We did a poll on this question on December 14th, which has given us some direction (investigate partnerships), but it may not have been enough time to anticipate all the possible questions that would arise. Session is working on a way for Knox members to delve more deeply into this question, so we will be ready to make a decision together. More to come on this!

Submitted by Rev Cathy

Human Sexuality

The congregation at Knox has indicated that it supports Session's intention to be a Generous Space: *Knox Guelph commits to fostering a community of faith where every person feels welcome and safe, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or background. God created all people. The diversity of people is a gift from God.*

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the life of the congregation through the sharing of their own gifts. As a community of faith, we strive to provide a supportive environment that is a Generous Space. This includes a minister's freedom to officiate marriages, at Knox, for people of all gender identities or sexual orientations. Knox will be a place where all people can live authentically and continue to grow in their faith with God. Each of us is a child of God and will be valued as such.

Please note that Generous Space does not assume or require uniformity but acknowledges that the range of backgrounds and experiences present in any congregation results in diverse perspectives on some issues. If you have any questions about any of this, or what this means for you personally, please speak to Rev Cathy, Rev Glen, Rev Jen or a Session elder.

Cathy's Corner: A Deeper Hope

How can we be hopeful in a world that is so full of dire events? "The world this hour", and "what we need to know" as CBC tells us repeatedly, is full of tragedies.

Maybe it has been easier to be hopeful in other centuries? In other circumstances? Post-war 1950's seems to have been a more "hopeful" time.

The most common way we talk about hope is similar to optimism. It is tied to outcomes. "I hope that that medical test for cancer will come back negative" or "I hope I will get that job" or "We hope that many young families will come to Knox." Or "I hope I will win the lottery" 😊. And we pray along those lines too. We pray for healing. We pray for safe travels.

When our hope rests in circumstances, we ride a roller coaster of hopes realized (the test came back negative!) and hopes dashed (I didn't get that job).

There is another kind of hope which Cynthia Bourgeault describes: let's call it a DEEPER HOPE. It does not depend on circumstances or defeats. It is more like that "stream of water that never stops" described in John 4 to the woman at the well. It is more like what the apostle Paul describes: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels. We are afflicted in every way....but not crushed ...as the life of Jesus is made visible in our bodies." (2 Cor 4)

This hope trusts that whatever the circumstances, in good times or not-so-great, we are held in an abiding Mercy. While such hope is a gift, we can also train ourselves to dwell in that hope, through forms of prayer that remind us of in whom we live and move and have our being.

This question seems important for Knox, and in the church in N America. Our culture is not interested in "church" as we have known it. But the MERCY abides, and flows, like an ever-flowing stream. We are invited to follow that stream of life in our life of the Spirit.

In Memoriam

<i>Alma Steel</i>	<i>January 31, 2026</i>	<i>91 years</i>
<i>Joan McCrea</i>	<i>February 12, 2026</i>	<i>89 years</i>
<i>Provan Wylie</i>	<i>March 6, 2026</i>	<i>88 years</i>
<i>Jean Fletcher</i>	<i>March 13, 2026</i>	<i>89 years</i>
<i>David Sandals</i>	<i>March 27, 2026</i>	<i>79 years</i>
<i>Lois Stockton</i>	<i>March 28, 2026</i>	<i>89 years</i>
<i><u>Former Members</u></i>		
<i>Mary-Lou Funston</i>	<i>February 11, 2026</i>	<i>90 years</i>
<i>Tom Mayes</i>	<i>March 18, 2026</i>	<i>94 years</i>

Moments from Mission & Outreach

We've launched into 2026 with wonderful, continued support of Knox's Mission & Outreach initiatives!

- Final total for the 2025 Giving Tree/Gifts of Change program: \$13,335 (includes \$10,000 from bequest Grace Cooper's estate)
- Give to Guelph donations in the first 3 months of 2026 totaled 379.8lbs.
- March 1st Grounds for Giving Sunday saw 23 cans of coffee & \$97 donated to support the work of Royal City Mission
- On February 4th, we prepared and delivered dinner for about 40 at the Campus Ecumenical Ministry—a warmly received evening of connection and fellowship between Knox volunteers, university students, and staff.

A **big** thank you to everyone for the ongoing support!

Celtic Dinner & Evening:

Oh, what a night! Saturday, March 14th was full of toe-tapping Celtic music, great energy, and wonderful fellowship. Thanks to the combined efforts of Knox and Trinity volunteers, we raised \$4,825 for Royal City's Clean Streets program! From planning and set-up to serving throughout the evening, we genuinely enjoyed partnering and working with Trinity United and getting to know one another. The gifted musicians and step dancers of the Guelph Concert Orchestra delivered a fantastic concert, weaving lively tunes and reflective pieces into a musical journey through Ireland—with a step into Scotland even! We received warm notes from both Trinity and the Orchestra, sharing how much they enjoyed the evening and their hope that we'll have the chance to work together again some day. Thank you to all the volunteers and to everyone who attended and helped make the evening such a success!

Give to Guelph: We're celebrating three years of Knox's recommitment to Chalmers through Give to Guelph. From April 2024 to March 2026, our church family has shared **4,976.8 lbs** of food with Chalmers, offering meaningful support to neighbours experiencing food insecurity. Our April items of focus are canned tomato sauce and canned tomatoes (whole or diced); Give to Guelph Sunday is April 15th. In May Chalmers has asked for diapers with May 17th being our Give to Guelph Sunday. Peanut butter, skim milk powder and toilet paper are always in need. Let's continue to work together to make a difference Knox family!

Lenten Offering: The season of Lent invites us into a time of reflection, renewal, and generosity. We are asking you to consider giving financially, as you are able, in support of those in need. The 2026 Lenten Offering will be shared as follows: 40% to PWS&D, 40% to Royal City Mission, and 20% to support Wyndam House Youth Emergency Shelter. Designated envelopes are available at the sanctuary entrances and included in the bulletins. Contributions may also be made by e-transfer to acct@knoxguelph.ca or by credit card through our website at www.knoxguelph.ca (select "donate" and then "on-line gifts"). Please ensure all gifts are clearly marked "Lenten offering."

Looking ahead:

Knox will welcome a PWS&D Guest Speaker on April 26th. A Mission & Outreach hosted coffee hour will follow the service.

Mark your calendars: Spring Grounds for Giving Sunday in support of Royal City will be on June 7th (coffee and cash donations gratefully accepted).

Please keep your eyes open for more Mission & Outreach opportunities in the weeks ahead!

Thank you for your on-going prayerful support.



chalmerscentre.ca

41 Macdonell St., Guelph, ON N1H 2Z4

Charitable Registration #: 85851 7725 RR0001

March 9, 2026

Knox Presbyterian Church
20 Quebec St
Guelph, ON N1H 2T4

To the congregation of Knox Presbyterian Church,

RE: Our Gratitude for your Support of Chalmers in 2025

On behalf of Chalmers, I would like to express our deep gratitude for all of your support of our work in 2025. Your financial and food donations enabled Chalmers to continue providing emergency food services for those living in the Guelph area. In 2025, we served **19,941** guests, **53%** of whom were children. Chalmers continued to see folks experiencing food insecurity. From single mothers, to newcomers or those who are struggling with the high costs of living, your support had a tremendous impact in enabling Chalmers to meet the needs of our community. Our food pantries at both our locations were very busy. Your donations helped Chalmers ensure that we continued to offer a wide variety of fresh and nutritious food, along with diapers and hygiene products. Our guests are incredibly grateful to **you** for making this possible.

In 2025, during our Monday and Tuesday drop in cafés, Chalmers served a staggering **4006 guests**, up from 1060 in 2024. These Monday and Tuesday morning cafés are vital for members of the community who come in, get warm, have breakfast and spend time with others, building community. Our café guests often struggle with insecure housing and tell us that they have not eaten in days. They arrive early and stay late, appreciating the sense of community that is very evident during these cafés. These guests are very grateful for you for making this possible.

Your generous support of Chalmers is changing lives. You are the reason that we are able to alleviate hunger and the anxiety of meeting basic needs for our guests. We are very grateful for your continued support. Thank you for helping create a *community, without poverty, where people flourish with dignity and respect.*

With gratitude,

Crystle Avery

Executive Director www.chalmerscentre.ca 519-822-8778

Serving the Community in the Spirit of Dignity and Respect.

Our Partners



The United Church
of Canada



Guelph United
ministries



United Way
Guelph Wellington
Dufferin



No Fall Festival in 2026

For the last several years, the ladies of Knox (with much help from others) have run a very successful Fall Festival in October or November.

The building was filled each year, with vendors, shoppers, volunteers all enjoying a wonderful day! We have had between 25-32 vendors yearly, many of whom have been with us from the very beginning. We have had numerous volunteers helping with set up, tear down, baking, cooking, greeting, and providing people power throughout the event.

Knox has received nothing but praise from vendors for our event, our building, and our volunteers. Almost all vendors from last year indicated their wish to return in 2026!

After some questions raised by Session, and discussion with the CE committee, it has been decided that there will NOT be a Fall Festival in 2026.

Many factors contributed to this decision; Traffic through the building was lower than normal last year; parking continues to be a MAJOR headache for vendors, shoppers and volunteers alike. New factors for 2026 that could throw a wrench into our plans are the ongoing Quebec Street construction, the uncertainty surrounding downtown parking, the unknown factor of if or when our building will be sold; the unknown factor of where we (as a congregation) will be in October / November.

We know many people will be disappointed by this decision, but we feel it is the correct one for this year.

We are so grateful to the many volunteers who gave their time and talents to help make Knox's Annual Fall Festival such a resounding success! It was truly a **Congregational Event!**

We look forward to Fall Festival's possible return once everything is more settled!

There will be on-going discussions regarding a Ladies Day and possible alternatives for fund-raising, hopefully in the Fall.

Thanks to everyone for your continued support and participation in this and other Congregational Events!

Blessings

Fall Festival Committee



Knox Lunch Bunch

The Knox Lunch Bunch meets the third Tuesday of the month. On April 21st we will dine at 11:30 am at **State and Main, 79 Clair Road East, Guelph** for a 11:30 am reservation. May 19 we will gather at the **Neighbourhood Table (formerly the Country Sisters), on HWY 86 at 6368 Side Rd 15, Listowel, Ontario** at 11:30 am. By popular demand, we will convene in June, July, and August at **Jesse's on the Green patio at the Guelph Country Club, 133 Woodlawn Rd. East** at 11:45 am. Contact Deb through lunchbunch@knoxguelph.ca to make a reservation to join us by the Friday before each outing. Numbers need to be confirmed in advance with the restaurant the weekend before our booking. Reservations are necessary to ensure that there is room for everyone. Friends welcome.

Knox Prayer Chain

Knox takes confidential prayer requests to comfort and lift up members of the Knox family, their relatives, and friends in times of concern or crisis. Requests are forwarded to our dedicated Prayer Chain members. The Prayer Chain is coordinated by Deb Nash-Chambers through the following link: prayerchain@knoxguelph.ca.

Knox Library

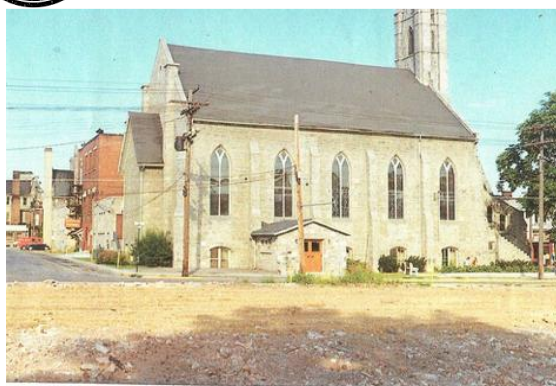
The library cart will be available during coffee hours on the first and third Sundays of the month and at Seniors Connecting luncheons. Starting at Seniors Connecting in January, the library cart in Metcalf Hall will be available on a self serve basis. This system will also be in place for selecting and taking out books on Sundays. A clipboard with directions will be available on the cart. It is suggested that those signing out books at Seniors Connecting return them the following month. Sunday borrowers should try to return the books after four weeks. Currently, the library is not accepting book donations.

From the Knox Archives:



An archives exhibit is available for viewing in the display cases in the narthex.

Yours in preserving history: Wendy Darroch and Donna Speers



1968

Empty Lot
Y.M.C.A. – a four storey, red brick building was demolished and replaced with the Park Mall Apartment building.



Communion Table donated in memory of Rev. A.J. McGillivray.
Baptismal Font in memory of Mrs. A. Gertrude Richardson.
The organ in memory of those who fell in World War II.
The Collection Plates, made of solid golden oak, were turned by hand on a wood lathe by Mr. S. Burnham.



Celtic Dinner and Concert hosted by Knox Presbyterian & Trinity United Churches.

