



Rideau Park United Church

Telephone: 613-733-3156
Email: info@rideaupark.ca
Website: www.rideaupark.ca

Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday School: 10am
Coffee Hour: 11am

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

Minister

Rev. Jim Baldwin
jbaldwin@rideaupark.ca

Interim Organist

James Seyler
organist@rideaupark.ca

Music Ministry Coordinator

Iain Macpherson
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Church Administrator

Kiersten Robison
administrator@rideaupark.ca
Ext. 229

Custodian

Geoff Scollick
custodian@rideaupark.ca

Minister's Message

It's early. But as I write this letter, I am blissfully aware of the play of sun and shadows across my yard and through my window. The days are getting longer...spring is around the corner...before we know it the trees will be green with new leaves...and I can get back into the garden again.

As the seasons of the earth continue in their cycle, so too do the seasons of the church year. And before we know it, Lent will be upon us. There is a close connection between the seasons of the earth and the church. The word comes from the Old English word "lencten" and is most likely a reference to the lengthening of days as characterized by the season of spring.

In the church, Lent refers to the period of 40 days that Jesus spent fasting in the desert. The 40 days begin on Ash Wednesday and conclude at sundown on Holy Saturday. Jesus wasn't the only one in the Bible who fasted for 40 days. Moses went into the mountains for 40 days and 40 nights to pray and fast before receiving the Ten Commandments. The prophet Elijah did the same on Mount Horeb, where he was given the word of God. In each case, the time of prayer and fasting was used to prepare them for their work.

Most historians agree that Lent was instituted by the Council of Nicea in 325 CE as a way to prepare Christians for the celebration of Easter, and the renewal of our commitment to follow Christ. The "three pillars of Lent" are *prayer, fasting and almsgiving*, which reflect *justice toward God, self and our neighbours*. The season is characterized by self-reflection, simplicity and sincerity.

"Three pillars of Lent"
**Prayer, fasting and
almsgiving**

Continued on page 2

ChurchPost Editor: Lynda Becker, churchpost@rideaupark.ca

Minister's Message (continued from page 1)

Growing up, Lent was perceived as mostly "a Catholic thing." Even when I returned to church at 16, there was little mention of Lent as a discipline; although I do remember our minister talking about giving up some of the "extra" things we enjoy...like pizza...and donating the money to a worthy cause. To be fair, that would take care of two of the pillars. Most often people talked about giving up things like smoking or chocolate, but it always seemed like the focus was on their physical health, with little or no emphasis on their spiritual well-being.

In the 80s, the Whole People of God curriculum began to teach us about the origins of Lent once again. It mirrored a growing interest in spiritual things in our society and we began to consider how our Lenten preparations could strengthen our spiritual relationship with God, ourselves and one another. In effect, we were returning to the roots of the tradition, but with less emphasis on self-denial and more attention to putting positive energy into our faith, our lives and our world. I think we need that now, more than ever.

So many of us are searching for ways to deal with the chaos of our world. Maybe the answer is a return to the practice of Lent: *prayer, fasting and almsgiving focused on justice toward God, self and our neighbours* that is characterized by *self-reflection, simplicity and sincerity*.

Meditation
BREATHE
SET INTENTIONS
SIT IN SILENCE
LISTEN TO YOUR SOUL

Maybe we need to give up some of the busy-ness of our day to read a daily devotional...to listen to a guided meditation...to practice yoga...or focus on our breathing. Maybe we could take some time to connect with a friend, to check in on our neighbours, or help out with a community project. And one of my personal favourites...maybe we could redirect some of the energy that is focused on the negative things that are happening in the world, and spend some time in gratitude and thanksgiving. Now, more than ever, we should find the time to be with people of faith, where our spirits may be renewed.

I'm a bit biased, but I think that there is no better place to do so, than at Rideau Park United Church on a Sunday morning. But we also have the weekly Zoom meditation group on Thursday mornings, there is a

four-week workshop on spiritual healing being offered during Lent, and one of our partner churches, Emmanuel United Church is offering 30-minute worship services at 7pm on Wednesday evenings. Whatever you choose, may you know that God is with you...may you find some peace in your heart...and strength in your spirit.

Rev. Jim Baldwin



Next ChurchPost Submission Deadline

Due: 5pm, Friday, April 24, 2026

Submissions to *ChurchPost* should be emailed to: churchpost@rideaupark.ca

Please include the name and phone number of the author(s).

Lenten Services

The **Ash Wednesday communion service** with meditative music and prayers will take place on February 18 at 7pm. As well, a **Labyrinth** will be available to walk in Beecroft Hall from 5-9pm.

Palm Sunday is on March 29 with a procession of palms during the worship service.

On **Maundy Thursday**, April 2, there will be a potluck supper at 5:30pm followed by a communion service at 7pm (in-person only).

The **Good Friday communion service** will be on April 3 at 10am with music offering by Sandra Graham and Doreen Claxton-Taylor, accompanied by a string quartet.

Easter Sunday on April 5 is a regular service at 10am.

Emmanuel United Church will be offering 30-minute Lenten services on Wednesdays at 7pm on Zoom from February 25 to March 25. The overall theme is "Reflections on Wilderness Time" and will be led by a different lay leader every week. For more information and the Zoom link, go to <https://emmanuelunited.ca/event/wednesday-evening-lenten-service-2/>.

Coffee Hour Needs Your Help

Coffee Hour requires two to three helpers each Sunday to operate smoothly. We've been very lucky the last few months with people signing up of their own volition. I'm particularly pleased that so many of you volunteer repeatedly; it's great that it's considered a worthwhile and rather fun task.

If you know how to run the dishwasher in Beecroft and are willing to run it on the occasional Sunday, please speak up. A straightforward and easy-to-follow training session on using the commercial dishwasher is in the pipeline for interested parties.

March's sign-up sheet is on the Beecroft bulletin board, so please consider taking a turn.

Nancy McPherson, nancymcp58@gmail.com



Maritime Cruise

Some Rideau Park people (Georgina and Peggy among them) have signed up for a Maritime cruise leaving from Montreal and ending in Boston in late July. We'd be happy to have others join us, particularly those who don't have a travel partner. You would be among friends. For more information, see www.hollandamerica.com/en/ca/find-a-cruise/n6n07b/v636.



Join a Committee at Rideau Park!

Are you a newcomer or nearly newcomer? Have you been a part of Rideau Park for quite some time? If so, this article is for YOU!

Rideau Park has a congregation that is very involved through its committees in the following ways:

- living out our mission, our vision, and our affirming Church Statement (Stewardship);
- inspiring us with Sunday Worship Services, our choirs, chimes, and handbells for people of all ages (Worship and Music);
- caring for its members (Pastoral Care);
- enriching our families, children, and youth (Christian Development);
- involving us in our community (Social Action and Outreach);
- seeking to continually expand, encourage, and supporting our volunteer base to keep all our committees running (Nominations);
- undertaking an enormous number of events that help our congregation finance church, community, and world needs (United Church Women or UCW);
- employing and caring for our staff (Ministry and Personnel);
- encouraging and sharing information (Administration and Communications);
- investing and managing our assets (Trustees);
- looking after our day-to-day operating expenses (Finance); and
- keeping our building in top condition so we can partake in all these undertakings (Property).

Whew! WE ARE ONE BUSY GROUP OF PEOPLE!

Did you feel excitement when you read about one of these committees? Would you like to know more about the specifics of what they do? Do you have a skill that you believe might be of assistance?

Please phone the church office at 613-733-3156 or send an email to info@rideaupark.ca if something intrigues you. We'd love to hear from you!

FYI: We are presently looking for a treasurer for our church. Skill with accounting is essential.

Nominations Committee



Our Hearts Remember



We hold in our thoughts and prayers the families and loved ones of these Rideau Park friends who have passed away.

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Iva McEwen | November 19 |
| Geraldine Palmer | November 28 |
| | 2026 |
| Joan Dewis | January 6 |
| Doug Shouldice | January 14 |
| Alice Ellacott | January 18 |

*I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.*

John 11:25-26

UCW Installation

(Presented at worship service on Sunday, January 18, 2026)

Rideau Park United Church Women are an amazing group. We have three active Units and a wonderful group we call UCW E-buddies. We send our UCW newsletter to over 100 women in the congregation. We are **bold** and **experimental**. Our leadership style is leaderless or, as some would say, plain old cooperation. We share roles, responsibilities and support each other. The UCW gets things done. Numerous Bazaar convenors pulled together an amazing event, some members focus on community building events, others on getting a new digital sign on our street corner or providing pastoral meals to those in our community who could use a "hug in a mug". The UCW shares with our community, our church and the UCC Mission and Service fund. That was 2025. In 2026, well....

The Transition Report tells us planning for our future is an important task ahead of us. The UCW knows there is much to be done to ensure our congregation's future. The future can be intimidating, but the UCW stands ready to help move Rideau Park forward in every way possible. The UCW itself is challenged to find innovative ways: for individuals of all ages and stages to come together in a safe and comfortable space, to support young families and parents so they can participate in the making of a future for Rideau Park and, lastly, to collaborate with other church groups and committees so that the UCW can help build Rideau Park's future. People are always our most important asset now and going forward.

The UCW is ready, when asked or needed, to help get the more concrete things done. Things that will ensure our congregation's future. For example, in the immediate future we would like to keep our 50+ year-old dishwasher, the one in Beecroft kitchen that the UCW and others count on, in tip top shape, free from leaks and other unexpected, untimely hiccups (quirks). We are ready to support in whatever way possible all technology updates to make our administrator's role as Sign Guru more efficient. Then of course, there are really big things that will be needed to keep our future comfortable, things like a roof or a furnace that the UCW can contribute to.

The UCW likes to plan forward. Knowing in advance means that often the UCW can help financially if needed. We also can take on projects and lead them in non-traditional and innovative ways. However, we do need you, your ideas, your moral and physical support to help us achieve our dreams. So, yes, we are and will be asking for your help in 2026.

Everyone has a skill, why not share yours – short term, long term, whatever your talent might be, we can find a way to use it. Talk to us to find out how you can help. The women of Rideau Park get things done because we believe we can do anything we set our minds to and then WE DO IT! We believe in Rideau Park's future.

And just in case you are wondering: Yes, we have fun; yes, we are friends; and yes, we will be here when you need us. Contact us at ucw@rideaupark.ca.



UCW Easter Cards – A Memorial Project

The UCW will be sending hand-made cards to families who have experienced the loss of a loved one this past year, as well as to members of Rideau Park who continue to be shut-in, either at home or at retirement or long-term care homes.

An Easter Memorial List, remembering those we loved and lost, will be published as a special Easter congregational e-mail.

To support this Easter Memorial Card Project, the UCW can accept your donations in memory of family and friends via e-transfer, cheque, credit card or Interac. Please forward the wording you wish to include in the Easter Memorial List to rpuceaster@gmail.com no later than Sunday, March 29.



How to Donate to the UCW Easter Project

- * By e-transfer through your online bank account. Send e-transfer to ucwfinance@rideaupark.ca, which is registered for "auto-deposit". In the message section, indicate UCW Easter Project.
- * By cheque made payable to "Rideau Park UCW". In the memo line, indicate UCW Easter Project. Mail to: Rideau Park United Church, Attn: UCW Treasurer, 2203 Alta Vista Dr., Ottawa, ON K1H 7L9.
- * By credit card, PayPal or Google Pay through CanadaHelps.org; under Fund, drop down to Option 4, United Church Women (UCW). In the message section, please indicate UCW Easter Project. Note that you will immediately receive an emailed tax receipt from CanadaHelps.org.

The UCW is organizing or participating in the following events...

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Tuesday, February 10, 1:30pm-3pm | Valentine's Tea |
| Sunday, February 22, 11:15am | Sunday Soup Lunch |
| Sunday, March 15, 11:15am | Sunday Soup Lunch / PIE Day |
| Sunday, March 22, 11:15am | Bake My Day Sale after the Sunday Service |
| Sunday, March 29 | Final day to submit to the Easter Memorial List |
| Sunday, April 12, 11:15am | RPUC Annual General Meeting |
| Friday, April 17, 6pm-8pm | Nearly New Sale and Used Book Sale |
| Saturday April 18, 9am-11:30am | Nearly New Sale and Used Book Sale |



Nearly New Sale and Used Book Sale drop-off dates at the church: Thursday, April 16, 9am-4pm and 6pm-8pm AND Friday April 17, 9am-12pm ONLY. Please donate gently used, good quality clothing and gently used books of any genre. Storage space is limited – donations will be accepted beginning after Easter.

For information on the Nearly New Sale and Used Book Sale, email christy.s.harris@rogers or judithsrna@gmail.com or call Marlene Hutchison at 613-731-2159. You can also always email us at ucw@rideaupark.ca.

Lenten Journey: Energy Healing 101 Tuesday evenings, 7-9pm (Feb. 24, March 3, 10, 17)

What are you doing for Lent this year? Rideau Park is offering a Lenten Journey: Energy Healing 101 with a series of four workshops on Tuesday evenings during Lent. It is a wonderful opportunity to deepen your prayer practice while learning about energy-based healing for the benefit of yourself and others. The workshops are free but seating is limited, so register early: call 613-733-3156 or email administrator@rideaupark.ca with your name and contact info. Although it is preferred that you register for the whole series, you can register for individual workshops. For more information, go to https://www.rideaupark.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Energy-Healing-101_pamphlet.pdf.



Cluster Update

Glebe-St. James United Church has started a Queer Space initiative for young adults. It is just getting off the ground. When it is more established, they'd like to connect with Emmanuel United Church to offer it to people who are aging out of Emmanuel's Rainbow Hub. I am sure that Rideau Park people are welcome to join them. Liz Elton is the volunteer co-ordinator for AV at Glebe-St. James. She is in the process of getting people from each church together for a

meeting (not so easy as there is a wide range of how each church handles AV). Glebe St. James is pleased to have had a new member come forward and volunteer to take on social media tasks. The communications team at Glebe St. James met with her in January and will be arranging a meeting with representatives from the cluster congregations. All are welcome to attend these meetings as we consider "what is the Spirit calling the church to do at this time in this place? Are there things to stop doing, and new things to take on?"

Sharon Sanderson

Distraction Thefts and Online Scams Workshop Wednesday, February 25, 1:30-3pm

The Social Action and Outreach Committee will be sponsoring a program with the Ottawa Police Service focusing on Distraction Thefts and Online Scams that are targeting seniors. Ottawa Police have seen an escalation in distraction thefts, including reports of violence and online scams as well as scammers impersonating officers via email or fake "bank investigator" calls, resulting in significant financial losses. Join us on Wednesday, February 25, 1:30-3pm and learn how to protect yourself and others. For further information, contact the church office.





Organ Recital in Memory of Dianne Ferguson Sunday, April 26 at 3pm

Pro Organo Ottawa is pleased to present organist Valerie Hall in recital at Rideau Park United.

This performance, as part of the exciting series of four Pro Organo recitals in its 2025-2026 season, is dedicated to the memory of Rideau Park United's long-serving and well-remembered organist and choir director, Dianne Ferguson (1934-2022).

Dianne was an accomplished musician: pianist, organist, and director of adult choirs, children's choirs, and handbell choirs. She had a long musical career in both Alberta and Ontario, culminating in her years at Rideau Park United. Dianne was an active and valued member of the Royal Canadian College of Organists, Ottawa and Edmonton Centres and, in 2007, received the RCCO Distinguished Service Award.

As Dianne Ferguson was organist at this church for many years and promoted Canadian music all through her career, Valerie Hall's recital will honour her memory by featuring a programme of Canadian music, the sounds of the True North [Strong and] Free.

To purchase tickets, visit http://www.rcco-ottawa.ca/pro_organo.html. There are three Pro Organo recitals in the spring of 2026, for which you may purchase season tickets. The special season rates are \$75 for adults, \$60 for seniors, and \$35 for students. You may also purchase a ticket just for this recital.

All are welcome and there will be a reception following the recital. Let's celebrate Dianne, springtime, community, and Canada in music!



Bells in Spring Sunday, May 3 at 7pm

The "Bells in Spring" Concert features three handbell choirs from Rideau Park (A Touch of Brass, La Bell Ensemble and Ringing Praise) as well as handbell choirs from Emmanuel United Church (Emmanubells), St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (St. Andrew's Ringers) and Trinity Presbyterian Church (Trinity Hilltop Ringers). The bell choirs will perform en masse, as well as individually. The concert can be viewed online by clicking [Watch Live](#) at the start of the concert and it will later be posted on the Webcast Archives. A freewill offering will go to support the various bell choirs. For more information, email [Gordon Dewis](#).



RPUC Bookstore

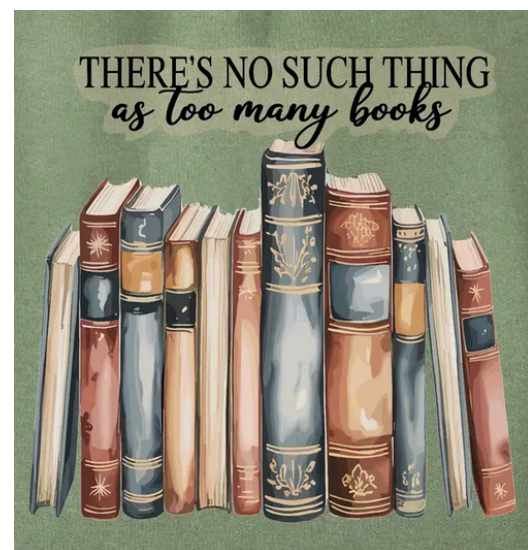
The Rideau Park United Church Bookstore, located on the lower level in the room right off of Brackenridge Hall, has books that will help while away the winter months. Ranging from historical fiction, mysteries and thrillers to philosophy, religion, and travel books, there is definitely something in the Bookstore for you.

The Bookstore is run on an honour system with the suggested fee of \$2 per book. Don't use cash anymore? E-transfers can be sent to ucwfinance@rideaupark.ca (please include a note that it's for books).

Also, the Bookstore will take gently used book donations of any genre. Book donations can be left on the shoe racks inside the Cunningham entry or dropped off in the Bookstore.

Please feel free to contact Judith Srna at judithsrna@gmail.com with any questions. See you in the Bookstore!!

Judith Srna



What did you go to the wilderness to see?

Questions!?! So enlightening! So frustrating!

From the 2-year-old's never-ending "why" as they come up to you while you're making dinner. *Can I have a cookie?* Not now. *Why?* You'll spoil your dinner. *Why?* Because the cookie will fill up your tummy. *Why?* Because we only have so much space in our tummies. *Why?* And so it goes until you run out of answers. Hopefully, by that time, dinner is ready and your little darling is distracted.

And then there's the curious grade 8 student in a class where a student teacher is teaching that a negative times a negative is a positive. Well, now, that's just ridiculous! So the student asks for an explanation. Unfortunately, the student teacher doesn't have the explanation but the student won't let it go. Eventually, the regular teacher steps in, the class continues and the curious student is reprimanded. (Not that I would know anything about such a scenario. 😊)

From the toddler, to the student, to news reporters with their who, what, when, where, how and why. And, finally, to the great teacher who knows just the right question to ask to go even deeper and get the students to own the question. And Jesus was a great teacher!

Some of his questions are famous. **What are some of his questions that you remember?**

Today we have: **What did you go into the wilderness to see? (Matthew 11:7)**

Continued on page 10

What did you go to the wilderness to see? (continued from page 9)

Scripture: Matthew 11:2-10

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

1. What is your initial reaction or response to this question?
2. What does wilderness mean (to you and dictionary definition)? Is it a place of rest or danger?
3. Are there different kinds of wilderness?
4. What other Bible stories involve the wilderness?
5. Where is God in the wilderness?
6. What is the opposite of wilderness?
7. How is your relationship with God different in the wilderness vs. not being in the wilderness?

I haven't offered any suggestions for responses to these questions. It is my hope that your comments will generate discussion.

But that's just what I think. What do you think?

Sharon Sanderson

Rideau Park Christmas Bazaar 2026

After being Area Convenors for many years, we need convenors for our 2026 Bazaar in the following positions, Fine China, Deli, Jewelry, Christmas Corner. If you have a passion and/or talent for any of these areas and wish to join the excitement of being part of Rideau Park's biggest fundraiser each year since 1952, where the past builds the future, please contact US NOW at ucw@rideaupark.ca with the subject line Bazaar.

Everyone has a skill, why not share yours – short term, long term, whatever your talent might be, we can find a way to use it. Talk to us to find out how you can participate. It is good for our health including our brain health.





Weekly Events

Social Activities

Mondays, 1pm Knitting Group
 Thursdays, 9:30am Quilting Group
 Thursdays, 1pm Euchre Club

Healing Pathway/Meditation

Tuesdays, 12:30pm Healing Pathway
 Thursdays, 12:30pm Healing Pathway
 Thursdays, 10am Meditation Online

Fitness Classes

Tuesdays, 9:15am Fitness 50+
 Thursdays, 9:15am Fitness 50+
 Fridays, 1pm Beginners Line Dancing 45+
 Saturdays, 10:45am Tai-Chi Class

Music Groups

Handbell Practice Times

Mondays, 7:15pm Touch of Brass
 Tuesdays, 6:30pm Ringing Praise
 Tuesdays, 7:30pm La Bell Ensemble

Choir Practice Times

Thursdays, 6pm Cherubs
 Thursdays, 6:15pm Joyful Noise (children)
 Thursdays, 7:30pm Chancel Choir
 Sundays, 11:30am Drums Alive (all ages)

[Click here](#) to view the website calendar.

Legacy Giving Brunch and Learn Sunday, May 3, 11:15am-1:15pm

The Stewardship Committee and Trustees invite you to our third annual Legacy Giving Brunch and Learn on Sunday, May 3 after the service. Join us in the Parlour to hear general legal and financial information that will help you plan your legacy gifts, in a relaxed and comfortable environment. There will be time for questions and answers as well.



Mark Your Calendars

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, February 10, 1:30-3pm | Valentine's Tea (hosted by UCW) |
| Monday, February 16 | Family Day – Office closed |
| Tuesday, February 17, 5:30-7:30pm | Pancake Tuesday (hosted by 28 th Ottawa Scouts) |
| Wednesday, February 18, 5-9pm | Ash Wednesday Labyrinth |
| Wednesday, February 18, 7pm | Ash Wednesday Communion Service |
| Sunday, February 22, 11:15am | Soup Lunch |
| Tuesday, February 24, 7-9pm | Energy Healing 101 (Your "on" switch) |
| Wednesday, February 25, 1:30-3pm | Distraction Thefts and Online Scams Workshop (OPS) |
| Tuesday, March 3, 7-9pm | Energy Healing 101 (Qualities of energy touch) |
| Tuesday, March 10, 7-9pm | Energy Healing 101 (Whole body prayer) |
| Saturday, March 14, 7:30pm | Jazz Concert with Brian An (trombone and piano) |
| Sunday, March 15, 11:15am | Soup Lunch / PIE Day |
| Tuesday, March 17, 7-9pm | Energy Healing 101 (Praying with others) |
| Sunday, March 22, 11:15am | UCW Bake My Day Sale |
| Sunday, March 29, 10am | Palm Sunday Service |
| Thursday, April 2, 5:30pm / 7pm | Maundy Thursday Potluck Supper and Communion Service |
| Friday, April 3, 10am | Good Friday Service |
| Friday, April 3 | Good Friday – Office closed |
| Sunday, April 5, 10am | Easter Sunday |
| Monday, April 6 | Easter Monday – Office closed |
| Sunday, April 12, 10am | Holy Humour Sunday |
| Sunday, April 12, 11:15am | Annual Congregational Meeting |
| Thursday, April 16, 9am-4pm, 6-8pm | Drop-off for Nearly New Sale and Used Book Sale |
| Friday, April 17, 9am-12pm | Drop-off for Nearly New Sale and Used Book Sale |
| Friday, April 17, 6-8pm | Nearly New Sale and Used Book Sale |
| Saturday April 18, 9am-11:30am | Nearly New Sale and Used Book Sale |
| Sunday, April 26, 3pm | Organ Recital in Memory of Dianne Ferguson |
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