

Yay! You are coming to the WOW Spring Meeting

Now what?

Soon we will be gathering at our WOW Regional Gathering in [Port Elgin](#) on May 22-24, 2026. Here is an information package for our children and youth program to help you prepare and know what to expect.

Arrival (12:30-1:30PM) ****Optional early drop-in****

Our team will happily greet you at our welcome table in the lobby. We will guide you to the “Young Workers” room where you can leave your luggage until checking in later. We can show you the Friendship/Freedom room next door, as well as the main meeting space. *This drop-in time is optional to ease your familiarity with our space, team and other participants.*

Please eat before you arrive or bring along a lunch to eat in our space.

It is helpful to let us know when you plan on arriving, so we can make sure someone is available to assist you.

Sign In/Out

It is expected that caregivers will sign in each child/youth when they are starting the program each day and sign them out when they will not be returning for the evening.

Reminder that they will be sharing accommodation with their caregiver or as otherwise assigned. They will not be supervised outside of program hours.

No need to come and get them for meals. Meals will be with the adults. We will bring children to you and have you initial our sign in/out sheet. They are welcome to eat with you or us until our next activity begins. We will provide nut and dairy-free snacks during the day for those not bringing their own.

Packing List

What should you bring? We hope to be outside some of the time. So, here’s what we think:

- Pajamas (will be a PJ party both nights for children who stay after dinner)
- Comfort Item (books, stuffy, blanket, fidgets, etc.)
- Shirts, pants, sweatshirts, underwear, socks, etc.
- Face cloth & toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant etc.)
- Weather appropriate coat and comfortable indoor & outdoor footwear
- Sunscreen and hat
- Refillable water bottle
- Personal snacks for breaks/room
- Medicine (as needed)

Meet Our Leaders

A superstar team that has been preparing for months for this moment! It takes a village 😊

- **Rev. Jen Auger** (Master of Counselling, Diaconal Minister)– Minister for Families & Youth at Hope Springs United Church, Elora
- **Sara Dales** (Registered Early Childhood Educator) – Leader of Christian Development and Outreach at Georgian Shores United Church, Owen Sound
- **Robyn Runstedler** – Children's Ministry Leader for Drayton United Church (oversees the Quack Pack because they are DUC's), and home childcare provider
- **Sifa Kanyamuneza** – Leadership Animator & Past Climate Motivator, GO Project
- **Matthew Tyhurst** – Youth Leadership Coordinator & Past Climate Motivator, GO Project
- **Neelah Irving** – General Council 45 delegate and first-aid trained lifeguard from Centennial United Church, Stayner
- **Olyndra Irving** – Youth leader from Centennial United Church, Stayner
- **Laura Black** (Master of Education) – WOW Regional Council Staff, First Third Ministry Faith Formation

*Shout out to Jennifer Irving (WOW RC President), Golda Wilson, and Christine Grose for their significant planning contributions, as well as Max Watkinson and Michele Petick for their super admin support.

Group Covenant for Health, Safety, and Respect

In Western Ontario Waterways Region, we seek to serve by connecting, supporting, and transforming. To prioritize a safer and meaningful experience for everyone involved, we ask all participants to align with the following covenant, informed by [Faithful Community: A Duty of Care Approach for Programs](#).

- Because I want to serve others, I will bring an open and curious attitude. I will come ready to build relationships, help the community, and learn from the people I meet.
- Because I understand my actions affect others, I will follow all local laws, UNIFOR and United Church of Canada policies. This means:
 - I will not bring or use illegal substances, alcohol, cannabis, or tobacco products while participating in the program.
 - I will maintain personal boundaries and follow laws of consent. There are no secrets around touch. I will listen when someone says stop with their words or body.
 - I commit to using electronic devices respectfully (moderate usage – putting them away during program time) to focus on building relationships and limit distractions. I will not take or post content (videos, photos, etc.) about others unless I have their consent.
- Because I value community, I will treat everyone - leaders, staff, other participants, and

community members - with kindness, respect, and understanding. I will consider how I am showing up, who hasn't had an opportunity to contribute, and not repeat personal stories without permission. I honour that people learn, process, and communicate differently.

- Because my well-being and the well-being of others is important, I will follow safety guidelines, stay within designated boundaries in groups of three or more when required, be wise about my choices, and communicate regularly with my leaders.
- Because I know how I treat others and their belongings matters, I will respect the property of others, and the spaces where we gather, work, and stay. I will remember that I represent the wider church community. I will act in a way that reflects care and humility.

Health & Safety Note: First Aid Kit and Lifeguard Trained leaders will be present at the event.

Program

An overview of our evolving weekend schedule – without revealing all the magic.

FRIDAY

12:30 PM – Welcome & Drop In (Main lobby)

1:30 PM – Worship & Community Building (Main Meeting Room with Adults)

3:15 PM – Icebreaker & Group Activities (Young Workers Room)

5:30 PM – Supper (with adults; sign out as needed)

7:00 PM – PJ Movie Night (Young Workers Room); youth could also do games or [register for an in-person workshop](#). See [Workshop List](#) below for descriptions.

8:30 PM – Complete sign-out of our care

SATURDAY

9:00 AM – Group Activities including parachute & balloons (Young Workers Room)

10:30 AM – Prep for Sunday Worship & Youth Presentation (Young Workers Room)

12:00 PM – Lunch (with adults; sign out as needed)

2:00 PM – Group Activities including sound wave experiment (Young Workers Room)

5:30 PM – Supper (with adults; sign out as needed for the night)

7:00 PM – PJ Video & Board Games Party (Young Workers Room); or

– Youth prep and lead time (Main Meeting Room with Adults)

8:30 PM – Bonfire with Songs & S'mores (outside, weather permitting; sign out for night)

SUNDAY

9:00 AM – Worship (Main Meeting Room with Adults)

9:50 AM – Listening to Nature: Walk to the Beach (outside)

Timing may shift based on weather; we will not be in the water

11:00 AM – Listening to our Bodies: Kids Yoga (Young Workers Room)

11:30 AM – Closing Circle (Young Workers Room)

12:30 PM – Lunch to go (adults come to room for final sign out)

Friday Workshop List – Optional for Youth & Young Adults

Select one and [register this week](#)

STOP AND LISTEN: "We're More Than a Holding Operation!" Join Kyle Pugh, the Ontario Regional Councils Archivist, as he talks about The United Church of Canada Archives, its holdings, the services they offer, and how they can help you and your congregation!

STOP AND LISTEN WITHIN: SIMPLE PRACTICES FOR SPIRITUAL CONNECTION presented by **Minister Pastoral Support Laurie Stevenson**. Amid busy lives, learning to "stop and listen" is both a challenge and a gift. This workshop offers an introduction to a range of spiritual practices that invite deeper awareness of self, others and God. Through guided experiences and gentle reflection, participants will be encouraged to notice how the Spirit speaks through body, mind and soul. Come with curiosity and leave with practices you can carry into daily life.

STOP AND LISTEN: TO GLOBAL VOICES - In 2025, Revs. Wonder Chimvinga and Aidan Legault travelled to meet with Global Partners of the United Church of Canada. They were sent to listen to the voices of partners, to experience their work, to celebrate with them the key successes of their relationship with the United Church, and to bring their wisdom back to the United Church as our denomination discerns the future of our Global Partnership Program. Join Revs. Wonder and Aidan as they share what they witnessed: Rev. Aidan will recount the story of his participation on a Pilgrimage of Learning to partners in the Philippines, and Rev. Wonder will describe his congregation's experience meeting partners in Zimbabwe

STOP AND LISTEN: Faithful Conversations for Amalgamation Discernment - This workshop offers a guided introduction to *Exploring Amalgamation Faithfully*, a resource designed to help congregations slow down, listen deeply, and approach amalgamation as a spiritual and relational journey. Participants will explore practical tools and facilitated exercises that emphasize story-sharing, trust, pastoral care, and discernment before outcomes. Ideal for those supporting congregations navigating uncertainty, change, and shared decision-making.

STOP AND LISTEN: TO CREATION - Are you passionate about the climate? Or someone who supports young people in their climate anxiety and work? Come learn about the Climate Motivator program! The United Church of Canada has identified four pillars to climate response: connecting with creation, raising our spirited voices, responding to climate impact, and getting our house in order. Join past young adult United Church Climate Motivators, Sifa Kanyamuneza and Matthew Tyhurst, as they share about the program and their work in climate action and leave inspired to work toward climate action in your own community.

Questions or Concerns

Before Event Contact – Laura Black, lblack@united-church.ca or 1-226-407-4308

During Event Contact – Jen Auger, Call 519-943-6577 (for immediate response) or email rev.jen@hopespringsunited.ca (to check in at some point)