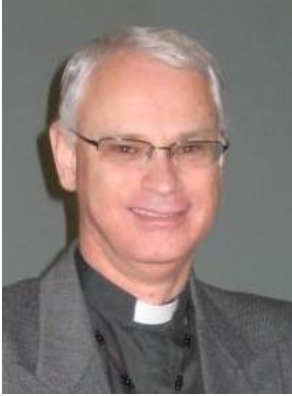


## Ministers' Messages: (Rev.) Dr. Steven Davis



A few days ago, I learned that a former parishioner of mine - from my very first pastoral charge in Newfoundland - had died. During my time there (on the Green Bay South Pastoral Charge) I became very close to her and her husband. The very first funeral I conducted after my ordination was for their 28-year-old daughter, who died in very

tragic circumstances. I had been on the Charge for 3 days when she died. I can remember being told about her death and that her father was the Chair of the Church Board at their congregation. I had met them and shared a few words the day before their daughter's death at my very first service, but aside from that I didn't know them.

I needed directions for how to get to their house. When I arrived a local Salvation Army officer (there was a family connection to the Salvation Army) was already there and had very much taken control of the situation, doing all the talking, leading in prayer, etc. I felt so very out of place, as if I had nothing to add to what my far more experienced colleague was already doing. I felt like a wallflower at a party, watching but not participating. After a few minutes, the young woman's father (the Chair of the Board) held his hand up and interrupted the Salvation Army Officer. "Excuse me, Captain. We're thankful you came and for everything you're doing, but our minister is here now, and I'd like him to say a prayer and share some words with us." I honestly could have hugged him at that moment. Aside from those few words shared the day before in church, he didn't know me at all, but he knew that I was feeling lost and out of place in that moment and in the midst of his own grief, he thought of me and made sure that I (and everyone else who was there) knew that I was their pastor. More than that - because I was their pastor I was a part of their family. (Continued on page 4)

## Rev. Karen Smart



The time has come for the time for me to say "So long, farewell". I have always had a hard time saying "good-bye". It is especially hard this time because I don't feel my ministry with you is finished. I have made so many wonderful friends and we have served God with love and grace.



During these challenging days, I have been re-reading Joyce Rupp's book, *Praying Our Good-byes*. She invites us to reflect on:

- ❖ The call of God in our lives
- ❖ The love relationships we have with God and the people of God
- ❖ To consider the painful things that keep you from moving on
- ❖ To remember the covenant and the promises of God and the blessings of our past days and years of ministry together
- ❖ And our hopes for the future.

(Continued on page 5)



## UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

### Sunday March 5, 2023 – 2<sup>nd</sup> of Lent

10:30am      Worship, Sunday School/Youth Group

### Sunday, March 12, 2023 – 3<sup>rd</sup> of Lent

10:30am      Worship, Sunday School/Youth Group

### Sunday, March 19, 2023 – 4<sup>th</sup> of Lent

10:30am      Worship, Sunday School/Youth Group

### Sunday, March 26, 2023 – 5<sup>th</sup> of Lent

10:30am      Worship, Sunday School/Youth Group

\* \* \* \* \*

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Wednesday March 1, 2023

UCW Monthly Meeting

Tuesday March 28, 2023

7:00pm - Church Lounge

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION OF  
VOICE IS  
FRIDAY, **March 17, 2023** AT NOON.**

## UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES for PVUC

Doreen Hallé, Chair, Worship Committee

There will be a lot of changes in the next while for PVUC, however, we will still be gathering to worship together on Sunday mornings. Commencing February 26th, which is also the First Sunday in Lent, various Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL's) will be leading us every Sunday.

What is an LLWL you ask? In the Licensed Lay Worship Leader program, the United Church has recognized a need for people to be supported through a training and licensing program. This gives both the lay leader and the community of faith confidence that their leadership is built upon a strong theological and biblical foundation that is consistent with the ethos of the United Church.

A licensed lay worship leader is a full member who has been determined to have gifts and a sense of call to the ministry of worship leadership and preaching, and who has developed these gifts through participation in a course of study and is licensed by a regional council, in our case ECORC, East Central Ontario Regional Council. An LLWL is not eligible to preside at the sacraments.

This is the lineup for February 26th to April 9th. There will not be a Maundy Thursday service this year.

**February 26<sup>th</sup>:** Robert Bennett

**March 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>:** John and Helen Bowman

**March 19<sup>th</sup>:** Susan Pleasance

**March 26<sup>th</sup>:** Rev. David Jones

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Susan Pleasance

**April 7<sup>th</sup> (Good Friday):** Rev. Sue Genge

**April 9<sup>th</sup> (Easter Sunday):** Rev. Sue Genge - Holy Communion

Services will still be recorded and available by 7pm on Sunday evening. Please plan to attend in person as you are able. It is always important to hear God's word and to share fellowship that is so necessary during these changing times.



**(Rev.) Dr. Steven Davis** *(continued from page 1)*

It was the beginning of a very warm relationship, and it taught me a lot about ministry. The young woman's father died several years ago, and now with her mother's passing I rejoice that in some way, thanks to God, they are reunited with their daughter. And I thank God for the warm connection I developed with them so long ago and that I carry with me still today.

Over the course of time some very deep relationships develop. I thought about the various families I've dealt with over the course of my time at Pickering Village. The joke about ministry is that our job is to "hatch, match and dispatch" - to preside at baptisms, weddings and funerals. In other words, it's to be a part not just of the life of the congregation as a body of believers, but it's also to be invited into the lives of individual people, to share in their joys and sorrows. What a blessing and privilege that is! Just a couple of months after I arrived, I presided at a funeral for a baby who lived only a couple of hours after birth, and the oldest person I've presided at a funeral for was 102 years old. There have been many in between those extremes. I had the chance to baptize or be involved with the baptism of many children - some of whom cried, some of whom grabbed my nose or the cross around my neck, some of whom smiled and laughed and charmed their way into my heart.

The last wedding I conducted at PVUC was for a bride whose family was Russian Orthodox. Her father came to me after the service and gave me a bottle of red wine from the Republic of Georgia, saying as he handed it to me, "Pastor Steven, you have made my daughter very happy and you have done great favour for us all. You must take this as our way of saying thank you to you from all of us." Many of the families I dealt with at such occasions were not church members and most of those who weren't I never saw again. But many were part of the PVUC family, and I find myself remembering them all right now. Funerals are a holy but sad time; weddings and baptisms are equally holy but joyful times. I've had the chance to share all those experiences with you. I have visited with you in your homes and in the hospital and in many and varied circumstances, and the bonds that I've developed over the course of caring for and sharing with you will stay with me forever. I believe that all of us are impacted by every experience; by every person that we meet and interact with. Each one of you has had an impact on me, and in a way we will carry each other forward wherever we may be.

But the time has come to say farewell. That's another reality of life - there's always another goodbye coming. I thank you all for having been a part of my journey. Blessings always!



**PVUC VOICE**

**Ministers:**

(Rev.) Dr. Steven Davis

Rev. Karen Smart

**Voluntary Associate Minister:**

Rev. David O. Jones

**Editor, Publisher & Photos:**

Dianne Catchpole

**Printing:** Wanda Ince

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**(905) 683-4721**

**Website: [www.pvuc.ca](http://www.pvuc.ca)**

**E-mail: [pvuc@pvuc.ca](mailto:pvuc@pvuc.ca)**

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**Please contact the editor.**

## Rev. Karen Smart *(continued from page 1)*

Then she invites us to raise these things to God and then offer our dreams and goals for our new ministries. I raise before God in regard to my time at PVUC:

- ❖ The Children and Youth have brought warmth to my heart. I have learned so much from them. It was so much fun learning together and sharing pageants and crafts with our church family. We especially enjoyed your baking and those gourmet hot dog lunches and Super Sundae Sundays which Brenda Plummer organized with the Christian Education Committee.
- ❖ One of the best things we did together was to rejuvenate the Youth Group. Thanks to Jordan Plummer/Wagner and Sharon Hull for their leadership and the UCW for funding the creation of a beautiful space for our youth to meet and learn in. I have appreciated being a part of your connections by texts and having you take part in worship services such as Christmas Eve. For those who have gone on from high school, I pray your prayer shawls are keeping you connected to God as you journey on in faith!
- ❖ I think of the many wonderful pastoral visits where people opened their hearts and their homes to me. Our tears and laughter were shared as we felt held in God's loving hands.
- ❖ And my colleagues have been top notch. To Steven, Oksana, Blythe, Ruth, Wanda and Anita – you are the best! I enjoyed sharing worship leadership with Steven, Oksana and the Choir. Your songs will continue to ring in my heart and my head.

For these and many other blessings, I give God thanks!

These are but a few of the connections I have made and while it is hard to say “good-bye” I am returning to a congregation I served from 2000 to 2010. Mount Zion is a loving church family in North Pickering. I know they will receive the Smart Family back with arms wide open.

For our future I pray that we will:

- ❖ pray for each other.
- ❖ continue to reach out to those in need and share God's love with the world.
- ❖ care for creation, as we seek justice and resist evil.
- ❖ continue to grow in faith and love.

Isaiah 55:12 reads: “you will leave with joy and be led away in safety”. In closing I offer this prayer which has been modified from a prayer by Joyce Rupp:

Yahweh, God of the journey, you went with the Israelites in the form of a pillar of cloud by day to show them the way and by night in the form of a pillar of fire to give them the light for their journey (Exodus 13:21-22). We long for that kind of assuredness of your presence on our new roads, too. We fear the unknown and wonder what the future will hold for us. A part of us wants to hold onto the blessings we have known and rest in the security of our time together. Remind us often that we are called to bring good news, that we are your servants, heralds of justice and peace (Isaiah 52:7). May we be so open to your Word and your way as we travel on and continue to show others how to live in Jesus' Way. Encourage us with a deepened awareness of our callings when we want to look back or when we experience feelings of loneliness, doubt or fear. Help us to hear your call to us and take us to your people and shine through our lives. We ask it in the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ. Amen!”



*Farewell - Sunday, February 19, 2023*



L-R - Rev. Karen Smart, Sean Aune and Rev. Steven Davis



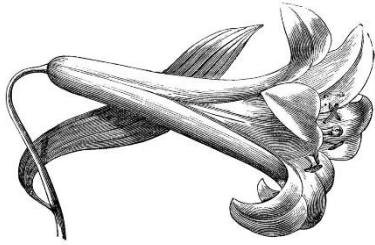
Sharon Zurbrigg and Carrie Green presented the donations to Sleeping Children around the World in honour of Rev. Steven Davis and Rev. Karen Smart



A large crowd!



Hannah Davis played several beautiful solos



## “VIRTUAL LILIES”

For many years, PVUC members have purchased Easter flowers to decorate our Sanctuary in honour of loved ones. Their names have been printed in the bulletin on Easter Sunday.

This year, we are once again, creating a lovely “Virtual Lily” page for the Voice, to display the name(s) of loved ones which will keep our tradition alive. If you wish to participate, please email the name(s) of the family members/individuals you want remembered to Dianne Catchpole at [brian.catchpole@sympatico.ca](mailto:brian.catchpole@sympatico.ca) or call 905-668-5179 by Thursday, March 16, 2023.

Donations (by cheque or E-transfer) to the PVUC General Fund or Benevolent Fund would be gratefully appreciated.

## PVUC Community of Faith Committee – Update

Your PVUC Community of Faith Profile Committee, composed of Fran Sancroft – Chair, Doug Brown, Sarah Dodge, Maddi Fitzpatrick, Ruth Fox, Anita Heeschen, Bob Martindale, Brenda Plummer, John Scott, Gwen Smith and Rev. Jean Wilson (Liaison Forum), has held seven (7) meetings (as of February 13) to work on their report to Council due March 26, 2023.

After receiving our orientation from Rev. Jean Wilson (Liaison Forum), we’ve interviewed Ministry & Personnel, Finance, Trustees and Property Chairs and reached out to other key Committees to build content for the Church’s profile.

**After February 14, congregational surveys will be discussed and form the basis of the Committee’s March 26 recommendations for future ministerial leadership.**





# SEEN AROUND PVUC



**PVUC AV crew in action on Jan. 29.**



**Sharon Zurbrigg celebrates her birthday with the Tuesday Morning Fellowship Group on Jan. 24, 2023**



**Members of the Property Committee taking down the Christmas tree on Jan. 10**



# CE FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON JAN. 29TH



*Photos by Tom Smart and Heather Scott*



**IN MEMORIAM: RUTH WEBSTER, CHAIR**  
**Mission and Service Committee**

On behalf of the members of the PVUC Mission and Service Committee, we thank Ruth Webster and her family for her unwavering dedication, support, and compassion to global and local initiatives over the years as our Chair on the PVUC Mission and Service Committee.

Ruth lived her life in the service of others. She was a talented musician and dedicated educator who touched countless lives with her compassion and grace. As an active member of several churches in Uganda and Canada, she taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, played the church organ, served on numerous service committees, and was a dedicated patron of several charitable foundations around the world. Above all, Ruth was known for her unwavering faith and devotion to living her life in the image of Christ.

A celebration in memory of Ruth's beautiful life was held at Pickering Village United Church in Pickering, Ontario, on Saturday, February 25th, at 1 pm. Ruth made a great impact on all our lives and particularly the community at Karanda Hospital in Zimbabwe.

Loving one another is one of the most profound ways we can offer compassion and hope to those we encounter, because through that love, others can be encouraged to take a chance on accomplishing extraordinary tasks.

Well Done, Ruth, Good and Faithful Servant!

Blessings,

Members, PVUC Mission and Service Committee.

## A PROFILE OF RUTH WEBSTER

By Dianne Catchpole

Many of us often wish that we had had more adventure in our lives. The work involved in earning a living, family life and contributing to society often seems to have taken all our energy and time. It is a rare individual who has been able to experience a life filled with adventure, with both its highs and lows, together with all the regular elements of daily living.

In contrast to the years to follow, Ruth Webster, born in Alliston, Ontario, began her life in a peaceful, rural landscape, on a farm in Mulmur Township, the oldest of six children. Her early roots in Christian faith were fostered by her mother, active in her local church, and a grandfather who was a missionary in northern Ontario. He was also one of the founders of the United Church of Canada in 1925.

After high school, she earned an Honours History degree at McMaster University in 1959, and subsequently, went on to Syracuse University for her Master's in Education. It was during this time that she met her future husband, a foreign student, from Uganda. This had a link to a premonition that Ruth experienced as a young girl while churning cream to make butter. She had a vision of banana trees. Later she saw these trees in Uganda, a country that has more types of bananas than anywhere else in the world.



Photo by Fran Sancroft

In 1967, Ruth moved to Uganda and stayed until 1985 – a tumultuous time which covered the years before, during and after the bloody dictatorship of Idi Amin. Ruth began her married life in northern Uganda among the Karamojong people (related to the Maasai tribe) and taught at a boys' boarding high school. After two years, they moved to Kampala, the capital city of Uganda with their blended family of six children.

During her years in Kampala, she taught high school and then moved on to the National Teachers College in order to train high school teachers. "It was challenging helping the students develop methods to bring history to life, when their future students might not even [have] had text books or a library in their high schools." Afterwards, Ruth went to the National Examinations Board, responsible for developing exams in the Arts area.

Besides her full-time employment, Ruth mentioned that, "I was involved with All Saints Cathedral in Kampala, first as organist for one of the services. They had three services every Sunday. I worked with a choir of young people. Then I was asked to be Superintendent [retitled Co-ordinator] of the Sunday School... We had a team of 12-15 teachers and about 300 children. ... To help the teachers, not just at All Saints, but throughout the diocese of Kampala, I was involved in workshops for Sunday School." She also organized festivals, where the Sunday School children sang songs and performed plays. "Once a month, we would go into the cathedral for the service and the children would sing and do the scripture... They would fill all the space around the communion table."

Ruth shared a number of personal reflections about Africa. "I enjoyed the people the most. I would see people come as tourists and want to see the animals and [they] would miss the most important part of the country – the people. But, "[the] times were not easy.

(Continued on next page)



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When Idi Amin came to power, there was a curfew [imposed], with doors locked by 7 pm at the latest. Everyone was affected. There were shortages of certain foodstuffs, like sugar, and you could line up for ½ a day to get sugar and milk for your family.”

“Everyone had lost someone. But Archbishop of Uganda, Janani Luwum, visited our church and spoke about how revenge was never a solution. He had so much love in his heart for everyone, and so, it was such a shock when we learned he had been killed, [because] he had been brave enough to tell Idi Amin his actions were wrong. Later, I learned that a house not far from All Saints was where people were taken to be tortured and then often into the bush to be killed.”

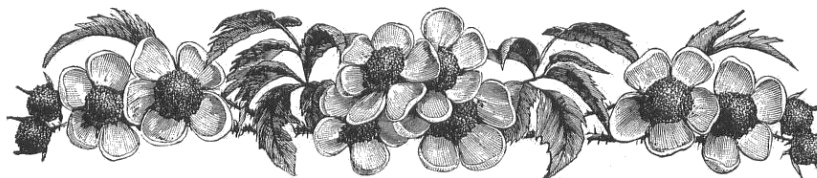
“We were in Kampala, during the Liberation war, when the Tanzanians, with other Ugandans who had fled the country, walked from one end of the country to the other. There were explosions at night. ...We were in the house with curtains drawn... I remember the night we heard the tramp, tramp, tramp. They came down our street, and I peeked through the curtains and saw the Tanzanians walking down that street. Idi Amin’s soldiers had fled by then. After that, there were a series of governments, but none seemed able to create stability. Then in July 1985, Museveni and his supporters arrived in Kampala to take over. He has been in power ever since. Sadly, he has not worked to achieve the goals that he initially espoused. He allows no opposition. His family have been grabbing up land all over.”

It was during this period, Ruth’s son was shot. Fortunately, they were able to come to Canada for treatment at St. Michaels, Toronto. Later, he experienced another bad time with gunmen in Uganda. After that, Ruth, with her son and daughter, left the country. They arrived in Canada on October 31, 1985.

Ruth and her husband, unfortunately, had parted ways. However, in 1987, she met her first boyfriend from high school. They married and moved to Manitoulin. Ruth took up employment as an occasional teacher and a beekeeper. She also was the organist at the church in Manitowaning, Clerk of Session and co-ordinator of Vacation Bible School. Bill eventually passed away, and it was then that Ruth moved to Ajax to live with her son.

Ruth joined PVUC and has been an extremely active and energetic member of our church ever since. As Ruth said, her experiences in Africa, “have spurred me to help the Thistles at Karanda Mission Hospital in northern Zimbabwe.” She has also helped sell Ugandan jewellery to support Ugandan women and an orphanage there. Currently, Ruth is Chair of Mission and Service. She is Co-ordinator of the PVUC Karanda project and a member of the New Beginnings – Interfaith Refugee Support Group. Ruth is on the Wellness and Social Concerns Committee.

Ruth has always been impressed with the generosity of people at PVUC. As she mentioned, “When they see they can make a difference in the lives of others, they respond generously.” Certainly, the same can be said of Ruth – during her exciting and unique life, she has always worked to make a difference in the lives of others and continues to do so today. We are fortunate to have such a distinguished and faithful member as part of our PVUC family.



## CHANGES

### Our Sympathy

We regret to announce the deaths of:

**Ovenell, Phil** – cherished husband of Alison Abou-Heif Ovenell  
**Webster, Ruth**



*Remember days of gladness; Remember times of joy;  
Remember all the moments that grief cannot destroy.*  
#494 Voices United

## NEWS FROM THE PEWS



### Baptism

Faith Angelica Chung  
daughter of Chad Chung  
and Sharon Abdul



### New Member

Christine Fletcher

# Kids Page

Colour by Number



Paint the world  
**SUPER**  
COLORING