

Sylvan United Church – Council Highlights (February 9, 2026)

A friendly update from your Church Council

The Council met on February 9, 2026, with Rev. Susanna Bates offering an opening prayer as we continued settling into a new season of leadership and community life at Sylvan.

Looking Into Grants & Future Planning

Council revisited the question of grant funding for driveway repairs. After inquiry, Sylvan is not eligible for the Faithful Footprints program. Other grant possibilities may exist, and re-mortgaging the property was mentioned as a potential option for future capital work.

Minister's Report – A Season of Connection

Rev. Susanna shared her plans for the coming months:

- **Lent begins soon**, with an Ash Wednesday service on February 18 at 12:30 pm.
- A **Lent theme**, "*Tell Me Something Good*," will guide worship, including weekly children's bulletins.
- A **four-week Lent gathering** is planned for March.
- Work will begin on a **new photo directory** to help us strengthen connections.
- Rev. Susanna outlined her weekly work pattern and will meet with all church groups to learn more about Sylvan's ministries.

Annual Report submissions are underway, and Council was reminded to send in their materials and photos.

Finance

The January financial report was presented and approved.

Property & Environment

Work around the buildings continues steadily:

- Electrical upgrades and road sign lighting have been completed.
- Fire safety improvements are finished, with documentation provided to Mill Bay Fire Department.
- Moss removal is scheduled for February.
- Driveway pothole management continues while long-term solutions are explored.
- Furnace and fireplace servicing revealed aging equipment and a gas leak in the hall fireplace, which has now been shut off.

- Council discussed options for replacing the sanctuary furnaces, including cost estimates and efficiency considerations.

Recycling reminders were shared, especially the importance of rinsing food containers.

Office Administration

Recent updates include:

- All-gender bathroom signage has arrived and will be installed.
- New AED paddles have been installed and tested, with coverage until 2031.
- Fire safety signage will be added in both buildings.
- Camp Pringle requested permission to display an image of a Sylvan-related artwork to highlight our shared history.

Hospitality

Hospitality volunteers continue to support Sunday mornings with warmth and care. A **Shrove Tuesday pancake supper** will be held on February 17 at 5 pm.

Outreach

The Outreach Team shared several updates:

- The chair has stepped down, and a shared co-chair model is being explored.
- A Salvation Army thank-you letter will be shared publicly.
- Sylvan's **Coldest Night of the Year team** has eight walkers and has already raised **\$1,495**, placing us in the top fundraising spot.
- Bottle-return fundraising brought in **\$400**, distributed among local charities.
- A **Food for Thought film & potluck** is planned for April 12, featuring *Tea Creek*, an Indigenous farming initiative.
- Outreach is exploring ways to support community engagement and growth.

Worship

Worship planning continues:

- Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday preparations are underway.
- A green banner will replace the purple one at the appropriate time.
- Pulpit supply for May and June is being arranged.
- The new welcoming banner is nearly finished and will soon be hung in the narthex.

M&P

Rev. Susanna's weekly work pattern was reviewed, and plans were made for upcoming staff check-ins and spring meetings.

Pastoral Care

Updates were shared on congregational health and care needs.

Women Together

The next gathering will explore the writings of Thomas Merton.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The ACM will be held **March 29 (Palm Sunday)**. Birdsong Nature School will be invited to attend.

Council also decided that monthly meetings will shift to **the second Thursday of each month** (September–June).

Next Meeting

March 12, 2026 at 7 pm in the Fireside Room.