

Norval United Church

Living Faith Story



Vision

Changing lives through God's love.

Mission

To be a caring, forgiving Christian community that welcomes people of all ages to join us on life's journey in finding God, growing spiritually, sharing our faith, and reaching out to serve others.



Statement of Inclusion

In response to God's call, Norval United Church (NUC) is committed to welcoming and celebrating people of all ages, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, racialized groups, sexual orientations, family configurations, abilities, ethnic backgrounds, and economic circumstances, into full participation in the life and work of NUC.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we strive to:

create a safe, respectful, and welcoming community
celebrate the gifts of one another

receive with gratitude the leadership, service, and ministry of one another
celebrate and honour the life passages of all

(births, baptisms, weddings, blessings, healing, death, and dying)

continue our discovery of what it means to be an inclusive community

challenge ourselves to grow toward greater inclusion and justice seeking for all people

Current Ministry and Vision

Norval United Church is a 172 year old congregation that has been blessed by God with new life and vibrancy. For years the congregation was rooted in farm country with the core of the church being dairy, apple, and mixed farming. From 1850 to 2019 the church was located in the small village of Norval. Since the mid 1990s the cities around Norval (Georgetown, Brampton, Mississauga) have grown significantly.

In 1999 NUC's first long range planning committee was formed. After many years of plans and changes to plans, our new church building was opened in November 2019 in Georgetown South, an area of significant growth. An additional 20,000 homes are planned for the farmlands in the fields west of the Church. We are currently in negotiations with Kindred Works (formerly UPRC) for the second phase of the development of a vacant three acres of property to the north and west of our current building. There is the potential for 150 rental units, some at full market rental value and some at geared to income. This will serve our community as well as provide a long term source of revenue to Norval United. The vacant land to the North and East of our property is part of Georgetown's Gellert Recreation Centre.

The new building was designed intentionally to be a multiuse space for the community. We have a wide range of community groups using space at the church. Community Living North Halton using space to run one of their day programs and North Halton Distress Centre has office space 24/7 in order to provide on demand support for folks in the community. The church and these groups have developed a very positive working relationship. We also have many other groups using space once a week, once a month or for one time events. The building is quickly becoming an active space throughout the week. Rentals are managed by a volunteer Facilities Manager in collaboration with our Administrative Coordinator while most of the set-up and take-down are taken care of by our full time contracted building custodian.



In February of 2020 we were growing growing quickly and averaging approximately 160 in attendance in our new building until COVID-19 caused us to close the building. Our strong Ministry team did an incredible job of pivoting to online worship. Our Ministry Team is comprised of our Lead Minister, an ordained minister who has faithfully lead Norval United for 30 years who will be retiring July 1 2023, and a full time DLM as our Youth and Young Families Minister. We have a strong volunteer worship team who meet monthly with our Ministerial staff, a Tech Support Staff person, as well as a contracted virtual choir director and a very talented pianist who has been employed by Norval United since 1987. Our full time Administrative Coordinator has strong IT skills.



Despite the challenges COVID-19 presented, the congregation continued to grow throughout this time. Online worship provided an opportunity to reach hundreds of people who would not otherwise be reached by Norval United. Worship is a blended style of worship, with some traditional hymns, but where the feeling is more relaxed and casual. Norval now offers two services. At 9:00 there is an online only service that is live streamed on Facebook and YouTube or can be watched at any time later. It is more personal, intimate and direct for those viewing online. The “camera on the wall” format felt less personal for online worshippers and did not fit with how we wanted our online ministry to evolve. It was a conscious decision to continue with this online service and has approximately 400 views per week. Past services can be viewed on our [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages.

Since the return to consistent in person worship in the summer of 2022 attendance has been slowly growing with an average attendance of approximately 65 people. The team has been working hard to ensure that in person worship is as safe and welcoming as possible for all. On September 11th, 2022 we had an historic day as we welcome 24 members to the congregation.

Children are very important in the life of Norval United. We provide an honorarium to five of our youth for two hours each Sunday to staff our Nursery with two teens per week. Most parents opt to keep their children in the Sanctuary for the first part of worship before leaving for their own programs led by our Youth and Young Families Minister. The children have activity tables in a corner of the sanctuary that they may use during the first part of worship. It warms our hearts when we hear their sounds and makes everyone smile at their occasional antics. Children often take part in readings with their family for various parts of the service, have offered our land acknowledgement. They have helped their families greet folks as they arrive and also assisted their families in serving at coffee time following the service. The people of NUC take to heart Jesus' call in Matthew 19:14 to let the children come to him.



Norval is known for an excellent summer camp program. Growing from a 15 year experience of doing Vacation Bible Schools, Norval now offers four weeks of all day, week-long summer camps. The camps, which always have a waiting list, are led by college/university youth and provide a great experience for the campers. Just as important, though, is the training and leadership for Middle School and High School youth at the camps

Another worship/small group experience that grew out of the pandemic is Midweek Breath, a 30 minute guided meditation, offered via Zoom on a Wednesday evening. Midweek Breath is a prayer, a poem, a music video and a 15 minute guided meditation. People gather each week from both our in person and online worship communities. We planned it as a brief Lenten exercise in 2021 and it has just continued on and become a well loved time of quiet worship together.

We have a strong Social media presence. In addition to our Facebook and YouTube channel, we are on Instagram and periodically post on TikTok. A weekly email newsletter is emailed each week. All of these social media posts are managed by our Administrative Coordinator.

We have a strong governing body who meet monthly. Please see attachment 2 for an explanation of our Governance Model. This document, along with attachment 1 our strategic framework will be used to set goals for 2023. These goals include the actions required to meet the goal, a timeline for doing so and who is responsible. Norval United is perceived in the community as a busy, active, growing warm, welcoming congregation where people are sincere, genuine, caring and compassionate. We are in the midst of the process to become an Affirming Ministry. Norval has been affirming with respect to its marriage policy and the welcoming and celebrating of all people but we had never gone through the process. It is hoped we will complete the process in the New Year

Norval reaches out to the community with Grief Support groups, monthly hymn sings at three long-term care facilities, our Prayer Purls knitting group. Norval is active in supporting local groups and charities such as Georgetown Bread Basket, Halton Women's Place, Links2Care, etc. Norval United worked with other local congregations to sponsor a Syrian refugee and is working with the same group to sponsor a family from Afghanistan.



Norval United is in a unique position. It has re-invented itself from what for years was the typical faith community. We see the use of our building by community groups as integral part of our calling to be church in this community, as a way of living out our faith and reaching out to the world. It is so heart-warming to see the new building finally being used the way it was designed, not just for the Norval United Church family of faith but as a building for the community. Norval United has had the same Lead Minister for close to 30 years. We know there will be upheaval and change as that minister retires. The congregation engaged Credence and Co. for a Visioning and Discernment process. The report from Credence and Co. has given the congregation a good framework from which to move forward. The report can be found [here](#) on our website.

Links and Attachments

Attachment 1: Strategic Framework

Attachment 2: Governance Model

