



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Saint Andrew's
United Church

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A Year of Excitement

- Over **11,400** meals were served by Sunday Suppers - 215 / week on average
- Over **650** unique community regulars called Saint Andrew's home
- The Stage was in use almost **300** days in 2023 - 82% of the year!
- **10** wonderful couples were brought together into union
- Saint Andrew's made **1** big leap forward, officially being recognized as an Affirming congregation!

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Rev. Susan Chisholm



“How do we live as people on this cold, dangerous earth [...] and stay open to presence, vulnerability, miracles?”

On Christmas Eve, we set up for 500. The chairs filled, we added more. From the tip of the stage to the top of the balcony, all those hundreds came together for worship. Standing at the door to bless people on their way, I recognized so many. There were people from our Sunday mornings, and our weekday activities. There were people who had attended funerals or weddings. I recognized people. From the concert crowd, and a few performers. I recognized kids who used to be kids, but somehow grew up in their years away – they're gorgeous faces beaming at this homecoming. I recognized familiar faces with unfamiliar faces accompanying. You should come to Saint Andrew's. You'd like it. I recognized people from other churches who prefer the 4:00 pm time slot. We can have dinner after. And – hard to describe but recognize - people in search of meaning and belonging and actual hope. Trust me, you truly can see it.

To the hundreds in the sanctuary that Christmas Eve, add a hundred or more in the hall for Sunday Suppers (a 1 in 7-year coincidence). And add the 40 or so experiencing communion at the Midnight Queer Spirit Service. How good that they were the ones to see Saint Andrew's into Christmas Day. Hundreds of people to recognize because hundreds of people come to Saint Andrew's day after day.

You know, every once in a while, someone raises the question: should we do less. It usually comes out of exhaustion or budget talks. The short answer is no. We should not, cannot, do less. The hunger for community, justice, and spirit is a reality. But we can do better with our resources: human, financial, and property assets. Wait till you join the conversation about the combined resources of the United Churches on the peninsula! Abundant resources for abundant need. What shall we do?

Minister's Message - Con't

So that was Christmas, and as you're reading now, this is lent. It's the bigger season. A season of preparation, consecration, and anticipation of new life, resurrection, spring. Every wisdom tradition has something like it. In Christianity, many practice some form of fasting: to be in solidarity with the world's hungry, or our own hunger for God, Grace, and Goodness. Here's a thought: might God be hungering for us too God's hunger for us, which is a boggling concept of us. We who are mealy-mouthed, self-obsessed, tense, doubtful, and distracted?

We cannot know resurrection and renewal with suffering and death. To dust we shall return, each of us. Each of those in Saint Andrew's on Christmas Eve, looking for community, justice, and spirit. Lent asks us to go deep enough into that reality to bring ourselves, gasping and sputtering, into the question of what - what then is the meaning of our lives? Specifically, you and me - why were we given the golden ticket of this life? And how shall we spend it? How do we live as people on this cold, dangerous earth, in these bizarre fever dream times, and stay open to presence, vulnerability, miracles?

My friends, this is not the time to do less. Our hunger and God's hunger meet at Saint Andrew's. There is work to be done, wounds to heal, and every single person who comes through our doors has the power to do something about both.

My deepest gratitude and love for you all,



Susan Chisholm

Photo courtesy of Susan Alexander



MESSAGE FROM KEVIN PARKS

Minister of Music & Venue Manager

In surveying the activity at St. Andrew's related to my dual role as Minister of Music and Venue Manager, what follows is a snapshot of what happened under my watch in 2023.

On the music ministry side, the band presented selections by Jackson Browne, Crosby Stills Nash and Young, Dolly Parton, REM, Chris de Burgh and Bare-

Naked Ladies among others. That's a pretty eclectic list! There are some core leaders in the band, but there's always room for new talent. If you would like to sing or play an instrument in our ensemble, please speak to me or another member of the group.

The choir presented anthems by Canadians Alec Tilley and Eleanor Daley, from the English Cathedral tradition by Herbert Sumsion, an oratorio excerpt by Mendelssohn and even crossed over to join the band in Billy Joel's River of Dreams, and in Advent a big jazz arrangement —complete with horns of — Mary's Magnificat by 21st Century English composer Will Todd. New choir members are always welcome. Please speak to me or a member of the choir.

I am grateful for the faithful leadership of all choir members, and notably the section leads, J Amadour, William Austin, Julia Jordan, and Erin Sparks. In November we welcomed Ibukun Olomodosi to a who brings a new dimension of music leadership as Music Associate. Ibukun will accompany the choir and add additional accompaniment to our congregational singing.

Speaking of which, I'm quite impressed with the increasing participation and confidence of the whole congregation in community singing during worship. I am committed to encouraging the congregation's song—it's why I'm on the Board of Trustees for www.musicthatmakescommunity.org and a part of the development team for the United Church's new digital worship music resource, www.thenletussing.ca. In the fall we sampled some of the new material that will be available when Then Let Us Sing! is launched in June of this year. I look forward to presenting workshops around the region to introduce this material, and to bring new songs to worship at St. Andrew's.

*“We are a beacon
for ministry through
music in our church
and community.”*

Kevin Parks - Con't

I want to recognize the work of our sanctuary tech support person Barrett Lindsay-Botten, who makes everything sound great on Sunday mornings, and the assistance of the choir librarian, Ruth Cordes, who keeps all our music and record keeping in good order.

As Venue Manager I oversee one of Halifax's busiest performance and rehearsal hubs. We are home to five choirs—Polaris Choir (Choirs for Change), Halifax Camerata Singers, Halifax Gay Men's Chorus, Capella Regalis (2 choirs!), and The Newcomer Choir — so there's a choir rehearsal at St. Andrew's every weekday. We're also the home of the Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra, whose rehearsals take place every Saturday morning. Symphony Nova Scotia continues to present their Baroque Series four times each year, and they have generously supported the physical infrastructure that has made it possible for us to develop into a sought-after performance venue. Cecilia Concerts has committed to present a significant part of their 2023-24 season on The Stage. Under our marketing banner "The Stage at St. Andrew's" we have hosted such acts as Lennie Gallant and Myles Goodwyn, and Sonic Concerts has become a returning presenter of acts that fit our more intimate setting that can still accommodate a mid-size audience of 500. Jocelyn MacLean has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of social concerns by curating and presenting a series that featured local up-and-coming female and gender diverse artists and partnering with climate action group Music Declares Emergency to present Braden Lam. Jocelyn also realized a partnership to support FeedNS in a series of Holiday concerts with Meaghan Smith. The Stage has hosted multiple recording sessions across many genres and is even the site of streamed education events by Debut Atlantic. All this totals up to mean that some event or rehearsal or activity was happening on The Stage on nearly 300 dates in 2023.

We are a beacon for ministry through music in our church and community. Music heals and soothes and inspires and evokes passion. Truly we are blessed to be able to offer all this, and I am grateful to God to have a part in the work.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kevin Parks

Congregation Designated Minister
of Music and Venue Manager



LETTER FROM CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Ian Sutherland

Dear Saint Andrew's Community,

There is a tremendous energy and spirit at Saint Andrew's these days. It can be felt in our dynamic worship services; our work to become an affirming congregation; the music and other performances that fill our building seven days a week; the hospitality we show some of the more marginalized members of our community at Sunday Suppers; and in the anticipation for the work we have ahead of us in discerning our mission and our path forward as a Congregation.

“There is no denying that 2023 has been a year of tremendous change at Saint Andrew's.”

There is no denying that 2023 has been a year of tremendous change at Saint Andrew's. In February, we ushered in a new Council and quickly set to work: rethinking our staffing model, hiring new staff, putting in place appropriate financial management tools, ensuring the continuance of ministerial services while Susan enjoyed a well earned sabbatical, supporting our work to become an affirming Congregation, engaging in community consultations

and actively cultivating relationships with other United Churches with a view to identifying opportunities to work together.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve Saint Andrew's where the hard work, talent, leadership and ambition of its staff, Council members and its many volunteers is so well matched to the challenge of our times: a time in which attendance at mainline churches is in sharp decline as are the financial and volunteer resources that have historically sustained them.

While we have managed to maintain and even grow our attendance numbers at Sunday worship and attract new members to our Church. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of many, our financial resources have not kept pace with our ambition or even our basic operating requirements and we continue to project a large operating deficit for 2024.

Letter from the Chair - Con't

As a Congregation, we are no strangers to operating deficits, but the ones of recent years are higher than those projected in previous years and while we are blessed with not insignificant endowment monies that can bridge us in the short term, over the long term, these kinds of regular operating deficits, especially ones of this magnitude, will significantly impact on our ability to attend to the needs of the Congregation and the broader community and to make the kinds of strategic investments in Saint Andrew's that will ensure our long term sustainability – ultimately denying future generations the opportunity to be part of a faith community that has supported and sustained this community for generations.

In 2024, in the lead up to our centennial celebration in 2025, we will be continuing our work of discerning our mission and our path forward as a Congregation. Our work will involve cultivating new relationships with other United Churches and determining how to best use this space we occupy at the corner of Robie and Coburg to support our mission. How will you contribute to the future of Saint Andrew's?

I would like to thank our Minister, Susan Chisholm, our staff and Council for their leadership, counsel and ongoing commitment to Saint Andrew's and the many communities it serves.

Our future will be different from our past, but from my perspective there is no Church in Halifax better positioned to become the expression of Church in the 21st Century than Saint Andrew's.

Warm Regards,



Ian Sutherland

Chair of Council,
Saint Andrew's United Church



SAINT ANDREW'S COUNCIL 2023-2024



Council Members Pictured

Ken Burt	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Susan Chisholm	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Bethany Deshpande	<i>Member at Large</i>
Larry Evans	<i>Secretary</i>
Andras Kocis	<i>Member at Large</i>
Ian Logie	<i>Member at Large</i>
Kevin Parks	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Roger Rowsell	<i>Building & Development Representative</i>
Marty Ward	<i>Member at Large</i>

Other Council Members

Leah Skerry	<i>Member at Large</i>
Ian Sutherland	<i>Chair</i>

MINUTES OF THE 204TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

May 28, 2023

Welcome

The meeting was held in the sanctuary following the regular worship service commencing at 11:30 a.m. Ian Sutherland welcomed all who were attending. The attendance sheets showed that 42 persons were present for the meeting. Since Rev. Susan Chisholm was on sabbatical, Rev. Shaun Fryday, our temporary minister, was in attendance.

In Memoriam

Marty Ward read off the names of 10 members and adherents of St. Andrew's who passed away since the date of the last Annual Meeting and thanked them for their contributions of time and talents to the work of the congregation.

Election of AGM Chair and Secretary

Andras Kocsis spoke on the matter of the election of a Chairperson and a Secretary for this AGM and noted that the current Council Chair, Ian Sutherland, is the only current member of Council who has had experience in chairing the AGM. He requested a motion to have Ian Sutherland serve as Chairperson for this AGM and Larry Evans serve as Secretary.

Motion: Roger Rowsell moved that Ian Sutherland serve as Chairperson for this Annual General Meeting of members of St. Andrew's United Church and Larry Evans serve as Secretary for the meeting. Seconded by Marty Ward. Motion carried.

Introduction and Acknowledgement by Chairperson

Ian Sutherland acknowledged that the AGM is taking place in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

Ian extended thanks to our former operations manager, Thunder Shan Narooz van Egteren, who had recently tendered her resignation and also extended thanks to the members of the previous Church Council for their service to the congregation: Sherry Hassanali (Chair); Jeffrey Smith (former Treasurer); Will Webster (Secretary and Interim Treasurer); Trish Betts; Dana-Lynn Farrell; Trish MacLeod; and Carole Cooley.

Voting Privileges

The United Church of Canada stipulates that only full members can vote on matters at the AGM. Full members are those persons who have been confirmed at St Andrew's or who have transferred their membership from another UCC congregation. It has been St Andrew's policy to extend voting privileges to persons who are adherents of this congregation, being those persons who contribute regularly to the life and work of St. Andrew's. The Chair asked for a motion to extend voting privileges to adherents.

Motion: *Bob Stephens moved that we extend voting privileges to adherents for the 2023 Annual General Meeting of St Andrew's United Church. Seconded by Frank Sutherland. Motion carried.*

Approval of Agenda

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the agenda for this AGM as circulated.

Motion: *Carole Cooley moved to approve the agenda as circulated. Seconded by Janet Skeba. Motion carried.*

Approval of Minutes

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the 2022 AGM held on February 27, 2022.

Motion: *Carole Cooley moved that the Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting be approved. Seconded by Helen Ferguson. Motion carried.*

Approval of Committee Reports and UCW Report

The Chair asked for a motion to accept the Committee Reports and UCW Report for 2022 as contained in the Annual Report which had been distributed to those attending.

Motion: *Margaret McKay moved that the Committee Reports and the UCW Report for 2022 as contained in the Annual Report be accepted. Seconded by Janet Skeba. Motion carried.*

Election of Members of Church Council

The Chair referenced the Congregational Meeting held in February 2023 at which certain persons were elected to serve as members of Church Council and to hold office until this AGM. He also made reference to the desire to have women added to the membership of Council. The Chair confirmed that the persons elected in February are prepared to continue to serve and that Bethany Deshpande and Leah Skerry have put their names forward for election. The Chair asked 3 times for any further nominations from the floor and then asked for a motion to elect the members of Church Council to serve until the next AGM.

MINUTES - CON'T

Motion: Lorne Ferguson moved that the following persons be elected to Church Council to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting: Ian Sutherland (Chair); Larry Evans (Secretary); Ian Logie (Chair of Trustees); Roger Rowsell; Andras Kocsis; Marty Ward; Bethany Deshpande; and Leah Skerry. Seconded by John Gunn. Motion carried.

Board of Trustees Report

Ian Logie, Chair of the Board of Trustees, reviewed the information contained in the Annual Report for 2022. He referenced the passing of John Young, the former Chair of the Trustees, whose insights and guidance will be greatly missed.

The investments held by the Trustees on behalf of the congregation and managed by Seamark Asset Management showed a negative performance with a loss of approximately 4% in 2022 after a positive gain of 19% in 2021. In addition to the loss in the value of the investments for the year, the Trustees were called upon to provide funds to support the operations of St. Andrew's in the amount of nearly \$148,000. He cautioned that continuing to withdraw funds in such amounts to cover operating shortfalls will lead to a diminishing balance of funds for future projects.

Motion: Ian Logie moved that the Trustees Report as contained in the Annual Report be accepted. Seconded by Don Couse. Motion carried.

2022 Financial Report and 2023 Proposed Budget

The Chair called upon Ken Burt, Chair of the Finance Committee, to present the financial information available for the year ended December 31, 2022 and also to present the proposed Budget for 2023.

Ken Burt informed the meeting that the final Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2022 are not yet available. The accounting firm of Lyle Tilley Davidson has been retained to assist with the preparation of proper Financial Statements for 2022 but their work is not yet completed. A Statement of Operations and Statement of Financial Position for the General Fund showing comparative figures for 2021 and 2022 has been prepared and copies were circulated to those attending. These statements show that the deficiency in the General Fund at year end had grown by approximately \$100,000 from the previous year. As soon as the completed Financial Statements for 2022 are available they will be distributed to the congregation.

Motion: Ken Burt moved that the financial information statements provided for the year ending December 31, 2022 be accepted. Seconded by Ian Logie. Motion carried.

MINUTES - CON'T

Ken Burt also reviewed the proposed Budget for 2023, a copy of which was made available to those attending. Assuming that the total revenues received in 2023 are consistent with the amounts received in 2022 and that projected expenditures are not exceeded, then there will be a net operating deficit of more than \$213,000 for the year.

Motion: Ken Burt moved that the 2023 Budget be approved as presented. Seconded by Lorne Ferguson. Motion carried.

Minute for Stewardship

The Chair made an excellent presentation to the meeting concerning the need for the congregation to give attention to the financial situation currently facing us and the path forward. He urged all to give serious consideration to increasing the amount being contributed to St Andrew's if at all possible to enable the church to provide the best possible support to both the members of the congregation and to the wider community. He outlined the various programs and services that are being supported now and encouraged all to invoke "the better angels of our nature" in responding to the challenges facing us.

Courtesies

Roy Hayward expressed thanks on behalf of the congregation to all of the staff and volunteers who kept St. Andrew's functioning over the past year.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Benediction by Rev. Shaun Fryday.

Prepared by Larry Evans, Recording Secretary.



BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL

2023 Representatives Report

Regional Council 15 held its 5th annual meeting – the first in-person meeting since 2019 – June 9-11, 2023, at Mt St Vincent University. By the conclusion of the meeting, it had the new name of: Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region.

The three elected representatives of St Andrew's, Kevin Parks, Patricia Betts, and Linda Scherzinger, were in attendance. Linda is a member of the bi-regional Mission, Justice, and Outreach Committee, co-chair of the Just Peace for Palestine and Israel Working Group and a member of the Ecojustice Working Group. Trish was also a member of the Justice, Mission, and Outreach Committee as Refugee Coordinator for the 3 regions of UCC East, but resigned in the fall due to health reasons. Kevin Parks is regional convenor for Music United, and at the General Council is a member of the development team for the new music resource, 'Then Let Us Sing!'. Kevin and Linda are also commissioners to the 44th General Council until the meeting of GC45 in 2025.



The theme speaker for the regional council meeting was General Secretary Michael Blair who spoke on "Our call to bold discipleship". In essence, the motions passed at the AGM were about:

1. The region prioritizing the development of local clusters in the life and work of our region and, after a job description is written and agreed upon, to seek a part time, term-limited position, "Regional Cluster Animator".
2. The region becoming an affirming region welcoming all people.
3. The meeting schedule for the regional council:
 - a. In 2024 meet in-person May 10-12, Dalhousie University campus, Truro;
 - b. In 2025 meet online for business and also meet in-person for the 100th Anniversary celebration with Fundy St Lawrence Dawning Water Region May 30-June 1st at Tantramar Veterans Memorial Civic Centre; with in-person youth events each meeting according to youth needs.
4. The regional council voted to re-name itself: Bermuda-Nova Scotia. We celebrated our new relationship with the Methodist Church of Bermuda. When the UCC reorganized, that required that a new relationship be established. Details took a long time, but all involved in the process appreciate the relationship that was approved by the current GC44.

5. Approve a proposal to ask General Council to review its decision at GC44 on Congregational Designated Ministers' role in the local council, seeking clarity on adequate and appropriate oversight and support of the ministry.

The report by Tatamagouche Centre included Indigenous women speaking of the Centre as a sacred, safe space where there is unconditional love for all people; and spoke of the concept of land back and a space that allows clan mothers to gather and share. (In the fall Linda was included in a gathering of about 30-40 Indigenous people and about 6-9 United Church/Tatamagouche Centre representatives which was focusing much more on the concept of land back and the possibility of the United Church land on which the Centre resides being "rematriated" or gradually moved toward the Indigenous "Women of First Light" having legal care and management of that land following a period of research, study and negotiation as to how to proceed.)

There was discussion and a vote on a Remit brought forward from the meeting of General Council 44 in August 2022, where the General Council approved an amendment to the Basis of Union in The Manual of The United Church of Canada to establish an autonomous National Indigenous Organization. It also authorized a Category 3 Remit to test the will of the church with respect to this change. In a Category 3 Remit each regional council and community of faith must vote on the proposed amendment. One approved, the United Church of Canada will be organized as (1) a 3-council structure consisting of communities of faith, regional councils, and a denominational council; (2) an autonomous National Indigenous Organization with its own mechanisms to make any future changes to its structure and processes – it will not be subject to the remit process. The vote was 126 to approve; 0 against.

Communities of Faith are required to register their vote (taken by the local council or governing body) on this remit by March 31, 2024. No response is counted as a 'No' vote. St. Andrew's Council considered Remit 1 at its meeting on February 15, 2024 and voted unanimously to submit a 'Yes' vote in approval of the remit questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Scherzinger, Patricia Betts,
and Kevin Parks

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

We are pleased to report on the activities of the Board of Trustees in 2023. This past year has been an active one for the Trustees, with increased focus and direction from an engaged and dedicated team. Following its structured Annual Work Plan, The Committee reviewed and reaffirmed its responsibilities relating to the stewardship of assets of St. Andrew's United, including oversight of the physical structure of the church and increased alignment with the Building Committee. The Committee also strengthened its association with the Finance Committee and Council.

SEAMARK Asset Management continues to manage St. Andrew's Endowment funds. The funds managed by SEAMARK posted positive results for the year, including 9.4% for its Balanced Composite Fund. Volatility in the stock market continued in 2023, but the S&P/TSX Composite Index ended the year with positive returns, a welcome change from 2022's decline of 8.5%.

St. Andrew's Endowment Fund, Manse Fund and Consolidated Fund ended the year with a value of \$1,421,027, compared to a starting value of \$1,492,500. The reduction in value during the year reflects \$253,800 in withdrawals to support the operations of the Church. These withdrawals were above the standard 4% of the balance of the Endowment and Manse Funds (\$54,162) and revenue from the Consolidated Fund (\$3,562) originally approved by the Trustees in early 2023. These additional withdrawals were required to fund operations as expenses exceeded donations and revenue in the year. The Trustees approved the additional allocation to support operations but cautioned that continuing to withdraw amounts exceeding the standard annual allocation is expected to lead to a diminishing balance of capital to fund future annual operating costs.

These withdrawals were offset by \$52,148 in bequests to the Endowment funds and income of \$42,058 and realized gains of \$119,352 during the year.

The Trustees look forward to working together, and with members of St. Andrew's, in the year ahead.

Trustees Report - Con't

Summary from the Board of Trustees
For the Year Ended Dec 31, 2023

	Endowment	Manse	Consolidated	Total
Starting Value (Jan 1 2023)	\$1,018,832	\$314,537	\$159,131	\$1,492,500
<i>Activity</i>				
Contributions	52,148	0	0	\$52,148
Withdrawals	(237,957)	(12,373)	(3,562)	(\$253,892)
Fees	(8,481)	(2,436)	(1,239)	(\$12,156)
Realized Gain/Loss	96,882	16,840	5,631	\$119,352
Income	30,201	7,735	4,122	\$42,058
Chance in Unrealized Gain/Loss	(29,099)	5,885	4,230	(\$18,984)
Ending Value - Dec 31, 2023	\$922,526	\$330,188	\$168,312	\$1,421,027

Respectfully Submitted,

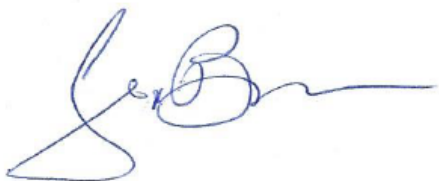
Ian Logie, Dale Noseworthy,
Diana Dalton, Terry Brennan,
Susan Chisholm, Robbie Shaw



Retirement Notice: Dale Nosworthy
Treasurer, Board of Trustees

Saint Andrew's United Church Board of Trustees has received notice of resignation from Dale Noseworthy effective upon acceptance, at the upcoming AGM on March 3rd.

Over the years, we have come to know Dale as the embodiment of professional poise coupled with infectious humor (don't sweat the small stuff) and a razor sharp mind for numbers and market trends. Her commitment to keeping board members and the congregation informed of the financial stability of the church has come at the expense of many hours of her time. For Dale to remain volunteering - years after her family has grown and moved on - is testament to her good nature and willingness to contribute to the well being of our community. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we wish her: fun in the sun (or snow), quality family time, peace, and happiness. Thank you Dale, we will miss you!



Terry Brennan

Co-chair (nominee)
Board of Trustees
Saint Andrew's United Church



ST. ANDREW'S UCW REPORT & FINANCES



With relaxed COVID restrictions, St. Andrew's UCW was able to hold a full schedule of nine meetings in 2023 and to resume most of our pre-COVID activities. We met on the third Monday afternoon of most months.

Six of the meetings featured a guest speaker or a presentation by a UCW member:

- Rev. Shaun Fryday told us about the work that our congregation was doing to achieve Affirming status.
- Esther Van Gorder from Nordic Walking Nova Scotia discussed and demonstrated Nordic walking poles.
- Robin Cummings of the Elizabeth Fry Society told us about the various programs they offer to marginalized women in the justice system. We brought donations of personal care items for their clients.
- Michael MacDonald, principal of Joseph Howe Elementary School, told us about the school's breakfast and snack program and other volunteer supports for the students. Lucille Evans (UCW member) demonstrated rug hooking and let us try it, working on coasters that she had started.
- Edie Clattenburg spoke to us about the Halifax Explosion and its impact on her family.

In June, we enjoyed a catered lunch and our annual penny auction fund-raiser.

During the year we organized receptions after six memorial services, supporting families at a difficult time. We held Valentine and Christmas cookie sales on Sunday mornings, and in November we invited the congregation to participate in our annual Soup Challenge. Our financial report shows the amounts raised by these efforts, and how we distributed the money.

We also responded to Rev. Shaun Fryday's request that we pay for the preparation of a Seeds of Hope grant application. The resulting grant supported the Pride Place event and other initiatives.

We were delighted to welcome three new members during 2023, bringing our active membership to 25, with six home members. We presented Life Memberships to Charlotte Sutherland and Janet Skiba, in recognition of their service to our group. We were saddened by the deaths of home members Betty Towler and Dorothy MacMillan, and of former member Donna Llewellyn in Red Deer, AB.

We thank outgoing leader Charlotte Sutherland for her years of service in that role, and we welcome Clara Miller and Gail Logie as our new co-chairs for 2024.

New members are always welcome!

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth Cordes

UCW Treasurer



St. Andrew's UCW - Financial Statement - 2023

Opening balance		\$3,675.88
Income:		
UCW member donations	\$2,498.00	
Other donations	\$1,250.00	
Receptions - 6 funerals	\$2,750.00	
Soup Challenge (for Joseph Howe School)	\$2,546.00	
Christmas cookie sale (for Brunswick St. Mission)	\$944.50	
Valentine cookie sale (for Sunday Suppers)	\$623.55	
Other fund raising	\$320.00	
Maritime Conference Financial Services (interest)	\$80.00	
Fellowship of the Least Coin	\$33.20	
	Total income:	\$11,045.25
Donations:		
St. Andrew's Benevolent Fund	\$400.00	
St. Andrew's appeal re Turkish earthquake relief (Antebi family)	\$100.00	
St. Andrew's Memorial Fund (re D. Llewellyn, B. Towler, D. MacMillan)	\$75.00	
St. Andrew's Operating Fund (for Sunday coffee)	\$575.00	
St. Andrew's Sunday Suppers	\$1,125.00	
Angola Memorial Scholarship Fund	\$150.00	
Arthur Kidston Memorial Camp	\$1,020.00	
Brunswick Street Mission	\$2,500.00	
Dalhousie United Church Chaplaincy	\$100.00	
Joseph Howe Elementary School breakfast program	\$2,546.00	
Women's Interchurch Council of Canada (Fellowship of the Least Coin)	\$33.20	
	Total donations:	-\$8,624.20
Expenses:		
Regional and National UCW dues	\$92.00	
Maritime Conference UCW newsletter subscription (3 years)	\$21.00	
Supplies for Benevolent distribution	\$93.48	
Laundry supplies for Brunswick St. Mission	\$20.68	
National UCW (2 life memberships)	\$120.00	
Net expenses re June lunch meeting	\$50.61	
Preparation of UCC grant application (re Pride Place event)	\$1,500.00	
	Total expenses:	-\$1,897.77
Closing balance:		\$4,199.16
Investment Certificate: Maritime Conference Financial Services		\$2,000.00

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Cordes, UCW treasurer



“Perhaps the most prominent feedback we received was about the importance of showing up.”

I'm pleased to present an overview of the work of the St. Andrew's Affirming Committee over the past year. The move toward declaring an officially affirming stance has been increasingly important to many of us here at St. A's due to certain aspects of the current political climate: the English-speaking world has lately seen a wave of disinformation-fueled hate against the 2SLGBTQIA+ community,[1] particularly transgender and gender-nonconforming people, and most specifically around the prospect of children and youth who may be discerning a trans identity.

This has manifested variously as divisive rhetoric and hate speech in the public square, vitriolic anti-2SLGBTQ+ demonstrations (such as the so-called "One Million March for Children" this past September), and, most recently, a tide of repressive legislation which has now begun to reach our shores. While all of this, in itself, constitutes a pressing social justice issue, that this form of hate is often underwritten by a prescriptive and narrow-minded strain of Christian theology demands a coherent and public response from progressive communities of faith.

While St. Andrew's has been generally supportive of 2SLGBTQ+ people in our midst (as I fortunately experienced upon coming out as genderqueer in late 2016), many members and adherents of St. Andrew's have increasingly wished to see us become recognized as an officially Affirming congregation, with an eye toward expanding our ministries to include specific and intentional support for the wider 2SLGBTQ+ community in Halifax (a function largely handled by the Queer Working Group, chaired by Rev. Shaun Fryday). Though we learned that St. Andrew's had already initiated an Affirming process several years prior, this was never completed and required a fresh start.

[1] That is, Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other forms of diversity in relation to the default ("straight") cisheteronormative social narrative that governs our daily lives and/or loving relationships; queer is often used as an umbrella term by people within one or more of these groups. For the sake of brevity, I hereafter shorten this abbreviation to 2SLGBTQ+.

AFFIRMING COMMITTEE - CON'T

At an early meeting of the Queer Working Group in February 2023, I volunteered to chair the new Affirming Committee. The new Affirming process was then 'soft-launched' at a Sunday service, in which I explained that while becoming a truly welcoming space is certainly no easy task, the work of committing to an intentionally affirming position is in fact vital to our ongoing ministry in the wider world. Soon after, a committee was officially struck, consisting of myself, Rev. Shaun Fryday, Susan Alexander, Kelly Kitamura, and Jean Shaw (Michelle Yorke joined a few weeks later).

The committee's first few meetings produced several ongoing objectives. In addition to a revision of our Values and Mission statements to better align with the standards of Affirm United,[2] we decided to focus our efforts on preparing for a large roundtable session involving local 2SLGBTQ+ organizations, to be organized by the Queer Working Group for Fall 2023. This would be the start of an ongoing process of consultation with the outside 2SLGBTQ+ community regarding how we might lend our intentional and tangible support. With this in mind, we proposed and planned several education and outreach events for the congregation, including a lecture / discussion series on 2SLGBTQ+ topics, a series of Sunday morning guest speakers over the spring and summer, as well as a film series and book study (which have not yet come to pass). We also discussed ways to make the stony exterior of our building more explicitly welcoming, most obviously by the prominent addition of Pride flags.

The six-week lecture / discussion series was held over March and April; I facilitated, along with a few informal guest speakers (including Rev. Shaun Fryday and Rev. Ivan Gregan). In addition to discussing the histories and subcultures of the major communities under the 2SLGBTQ+ umbrella, we also spent time examining the concepts of gender and relationships through a theological lens, as well as unpacking the Bible's so-called "clobber texts" that are often quoted to condemn 2SLGBTQ+ relationships. Some of the best discussion happened outside of the planned presentations; an open Q&A period resulted in a particularly moving talk about some of the negative stereotypes and moralistic objections that have often surrounded 2SLGBTQ+ matters, and what goes into building truly ethical relationships (whether they adhere to cis-heterosexual norms or not).

Unfortunately, from mid-May onward I found myself much less able to be involved regularly, as I was then invited to a summer supply ministry position at Rockingham United. Though this took up most of my attention over the next two months, and financial difficulties got in the way thereafter, the Affirming process continued.

[2] Affirm United / S'Affirmer Ensemble (AUSE) is an independent body within the United Church that recognizes individual communities of faith as officially 2SLGBTQ+-affirming and committed to full inclusion of all genders and orientations within the church environment.

Guest speakers participated in Sunday services throughout the summer monthly; pride flags were acquired and displayed prominently, and a helpful poster underlining the importance of checking in about pronouns — a matter that has been particularly close to my heart — greeted me on my next visit.

The Pride Place roundtable event went forward in October, facilitated by Robert Wright, and was extremely well-attended (see the Queer Working Group report). Though there were certainly some imperfect moments, the discussion that I observed and facilitated was enthusiastic and highly constructive. Perhaps the most prominent feedback we received was about the importance of showing up; for a population that has so often been mistreated at the hands of the Church at large (including past and present manifestations of the United Church itself), we as a consciously progressive community of faith have a responsibility to help change the prevailing narrative. Many participants stressed the need for us to not simply label ourselves an open and affirming space, but to be engaged in a consistent process of learning from our secular 2SLGBTQ+ neighbours and actively demonstrating our support.

In November, a final report on our Affirming process was prepared by Rev. Susan and Kelly Kitamura, submitted to Affirm United along with a revised Values and Mission statement and a copy of our marriage policy (which has been gender-inclusive for some time). The report and statement were accepted by Affirm after several minor revisions, and we held our official Affirming celebration on November 26. There was an air of joy in the sanctuary as rainbows were displayed everywhere and cake was served, but the event was more than just self-congratulatory; I certainly met some new faces in the congregation who seemed glad that their spirituality and their queerness could finally, officially, coexist here. For my part, though I remained aware that the work of seeking understanding and building bridges can take lifetimes, and that missteps inevitably happen, the twenty-something tenor who had quietly asked to be referred to as "they" seven years ago was pleased. Even as I now watch from a distance (being occupied with pulpit supply elsewhere), I know and trust that, little by little, we will continue to live out this part of our faith sincerely and earnestly.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tamsin Robson, M.Div. (they/she)

Outgoing Chair,
Affirm Committee

BUILDING & SITE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

The past year of 2023 was an eventful one for both the Building and the Site Redevelopment Committees. The year started out as two separate Committees, each with its own mandate and work plan. With Council's acceptance of the recommendations from the Chairs of both Committees presented at the May Council meeting, the Building Committee and the Site Redevelopment Committee have now been amalgamated into one Committee.

The Building Committee's basic role & responsibility is to oversee the maintenance & upkeep of the Church Buildings & Property, to maintain the value of the asset and prevent any deterioration that might negatively affect the property value and enjoyment of the facility. This includes working with Saint Andrew's staff on day-to-day issues, ensuring contracts/agreements with maintenance contractors & suppliers are in place & work scopes executed, managing budget, and long-term planning. Early in the year, the Building Committee identified repair work required for Immediate (Year 1), Short-Term (1 - 5 years), Intermediate (6 - 10 years), and Long Term (10 - 20 years). This effort was guided by a detailed Building Condition Assessment Report commissioned by the Building Committee and issued in February by Stantec Architecture Ltd. The most critical issues requiring attention were noted and cost estimates shared with Church Council & the Congregation in April. Costs were estimated to be in the \$1.7M range.

The Site Redevelopment Committee has a mandate to research and outline options for potential redevelopment opportunities for Saint Andrew's Church property, to both enhance our ministry as well as create additional revenue to support ministry & church expenses. In 2021, the committee engaged with United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC), founded by UCC in 2019 to provide real estate development expertise & services. A proposal with options was presented by UPRC in February 2022. Further attempts to engage with UPRC were not successful, mainly due to the limited capacity of UPRC to process the numerous requests from other churches across the country. In April 2023, Council accepted a recommendation from the Site Redevelopment Committee to engage Wayne Marsh to facilitate a Stakeholder Consultation Strategy Process as part of the site redevelopment planning. The process was completed with an extensive report issued in November 2023 that is currently being reviewed by Council.

Influencing the work plan, scope, and timelines of both committees are the high-level discussions currently happening with the other Peninsula United Churches. As noted, there is now one Building-Site Redevelopment Committee.

It was recognized that the work of each committee is directly related to & dependent on the work & decisions of the other – the separate committees also had a significant overlap of common members. The first meeting of the combined committee was held on September 12th. At this meeting, it was recommended that the concurrent processes of the Wayne Marsh Consultations as well as the Peninsula Churches Discussions should proceed and a strategy then developed based on these outcomes before any additional significant funds are expended on building repairs or site redevelopment plans. Emergency repairs should only be performed until a clear mandate is established. Council agreed with this recommendation. While informal committee work has been on-going since September, there has not been another formal committee meeting. Committee meetings should recommence early in 2024.

The following overview of maintenance work was performed in 2023:

1. **STANTEC ARCHITECTURE BUILDING CONDITION REPORT** - Engaged to provide an update to their original Condition Report from a few years ago. The report was reviewed in detail and generally was consistent with the earlier original report.
2. **ROOF** - The roofs at Saint Andrews are at the end of their life expectancy. Visual deficiencies are evident: asphalt shingle loss, roof gutter/drain deficiencies and missing components, deficiencies in the metal/copper roof and membrane flat roofs. Mader's Roofing inspected the roofs and provided further insight on possible options for replacement. Central Roofing replaced a portion of a flat roof area that was the source of significant water leaking in the stairway connecting the sanctuary and hall. Coastal Restoration and Masonry removed failing caulking and provided new sealant to various areas of roof flashing and seams associated with the south side metal copper roofs. Various roof drains and rain leader downspouts were cleared of debris and blockages. These repairs have proven to be successful in mitigating water leaks. The Staff and Committee continue to closely monitor for leaks and roof deficiencies, with the approach of a patch and repair on as needed basis in anticipation of a clear strategy on site redevelopment.
3. **WINDOWS & EXTERIOR BUILDING ENVELOPE** - Coastal Masonry and Restoration resealed around window frames and mortar joints on the lower exterior south side of the Sanctuary.
4. **STAIRS** – De-laminated concrete stair treads & risers and at the main Robie Street entrance were repaired.

5. **BELL TOWER** - Meetings with various consultants on the Bell Tower deficiencies continued throughout 2023. Heritage Standing Inc., who completed an earlier Phase 1 Bell Tower Assessment Report, were re-engaged to conduct a Phase 2 Remedial Report, including exploratory investigation of interior Tower brick walls. We anticipate the final report by the first quarter of 2024. Preliminary comments from this investigation confirmed the Tower currently is structurally sound. In the meantime, protective fencing continues to remain in place due to the risk of flaking exterior stone cladding veneer.
6. **ENERGY AUDIT** - An Energy Audit Report on the building was completed by CBCL. This audit was supported thru the United Church of Canada Faithful Footprints program that has the goal of reducing carbon emissions from all church operations across Canada by 2050. The CBCL Audit Team identified 8 opportunities. Members of the Building/Site Committee are focusing on 4 of the opportunities, which would result in short-term financial paybacks in energy savings while improving building services. These initiatives are being further reviewed for consideration to implement in 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Building & Site Redevelopment Committee



MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT



The Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee acts as liaison between the clergy and lay staff, and St. Andrew's congregation and Council. This is a mandatory committee required by the bylaws of the United Church of Canada. M&P oversees the roles, functions and entitlements (vacation, sick leave, continuing education, sabbatical) of clergy and lay staff, and facilitates employment letters as directed by Council. If M&P receives personnel-related concerns from the congregation, the committee works to find a resolution to the issues. Each year, the committee meets with clergy and permanent staff members to review and evaluate their performance over the past year and to discuss goals for the coming year.

Committee meetings are held bi-monthly, with the exception of the July and August, or more frequently if required. While the business of the committee remains confidential, M&P reports regularly to Council.

M&P is very grateful to our full-time, part-time and contract staff, for their passion and dedication to support St. Andrew's mission and all of the work that happens in our community.

A sincere thank you to all M&P members for their time and efforts on behalf of the congregation.

*Respectfully
Submitted,*
Carole Cooley
Chair

2023 Additional
Committee Members

Katherine Frank
Roy Hayward

PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Pastoral Care Committee has held mainly online meetings this year for ease of access. We have continued to offer in-person visits upon request with mainly telephone and mail visits to keep each of our congregation members in contact with St. Andrew's. Through this contact, our committee provides support to members of our congregation who are in need. We are most grateful for the guidance of Rev. Susan Chisholm, Minister.

The continued lack of online worship is a great disappointment to those who were unable to attend services in person. For many of us, the inability to attend worship in-person has highlighted the importance of maintaining a connection to St. Andrew's. During our time apart, we have become more aware of the impact of isolation from our church family and this has heightened the importance of our visitation program to the health and well being of our congregation. We are profoundly disappointed that St. Andrew's has decreased online access when most other organizations are expanding their online offerings. We sincerely hope that St. Andrew's will prioritize equitable access for all our congregation in the future.

This year, we continued to send handwritten cards to members of our congregation in need of support and also to members of our congregation who have shown great strength in leadership during the year. We are most grateful to all of our members who volunteer their time and energy to make St. Andrew's a better place.

We supported Rev. Shaun Fryday on the Affirm Committee as St. Andrew's completed the process to becoming an officially affirming congregation in 2023.

Although we have lost some members of our congregation in 2023, it is notable that all families expressed their gratitude for the connection that St. Andrew's had maintained with each of their loved ones.

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to all our volunteers, committee members and especially to Rev. Susan Chisholm who is the epitome of "pastoral care".

2023 Committee Members:

Betty Anderson (Past Chair), Joan Auld, Susan Chisholm, Kelly Kitamura (Chair), Jean Shaw

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Kitamura

Chair

QUEER WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Queer Working Group is made up of members of the community and the congregation and have to responsibility to look at the big picture in terms of the needs of the Queer/Trans community. Most of 2023 was dedicated to preparing for and hosting the Community Round Table where over 42 groups from the community came to a day at St Andrews in late Oct. It is know as the Pride Place event and a report was produced and is available for review.

Essentially the feedback form the day showed: an enormous gap in community based space for gathering and meeting in safe environments; the need for Churches to become solid Allies; and the need for further conversation in how we can close the distance between the church community and the Queer/Trans community.

Plans are underway to expand the membership of this group to include other united churches in the area and work with the existing Affirming congregations to join forces in this ministry.

If you are interested in working on this committee or have questions please speak to Shaun Fryday.

Many thanks to Patricia Neves who has spent countless hours in the success of this project.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shaun Fryday



REFUGEE SUPPORT COMMITTEE REPORT

OBJECTIVES

Respond to requests for Saint Andrews' assistance to refugee families as they are approved by federal authorities to enter Canada. Reunification of related refugee families is a major goal. Support and assistance are provided as families are approved. Committee support and activity begins after notice that families have been officially approved to immigrate.

WORK PLAN

Respond to refugee family needs as required upon approval by the federal government.

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED IN 2023/EARLY 2024

In late 2023 Mahmoud Almalsalmeh's family of five was suddenly approved by federal authorities to enter Canada. The family arrived in Halifax on January 11, 2024. With extremely short notice extensive assistance was provided by Saint Andrews' volunteers and our community network. Janet Skiba led the effort under extremely difficult circumstances to successfully set up the apartment found for this family.

Tasks completed on behalf of refugee families:

- Recruitment of volunteers and donors
- Solicitation, collection and distribution of donations of funds, household goods, furniture, groceries
- Support with research, inspection, rental and initial payment of apartments for some supported families
- Thoroughly clean/repair all donated items and each apartment.
- Delivery and placement of furniture, draperies and other household goods to each apartment
- Greet arriving families at Halifax Stanfield International Airport and transportation to their new homes.
- Ongoing support of each family is required to assist with navigating access to the Newcomer's Health Clinic, ISANS, free bus passes for a year, English language training, school registrations for school age children, counseling and advice on a wide range of problems and issues.

What worked well / what did not:

- Working well: Wesam Almalsalmeh recently reported that many of his friends in the wider refugee community in Halifax wish that they had friends like he and Waed have found at Saint Andrews. He has indicated that many of his fellow refugees in Halifax do not have the same kind of support and assistance that Saint Andrews consistently provides.
- Working well: Saint Andrews has officially sponsored two refugee families, Wesam Almalsalmeh's family in 2016 and that of Abdel Rahman Al Keek (Waed Almalsalmeh's brother and his family) in 2022. Since that time our Refugee Committee has been called upon to assist other refugee families, both Afghan and Syrian to become established in Halifax; this has involved extensive support by a small group of volunteers within Saint Andrews and the wider community.
- Working well: While the Refugee Committee has shrunk to just a few active members the congregation can always be relied upon to provide donations of cash and household goods as needed when refugee families arrive. There is strong congregational support when needy occasions arise.
- Not working well: Access to English language training is still not working as it should because of excess demand and extremely limited capacity. As a result, refugees continue to face barriers to post-secondary education and employment that accentuates the difficulties they face in their new country.
- Not working well: Access to critical dental and medical care is not readily available.

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to support the reunification of the far-flung Almalsalmeh family, some of whom remain stranded in the Middle East. Specifically, Wesam Almalsalmeh has two married sisters and their families currently living in dire conditions in conflict zones. They have initiated applications to enter Canada but their approval processes have not yet been completed. They too will need assistance and support from the Saint Andrews family in future.



We continue to strongly recommended that in each future instance when Saint Andrews is participating in support and assistance to a refugee family that notice be given to the congregation both from the pulpit and in the weekly newsletter. Members of the congregation are not always consistently aware of the activities of the Refugee Support Committee.

This will facilitate the congregation's awareness and enable those who want to participate by donating materials and/or support to assist incoming refugees, e.g., financial donations, household goods, furniture, accommodations, and transportation. This is a key part of Saint Andrews outreach activity, and it is important that members of the congregation are always aware of our work on behalf of refugee families.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helen Ferguson

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Social Justice Committee engages with the congregation and the broader community in education, advocacy, and action on environmental and social justice issues. Members are: Joanne Roy, Susan Alexander, Ellen Taylor, Beth MaGee, Andrea Harrison, Trish Betts, Linda Davis, Linda Scherzinger, Bill Chambre – new members are always welcome

The year began with the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper **fundraiser for Phoenix Youth** programs. This was a free-will offering event on February 21st. A great group of volunteers prepared and served the meal of pancakes, ham and beans. There was a record attendance enjoying the meal with friends and neighbours. Over \$2,000 was donated to Phoenix Youth.

Protecting the Earth/Addressing the climate crisis:

We urged our MPs to pass legislative **Bill C-226 to end environmental racism.**

Earth Week, we sent and encouraged members to send letters to Canada's Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, urging him to set ambitious climate action targets and expressing support for climate justice legislation.

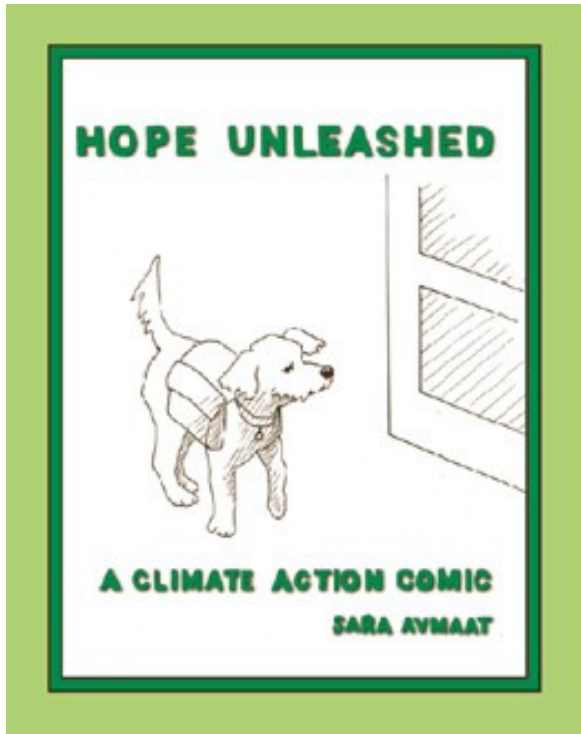
Earth Day, April 22nd, we promoted and invited St Andrew's people to join the People's Parade for Life on Earth organized by the Ecology Action Centre and other partners including KAIROS. We made a banner for St Andrew's to carry in public. Andrea Harrison led an Earth Day worship service and we distributed individual pledge cards to live more sustainably.

We invited people to test drive an electric car in the parking lot of Mt St Vincent where the United Church Region 15 AGM was being held in June.

We shared ways to take action by participating in "plastic-free July" and ways to help save the planet from being overcome with plastic.

We called for new members to join us after a summer of caring deeply about all those here and around the world who have been suffering from devastating wildfires, floods, droughts and extreme heat - all fueled by climate change; knowing that climate change amplifies all forms of injustice – hunger, migration, racism, poverty, inequality, deadly viruses, homelessness, and war.

In September we joined the youth of Halifax in the fifth global youth climate strike. We marched with churches, with our St Andrew's banner, as we called for a rapid, just, and equitable end to fossil fuels. With our presence we were in **solidarity with the youth** for the love of Creation and our love for our children and grandchildren.



We were thrilled to join the November book study on Joanna Macy's, "**Active Hope**", led by Susan Chisholm and Joanna Bull of the Ecology Action Centre.

We promoted and sold a book for families/all ages by a local artist on climate hope/action, "Hope Unleashed". Proceeds benefitted the Ecology Action Centre and the NS Nature Trust.

Addressing Poverty:

We shared facts and resources about why many people in Nova Scotia are food insecure.

We shared information about the rising cost of living and facts about a **Guaranteed Livable**

Income. "A guaranteed, livable basic income would ensure that everyone can meet their most basic needs, like putting food on the table and keeping a roof over their heads." We sent messages to our MPs asking that a guaranteed livable income be on the legislative agenda. We attended an all-day Saturday conference on a Basic Livable Income at the Central Library.

We promoted the annual fundraiser breakfast for **Brunswick St Mission**. We began requesting food donations for **Brunswick Street Mission** and posted a list of needed items.

Towards a Just Peace for Palestine and Israel:

We invited people to participate in the **Palestine Land Exercise** as a Lunch and Learn on May 7th with a catered lunch by the Ummah Mosque. 30 people participated in the interactive learning of the relations between Israel and the Palestinians over many years.

SOCIAL JUSTICE - CON'T

In November, we organized a Lunch and Learn. **Bill Chambre** shared his experience in East Jerusalem where he served in the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme. He spoke during the worship service and shared more stories and photos and responded to questions after a lunch provided by Nour Issa, a local Palestinian who also shared her personal story.

In December, we sold Fair Trade Palestinian olive oil, za'atar, and soap and also Fair Trade, organic Breaking The Silence coffee in support of the Maritimes Guatemala Solidarity Network. Proceeds benefitted Palestinians and Guatemalan Mayan people in their searches for justice.

We greatly appreciated Susan Chisholm sharing the ecumenical statement, "A Cry to End the Violence and to uphold the rights of all civilians to life and freedom from violence and discrimination.



As war continued in Gaza, we shared **ways to respond** with a sample letter to the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and our MP **for a ceasefire** and suggested ways to donate.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Scherzinger



SUNDAY SUPPERS REPORT

Every Sunday afternoon, the Sunday Suppers community gathers. We welcome new volunteers and guests, celebrate with guests who have found an apartment or a job, mourn long time guests who die, listen to good and bad stories from the week, and welcome everyone with a smile, hot drinks, and food.

“We have been inspired by an influx of young volunteers who bring their energy, smiles, and kindness each week.”

Demand for Sunday Suppers' services continued to grow in 2023 due to rising food prices and lack of affordable housing. We served 11,426 meals last year. There are an increased number of people working full time and still not able to afford housing. We offer tents and sleeping bags to the recently unhoused. This year we handed out about 30 tents.

The Suppers had a change in the leadership team and with regret, we said goodbye to Elaine Churchill as she retired and moved to their dream home in the Valley. Our current leadership team is Kathy McKay, Marnie Ritcey, Marsha Meldrum, Lucy Caravan, Mark Heerema, and Graham Muirhead.

In addition to the hot meal each Sunday, our guests also receive at least two pieces of fresh fruit, treats, pizza, granola bars, a beverage, coffee, tea, sugar, and toilet paper. There are socks, used warm coats, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, shampoo, razors, and menstrual products available for those in need.

Our volunteer numbers have increased back to pre-Covid numbers. We have been inspired by an influx of young volunteers who bring their energy, smiles, and kindness each week. Two of the high school students did a sock and glove drive at their school. The four-plus cases of items donated were wonderful.

We continued our tradition of guests choosing a gift at Christmas – towels, blankets, travel mugs, water bottles, flashlights, or hats with built-in headlamps. Our party meal is always holiday chaos.

Donations of gifts and food arrive, Progress Club volunteers help guests select cards to send to family and friends, a volunteer plays Christmas songs on the piano, guests share happy and sad memories of past Christmases. There is a brief interlude of quiet as the volunteers hold taper candles and sing Silent Night. We welcomed guests on Christmas and New Years Eves as these fell on Sundays.

Our membership in Feed Nova Scotia provides us with a weekly delivery of food. We also have an opportunity to meet and learn from other food security programs and take part in visioning and advocacy work. We meet the Feed Nova Scotia Standards and are now working toward meeting the Food Banks Canada Guidelines.

The Suppers are dependent on a web of volunteers and donors. With our increased number of meals served, we now use 20 casseroles each week. Many of the church groups cooking casseroles have been involved for 35+ years. The Kin Club provides an annual BBQ, food, and gift donations throughout the year. Grace Chapel assists with BBQs, provides freezer space, sandwiches, and other donations. There is a long list of other donors.

The support from the congregation and staff of St. Andrew's is impossible to quantify. You go above and beyond in providing casseroles. The UCW has cookie sales to support our work. The Sunday School prepare food treats for our guests. When we need volunteers to help at the suppers, people from St. Andrew's show up. The administrative support with donations, invoices, and charitable tax receipts lessens the load on volunteers.

In closing, we could not do any of this without the many people of Saint Andrew's and others who help however they are able, and we are very grateful. One of our guests expressed the essence of the suppers when he said:

"I like coming here because I feel something special in the air."

Respectfully Submitted,

Sunday Suppers Leadership Team

WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE REPORT

The Worship and Music Committee is back this year with some new members and a new mandate, to support our staff members as they prepare weekly worship, to support the people who are delivering aspects of the Sunday morning experience, and to take a training-based approach to involving the people of St Andrew's in the work of Worship and Music.

"In the past year, we have offered quality in-person services [...] attendance has been steadily growing through the year."

In the past year, we have offered quality in-person services, with occasional recordings made of special services or music events. Attendance has been steadily growing through the year. In addition to Susan's excellent reflections, she will continue to invite guests with different perspectives to come speak to us as well. We will bring different voices to worship in other ways, for example we have members of the Worship and Music Committee (and friends) introducing offering time, which was restored to our worship services this winter.

There are a number of ministries that make our worship experience possible, we appreciate their joyful contributions, and we are looking for ways to support their work.

This past fall, in consultation with Janet Skiba, who heads Coffee Hour, we held a training session one Sunday after the service, which showed a small group how to operate our high-tech coffee machines and move all the equipment from the kitchen to the sanctuary and back again. We hope to have another session before the summer. We also appreciate Margaret MacKay and her dedicated team, who are now preparing Communion every other week.

This past year, we have connected with the Queer Working Group, about what visible signs we could have of our Affirming status even on Sundays when our huge rainbow flag is not on display. We have also supported the work of the Welcome Ministry, by finding them a beautiful desk, so they could offer a concierge experience to everyone who walks through our door. We will be working together in the Christmas season, to equip the greeters with a safety plan for our packed Christmas Eve service.

Many thanks to our Ministry staff, Susan and Kevin, for being so open and consultative about what it takes to make Worship and Music happen at St Andrew's, and to our Sexton and assistant Sextons, who so often put in the legwork to make our ideas reality. Thanks, also, to outgoing committee member, Kim King, whose gentle wisdom guided us in the early days of revisioning our work, and also found us that great desk. Lastly, thanks to the people of St Andrew's, who clap along, and pray together, and drink coffee, and read a scripture or pass the plate, and each Sunday come back to continue to experience the love of God lived out inside and outside our doors. We couldn't do it without you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Fraser

Chair of Worship and Music Committee



FINANCIAL REPORT & STATEMENT FOR THE 2023 FISCAL YEAR

Dear Members,

I am pleased to present the finance report for Saint Andrew's for the fiscal year 2023. It has been a year of both challenges and accomplishments, and we are grateful for the continued support of our Council as we worked through staffing changes, computer system renewal and reconstruction of two year's of financial transactions. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of Patricia Neves. Many thanks Patricia.

2023 Financial Overview

Income \$783,859 exceeded budget by \$352,164, highlights:

- Congregational Offerings: \$271,734, \$56,734 more than budget.
- Hall and Church Rental: \$140,562, \$15,628 more than budget.
- Grants: \$45,000, none budgeted
- Bequests received \$104,859, \$89,859 more than budget
- Other Income: \$221,704, \$144,944 more than budget

Expenses \$886,943 exceeded budget by \$203,002, highlights:

- Personnel Costs (Salaries, Benefits, etc.): \$444,170
- Building Maintenance \$41,878
- Utilities: \$82,704
- Outreach and Refugee Support: \$104,818
- Consulting, Legal and Accounting : \$42,522

Net (Loss): \$103,084

Looking Ahead:

- As we move forward into the new fiscal year, we anticipate both opportunities and challenges. It remains crucial for us to remain diligent in our financial stewardship and to adapt to changing circumstances.
- We will continue to explore new avenues for fundraising and revenue generation while being mindful of maintaining financial transparency and accountability.
- We will invest in energy efficiency projects to reduce our dependency on energy and to reduce our carbon foot print.

- Your continued support and involvement are invaluable as we strive to fulfill our mission and serve our community. We are looking for a Treasure and Finance Committee members for vacancies in 2024.

In conclusion, I want to express my gratitude to our members, adherents, volunteers, and staff for their unwavering commitment and dedication. Together, we will continue to make a positive impact and financially strengthen our Saint Andrew's community.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ken Burt

Executive Director



Profit and Loss Jan - Dec 23 (Unaudited)

Income	
4070 · Grant funding Income	45,000.00
4230 · Hall Rental	63,440
4240 · Church Rental	77,122
4245 · The Stage Ticket Sales	72,620
4270 · Fund Raising Projects	7,310
4280 · Miscellaneous Income	13,626
4295 · Insurance Salary reimbursed	15,272
4690 · Transferred to Liability Account	35,263
4710 · Congregational Offerings	271,734
4810 · A. M. MacKay Trust	36,494
4850 · O.E. Smith Trust	13,380
4880 · Bequests Received	104,859
4911 · Hospitality Income	2,200
4914 · Designated Mission and Service	25,539
Total Income	<u>783,859</u>
Salaries and benefits	446,489
Building costs	137,149
5310 · Insurance Premiums	25,097
5330 · Furniture and Equipment	1,004
5350 · Miscellaneous Expenses	4,844
Music costs	7,610
Worship and faith formation	3,658
5620 · Communications	1,307
5625 · Hospitality Expense	3,401
5650 · Outreach	46,456
5655 · Refugee Support	58,363
Total 5680 · Committee Operations	4,714
Office expenses	17,796
5810 · Legal Accounting and PR	17,569
5830 · Consulting Services	24,954
5840 · Subscriptions and Memberships	581
Total Stage expenses	67,835
Mission and service	
5960 · Regional Council Assessment	18,117
Total Expense	\$886,942.92
Net Income (Loss)	-\$ 103,084



In Memorium

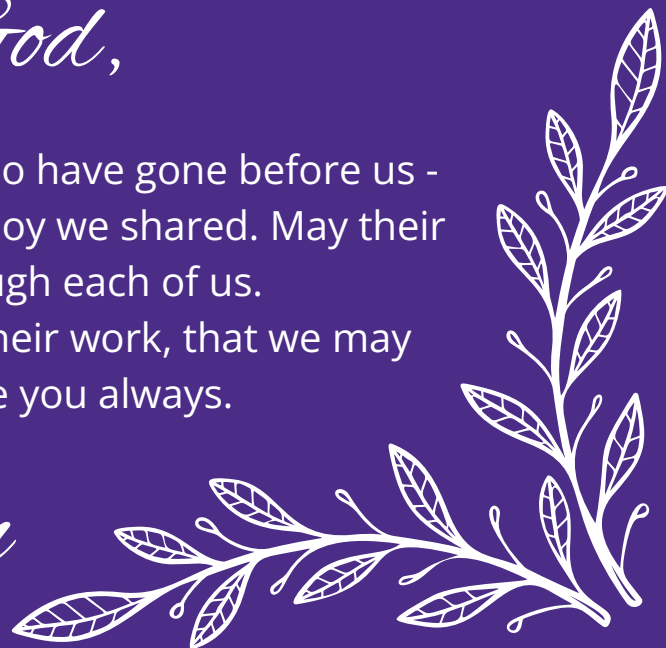


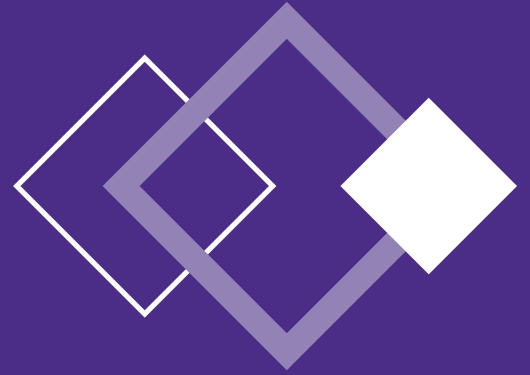
Marion Anderson
Peter Corkum
John Fraser
Nancy MacDonald
Raney MacDonald
Dorothy MacMillan
Brenda McCarthy
Alexa McDonough
Alan Pyesmony
Edward Rafuse
Marjorie "Betty" Towler
Keith Walling
Carol Young

Loving God,

We thank you for the gift of those who have gone before us - the times we spent together and the joy we shared. May their light continue to shine through each of us. Grant us the strength to continue their work, that we may continue to love and serve you always.

Amen





*A Social Justice
Community in the
Heart of Halifax*

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