

ERIE STREET UNITED CHURCH

2024 Annual Report



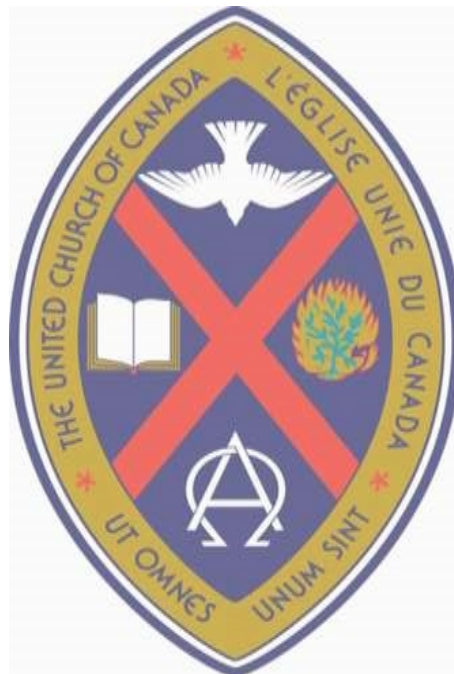
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The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on
Sunday, February 9th, 2025, following the worship service.

Please have this report with you for the meeting.

Table of Contents

Annual Report Table of Content	1
Annual General Meeting Agenda – Sunday, February 9 th , 2025	2
Life of the Church – 2024	3
Message from the Minister	4-5
Report from the Chair of the Chair of the Official Board	6
Annual General Meeting Minutes – February 11 th , 2024	7-10
The Life and Work of Erie Street United – Mission & Priorities	11
The Life and Work of Erie Street United – Reports	12-26
Financial Statements	27-32
Members of the Official Board	33



Annual General Meeting Agenda

Sunday, February 9th, 2025

- 1. Call to order: 11:15 a.m.**
- 2. Opening prayer**
- 3. Selection of meeting chair and recording secretary, and decision on voting rights**
- 4. Opening remarks from chair and approval of agenda**
- 5. Life of the Church**
- 6. Review and approval of congregational meeting minutes**
 - February 11, 2024
- 7. Minister's report**
- 8. Trustees report** - includes approval of new members
- 9. Chair of Official Board report**
- 10. Stewardship and Finance report** - acceptance of 2025 budget
- 11. Other Board committee reports**
 - Worship and Music
 - Christian Education
 - Pastoral Care and Visitation
 - Ministry and Personnel
 - Ushering, Membership and Nomination
 - Missions
 - Communication and Outreach
 - Property and Maintenance
 - Fundraising and Event Coordination
- 12. Other Church Group reports**
 - [Brief comments to clarify items in their reports]
 - United Church Women (UCW)
 - Archives Committee
- 13. Antler River Watershed Region Report**
- 14. Election of the Official Board for 2025**
- 15. Other business**
- 16. Closing prayer**
- 17. Adjournment**

Life of the Church 2024

Those who have passed into God's Holy Presence and who we hold in Loving Memory

Irene Taylor	January 8 th , 2024
Catherine Mallory	February 4 th , 2024
Richard (Dick) Wright	February 20 th , 2024
Ralph Ford	April 11 th , 2024
Ron Paine	October 4 th , 2024
Scott Paine	November 1 st , 2024
Marlene Baldwin	November 11 th , 2024
Jack Underwood	December 16 th , 2024
Ellen Hart	December 31 st , 2024

May we remember that each of these people live not here with us but in the presence and fellowship of God and are embraced in God's love for now and eternity.

Those who have been received into God's Holy Family by Transfer of Membership

Harry Slegers	November 21 st , 2024
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There were no members removed by Transfer of Membership

There were no Marriages, Baptisms, or Confirmations in 2024



Message from the Minister

Dear Family and Friends of Erie Street United Church,

So how do we talk to God? Sometimes, the best books I read, go back to when I need to, and give to people through my calling are children's books. I love the simple and direct messages they wonderfully portray. I just got a new book last week which was called, "What Happens When I Talk To God? The Power of Prayer for Boys and Girls." Our lives, as hopefully some of the excerpts from this book show, are always much better when we spend time with God. I am going to share just a few parts of this book with you. Hopefully, some of what I am sharing may resonate with you. This is a book told from a child's point of view

"Talking to God is called prayer. God wants to talk to us all the time. That's why I try to talk to him every day. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday – everyday is the perfect day to pray. God likes it when I talk to him. That's because he loves me and wants to spend time with me. He likes to hear that I love him too. So when I talk to God, I always tell him how much I love him. I say, "love You, God"

"God wants me to talk to him because he is my friend. And friends always talk to each other. You can't be friends with someone you never talk to. That's why talking to God everyday is so important. My favorite thing about talking to God is that I can talk to him about anything. God wants me to tell him about the things that matter to me. I can talk to God about good things but I can talk to God about bad things too. God always listens to me, and he always understands just how I feel. And I always feel better after I talk to God."

"Each time I pray, I believe that God hears me and that he will answer my prayers. But I need to trust God to answer in his own way and whenever he wants to. Sometimes this is hard to do. Maybe someone special to me is sick, and I want them to get better right away. Or there's something I really want, and I don't like waiting for it. It always helps to remember that my job is to pray. God's job is to answer my prayer. So I need to do my job and let God do his job. I say, "God, help me wait patiently for you to answer my prayers."

"My prayers are so important to God that when I pray, he always comes closer to me. I like being close to God. That's why I talk to him every day. I say, "Thank you God, that you are close to me right now and you love to hear me pray."

As the song *Take Time to Be Holy* says,

*Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.
Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive beneath His control.
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love.*

Solitude, in prayer time with God is the way we form a habit of retreat, creating a space and time when God can speak to us. What is certain is that if we create a place where we can regularly turn to God, God will meet us there. Just as he met his disciples. So, as we retreat to the path in the woods, the backyard, the garden, or the old comfortable chair in the den, then we discover what the disciples did – that Jesus is there and he is waiting to serve and nourish us. Time spent with God in solitude will always bring a harvest. The problems we have outside the solitude will seem different when we return to them refreshed and strengthened. The surer sense of our relationship with Christ that solitude brings spills over into everything else we do. Being loved and cared for in our prayer time allows us to love ourselves and to love others.

And prayer time with Jesus does not have to be long or complicated; we only need to reach out and make ourselves available ... In the busyness of our lives maybe this prayer will illustrate what I mean:

Dear Jesus, during this day, help me quiet all the thoughts that fill my head – where I must go, whom I must see, and what I must do. In their place give me a sense of your order, your peace, and your time.

Help me to understand that you are in control, and I can trust you with my day. Help me to realize that nothing on my to-do list is important if it is not what you want me to do.

I give all my tasks to you and trust you to bring order to them. In these moments, Dear Jesus, come to me, be with me, and free me from the tyranny of to-do.

May we all try to take the time to meet Christ as we begin our days. If it is our desire to meet God, if only for some fleeting moments, that is important. For in seeking Christ's presence, we also find Christ's peace and a calm in our soul as Christ will show us the way to go and walk beside us each and every day.

May each of us know that we can always talk to God and God is always listening saying, "I am here. You are my precious child. I love you."

Thanks be to God.

Love and Blessings,
Reverend Lynne

Report from the Chair of the Official Board

As this year comes to a close so does my term as Chair of the Official Board of Erie Street United Church. I have held this position for 3 years and will be passing it to very capable hands. It has been a busy and sometimes challenging few years with many changes and some financial issues that we have had to deal with. It has also been a delight as we have watched our congregation grow and thrive in many ways. As always the feeling of community and family shines through and for me the support of my church family over the past few year has been more important than ever. Your care and concern has seen my own family through some real challenges this year and I am forever grateful to you all for that.

Financially we have met both our fundraising and our canvass goals this year thanks to your amazing support. We are heading into 2025 with a more stable budget but the work is not over. We will need to keep our efforts up and I am hoping that 2025 will bring us a balanced budget and provide the financial stability that will keep us moving forward. Your generosity this past year has been overwhelming as has the work of all those who organized and participated in our various fundraising activities. I anticipate another great year from our fundraising group. We continue to try new things to promote not only funds but also fellowship and fun for the congregation.

We also head into this year with a full roster for the Official Board. Many thanks to those who have served and will be leaving positions and thanks to those remaining to continue their work. We also welcome some new faces and appreciate them making the commitment to ESUC and the ongoing work that it takes to keep us functioning. Although we have a full roster for the Board there is always opportunities for you to serve on a variety of committees. Please consider joining one of the committees. There are many different aspects of the life of the church that our committee work covers. I am sure we can find a spot that would interest you and help you use your gifts to enhance the life of our community of faith.

We go in to 2025 with faith that God will go with us and give us the strength and resources to carry on our ministry both within our church family and beyond its walls to our community and the world. We are small but mighty and should be proud of the work we do. Many thanks to all for being such an important part of that. I wish you all a very happy and healthy 2025. It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair and I know that we will continue to be a loving and faithful congregation that will carry the message of light and love wherever we go.

With faith and love,
Deb Ellacott, Official Board Chair

Erie Street United Church Annual General Meeting Minutes, February 11th, 2024

1. **Call to order:** 11:25 a.m. – Location: church sanctuary
2. **Opening prayer:** Rev. Lynne opened the meeting with a prayer
3. **Selection of meeting chair and recording secretary, and decision on voting rights:**
Rev. Lynne reviewed voting procedures at congregational meetings. Full members are allowed to vote on all matters and adherents may have voting rights if approved by the membership. Also, we need to select a chair and recording secretary for the meeting.

Motion – by Rev. Lynne, seconded by Bob Todd that adherents be allowed to vote on all matters arising during the meeting – **Carried**

Motion – by Pauline Todd, seconded by Adam Hayes that Deb Ellacott be appointed chairperson for the meeting – **Carried**

Motion – by Martha Gammage, seconded by Bob Todd that Ron Fleming be appointed recording secretary for the meeting – **Carried**
4. **Opening remarks from chair and approval of agenda:** Deb Ellacott took over as chair. She started by making a correction to her report on page 5 of the Annual Report. In the report, it states that the Community Pantry is sponsored by the Legion. The Ridgetown Community Pantry is actually sponsored by Free Help CK, a charitable organization based in Chatham but extending to all of Chatham-Kent. The Legion graciously houses the pantry on their property.

Motion – by Liz Brown, seconded by Ron Fuller that the meeting agenda be approved as circulated – **Carried**
5. **Life of the Church:** Rev. Lynne read the names of the four people whose deaths we recorded in 2023 (three members and one adherent). She also read the names of the 16 people who transferred their memberships to our church in 2023 and the two who transferred out. There were no marriages, baptisms or confirmations in 2023.
6. **Review and approval of congregational meeting minutes - February 12, 2023:** The minutes were included in the annual report. Deb asked if any changes or corrections were needed.

Motion – by John Davidson, seconded by Roger Kellam that the minutes of the Feb 12, 2023 Annual Meeting be accepted as circulated. **Carried**
7. **Minister's report:** Rev. Lynne made special mention of the fact that we received 16 new members by transfer in 2023 and that these new members have brought new life to our congregation. While many congregations are experiencing declining

memberships, it was heart-warming to see an increase in ours. She thanked the long-time members of the congregation for being open and loving and welcoming. Rev. Lynne also thanked Joelle Myers, our office administrator, and Deb Ellacott, Official Board chair, for their dedicated service.

- 8. Trustees report:** Susan Litwin (secretary of Trustees) gave the report. One of the responsibilities of the Trustees is arranging for insurance for the church. We have seen significant increases to the insurance premium in the past two years (10% and 17%, respectively). There are other churches in our area that have experienced even greater increases. In the past year, the Trustees looked at getting a quote from a recently formed insurance entity with roots in the United Church. However, it came in at 9% higher than what we are already paying, so no change was made.

The normal maximum length of membership for the Trustees is 15 years and Tim Hall reached that milestone in the past year. He has stepped down, leaving a vacancy.

Motion – by Adam Hayes, seconded by Ken Stevenson that Ron Fleming be elected to membership on the Board of Trustees. **Carried**

- 9. Chair of Official Board report:** Deb gave a brief overview of her report (pages 5 and 6 of the Annual Report).

- 10. Stewardship and Finance report:** Bill Litwin thanked the team of people who help with finance activities for the church. He then presented a series of well-organized slides summarizing the key points listed in the Annual Report. For 2023, total revenue was \$147,114; total expenses were \$150,613; deficit was \$3499 (the projected deficit had been \$7167). In the proposed budget for 2024, total projected revenue is \$151,600; projected expenses total \$159,344; projected deficit is \$7744. One of the main reasons for the higher expenses in 2024 is personnel cost increases, most of which have been mandated. In 2023, we were able to avoid accessing our bank operating loan but we may not be so lucky in 2024.

Motion – by Bill Litwin, seconded by Charles Alfano that the proposed budget be approved as presented - **Carried**

Deb thanked Bill Litwin and Stephanie Hayes for all their work in preparing the finance information over the past year.

- 11. Other Board Committee reports:** Representatives from the various Board committees were invited to make comments or answer questions about their committee activities.

- **Worship and Music** – Pauline Todd thanked the musicians. Deb announced that the covenanting service for Rev. Lynne is scheduled for April 7.
- **Christian Education** – Susan Litwin thanked all those who have supported GAP in the past year.

- **Pastoral Care and Visitation** – Roxanne Davidson thanked all those who have contributed to this work in the past year.
- **Ministry and Personnel** – Deb Ellacott – nothing to add
- **Membership, Ushering and Hospitality** – Martha Gammage invited anyone interested in helping with ushering or hospitality in the coming year to contact her.
- **Missions** – Charles Alfano has recently taken over from Margaret Johnston.
- **Communication and Outreach** – Susan Litwin invited people to send along any ideas for changes to the church newsletters.
- **Property and Maintenance** – Adam Hayes thanked his team of helpers for their efforts in 2023 and invited comments or ideas for future improvements to our facilities.
- **Fundraising and Event Coordination** – Deb Ellacott highlighted the “event” portion of this committee’s mandate. The fundraising is important but the events are very important to the life of the church.

Motion – by Bob Paling, seconded by Beatrice Fleming that all reports be accepted as presented in the Annual Report - **Carried**

12. Other Church Group reports

- **United Church Women (UCW)** – Roxanne Davidson reported that for many women, the UCW has historically been a big part of their lives. However, the world is changing and the membership is dwindling. There are still some donations coming into the group but there is a real possibility that the group may not be able to sustain itself much longer.

Motion – by Roxanne Davidson, seconded by Pauline Todd that the UCW report be accepted - **Carried**

13. Antler River Watershed Regional report: Deb Ellacott reported that she and Rev Lynne attended meetings for the Region in 2023. One of the initiatives in the past year was a review of the recent restructuring of the United Church. A concern that was identified was the greatly reduced communication between congregations at the local level compared to the previous structure – and a desire to somehow improve these connections.

Motion – by Pauline Todd, seconded by Martha Gammage that the Region report be accepted as presented – **Carried**

14. Election of the Official Board for 2024: Of the 2023 members of the Official Board, the following individuals have seen their terms end and have resigned their positions: Bill Litwin – Stewardship and Finance; Marion Cole – Ministry and Personnel; Margaret Johnston (filling in after the departure of Marilyn Snary) – Missions. Deb asked for nominations to fill the vacant positions.

Bob Paling nominated **Roger Kellam** to serve as chair of the Stewardship and Finance committee – seconded by Pauline Todd - no further nominations – voted on and approved.

Beatrice Fleming nominated **Marianne Fenton** to serve as chair of the Ministry and Personnel committee – seconded by Roger Kellam – no further nominations – voted on and approved.

Roger Kellam nominated **Charles Alfano** to serve as chair of the Missions committee - seconded by Martha Gammage – no further nominations – voted on and approved.

15. Other business

- **Reorganization and revision of the Fundraising and Event Co-ordination Committee** – Deb Ellacott recommended that this committee cease to be a standalone committee but rather function as a subcommittee of the Stewardship and Finance committee in future. The chair of Stewardship and Finance would be responsible for organizing the occasional meeting but the subcommittee members would chair the meetings and continue to be responsible for the various events. Deb would take on the task of updating the information in the church handbook.

Motion – by Martha Gammage, seconded by Bob Todd that the Fundraising and Event Coordination Committee become a subcommittee of Stewardship and Finance and that the handbook be updated to reflect the change – **Carried**

- Deb expressed her thanks for the efforts of several individuals: Joelle Meyers, our office administrator, who goes “above and beyond” and who Deb described as “a treasure”; Rev Lynne for her outreach and compassion and for her connection with people; Stephanie Hayes, treasurer, for her work on payroll and checks and finances in general; our custodian and all committee members.
- Rev Lynne carried out the installation of the 2024 members of the Official Board.

16. Closing prayer: Rev. Lynne gave a closing prayer.

17. Adjournment: Deb adjourned the meeting at 1:02 pm

Note: 36 people attended the meeting

Deb Ellacott
Chairperson

Ron Fleming
Recording Secretary

The Life & Work of Erie Street United Church

Our Mission

Erie Street United Church operates under the following mission statement:

As a congregation, we welcome everyone to share our joy and fellowship. We celebrate the Good News and dedicate ourselves through ministry and outreach, with special focus on youth.

Our Priorities

Our longstanding priorities are as follows:

✝ **Faith Formation and Spiritual Enrichment**

We have created opportunities for faith formation and spiritual enrichment for all ages through worship, education, and various programs and activities.

✝ **Welcome and Support**

We have enhanced the profile and reputation of ESUC as an open, inviting, supportive and energetic congregation. We have communicated directly and frequently with our individual congregation members.

✝ **Missions**

We have sought ways to express our faith through mission and outreach initiatives, both locally and globally.

✝ **Community Awareness**

We have maximized our community's awareness of what ESUC has to offer so that interested persons have every opportunity to participate as fully as possible in the life of the church.

✝ **Ecumenical Ministry**

We have worked with other churches to provide joint services, programs, and activities, and we have sought to develop a cooperative, caring Christian community in Ridgetown.

Reports

Board of Trustees

A meeting of the trustees was held on January 7, 2025. All members of the trustees were present. We would like to thank Ron Fleming for stepping in to replace Tim Hall who completed his 15-year term as a trustee.

During the meeting, an update was provided on the renewal of the insurance policy for the period from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025. Renewal of insurance policies for faith-based programs continues to be challenging within the insurance industry. Fewer and fewer insurance providers are interested in offering coverage for faith-based programs due to their historical claims experience. Premiums on our policy have increased over the last few years but not as much as for many other churches. For the 2024/2025 year, our policy actually saw only a slight 1.5% increase over 2023/2024. Last year, we explored other options for a cheaper policy but found the alternative were more costly than our current policy.

A report from the Property Committee was reviewed on the care of the church in 2024, as well as a list of potential projects for the future. Related to these projects, the current balance of the Capital Fund was reviewed and sits at \$6510. One recommendation to the property committee was to pick one room annually and do a spruce up and basic upgrade.

The membership of the 2024 Board of Trustees is shown in that table below. Special thanks to Rev. Lynne Wilson and trustees Ron Fleming, Wayne Snary, Susan Litwin, and Adam Hayes for their time and support this year.

Board of Trustees in 2024 (Normal term = 15 years)

Name	Start year	Years Served
Adam Hayes	2015	9
Susan Litwin (secretary)	2017	7
Jason Van Maanen (chair)	2018	6
Wayne Snary	2023	2
Ron Fleming	2024	1

Note: Rev Lynne automatically became a member in 2022.

Jason Van Maanen
Trustees Chair



Stewardship and Finance Committee

Great news! We finished 2024 with a very small deficit (\$1,580.00) vs our budget projection of a deficit of \$7,744.00.

Financial successes

In 2024, weekly giving's, which included weekly envelopes, Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR), and loose offerings, totaled \$93,993.00 vs our budget of \$88,240.00. This was an increase of 6%.

Our Special Canvass budget of \$30,000.00 was also exceeded by 12% and totaled \$33,560.00. Although we started out slow, your financial support over the final four months really assisted our church in minimizing the use of our Line of Credit at our financial institution over the same period of time.

Numerous Fundraising events throughout the year were also well supported by both our own church members and by many non-members within our community. Our aggressive goal of raising \$19,400.00 came up \$346.00 short but all monies raised support the overall requirements of our church. A big thank you to all who helped organize and volunteered their time and talents to make these events a great success.

Financial challenges

Like our own household expenses, inflation continued to make our operating budget a challenge in 2024 and will continue to in 2025, as well. Remember we had a small operating deficit in 2023 of \$3,499.00, and as mentioned above, although we reduced that figure in 2024, 2025 will pose another challenge for us. Our church building is relatively new compared to many other religious buildings, but unforeseen expenses could "pop up" which could be a challenge to fund. We have no big rainy day fund to utilize if needed. So, we all must continue to monitor expenses and ensure revenues (from all sources) exceed our expenses.

Outlook for 2025

Total revenues will need to increase by approximately 2.4% vs our actual results from 2024 to cover our projected expenses, which will total approximately \$163,603.00. Personnel related expenses account for a portion of the projected increase with the balance coming from miscellaneous property expenses (ie utility costs & building repairs). Reliance on regular weekly givings, various fundraising initiatives, and reaching a special canvass goal of \$35,000.00 will be required. Even then a small deficit of \$3,003.00 is projected. Your continued financial support with regular donations via PAR, weekly envelope givings, and possibly an early extra donation towards the "special canvass" objective would be appreciated to ensure revenues match our monthly expenses.

Special Thank you

Stephanie Hayes has been a valued volunteer for many years and incurs many hours every week in maintaining the church “books”. Her role in book-keeping, ensuring all bills are paid on time, preparing monthly financial reports, payroll requirements, etc. is very much appreciated. Joelle, our church secretary, should also be recognized for assisting in preparing tax receipts, issuing envelopes, etc. Also, a thank you goes out to all individuals that assist in counting the weekly offerings, recording and depositing those funds.

With 2024 being my first year as a member of your Official Board and also a relatively new member of Erie St United Church, I would like to thank everyone who has supported our church both financially and volunteering your time and talents to ensure our church continues to grow and thrive within our community.

Roger Kellam
Stewardship and Finance Committee Chair

Fundraising and Event Coordination Subcommittee

The fundraising committee has been very active this year. We have run a number of events and fundraising activities and, thanks to your wonderful support, have reached our fundraising goal for the year 2024. What an amazing achievement. It was an ambitious goal when we set it but with the help of many, we were able to get there. So many people have contributed to the success of our fundraising I am afraid that if I were to list everyone, I would inevitably miss someone. So, thanks to each and every one of you for your support of our initiatives this year. We couldn't have done it without you!!

Our activities were many and varied this year. I would like to thank the fundraising group for their many ideas and initiatives. Their creativity and commitment are what keeps us focused and able to reach our goal. We had several dinners this year, all of which were very successful. We are indeed a congregation that likes to gather to eat. Meat pies and soup sales also went well again this year. Thanks to all those who purchased and enjoyed them. We tried some new ideas by freezing soup and spaghetti sauce which went very well. The yard sale and the silent auction were also very successful this year. We tried poinsettia sales this year with not much success but trying new things is always worth it. You never know when you may hit something that really works.

Our group will be meeting again early in 2025 to begin work for the coming year. We already have a number of events planned and will be looking for new ideas and initiatives. If you have ideas you are welcome to join us or speak to anyone on the

Board or the committee about sharing your thoughts with the group. We hope that we can once again bring you a great variety of activities that will help us meet our fundraising goal.

Deb Ellacott

Scrip

The funding raised through our Scrip gift card program in 2024 was \$2,173.74.

Thank you to everyone who supports this fundraising effort. We encourage those who haven't used the Scrip program to consider using it in 2025. Gift cards can be purchased for a wide range of popular stores including Foodland, Sobey's, Shopper's, Home Hardware, Food Basics, Canadian Tire and many more. They come in handy when you need a gift for someone but don't quite know what to buy. For more information, contact Margie Johnston, Beatrice Fleming, or Bethe Carnie.

Worship and Music Committee

Erie Street United Church had services at 10:30 am every Sunday except during the summer when some services were shared with Mt Zion Presbyterian Church.

Communion was celebrated four times throughout the year.

In February, the Chatham Concert Band joined us in worship and played our four hymns and provided a GAP lesson.

Larry Schneider led our worship service on March 10 and returned on April 7 for Rev. Lynne Wilson's covenanting with our church.

New Members were welcomed during the worship services on January 28 and April 21.

Music Sunday was October 6.

GAP led the service on December 8 and we all enjoyed pizza afterwards.

The Christmas Eve candlelight service was December 24.

Worship and Music Committee:

Bethe Carnie, Beatrice Fleming, Pauline Todd



Ministry and Personnel Committee

Throughout 2024, Rev. Lynne Wilson continued to provide our Erie Street congregation with spiritual guidance and leadership. Her sincere interest in the members of our church family, engaging services, and focus on pastoral care and missions have benefited our church family and the greater community.

We appreciated having talented pianists Roberta Dickson and Gaele Mifflin support our choir and congregation throughout 2024, as they alternated services and attended Thursday choir practices. Gaele played her last service with Erie Street on December 29th after accepting a full-time Choir Director position at her home church in Wallaceburg. We were blessed to have Liz Brown and Marion Cole each agree to cover the pianist duties once per month until a longer-term solution is finalized.

Ron Fleming has continued as our music director and choir leader, bringing our congregation's passion for music to life each Sunday. Under Ron's leadership, we have enjoyed a wide variety of music and special performances.

Joelle Myers continues to juggle the very busy office with her strong administrative skills. Her support to Rev. Lynne, the committees, the congregation, and the community helps keep our operations running effectively and efficiently. On many occasions in 2024, Joelle went above and beyond to ensure deadlines were met and technology issues were resolved quickly to enable services to run smoothly. Our congregation is grateful for all this support and effort.

Bridget Kupo continued to provide janitorial services to Erie Street in 2024. With the help of her husband, Francis, they worked hard to keep the many spaces within our church clean, tidy, stocked, and ready for the busy week ahead.

Our treasurer, Stephanie Hayes, again invested a significant amount of time and effort in 2024 to ensure our financial records, bills, reporting, and obligations were met. This included making legislated wage adjustments for staff in the fall in addition to her regular payroll responsibilities. Her many years of experience handling Erie Street's books and accounting is a significant benefit to our congregation and is greatly appreciated.

The M&P Committee met multiple times in 2024. Annual reviews were completed, personnel files were reorganized, and arrangements were made for the laptop in the sanctuary to be replaced in early 2025. Committee members also completed training and reviewed resources recommended through the United Church of Canada.

Thanks to all employees and volunteers who have served our community of faith in various capacities this year.

And special thanks to Deb Ellacott and Stephanie Hayes for their participation on the Ministry and Personnel Committee in 2024. Their guidance, support, and efforts have been critical to helping me learn the responsibilities of this committee and take on this role of chair during my first time on the Board. Together, we have completed several important tasks and made progress in a variety of areas.

Marianne Fenton
M & P Committee Chair

Christian Education Committee

GAP Program

Throughout the school year, four dedicated GAP (God's Awesome Place) leaders and an experienced helper prepared and presented lessons, which often followed the scriptures used in Sunday services. Some favourite lessons included Grace, Beatitudes, Psalm 23, Syrophenician Woman, Ten Commandments and the parable of the Lost Sheep. GAP kids rejoined the congregation for communion when it was part of the worship service.

GAP kids showed their musical talents by playing the bells in the service on Mother's Day, in October (in their Halloween costumes!), and during the service they led on December 8th.

GAP welcomed staff of Kenesserie Camp to a service in June to share activities and songs with GAP kids.

Field trips included a new outing to Lawn Bowling in September, to Foodland on World Food Day in October and trips to the Village in both May and December, where the kids entertained residents with a performances on the bells. The 'sheep' crafts prepared by the kids for use during the December 8th worship service were reused and shared with residents at the Village the following week.

Missions & Outreach

On Sundae Sunday in June, GAP kids collected donations and gave those funds to Salvation Army. When they visited Foodland on World Food Day, GAP kids bought food and donated it to the food bank. In December, GAP kids prepared Christmas cards for Erie Street members who live in retirement homes.

Many of the Erie Street GAP kids learned to "Dive into Friendship with Jesus" at the Ridgetown Community Vacation Bible School from July 8-12 at the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus. Erie Street United also processed charitable receipts for this event.

Lynn Van Maanen
Christian Education Committee Chair



Missions Committee

Your Missions Committee have had a busy year with outreach activities within our local community and missions abroad.

Canadian Aid for Chernobyl (CAC)

A recent update from Margaret Campbell advised that despite the war in Ukraine CAC continues to support the Chaussy School of Sport (Orphanage) by subsidizing food and agricultural needs and by providing funds for high school graduates to continue their education. Moving forward we hope to raise funds to support this important mission work.

Local Community Outreach

It is only through the support of our congregation who unselfishly donate their time, talents, food, gifts, and money that we can be successful in our many outreach activities at ESUC. Your fund-raising efforts contribute to Missions and our Service Fund.

Thank you for your support of the following activities:

Lunch Bunch

The weekly Lunch Bunch program at ESUC on Thursdays provides an inviting safe space for conversation, fellowship, and a hearty meal for people in need from our community. By focusing on what people are grateful for Rev. Lynne has been able to foster a sense of belonging for the people who attend on a regular basis, thus creating their own sense of community. The lunches are hosted by one of the seven participating churches.

ESUC hosted lunch bunch six times in 2024. We provided meals of Soup and Sandwiches in the warmer months, Shepherd's Pie, and Coleslaw in the winter months. On average, we would host 16 to 21 people at each lunch. In December, all churches helped to provide a Turkey Dinner and Christmas Gift Bags to our Lunch Bunch community.

Many thanks to members of our church family who helped to prepare food, serve, and clean up each time we hosted Lunch Bunch.

Annual Yard Sale

As always, the members of our congregation were generous with their donation of goods and purchases of items at both the ESUC yard sale in June and the Town-Wide yard sale in July. When all sales were completed, we raised over \$1600.00. This was a terrific fund-raising event. Many thanks to Margie Johnson and Joyce Campbell for organizing and supporting this activity.

Operation School Supplies

During the month of August, Margie and Joelle helped to coordinate the collection of school supplies donated by members of our congregation. We were able to supply our local Salvation Army with over 25 backpacks and lunch boxes filled with binders, papers, markers, crayons, notebooks, rulers, and pencils. The estimated value of goods collected was over \$400.00, along with some anonymous cash donations. All items were distributed to local students in need.

Fill-A-Bag for Christmas

In November, our congregation joyfully participated in filling Foodland shopping bags with non-perishable food, toiletries, personal items, and grocery gift cards. We were successful in filling 40 bags with these items. As part of White Gift Sunday, our Gap Kids collected unwrapped games and toys from the congregation and filled another 10 shopping bags.

On November 27th Becky from the Salvation Army came to ESUC to receive the bags which were loaded and delivered to the Ridgetown store for distribution to families in need in our community in time for Christmas. Many thanks to Margie and Joelle for coordinating this program and to all our church family for their generous donations.

It's in the midst of community that we truly can use our gifts to serve others and to grow as a church family.

Charles Alfano
Missions Chair

Property and Maintenance Committee

Kitchen and Fellowship Hall

The floors in the Fellowship Hall and Kitchen were stripped and waxed. The chairs in the Fellowship Hall were cleaned and some of them were repaired. The service man looked at the dishwasher in early October and we are waiting on a part.

Grounds

The bushes around front of church were trimmed several times throughout the spring and summer. The weeds in the gardens and walkways were kept under control as much as possible. The sidewalk to the right front door was edged. The trees along Yeck's Other Place were trimmed back. The pile of paving stones in the garden at the back were stacked to form a small wall at the back of one side of the shed. A trellis was installed behind the other side of the shed. The old garbage box at the back of the church was dismantled and disposed of as it was no longer being used.

An area in front of the bell was prepped and the Methodist Church cornerstone was placed there. A frame was built for the cornerstone from the Christian Education Building of the old church and was placed by the back door of the church.

The fence that backs on to the alley was rebuilt. New posts were installed and many of the fence boards were reused. The large ladder that used to hang on the fence was put back on the fence. Thanks for the donated services of Green and Clean Lawn Care for the maintenance of the lawns.

Fire and Safety

The smoke detector outside the kitchen reached the end of its life and was replaced with a kitchen friendly one. The batteries were changed in all the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. All the fire extinguishers and emergency lighting systems were checked monthly. Sentry Fire did their annual check of the fire extinguishers and emergency lighting systems.

General Maintenance and Repair

The furnace filters were replaced early in the year. The door chime system quit working and was replaced. The lock on the sign was replaced. The thermostats were managed to save energy when the building was not being used. The power source for the wireless transmitter on the second TV monitor in the Sanctuary stopped working and was replaced. The cold water tap in the women's washroom had seized and there were issues with the cold and hot water taps in the men's washroom. Repairs would have been difficult so the faucets in both washrooms were replaced. Light bulbs throughout the building were replaced as necessary.

In the fall water started coming in along the archway to the glass block area. A roofing company was contacted, and their assessment was that water is getting in where the flat roof meets the bricks. They caulked all along that edge and caulked some cracks in the mortar of the bricks on both sides of the glass blocks. The flat roof appears to be okay.

Parlour

The Parlour was painted to match the furniture that was donated last year.

Future Repairs

The glass blocks at the front of the church have been letting small amounts of water in for some time. The mortar between the blocks has become brittle and has fallen out in some areas. Caulking has been done to try to minimize the leaks. An estimate is being sought to determine the cost to repoint them.

The system that controls the emergency lighting in the south half of the building needs to be replaced. It will cost around \$1000 to replace it.

The dishwasher has worked well for a year or more, but it quit working properly early this fall. A part that might fix it is on back order (not surprising as the DW is 31 years old) and it will hopefully arrive early in the year. If that part doesn't fix it, then it is the motor. A new motor would cost about \$2000, and a decision will have to be made to replace the motor or purchase a new dishwasher.

Committee helpers included Wayne Snary, Wayne Cole, Helmut Spieser, Ron Fleming, Charles Alfano, Deb Ellacott, Roger Kellam, Stephanie Hayes, Brad Carnie, Bob and Pauline Todd, and several others. A big thank you to everyone who helped with committee work throughout the year!

Adam Hayes

Property & Maintenance Committee Chair

Communications and Outreach Committee

Erie Street United's communications and outreach efforts again involved a variety of elements throughout 2024.

There were four newsletters (March, June, October, and December). Each one included a message from Rev Lynne, a note from our Official Board Chair (Deb), and reports from our church committees. The reports focused on both recent and future church activities. Thank you to everyone who contributed content in 2024!

Our worship service videos continued to have a strong following each week (approx. 15 viewings), with the usual peaks on special Sundays and Christmas Eve (approx. 40). We have heard many say they enjoy staying connected with us from far afield.

Joelle sent out emails each week with the worship video link, worship bulletin, and slides, as well as details regarding upcoming events and other timely information. Joelle used Facebook posts to reach members of our broader community.

Rev. Lynne continued to inspire the readership of *The Ridgetown Independent News* with her regular *Faith and Everyday Living* contributions.

Thank you to everyone who helped us communicate in 2024, including those who helped run the audio/visual equipment each Sunday.

In the year ahead, with Sarah Hart Coatsworth as the new Communications & Outreach Chair, you will see a fresh approach to our communications as she applies her own talent-set and enthusiasm. Thanks, Sarah, for taking on this role.

Susan Litwin

Communications & Outreach Committee Chair

Membership, Ushering and Hospitality Committee

We have dedicated teams of greeters and ushers on hand every Sunday to welcome members and guests to our Sunday service. Our Welcome Booklet has been recently updated and is available to newcomers. We would also welcome anyone who is interested to join our group of greeters and ushers, please contact me at 519-674-0182 or email martgamm@gmail.com to be placed on our list.

We are always open to new members; if you are interested in becoming a member of our Church Family, please contact the office or Reverend Lynne Wilson.

2024 ESUC MEMBERSHIP REPORT

	<u>Resident</u>	<u>Non-resident</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Members</i>	<i>222</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>313</i>
<i>Received by Transfer</i>	<i>+1</i>	<i>+1</i>	
<i>Removed by Death</i>	<i>- 6</i>	<i>- 6</i>	
<i>Removed by Transfer Out</i>	<i>- 0</i>	<i>- 0</i>	

Martha Gammage

Membership, Ushering & Hospitality Committee Chair

Pastoral Care Committee

The pastoral care committee acts to foster a sense of “church family” and of fellowship and belonging. We are truly thankful to be kept informed of happenings that require a card, visit, phone call, etc.

We are continuing with the meal program – It has been well-received. Special thanks to volunteers who cook the meals and deliver them.

Respectfully submitted Roxanne Davidson

Pastoral Care Committee Chair

United Church Women (UCW)

The UCW is going through some transitions. A final discussion has not been had on whether to disband.

Respectfully submitted, Roxanne Davidson

Regional Council Report

This year Reverend Lynne and I attended both the Regional Meetings of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council. One was held in May and the other in October. Regional Council is an integral part of the church organization and representation of ESUC on this council is important as we maintain a voice and presence in the larger church. Four commissions operate to provide oversight and support to Communities of Faith. They provide guidance in all aspects of church life. They support the Communities of Faith in Stewardship and Finance, Ministry and Personnel matters, Outreach and Missions and a variety of other important functions of the life of the congregations.

We have been able to attend these meetings remotely via Zoom for the past few years. This practice was started during the pandemic but has continued as a way for people to gather without having to travel long distances. Our representation on this committee is important and it is a role that gives much insight into how the wider church functions and supports individual congregations. It keeps us up to date with happenings not only at the regional level but also with the national church as well. I have held this position for a number of years and will be passing this important work on. If you might be interested in taking this important role on please speak to me and I can provide you with some insight regarding the role and the expectations.

Deb Ellacott
Regional Representative



Erie Street United Church

Summary of Operating and Capital Funds Year Ending Dec 31, 2024

	Schedule	2024 Plan	2024 Actual	2025 Plan
Operations Revenue				
Weekly Offerings		\$ 88,240	\$ 93,993	\$ 94,450
Special Canvas		30,000	33,560	35,000
Missions		7,700	6,585	6,675
Fundraising	10	19,400	19,054	19,350
Donations		5,170	3,615	3,725
GAP		700	976	1,000
Miscellaneous		390	396	400
Total Operations Revenue	1	<u>\$ 151,600</u>	<u>\$ 158,179</u>	<u>\$ 160,600</u>
Expense Operations				
Ministry and Personnel	2	\$ 119,753	\$ 121,077	\$ 122,532
Property	3	23,850	22,556	24,015
Missions	4	7,700	6,585	6,675
Membership	5	5,016	6,952	6,681
Stewardship & Finance	6	1,725	1,930	2,125
Worship & Music	7	525	659	800
Christian Education	8	225	-	225
Outreach and Communications	9	50	-	50
Other		500	-	500
Total Operations Expense		<u>\$ 159,344</u>	<u>\$ 159,759</u>	<u>\$ 163,603</u>
Net Operating Revenue (Expense)		<u>\$ (7,744)</u>	<u>\$ (1,580)</u>	<u>\$ (3,003)</u>
Capital Revenue				
Envelopes		\$ 1,000	\$ 1,035	\$ 1,100
Total Capital Revenue		<u>\$ 1,000</u>	<u>\$ 1,035</u>	<u>\$ 1,100</u>
Capital Expense				
Capital Fund		\$ 1,000	\$ 1,035	\$ 1,100
Total Capital Expense		<u>\$ 1,000</u>	<u>\$ 1,035</u>	<u>\$ 1,100</u>
Net Capital Revenue (Expense)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Net Revenue (Loss)		<u>\$ (7,744)</u>	<u>\$ (1,580)</u>	<u>\$ (3,003)</u>

Schedule 1

Operating Receipts	2024 Plan	Actual
Envelopes	\$ 87,000	\$ 92,243
Loose Offerings	1,200	1,530
Initial Envelopes	10	170
Subscriptions	30	50
Belarus Children	750	300
Mission and Service Fund	5,800	5,045
Missions-Local/White Gift	350	150
Vacation Bible School (Mission)	500	850
Sunday School - Current/Missions	1,000	1,216
Special Canvass	30,000	33,560
Donations	3,170	2,190
Donations in Memorium	2,000	1,425
Fundraising	19,400	19,054
Miscellaneous Revenue	390	396
	\$ 151,600	\$ 158,179

Note: ESUC received memorial funeral donations in 2024 for
Marlene Baldwin, Richard (Dick) Wright, and Irene Taylor

Schedule 2

Ministry and Personnel	2024 Plan	Actual
Salary-Minister	\$ 71,053	\$ 71,053
Salary - Music Director	-	-
Salary-Organist	4,000	4,500
Salary-Secretary	14,325	15,120
Salary-Custodian	4,700	5,235
Salary-Guest Speaker	1,300	800
CPP Expense	3,800	3,766
E.I. Expense	1,775	1,752
Group Insurance	7,950	8,564
Payroll Expense	360	393
Travel Allowance	1,000	696
Continuing Education and Learning	1,640	934
U. C. Pension	7,250	7,764
Miscellaneous	600	500
TOTAL MINISTRY & PERSONNEL	\$ 119,753	\$ 121,077

Note: ESUC acknowledges the services provided free of charge in 2024 by our
Music Director, Treasurer, pianists, and organist

Schedule 3

Property - Church	2024 Plan	Actual
Union Gas	\$ 3,250	\$ 2,201
P.U.C.	4,350	4,754
Telephone	2,000	1,841
Internet	1,200	1,189
Repairs and Maintenance	3,000	2,108
Grounds Maintenance	1,200	1,077
Custodian Supplies	400	347
Insurance	7,200	7,176
Organ/Piano Tune/Repair	-	161
Copier Maintenance	900	729
Computer Upgrades	350	973
Non Budgeted Items	-	-
TOTAL PROPERTY CHURCH	\$ 23,850	\$ 22,556

Schedule 4

Missions	2024 Plan	Actual
Mission and Service Fund	\$ 5,800	\$ 5,045
Belarus Children	750	300
White Gift	250	25
Local Missions	100	125
Vacation Bible School	500	850
Sunday School Missions	300	240
Non Budgeted Items	-	-
TOTAL MISSIONS	\$ 7,700	\$ 6,585

Schedule 5

Membership	2024 Plan	Actual
Presbytery Assessment	\$ 4,341	\$ 5,990
Broadview	300	605
Literature	75	106
Baptism/Confirmation	-	-
Membership Supplies	-	-
Contribution Envelopes	300	230
Hospitality Supplies	-	21
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	\$ 5,016	\$ 6,952

Schedule 6

	2024 Plan	Actual
Stewardship and Finance		
Office Supplies	\$ 625	\$ 797
Postage	100	-
Bank Charges Gen Acct	1,000	1,133
Non Budgeted Items		
TOTAL STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE	\$ 1,725	\$ 1,930

Schedule 7

	2024 Plan	Actual
Worship and Music		
Flower Fund/Easter Lilies/Poinsettia	\$ 200	\$ -
Choir/Organ Music	225	172
Bulletins	-	100
Communion Supplies/Candles	100	60
Non Budgeted Items	-	327
TOTAL WORSHIP AND MUSIC	\$ 525	\$ 659

Schedule 8

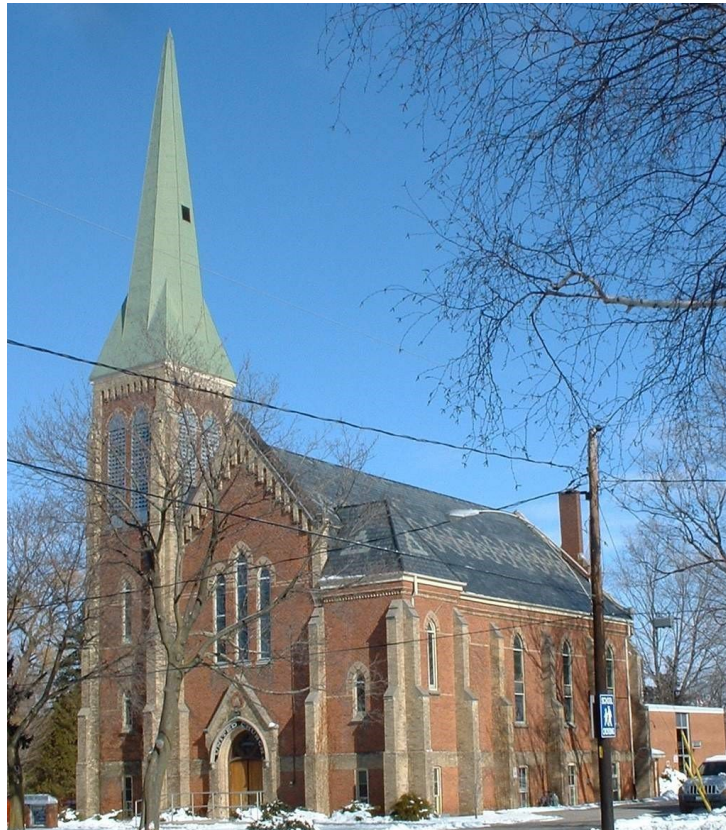
	2024 Plan	Actual
Christian Education		
Palms	\$ 25	\$ -
Awards		-
Supplies	50	-
Library		-
Curriculum/Activity	150	-
		-
TOTAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$ 225	\$ -

Schedule 9

	2024 Plan	Actual
Outreach and Communications		
Outreach and Communications	\$ 50	\$ -
Advertising	-	
TOTAL OUTREACH/COMM	\$ 50	\$ -
	2024 Plan	Actual
Other Committees and Miscellaneous		
Pastoral Care	\$ 50	\$ -
Conference	450	-
TOTAL OTHER AND MISC	\$ 500	\$ -

Schedule 10

	2024 Plan	Actual
Fundraising		
Fundraising Yard Sale	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,611
Fundraising Meat Pies	6,000	6,560
Fundraising Other	9,300	8,649
Fundraising Maple Syrup	500	60
Fundraising Scrip	2,300	2,174
TOTAL FUNDRAISING	\$ 19,400	\$ 19,054



**Erie Street United Church
Balance Sheet As at 31/12/2024**

ASSET

Current Assets

General Account	\$ 14,769.00	
Total Cash		\$ 14,769.00
Investments	6,510.00	
HST Rebate	784.00	
Total Receivable		7,294.00
Total Current Assets		\$ 22,063.00

Capital Assets

Building		\$ 418,200.00
Land		-
Total Capital Assets		\$ 418,200.00

TOTAL ASSET		\$ 440,263.00
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LIABILITY

Current Liabilities		\$ -
Total Current liabilities		\$ -

Long Term liabilities		\$ -
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TOTAL LIABILITY		\$ -
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EQUITY

Members Equity

Bank Balance Jan 1st	\$ 16,339.00	
Invested in Fixed Assets	418,994.00	
Capital Maintenance Fund	6,510.00	
Total Members Equity		\$ 441,843.00
Current Earnings		(1,580.00)

Total Equity		440,263.00
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LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		\$ 440,263.00
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**Note: Erie Street United owns 100 common shares of BCE stock
2024 capital funds have been moved to money market fund**

Members of the Official Board

<u>Position</u>	<u>Held the Position in 2024</u>	<u>Nominated for 2025</u>
Chair	Deb Ellacott	Susan Litwin
Vice Chair	VACANT	VACANT
Secretary	Ron Fleming	Ron Fleming
Treasurer	Stephanie Hayes	Stephanie Hayes
Worship & Music	Pauline Todd Beatrice Fleming Beth Carnie	Beatrice Fleming
Stewardship & Finance	Roger Kellam	Roger Kellam
Christian Education	Lynn Van Maanen	Lynn Van Maanen
Pastoral Care	Roxanne Davidson	Roxanne Davidson
Ministry & Personnel	Marianne Fenton	Marianne Fenton
Membership, Ushering & Hospitality	Martha Gammage	Martha Gammage
Missions	Charles Alfano	Charles Alfano
Communication & Outreach	Susan Litwin	Sarah Hart Coatsworth
Property & Maintenance	Adam Hayes	Adam Hayes
Regional Representative	Deb Ellacott	Deb Ellacott
UCW Representatives	Roxanne Davidson	Roxanne Davidson

Notes:

- (1) The minister is automatically a member of the Board.
- (2) The normal term for elected positions is two years.
- (3) Additional nominations will be accepted at the Annual Meeting.