

# BETHANY UNITED CHURCH

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## Annual Report

-2023-

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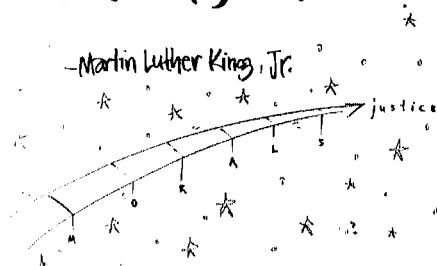
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**BETHANY UNITED CHURCH**  
**2023 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**  
**Sunday April 7, 2024 - AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer and In Memoriam
3. Welcome and Remarks re Meeting Chair and Recording Secretary
4. Motion regarding Voting Privileges
5. Motion appointing AGM Chair
6. Correspondence
7. Approval of the Agenda
8. Approval of Minutes of the (In-Person) Annual Meeting held March 26, 2023
9. Business arising from these minutes
  - a) Bethany Representatives (2) to Regional Council #15 (Bermuda-NS)
  - b) Update on Option 1 Renovations/Maintenance Plans
  - c) Review of Affirming Working Group Initiative
10. Printed Reports – All reports are printed in the annual report except the Treasurer’s Report and the Accountant’s Report.  
Motion to accept all the reports as printed in the Annual Report (except the Treasurer’s Report and the Accountant’s Report.)
11. Financial Report
  - a) Treasurer’s Report
  - b) Accountant’s Report
  - c) Proposed Budget for 2024Motion to accept Financial Reports.
9. Nominating Committee Report  
Election to fill vacancies.
10. New Business
  - a) Development of the Bethany Community of Faith Profile and Living Faith Story
  - b) Boiler/Heating System Review
11. Adjournment
12. Benediction

## MINISTER'S REPORT

The arc of the  
moral universe  
is long but it bends  
toward justice."



An angel said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) There was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official, an Ethiopian, in charge of the treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship. The Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join him." Philip ran to him and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" Philip baptized him. The eunuch went on his way rejoicing. Acts 8:26-40

Welcoming, hospitality, belonging, feeling at home, finding a place/space where you are kin with others, this is the mission of a church. If you read the Book of Acts you have a sense of what that early church did, how they felt, the community the Spirit formed, in the midst of resurrection appearances. Every minister yearns to be part of that experience. Bethany has more than it's share of persons who excel at this ministry. This is the friendliest church I have served, the most authentic offering of community at coffee hour and other church events I have witnessed. But the offering itself has remained, for the most part, to those who look, sound and act like me. It's much less challenging (and satisfying) to offer hospitality to someone who resembles you in almost every way.

In 2023 we have taken on the challenge to ponder what hospitality might look like, feel like, be like, with those previously thought of as "other". The Bible is full of stories that challenge a "us and them" mentality, the Good Samaritan being the most well-known. Just when we think we have the "us and them" rules down pat, God thrusts a story into our experience that busts open a revelation. Jackie and Aundrea's wedding, early in my time at Bethany, was one of those revelations. More have come our way since. And more will come our way, long after I have moved on as your minister. As the United Church of Christ's mission statement reveals, "God is still speaking." What comes next, no one knows but God.

Martin Luther King proclaimed, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." *Open My Eyes That I May See...Peace, Kevin*



# *IN MEMORIAM*

*David "Nelson"  
Braid*

*Geraldine "Geri"  
Colquhoun*

*Veronica Feargrieve*

*Catherine "Kay"  
Goss*

*Jean Hatcher*

*Shirley Hill*

*Mary Lawley*

*Donald MacKay*

*John Mahen*

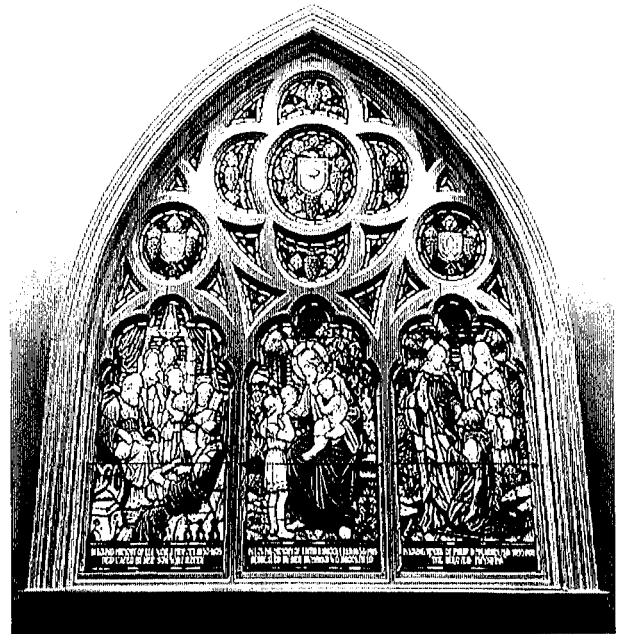
*Joyce Olmstead*

*Michael  
Redmond*

*Evelyn Smith*

*Glen Stright*

*Ruth Swim*



## **MINUTES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**MARCH 26, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Executive Board Co-Chair Chuck Maxner opened the meeting by thanking the congregation for their attendance and calling the meeting to order at 11:59 am. It was noted that with more than twenty congregants present, quorum was met. Chuck also took a moment to thank David Rackham for his many years of leadership as Chair and for leading Bethany through the COVID period. Chuck noted that this was the first in-person Annual Congregational Meeting since 2019.

**IN MEMORIAM/OPENING PRAYER:** Rev. Kevin Little – Rev. Kevin Little shared the names of members of the Bethany community who passed away during the year. Those named were Marion Baxter, Melvin Bona, Irene Chapman, Charlotte Charlton, Rev. Dr. Randy Crozman, Patrick Farmer, John Fiske, Lois Lynds, Jane Jeffrey, Truman Layton, Norman MacNeil, Jessie McCurdy, John Moore, Doug Roy, Janet White, Joyce Whynot, and Anna Marie Zurawski. Rev. Little expressed thanks for the presence of these individuals within the Bethany community.

**WELCOME:** Executive Board Co-Chair Chuck Maxner welcomed the congregation to the meeting. Chuck spoke about advice that had been received by the Executive Board through United Church of Canada to appoint an “arm’s length” Chairperson to oversee the Annual Congregational Meeting rather than have a Chair of Executive Board chair this meeting. Chuck introduced Nancy Dearn as the new Recording Secretary and thanked Gloria Stephens for her excellent service in this role.

**VOTING PRIVILEGES:** Executive Board Co-Chair Glen Knapp – Glen also thanked those gathered for their attendance. Glen explained that it has been the tradition at Bethany to include non-members in voting privileges and moved to extend voting privileges to both members and adherents. Motion seconded by Bev Johnson. Motion carried.

**APPOINTMENT OF ANNUAL MEETING CHAIR:** Executive Board Co-Chair Glen Knapp nominated and made a motion to appoint Bob Carter as Chair of this meeting and of any other congregational meetings throughout the year. Rob Steeves seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Executive Board Co-Chair Chuck Maxner moved to accept the Meeting Agenda as presented for today’s meeting. Motion seconded by Doug Shields. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Annual Meeting March 20, 2022, 1:30 pm via ZOOM):** Executive Board Co-Chair Chuck Maxner made note of some minor spelling errors within these minutes and noted the corrections. These corrections included

correction under **IN MEMORIAM**, Reuben Action should be Reuben Acton. Also, under **PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2022**, Fall Fair & Gallia Night should be Fall Fair and Gala Night. Chuck also made mention of the Auditor's Report referenced in the Financial Report to be discussed at a "future meeting". Chuck clarified that the future meeting was in fact today's annual meeting, and this report would be discussed today as item #11.2 of the agenda. Motion was made by Louisa Duck to accept the minutes with amendments in place. Motion seconded by Karen Finley. Motion carried.

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF MARCH 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022:**

1. Bob Carter discussed the need for a volunteer from the congregation of Bethany to act as Bethany's representative to Region 15. No volunteers came forward. Bob advised anyone who may be considering this role or looking for more information, to speak to Executive Board Co-Chair Glen Knapp.
2. Update on "Option 1" on behalf of the Board of Managers: Betty Tozer – Betty detailed the progress of Option 1 and provided a detailed outline of this presentation attached to these minutes. Meeting Chair Bob Carter thanked Betty Tozer and the Board of Managers for their in-depth work and ongoing efforts.

**PRINTED COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS:** Executive Board Co-Chair Chuck Maxner made a Motion to accept all printed annual committee reports as circulated apart from the Treasurer's Financial Report and the Auditor's Report. Motion seconded by Lisa Harrison. Motion carried.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Rob Steeves, Treasurer – Rob began his report with a clarification that the "Auditor's Report" is in fact an "Accountant's Report". Rob made a Motion to accept this Accountant's Report from 2021 as deferred from last year's Annual Meeting. Motion seconded by Chuck Maxner. Motion carried.

Rob continued with his presentation and gave a detailed in-person report with the use of visual slides. A complete report is attached to these minutes. In summary, Rob noted that with many people having stepped up to contribute, the operating budget finished 2022 in the black. Rob expressed his great thanks for this generosity. The proposed budget of 2023 was detailed as circulated and includes marginal increases in costs as well as a decline in insurance costs. Noting the need to transition from Option 1 to some type of on-going capital campaign to keep up with regular building maintenance, Rob also summarized the need for an additional \$31 000 to meet the needs of the 2023 budget. Rob proposed the idea of an "Events Calendar" and a "Calendar Coordinator" to work towards planning events to increase revenues.

Treasurer's Report: Rob Steeves made a Motion to accept the treasury report as circulated for 2022 apart from the Accountant Reports for 2022 which are pending. Bob Eaton seconded this motion. Motion carried.

Proposed Budget for 2023: Rob Steeves made a Motion for the approval of the budget for 2023 as circulated. Bill Piercey seconded the Motion. Motion carried.



Accountant's Report for 2022: Approval for this report has been deferred to next year's Annual Congregational Meeting (2024).

On behalf of the entire congregation and with added applause from the floor, Bob Carter acknowledged the great depth of work put into Rob's report and thanked Rob for his continued work in the critical role of Treasurer of Bethany United Church.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** Jim Musgrave – Full Report of the Nominating Committee is attached as an appendix to these minutes and provide a complete account of Jim's presentation. Jim Musgrave made a Motion for the approval of the Report of the Nominating Committee and the approval of all nominees within this report. Motion was seconded by Carol Knapp. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Kathy Grant – Bob Carter invited Kathy Grant to review the beginning of Bethany's journey to become an Affirming Community of Faith. Kathy noted in her presentation how the idea to begin this journey arose from Rev. Kevin Little's sermon on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in which he asked the congregation to imagine what they desire Bethany to become in thinking of a Vision Statement. Through the Community Connections Working Group, a proposal was put forth and approved by Session to move forward in seeking information and communicating with the congregation what it means to be an affirming church through Affirm United, a partner of the United Church of Canada. Kathy stated that no vote on this matter is needed today but that announcements of future meetings and educational opportunities would be forthcoming.

#### **ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:**

Rev. Vincent Ihasz asked for clarity from the Session Report as to his name listed as Emeritus Member of Session. Rev. Kevin Little provided this clarification noting it was due only to Rev. Ihasz' accepted title in the church of Minister Emeritus.

Chuck Maxner offered thanks to Bob Carter for chairing today's meeting and to Nancy Dearn for taking on the role of Recording Secretary.

Bob Carter added additional thanks to David Rackham for his many years as Chair of the Executive Board.

#### **ADJOURNMENT/BENEDICTION:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Bev Johnson. Motion seconded by Barry Paton. Motion carried.

Rev. Kevin Little expressed a final word of thanks to Ian Parker, Dana Mills, and Hedley for their tremendous work in organizing, printing, collating, and distributing this year's Annual Report.

Respectfully Submitted, Nancy Dearn, Recording Secretary

## **APPENDIX TO THE MINUTES**

### **Nominating Committee Report**

The Nominating Committee consists of Heather Brophy and Jim Musgrave (Chair). What follows is the Committee's report of the for the upcoming year, 2023-24:

#### **Session**

Bob Cummings and Crystal Wentzell resigned from Session during their terms, and we thank them for their service.

The following Elders have completed five-year terms and are willing to serve another five-year term each, if elected, and we hereby nominate them. Alphabetically, they are:

- Pam Carter
- Louisa Duck
- Scott Grant
- Lisa Harrison, who currently serves as Clerk of Session
- Bill Piercey
- David Rackham
- Zenora Rackham
- Glenn Tozer
- Sharon Wentzell

The following members of the Bethany church family have agreed to serve new five-year terms on Session, if elected, and we hereby nominate them now. In alphabetical order, they are:

- Penny Allen
- Sandra Anningson

#### **Board of Trustees**

Heather Brophy has retired from the Board of Trustees, and we thank her for her service.

Bill Piercey, who currently serves as Chair of the Board of Trustees, has completed his second five-year term, and is willing to serve another three-year term, if elected. Subject to Executive Board approval of this further term, and ratification by this Annual Meeting today, and we hereby nominate Bill.

Jim Musgrave has completed one term on the Board of Trustees and is willing to serve another three-year term, if elected, and we hereby nominate Jim.

Michael Moore has agreed to serve a new three-year term on the Board of Trustees, if elected, and we hereby nominate Michael.

## **Board of Managers**

Jackie Clairmont Mitchell and Kevin Nettle resigned from the Board of Managers during their terms, and we thank them for their service.

The following members of the Board of Managers have completed their terms on the Board, and we thank them for their service. Alphabetically, they are:

- Penny Allen (completed a total of 7 years)
- Mary Farmer
- Phil Reardon (completed a total of 7 years)
- Doug Shields
- Carol Simmons

Brian Jay has completed one term on the Board of Managers and is willing to serve another three-year term, if elected, and we hereby nominate Brian.

Robert Steeves, who currently serves as Treasurer, has completed his second three-year term, and is willing to serve another three-year term, if elected. Subject to Executive Board approval of this further term, and ratification by this Annual Meeting today, we hereby nominate Rob.

The following members of the Bethany church family have agreed to serve new three-year terms on the Board of Managers, if elected, and we hereby nominate them now. In alphabetical order, they are:

- Ruth Bona
- Sharon Logan
- Bob McGee
- Herb Murray
- Liam Whynot

In addition, Jerry Slaunwhite has agreed to serve a new one-year term on the Board of Managers, if elected, and we hereby nominate Jerry.

## **Executive Board**

Julie Johnson, Grant MacKenzie and Gloria Stephens have now retired the Executive Board, and we thank them for their faithful service.

Abigail Cameron, our youth member of the Executive Board, is now very busy with her studies and retires today after the completion of her term, and we thank Abigail for her service.

Charles Maxner has completed one term on the Executive Board and currently serves as a Co-Chair and is willing to serve another three-year term on the Executive Board, if elected, and we hereby nominate Charles.

Gary Gallant has completed one term as a member-at-large on the Executive Board and is willing to serve another three-year term, if elected, and we hereby nominate Gary.

Elizabeth Carter has completed one term as a youth member on the Executive Board and is willing to serve another three-year term, if elected, and we hereby nominate Elizabeth.

Les Russell has completed a one-year term as a member-at-large and is willing to serve another one-year term, if elected, and we hereby nominate Les.

Heidi Reardon has agreed to serve a new three-year term on the Executive Board, if elected, as a youth representative, and we hereby nominate Heidi now.

## **Concluding Comments, Thanks, Recommendations and Resolution for Approval by Bethany Membership**

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, we now invite the Chairs or Secretaries of each of these Boards and Committees – Session, the Board of Managers, the Board of Trustees, and the Executive Board – to reach out to your new members to thank them for their offers of service, to provide them with minutes from your last meeting, and to provide them with notice of the next meeting and any helpful orientation.

The Nominating Committee would like to thank all those volunteers who complete their service on these Boards and Committees, all those who have agreed to extend, and all those who have agreed to serve under refreshed or new mandates on behalf of our congregation. Their efforts help lead us as Bethany builds the New Jerusalem. We are blessed by their countless hours of dedicated service to the life and mission of Bethany in the world.

I would also like to thank Heather Brophy for her support on the Nominating Committee this year.

Special thanks to Rev. Kevin Little for his always-reliable and invaluable assistance.

Special thanks as well to the Chairs, Lisa Harrison (Clerk of Session), Charles Maxner and Glendon Knapp (Co-chairs of the Executive Board), Bill Piercey (Chair of the Board of Trustees), and Mary MacKay (Chair of the Board of Managers), for their incredible support of our work.

Thanks as well to Dana Mills, who is always professional and helpful.

But most of all, thank you to all the volunteers who said, “Yes”, to service!

All of the extensions noted in this year’s report, and all of the nominations to the Board of Managers, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Board and Session for 2023-24 are respectfully submitted, and I hereby move approval of all these extensions and appointments for the year ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Musgrave,

Chair, Nominating Committee



**BETHANY UNITED CHURCH**  
**ERRATUM NOTICE - MARCH 2023**

**We regret that the following report was not included at the time that the 2022 Annual Report was printed:**

**Community Connections Working Group**

The Community Connections Working Group has not been active as a committee during the past two years due to the protocols put in place by NS Public Health and Bethany Church. During this time the kitchen was also under renovation. These protocols and renovations made it difficult to bring our community together for meals and events that the working group had organized pre-pandemic. With renovations complete and safety protocols loosened we were pleased to have met in October of this year to plan how we will move forward connecting our Bethany community as well as the greater community.

During this meeting we reviewed our previous initiatives: ISANS; Walk and Talk; Digital Sign; Past Fundraisers. We discussed the Community Meals we had in the past with two lunches and two evening meals in the winter and spring months. We hope to be able to offer these meals in the near future and continue to focus on healthy, local foods and sustainability. We also look forward to planning fundraiser events that will bring us together for an evening of fun and fellowship.

It was suggested by a number of people at Bethany that the working group seek information on what it means to be an affirming church through Affirm United, a partner of the United Church of Canada. Affirming Ministries are congregations, presbyteries, Conferences, educational institutions, and other ministries within the United Church that publicly declare their commitment to inclusion and justice for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Although Affirming Ministries make an explicit statement about issues of sexuality and gender, their commitment to justice is far broader. They continually grow and change as they seek to live more fully into God's way of welcome, love, and justice for all creation. Affirming Ministries work in many different ways toward the healing and wholeness of creation: challenging bias and discrimination based on appearance, culture, class, or age; working to end racism; promoting economic justice; increasing accessibility; caring for the planet. Affirming Ministries seek to go beyond issues of gender diversity and sexual orientation to work for justice and inclusion for all people.

A sub-committee was formed to research this request. A proposal was made to Session in late November seeking approval for the sub-committee to explore the process of becoming an Affirming United Church. This proposal was discussed and approved by Session. Two Session members have joined the work of this committee which is now called the Affirm United Working Group. This team of volunteers will embark the Bethany community on an educational, discernment and decision-making process that helps our ministry to be a more welcoming, inclusive safe place for all people.

We look forward to our continued journey of connecting with others here at Bethany and the greater community, in a welcoming and inclusive environment abundant in God's love.

Respectfully submitted: Cheri Wilson and Ann Bradley, Co-Chairs.

Cheri Wilson Co-Chair

Ann Bradley Co-Chair

Mavis Hicks

Maureen Reynolds

Karen Hatcher

Bev Grant

Bev Johnson

Kathy Grant

Margie Guy

Dana Mills

Mary MacKay

**We apologize for any undue distress this may have caused.**



**BETHANY UNITED CHURCH**  
**ERRATUM NOTICE - MARCH 2023**

We regret that the following report was not included at the time that the 2022 Annual Report was printed:

**INVESTMENTS**

The church's unrestricted financial account holdings (by investment type) as of December 31, 2022 are:

**Securities**

<b><u>Common Shares</u></b>	<b><u>Quantity</u></b>	<b><u>Market Value</u></b>
Brookfield Renewable Pwr	1,200	\$ 19,296.00
Bank of Montreal	50	\$ 6,133.00
Bank of Nova Scotia	695	\$ 46,106.30
BCE Inc	105	\$ 6,246.45
Canadian Nat'l Railway	110	\$ 17,692.40
Canadian Utilities	1,000	\$ 24,320.00
CIBC	322	\$ 17,635.94
Empire	236	\$ 8,415.76
Fortis Inc	239	\$ 12,949.02
Great West Life	416	\$ 13,020.80
Magna International	128	\$ 9,735.68
Restaurant Brands	204	\$ 17,864.28
Royal Bank of Canada	404	\$ 51,429.20
Telus	467	\$ 12,202.71
Toronto Dominion Bank	264	\$ 23,144.88
<b>Total Value of Shares</b>		<b>\$286,192.42</b>



**US Funds:**

Apple	77	\$ 10,004.61
Costco	26	\$ 11,869.00
COMCAST	308	\$ 10,770.76
CISCO	240	\$ 11,433.60
IBM	82	\$ 11,552.98
Int'l Flavours	133	\$ 13,943.72
Union Pacific	59	\$ 12,217.13
Waste Management	80	\$ 12,550.40
Cash		\$ 307.56
<b>Total Value of US Funds</b>		<b>USD \$ 94,649.76</b>
		<b>CAD: \$128,061.13</b>

**Accumulated Dividends** \$ 14,442.49

**Management fees** \$ 2017.82

**Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs)**

<b>GIC Type</b>	<b>Principal</b>	<b>Interest Rate</b>	<b>Maturity Date</b>
Annual Compound	\$ 66,226.62	2.770%	May 22, 2024
<b>Total Value of Fixed Income</b>			<b>\$ 66,226.62</b>

**Uninvested cash** \$ 75,103.09

The church's **restricted** financial investment is:

N. Geizer \$ 10,225.00

(Currently awaiting reinvestment - included in "Uninvested cash" above)

**We apologize for any undue distress this may have caused.**



## BETHANY UNITED CHURCH ERRATUM NOTICE - MARCH 2023

**We regret that the following report was not included at the time that the 2022 Annual Report was printed:**

### 4 – year Financial Comparison

**Bethany United Church - 4 Yr. Financial Comparison with 2023 Budget**

	Budget 2023	Actual 2022	Actual 2021	Actual 2020	Actual 2019
<b>REVENUE</b>					
Contributions	\$ 458,457.00	\$ 435,866.59	\$ 411,336.11	\$ 449,921.00	\$ 347,187.00
Rentals	\$ 10,238.32	\$ 8,412.50	\$ 6,644.39	\$ 4,760.00	\$ 14,410.00
Parking	\$ 36,516.00	\$ 36,516.00	\$ 55,800.00	\$ 50,163.00	\$ 32,296.00
Fall Fair	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35,715.00
Gala Auction	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Memorial Donations	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 3,845.00	\$ 5,693.00	\$ 3,051.00	\$ 3,975.00
Dividend & Int.	\$ -	\$ 19,747.00	\$ 13,271.60	\$ 29,435.00	\$ 12,523.00
Jazz Vespers	\$ -	\$ 204.00	\$ 204.00	\$ 204.00	\$ -
Funerals	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,023.00	\$ 6,157.00
Joy Lunch Club	\$ 700.00	\$ 68.58	\$ -	\$ 324.00	\$ 259.00
Other	\$ 2,304.00	\$ 12,696.79	\$ 56,004.50	\$ 29.00	\$ 220.00
<b>NET REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 534,815.32</b>	<b>\$ 538,256.46</b>	<b>\$ 548,953.63</b>	<b>\$ 524,930.00</b>	<b>\$ 506,852.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Salaries, Benefits, Travel	\$ 351,436.68	\$ 333,099.30	\$ 296,785.00	\$ 296,879.00	\$ 307,122.00
Premises	\$ 132,158.00	\$ 130,376.06	\$ 106,296.82	\$ 182,947.00	\$ 139,596.00
Music	\$ 3,520.00	\$ 2,818.78	\$ 586.06	\$ -	\$ 4,623.00
Office	\$ 17,350.00	\$ 15,224.49	\$ 17,195.18	\$ 17,822.00	\$ 20,659.00
Christian Education	\$ 2,800.00	\$ 2,544.07	\$ 4,379.06	\$ 798.00	\$ 1,381.00
Worship Ministry	\$ 3,800.00	\$ 2,201.86	\$ 7,840.25	\$ 796.00	\$ 7,157.00
Presbytery Assessment	\$ 22,650.00	\$ 8,535.00	\$ 16,316.00	\$ 1,316.00	\$ 16,316.00
Communications	\$ 600.00	\$ 559.08	\$ 179.84	\$ 126.00	\$ -
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 514,814.68</b>	<b>\$ 505,959.50</b>	<b>\$ 509,628.11</b>	<b>\$ 513,892.00</b>	<b>\$ 496,152.00</b>

Financial Statement Breakdown:					
Net operating Income / Loss before stock donations	\$ 0.64	\$ 12,496.96	\$ 19,325.42	\$ 11,338.00	\$ 10,700.00
Gain (Loss) on disposal of investments	\$ -	\$ 17,898.00	\$ -	\$ 138.00	\$ 19.00
Stock Donations	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,267.00
Management fees	\$ -	\$ 2,018.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Unrealized gain(losses) or stocks	\$ -	\$ 100,063.00	\$ 80,696.53	\$ 5,548.00	\$ 22,154.00
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	\$ 0.64	\$ 22,256.04	\$ 120,021.95	\$ 4,928.00	\$ 43,072.00

**We apologize for any undue distress this may have caused.**

## **Executive Board Report**

The last Bethany United Church Executive Board Report was for the 2022 Annual Report reviewed at the Congregational Meeting on March 26th, 2023. With that report we did restate some details about the present governance at Bethany United Church. Each governance board and committee has its own specific mandate and area of jurisdiction and generally the Executive Board is responsible for exercising overall leadership in the care and oversight of the spiritual life, activities and the work of the congregation, the care and maintenance of church property and facilities, and acts as a liaison between our local Community of Faith and Regional Council 15 (now the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council) of the United Church of Canada. Various committees and boards take care of the day-by-day management and governance of the activities of Bethany United Church and these groups are all represented on the Executive Board.

Specifically with respect to the Executive Board membership, at the March 26, 2023, Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee outlined some changes. At the April 24th, 2023, Executive Board Meeting, the Board thanked departing members Abigail Cameron (youth member), Julie Johnson and Grant MacKenzie for their service to the Board. Special thanks went to Gloria Stephens for her dedication as the Recording Secretary for many years and also Nancy Dearn was welcomed as the incoming Recording Secretary. Welcome was also extended to Heidi Reardon who joined as the new youth representative.

The last Annual Meeting in March 2023 was the first in-person Annual meeting since the Covid pandemic upset life in March 2020. The meeting format was quite successful and was held following a regular worship service and in the sanctuary to allow some element of adherence to ongoing Covid inspired social distancing concerns. Also from a governance aspect, rather than have the Executive Board leaders as Chair of the meeting, it was recommended and accepted by the congregation to have another person from the congregation act as Chair. This brought Bethany in line with UCC best governance guidelines. We thank Bob Carter, a member of the Board of Managers, who provided excellent chairing of the proceedings.

Once again it is to be emphasized that the Executive Board expresses its thanks for the commitment and hard work of the members of all of the committees and boards who are active on your behalf. We certainly thank all who have answered the call to serve as there is an ever-changing membership on the committees and boards. We do recognize that there is a learning curve required when taking on such new duties and responsibilities and so on behalf of the congregation, we thank all volunteers who take on these tasks.

Special thanks are extended to Jim Musgrave as chair of the Nominating Committee for guiding their efforts in keeping well validated records of committee membership and undertaking a tireless approach to extending invitations to serve on Bethany's Boards and Committees.

The Executive Board met in 2023 on February 13th, March 20th, April 24th, and October 24th at which time reports from all of the Committees and Boards were reviewed. Each of the Committees and Governance Boards has provided a report to be found elsewhere in this Annual Report publication.

Following are some comments on specific issues reviewed at the Executive Board. The United Church of Canada requested that the governing body of every pastoral charge review and vote on Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization within the structure of the UCC. Information was provided by the UCC to review, and this was evaluated and discussed at length. The Executive was supportive of the Remit and the recognition of the strong and important relationship between indigenous people and the UCC. A vote was submitted from Bethany's Community of Faith supportive of the Remit.

As you know, the Covid 19 pandemic markedly impacted our congregational activities but gradually restrictions have relaxed, and this has allowed us to safely increase our activities. The situation has been monitored by our own congregational IPIT (In-Person Implementation Team) Committee. Special thanks to the members (Glen Knapp, Pam Carter, Elizabeth Carter, Bev Grant, Shawn Whynot, Louisa Duck, Dana Mills and Charles Maxner) for their efforts on your behalf. Given the Public Health direction that the Covid-related Health Protection Act was no longer necessary and that Covid was to be dealt with like other respiratory viruses, IPIT recessed as of June 2023. Special thanks to Bev Grant and her Kitchen Committee for taking the initiative to set a safe Food Policy for Bethany, this having been circulated in a church bulletin addition in the autumn of 2023.

With the relaxation of Covid rules, many group activities and events have been occurring. We have seen a steady rise in attendance at worship services but also for those not able to attend in person, special thanks to the Audio-Visual Team (Glen Knapp, Rob Steeves, Stephen Morley, Penny Allen, and Barry Paton) which ensures an excellent online You-tube service is provided. The weekly group activities have been supplemented by special events such as Christie Chisholm's fascinating Highland Night, the Pancake supper, the Spring Tea and the fall Movie Night to name a few. The Board of Managers continued to guide us through continued renovations including inside and outside painting, a spring work party to do yard cleanup and most importantly the replacement of the Sanctuary roof to name a few. The B of M even championed the installation of pickleball lines in the gym and obtained nets and equipment to allow for pickleball lessons and games! Special thanks and acknowledgement to Mary MacKay who led the B of M for much of 2023 before the necessity for her to step aside for personal reasons. The large ongoing task for the B of M to address is boiler replacement and special thanks to the subcommittee engaged in exploring all options.

In regard to Bethany's local environment, we were made aware of a major development being planned for the "Sears" property on the land above the tracks adjacent to our parking lot. This is known as the West End Growth Node and is a major development

consisting of numerous high-rise structures and retail establishments. Also included will be a new transit hub. Some members of the executive were able to meet in person with the HRM planning team to hear about some details and Bethany's Fellowship Hall was the site of the HRM Planning Teams' first public meeting about the project, this being held on April 12th, 2023. This was suboptimal in its' execution and so was not so beneficial in reviewing the project. Further HRM Planning Department public meetings were held at other venues but at this time we do not know the potential impact on Bethany, but this is a long term (20 to 30 years) project. We will need to continue to monitor this issue.

At various meetings, questions have arisen as to the best governance structure for Bethany. In light of that, a Governance Subcommittee has started to review this concern. In 2023, surveys were circulated and completed by the various committees and boards. This year we plan to review this information as part of a major congregational self-reflection to be undertaken.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee under the direction of Herb Steeves has been very active in clarifying and documenting the duties and responsibilities of Bethany United Church staff members to allow the development of job descriptions, a very large and important task for which we thank Herb and his team.

A major initiative undertaken has been the self-reflection directed by the Affirming Working Group which was developed in 2022 following responses by the congregation submitted on Pentecost Sunday June 2022. Subsequently a subcommittee of the Community Connections Working Group was formed as the Affirming Working Group, this action being supported by Session in late 2022 and the Executive Board in February 2023. As outlined in a letter from the Executive in February 2023, "the Affirming Working Group invites our congregation to embark on an education, discernment, and decision-making process to help us determine if we will become an Affirming Ministry." The working group has been very active ever since in providing educational materials in the Fellowship Hall and hosting 2 excellent interactive and well attended in-person sessions in May and October 2023 at which time all opinions and ideas were discussed. The process will continue as we continue to faithfully reflect on this endeavour.

We did clarify the role of the Treasurer in 2023 as previously the Treasurer's role was attached to the Board of Managers and the Executive Board. However, upon review and reflection, it was felt that the Treasurer was responsible to the Congregation. Thus, at the Executive Board meeting in October 2023, the Treasurer position was clarified by having the Treasurer resign from the Board of Managers and endorse that the Treasurer's responsibility is to the congregation however the position will have ex officio advisory status to all Boards and voting rights will be extended as a member of the Executive Board. It was further clarified that the Term for the Treasurer's position will be for five (5) years with an option to renew for three (3) additional years. Obviously, we thank Rob Steeves, our present treasurer, for his dedication and vigilance to his role. Through his leadership we continue to weather changing times and he would be the first

to thank the congregation for their blessed generosity and commitment to our Community of Faith.

We offer most heartfelt thanks to our staff members (Shawn Whynot, Ann Bradley, Dana Mills, Louisa Duck, Jimmy Sweet and Tina Gascon) for their commitment to Bethany and their tireless efforts and commitment on behalf of our Community of Faith. As mentioned in last year's report, we have gone through interesting and challenging times (particularly with Covid) and they have been flexible to change to ensure success of our Faith journey.

We would be remiss not to mention the important role youth members have had on our congregation. The ever-smiling Daniel Carter was our Ministry Resource Assistant in the summer of 2023, and he undertook many extra activities such as updating our governance document filing system, doing a website survey, and conducting AV activities to support summer worship services. Kyla Mills was successful in becoming a Climate Motivator for the United Church of Canada and she has conducted educational activities about climate issues and her endeavours are exemplified by the "hanging cranes" in the sanctuary. Special thank you to Dr. Mark King who guided her as her mentor for her projects.

As stated last year, we are so blessed to have Reverend Kevin as our spiritual leader. His enthusiasm and energy are infectious, and his daily blogs are definitely anticipated. He leads by example particularly in the realm of social conscience and outreach to the community. He is to be thanked for his tremendous commitment to pastoral care and support of those who are challenged by ill health or are grieving.

As we enter 2024, we have an exciting opportunity for us to undertake a self-reflection and visioning exercise as a congregation. The United Church did have us complete a brief questionnaire on our Faith Community in 2023 in preparation for the development of our Community of Faith Profile which will include our Living Faith Story. This will be our collaborative undertaking for 2024!!

We look forward to the continued excellent work from all of our Boards and Committees as we work together to provide the stewardship for Bethany to be the wonderful Faith Home that we experience daily.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Glen Knapp  
Chuck Maxner  
Executive Board Co-Chairs

## **Ministry and Personnel Committee Report**

The Ministry and Personnel Committee (M&P) is comprised of congregation members of Bethany United Church. These volunteers are:

Lynn Steeves  
Ian Parker  
Julie Jonson  
Dan Jackson  
Herb Steeves

The Committee met a number of times during 2023 dealing with matters of the Church. It has met with all staff in a group setting and individually as required.

The M&P Committee acts under the guidelines of the Manual of the United Church of Canada. The Committee has three primary roles: consultation and support in a relational manner with all Pastoral Charge staff, including ministry and lay personnel, fostering healthy relationships between Pastoral Charge staff and with the congregational community, and overarching supervision of appropriate human resource functions.

The Committee believes that supporting the Pastoral Charge Staff in the performance of their duties is paramount. The good work that has occurred in keeping Bethany United Church functioning has been directly related to their efforts.

The Committee in 2023 continued to review both past and the best practices for Bethany United Church regarding ministry and personnel. M&P focuses its efforts towards ensuring the proper procedures and policies related to staff members are in place. In 2023 updated job descriptions were completed for all staff.

Members of the community of faith who wish to discuss matters regarding the M&P Committee or Pastoral Charge Staff should please direct these, confidentially in writing, to the Chair or any member of the Committee.

The end of March 2024 will see the completion of one Committee member's participation. Ian Parker is retiring from M&P. We wish to thank Ian for his great service and experience with the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Herb Steeves  
Chair

## **Board of Managers (BOM) Report**

The Board of Manager's role is to oversee the financial operation and maintenance of the church. The Board oversees a wide range of projects from routine maintenance to significant capital projects.

In 2023 the Board met nine times. The Board does not meet in the Summer. Members participated by ZOOM or in-person. Thanks to Dana Mills and Rob Steeves who take the lead in setting up and administering the ZOOM calls.

During the year, for a variety of reasons, five members had to leave the Board. We said goodbye to Mary MacKay, Susan Zurawski, Grant MacKenzie, Sharon Logan and Jason Merry. We thank all the above for their efforts in improving the church facility. The Board is looking forward to new members joining us in 2024.

The Board has broken down its duties, so that each Board member assumes responsibility for a particular area. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the people below. There is also the option of letting the office know that you would like the Board to contact you.

Maintenance - Interior	Jeff Mills
Maintenance - Exterior	Brian Jay
Maintenance – Small Jobs/Snow Removal/Lawn Care	Bob McGee
Building Systems	Jeff Mills
IT Support	Rob Steeves
Fire and Emergency	Liam Whynot
Health and Safety & Security	Bob Carter
Kitchen	Ruth Bona
Option 1 and Planning/Administration	Betty Tozer
Rentals	Glen Knapp (not a BOM member)
Chair	Mary MacKay (Now Vacant)

During 2023, the caretaker and Board members conducted routine maintenance and painting throughout the building. Other activities undertaken included a clean-up of the storage closets throughout the facility by volunteers and BOM members. Thanks to donations from congregants, there are now new pew numbers in the sanctuary and art hung in the parlour. Patchmaster undertook drywall repairs and Certa-Pro painted the ceilings in various rooms and hallways throughout the facility. The BOM arranged for new parking lot signs to be purchased and installed in the rear parking lot.

Inspections by the Fire Marhsall's office and Intact Insurance identified deficiencies together with a timeline for having work completed. Glen Knapp and Liam Whynot worked diligently and as required contractors dealt with all deficiencies.



As part of our regular maintenance, Bethany retained GFL to examine, clean and inspect all storm water, sanitary and related pipes on the rear parking lot. The inspection confirmed that some pipes and basins are in disrepair. GFL was unable to complete the camera inspection of the large 48-inch pipeline due to accessibility concerns. The Board has initiated discussions with a contractor about a clean-up near the grate of the pipe so that a camera inspection may proceed in the Spring. It is the Board's intention to replace the old pipes and basins when the rear parking lot is repaved.

The facility was busy with one-time renters and long-term renters. Rental income was up from 2022. The use of our pickleball courts brought in a little over \$1,000. The BOM hope to increase this amount in 2024.

The Board oversaw two significant projects based on the Option 1 Team Report. This work is funded by monies raised by the capital campaign. Four Seasons Roofing replaced the roof on the sanctuary, in July 2023, at a cost of \$97,226.82 (includes HST). As part of this project, the contractor replaced the roof cladding on both the sanctuary and chapel, to avoid the need for painting. Jeff Mills was on-site throughout and managed this job on behalf of the BOM. The painting of the exterior of the facility took place in August 2023 at a cost of \$37,150.75 (includes HST). The Board also spent money to ensure the pigeons roosting in our sanctuary roof eaves would relocate. The Board entered into agreements for the replacement of three exterior doors and flooring throughout the facility. This work will take place in 2024.

During 2023, the BOM had a knowledgeable team looking at our boiler and heating system. Our current operating license for the boiler expires in 2024. Bethany must have a plan ready to replace the boiler. Bethany engaged a consultant, CBCL Engineering and Environmental Design Services, to provide a report about heating options for the church. The BOM will be keeping you updated during 2024.

A great deal of planning and work goes into maintaining our church facility. This includes maintenance and upgrades to meet building code, fire, insurance, health, safety, and accessibility requirements. The Board has set out a plan identifying inspections, maintenance, minor and major projects that it will work toward completing in 2024.

The summer saw Daniel Carter, joining us as a Ministry Resource Assistant, through the Canada Summer Works program. Dana Mills will be submitting another application, on behalf of Bethany, in 2024.

The BOM cannot conduct its role without help from Kevin, Jim, Dana, Ann, Louisa, Shawn, Tina, Rob, and volunteers.

Thank you to everyone for the support the Board received in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,  
Board of Managers

## **Treasurer Report**

In 2023, life at Bethany had a much more “normal” feel to it: Coffee hour attendance grew, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was held, Men’s club and Joy Lunch resumed. As your sophomore treasurer, the financial cycle began to feel more familiar. Preparing a budget was still a challenge, as every year since 2019 has presented unique and often challenging circumstances. Having been through the full cycle I was much more comfortable looking for expenditure trends and making choices. I’m still not where I would like to be in the budget planning/consultation phase, but I believe that overall, the process is slowly improving. I also had a better idea of what to expect in the last quarter of the year: I wasn’t nearly as stressed in late 2023 as I was the previous year!

It was yet another year of learning: I’m still learning more about the full operational scope of the Community of Faith that is Bethany, and how it fits in our region. I’m also learning more about the operations of the National Church, and our place in it and how each pastoral charge has its own strengths, weaknesses differences and challenges. One of the benefits of Covid (don’t hear that often do you?) is that UCC leveraged technology to create a community forum for United Church treasurers from across the country to meet on Zoom on a monthly basis. It’s been a godsend to me in my short two years as treasurer: This forum keeps us abreast of things such as the latest CRA changes, Payroll issues and fixes, Grants, deadlines for statistical submissions, etc. It is very well organized and moderated, no small feat when there are regularly more than 160 treasurers from across the country online!!

The first quarter was busy as usual: For those unfamiliar with the cycle, in the first quarter there is the business of wrapping up the previous year, working with accountants to review/close the books, preparation of congregant tax receipts, creating a budget for the new year, and submitting detailed statistical reports to the National Church. After catching our breath for a week or two in April, this all culminates in the preparation of our tax return for CRA by end of the second quarter.

As usual, summer was financially fairly quiet. Building maintenance expenditures were fairly low. The board of Managers planned and executed two major capital projects left from Option 1: a new sanctuary roof and a large exterior painting project.

Fall was not without its challenges, but I had better data to work with as far as planning and projections were concerned. A deficit still seemed possible, but the figures weren’t nearly as dire as they were the previous year. In the end, the Bethany Community of faith came through!!! For that, I would like to sincerely thank everyone for their generosity this past year, particularly in December.

As I write this in February, the final number for the year is yet to be determined. The accountants are working away at finalizing our annual review and our year end books and December 2023 financial position. Givings were \$20,000 below what I had budgeted. Rentals partially offset this as they were \$10,500 higher than budget. Extra activities also provided \$5,000 more than budget, meaning our operating revenue was

only \$5,000 less than budgeted. Our expenses were actually \$15,000 less than budgeted, with fuel costs being the major contributor as they were \$18,000 less than budget. Unless they identify a serious mistake in our operating and revenue record keeping, I believe our operating account will show a surplus for the year in the range of \$16,000.00 - \$17,000.00. The final bottom line will depend on how well our investment portfolio did for the year. One other financial highlight of note for the year: We paid our CEBA loan off in time, meaning we only had to pay off \$40,000 of the original \$60,000, with the other \$20,000 becoming a forgivable grant!

Going forward in to 2024 and beyond, we still face challenging times: First, inflation is still a cause for concern. While it has been headed in the right direction, it seems the impacts of rising costs have lagged behind and we are still catching up. Second, while we look at closing off the Capital Campaign we started some 5 years ago, there is still more infrastructure work that needs to be done throughout the complex. As I reported last year, the heating system is going to need to be replaced, and very soon!! And it is likely to be an expensive six figure replacement.

One of the things we as a congregation need to explore more fully is how to deal with planning for “capital” expenditures. Our Five-Year Option 1 renovation was an example of a major, multi year capital program, but we need to take a look at how we plan and fund major projects on a regular annual basis. Basically, we would have an operating budget, which keeps the lights on, pays salaries, funds our programs, and covers the cost of minor maintenance. A separate permanent capital account would be maintained for planning and executing capital projects. Congregants would have the ability to designate gifts on a regular basis to this capital account. Sounds simple, but there are lots of details to be sorted out. Budget year 2023 actually served as an unofficial trial of the concept. Granted, the “capital” work consisted of tasks and funding left over from Option 1, but it served as a test. The board worked within its operating budget for day-to-day operations, and in parallel completed several capital projects using capital account funds. These projects included a new roof for the sanctuary, as well as a major painting project. From a financial management perspective, it went fairly smoothly.

I want to conclude this report by thanking several people who continue to be a blessing to me as your treasurer:

- Linda Knechtel for being always there to calmly answer questions.
- Tina Gascon, for doing the heavy lifting, and patiently putting up with me and my endless queries and data requests.
- Third, Dana Mills for putting up with my tardiness in getting reports done.

In closing, a massive “THANK YOU” to you, the congregation for your continuing financial support of this wonderful community of faith. I urge you to prayerfully keep Bethany in your thoughts when planning your donations for the coming year.

Thank you for the privilege of being your treasurer.

Respectfully submitted, Robert Steeves, Treasurer

## **Contributions to Mission & Service (M & S) Fund in 2023**

**The total amounts of contributions made to the M & S Fund are:**

<b>Mission and Service Contributions/Envelopes:</b>	<b>\$ 19,694.52</b>
<b>M &amp; S UCW</b>	<b>\$ .00</b>
<b>M &amp; S White Gift</b>	<b>\$ 30.00</b>
<b>M &amp; S World Development</b>	<b>\$ 260.00</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<hr/> <b>\$19,984.52</b>

## **Contribution Breakdown – 2023**

**Total envelopes issued for 2023: 301**

(This includes 88 households on PAR and 4 contributors through Canada Helps.)

**Total numbers with Zero balance: 13**

**Contributions between:**

<b>\$1.00 - \$100:</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>\$101 - \$500:</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>\$501 - \$1000:</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>\$1001 - \$2500:</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>\$2501 - \$5000:</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Over \$5000:</b>	<b>26</b>

## **Memorial Donations Received In 2023**

**\$5,260.00**

Bethany United Church expresses thanks to all members and adherents who contributed to the memorial bulletin donations for 2023 “in memory” and all charitable donations made to honor loved ones and friends.

## **Volunteers**

*Bethany is blessed with a dedicated community of volunteers.  
Our sincerest gratitude is extended to all for the gifts you share.*

## Bethany Benevolent Fund

The Bethany Benevolent Fund is a Session Fund for goodwill purposes that is used to help people in difficult circumstances. Our sincere thanks to the congregation of Bethany for their many generous donations throughout the year. This Fund is administered at the discretion of our Minister, Kevin Little.

### FINANCIAL STATEMENT

	Debit	Credit
<b>Opening balance as of January 1, 2023</b>		<b>\$2895.99</b>
<b>Revenue:</b>		
Individual donations		\$3153.00
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Amount disbursed		\$2724.43
Other expenses		\$ 00.00
<b>Closing balance as of December 31, 2023</b>		<b>\$3324.56</b>

## Brookfield Fund

2023 was a quiet year for the Brookfield calendar fund. This auxiliary fund, in existence for almost 100 years, has provided financial assistance for minor unforeseen expenditures not covered in the operating budget of the church. Examples of such expenditures have included things such as postage for an unforeseen mass mailing to the congregation, minor ancillaries for the nursery, covering the per diems for a student delegate to a church conference, a new piano lamp for the chapel, or flowers for a staff illness.

<b>Balance January 1, 2023 .....</b>	<b>\$1,408.98</b>
<b>New funds in 2023 .....</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>Expenditures in 2023 .....</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>Balance December 31, 2023 .....</b>	<b>\$1,408.98</b>

If any congregants have more details on the origins of, not only this fund, but also its name, I would be most interested in hearing from you. This fund has not seen much activity in the past few years, and it has been suggested that it may have run its course. Before any decision on its future is taken, I feel obliged to explore its history for a fuller understanding of its origins and purpose.

In the meantime, we welcome any and all donations. Usual donations are modest but very much appreciated. Annual contributions to the fund are included in the year - end statement you receive for income tax purposes for your regular envelope receipt. If you think that you would be able to contribute to the Brookfield Fund, we will welcome hearing from you (telephone 902-455-0521, 225) to make arrangements to receive your donation.

Respectfully submitted, Robert Steeves, Treasurer

## **The Earle and Janet Reid Scholarship Fund (“The Fund”)**

Under the provisions of his Last Will and Testament, Dr. Earle Reid generously donated to Bethany United Church the sum of \$100,000.00 to fund the Earle and Janet Reid Scholarship Fund (“the Fund”). Under the provisions of his Will, Dr. Reid provided that the net annual income of the Fund be distributed annually by Bethany by awarding annual scholarships to recipients attending a secondary or post-secondary educational institution who are active participants in church activities.

The funds were transferred to the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia to invest on Bethany’s behalf. CFNS is a public charitable foundation established by Nova Scotians for Nova Scotians which works with private donors to build the financial and social capital of our community by establishing permanent endowment funds and providing the expertise to maximize the benefit to each of these funds. Since all the funds of the CFNS are pooled and invested together, the CFNS is able to keep investment costs low in order to maximize the benefit of each endowment fund. The monies in the Fund are invested in a balanced fund comprised of 60% equities and 40% fixed income. The CFNS charges an annual management fee of 1.77% for each fund and provides annual and quarterly reports.

Under the terms of Bethany’s agreement with the CFNS, an Adjudication Committee consisting of three members of the congregation and a representative of the CFNS has been established to review all applications for the two annual scholarships and to recommend the two annual recipients of the scholarships as set out in Dr. Reid’s Will and then to forward their recommendations to the CFNS’s Board of Directors for final approval. In 2023, the members from Bethany who sat on the Adjudication Committee were Greg McConnell, Stephanie Rice and Tonya Brennan. The CFNS is responsible for promoting the Fund.

This past year (2023), the annual scholarship awards were granted to Thomas Duck, Bethany United Church and Aiden Kang, Bedford United Church. Both were awarded \$2000. Thomas will continue his studies at Dalhousie University and Aiden is beginning his studies in the BSC program at Dalhousie University. The application deadline is annually now the fifteenth of May.

~ Greg McConnell

## **Board of Trustees Report**

The role of the Board of Trustees is to hold all real property occupied by the Congregation of Bethany United Church in trust for the United Church of Canada and to ensure that all the congregational property is used for a purpose not contrary to the provision of the Trusts of Model Deed.

Although the Trustees held no formal meetings in 2023, they participated in virtual conference calls during the year including telephone conference calls and emails to discuss the following matters namely: -

1. Review the Crowthers & Brayley Ltd.'s January 27, 2023, appraisal report of the personal property of Bethany United Church for the purpose of determining the replacement cost for property insurance which appraisal amounted to \$682,220.95.
2. Reviewed the quarterly financial statements from Kim Reardon of CIBC Private Wealth Wood Gundy, Portfolio Manager, to keep up to date on the status of the investment portfolio throughout the year.
3. Several members of the Board attended HRM's staff presentation at the Halifax Forum in May 2023 to hear a report on the status of the proposed West End Mall Future Growth Node and impact this development may have on Bethany United Church in the long term. Unfortunately, there was very little information that the staff could provide us with at this early stage of the development. We will keep our eyes on the project as it proceeds.

The members of the Board of Trustees for 2022 consisted of: -

Bill Piercey, Chair	Gordon Lawley
Jim Musgrave, Secretary	Lynne Legg
Don MacKay	Brenda Duplisea
Brian Wentzell	Brian Jay
Rev. Alfred Woodward	

I wish to thank the members for their dedication to the Board over the past year with a special thank-you to Gordon Lawley and Rev. Alfred Woodward, both of whom have resigned from the Board effective December 31, 2023, and Don MacKay who passed away in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Piercey, Chair

## **Session Report**

Rev. Kevin Little – (2015 - )

Lisa Harrison - Clerk of Session - (2021 - )

Louisa Duck - Children and Family Care Ministry – (2010 - )

Ann Bradley – Community Engagement Facilitator – (2016 - )

### **EMERITUS MEMBERS OF SESSION**

Rev. Vincent Ihasz (2015)

Don Grant (2022)

### **LIFE MEMBERS OF SESSION**

(None Recorded at this Time)

#### **(2024)**

Carolyn Kunz  
Elizabeth Carter  
Gordon Lawley  
Janet Sponagle Hopper  
Joan MacVicar  
Kathy Brown

#### **(2025)**

Diane Plumridge-Reid  
Laura King  
Lori Cormier  
Rick MacFarland

#### **(2026)**

Andy Williams  
Aundrea Michell  
Judy MacLean  
Karen Harrigan  
Marion Jay  
Maryth Maxner  
Yvonne Macor

#### **(2027)**

Bonnie Boyd-Read  
Mabel Davis  
Randy Tyler  
Ruth DeVenne  
Heather Fitzpatrick  
Kathy Ross  
Rick Anningson  
Elizabeth Carter

#### **(2028)**

Bill Piercey  
David Rackham  
Glenn Tozer  
Lisa Harrison  
Louisa Duck  
Pam Carter  
Sharon Wentzell  
Scott Grant  
Zenora Rackham  
Penny Allen  
Sandra Anningson



**MINISTRIES OF SESSION - 2023**

**Local Outreach**

Ann Bradley, Chair  
Ann Pugh\*  
George Russell\*  
Sharon Wentzell  
Glen Knapp\*  
Zenora Rackham

Gary Gallant\*, Treasurer  
Cathy MacDonald\*  
Carol Knapp\*  
Margie Guy\*  
Tim Cormier\*  
Steve Morley\*

**Worship Ministry**

Elizabeth Carter, Chair  
Bev. Grant\*  
Rev. Kevin Little  
Louisa Duck

Kathy Brown  
Carolyn Kunz  
Shawn Whynot\*

**AV Ministry**

Barry Paton\*  
Rob Steeves\*  
Glen Knapp\*  
Steve Morley\*  
Penny Allen

**Communion**

Don Grant

**Head Usher**

Pam Carter

**Transportation**

Heather Gillis\*  
Harriet King\*

\* Member at Large

**R** Retired

**D** Deceased

## **2023 BAPTISMS**

Skye Vee Hernandez Parks  
Oliva Rachel Hazel Kunz  
Rhodes Triston Max Manson

## **2023 MARRIAGES**

Jessie Gavel & Andre Daoust

## **BETHANY SESSION REPORT**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Number of Elders December 31 (Incl Emeritus member)	34	35	38
Total number of families under Pastoral Charge	319	314	303
Total number of persons under Pastoral Charge	861	722	697
Number Baptized	4	0	3
Number of Marriages	2	3	1
Number of Funerals	13	5	9
Received by Profession of Faith	6	0	0
Received by Certificate of Transfer	19	0	17

## Worship Committee Report

This is now the third report that I have written through my role as Chair of the Worship Committee, and the end of my second complete year in this capacity. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in this role, and I would like to thank all the people who have supported me throughout this year.

The purpose of the Worship Committee is as follows:

*“To oversee the worship services at Bethany United Church, endeavouring to plan and provide “an awesome and transforming” worship experience for all”*

As you will note in this report, the Worship Committee did not meet as frequently as in previous years. I was studying in Spain for the first part of 2023 and then we had summer, so our first meeting was not until September. We communicated largely through email, and I appreciate the support of the members of this committee while I was abroad.

Anniversary Sunday was on October 29<sup>th</sup>, and we were grateful for the presence of Lisa Harrison, the Executive Director of Brunswick St. Mission. She spoke with us regarding her work with the Mission and we appreciated her reflection offered.

We also wish to acknowledge the retirement of Bev Grant, who has dedicated 11 years to the Worship Committee, offering her valuable advice and support. She has decided to bow out of the Worship Committee this year, and as such we wish to thank her for the work that she has done, and the integral role she plays at Bethany. We are so grateful for her.

On that note, I wish to express gratitude for the volunteers who ensured our hospitality ministry and worship services ran smoothly. Many thanks to the ushers, who provide a welcoming face every Sunday morning. Additionally, a special thanks to those who work to make our services available online. Most of our activities have returned to in-person continue to appreciate the way that technology has allowed us to become more accessible. I know many (including myself!) are grateful for the way that our services have become a hybrid format, and that is largely due to the dedication of the Audio and Visual Team Ministry volunteers. Thank you. We are excited to see what 2024 brings.

Members of the Worship Committee for 2023 were as follows:

### Non-Staff

Elizabeth Carter, Chair  
Kathy Brown  
Bev. Grant  
Carolyn Kunz

### Staff

Rev. Kevin Little  
Shawn Whynot  
Louisa Duck

~ Elizabeth Carter, Chair

## **Local Outreach Ministry Report**

**Jesus said, “For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat,  
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,  
I was a stranger and you invited me in.  
I needed clothes and you clothed me. (Matthew 25:35-36)**

Local Outreach is a ministry of session and is directly supported by the congregation through designated contributions in the weekly offering envelopes. On behalf of Bethany Church, this money is used to serve persons in need of food, clothing items and supplies in the Metro area. A list of community agencies supported during the past year may be found in the Committee’s financial report.

This past year continued to be challenging for so many people in need of food and shelter as the cost of food rises and the lack of affordable housing proves to be a crisis in our city. The volunteers at St. Andrew’s Sunday Suppers continue to go above and beyond, making certain every person who arrives for a hot meal on Sunday receives one. With the continued support of local churches and organizations the supper team also provides personal hygiene items, warm winter clothing, tents, and snack foods. Bethany has continued to be very generous with their support to this growing need. We provided casseroles in January and November as well as fresh fruit and other needed items throughout the year.

The Brunswick Street Mission continues to provide much needed outreach services with a team of volunteers and staff. The Mission relies on donated funds and would not be able to offer services to those in need without the support from various community organizations and local churches such as Bethany. We would like to thank all those Bethany folk who supported the Mission’s Annual Fundraiser Breakfast in October. Your support for this event and throughout the year is greatly appreciated.

In February, the committee along with a concerned congregation member Valerie Doucette, raised funds through our *Have a Heart Campaign*, for the *Out of the Cold Shelter*, to support those living rough in our city. *Out of the Cold* began in 2007, as a winter shelter, and is now funded by the Provincial Government. They provide permanent supportive housing, and supplies for those living outside, when donations are available. Through the generosity of our congregation, we raised \$5000 for *Out of the Cold* to purchase the following supplies: hand warmers, emergency blankets, waterproof camping pillows, rubberized interlocking mats, to provide barriers between pallets and tents and winterized sleeping bags, and mats.

During the late fall, the Committee sponsored a number of projects to support programs during the Christmas season. Through our clothing box, the Brunswick Street Mission, Phoenix Programs for Youth, Fairview Family Resource Centre and other agencies, received many articles of warm clothing. Special thanks to those of you who take the time to knit warm hats, mittens, and scarves, your time and care is greatly appreciated. Many of you generously donated non-perishable food items and funds to the Halifax West Ecumenical Food Bank to provide meals and Christmas dinners. We also continue

to collect feminine hygiene products. More than 100 gifts were donated to the Angel Tree and were forwarded to the Salvation Army for distribution. Each year the Bethany Youth Group hosts an Old-Fashioned Christmas in support of Phoenix Youth. Many Christmas stockings have been filled thanks to your support!

The committee wishes to thank the congregation for their warm and generous support, both financially and in other ways over the past year. I would like to thank the committee members for their dedication and efforts in the work that they do to serve others in our community. Thanks also to Dana Mills and Tina Gascon for their administrative assistance and support and as well to Louisa Duck, the Bethany Sunday School, and the Bethany Youth Group for their continued support of Bethany's Local Outreach projects. It is greatly appreciated and a wonderful way to involve the youth of our community.

Respectfully submitted: Ann Bradley, Chair

Local Outreach Committee Members:

Sharon Wentzell  
Zenora Rackham  
Cathy MacDonald  
Carol Knapp  
Glenn Knapp  
Steve Morley  
Tim Cormier  
Don Grant  
Anne Pugh  
Margie Guy  
Gary Gallant (Treasurer)

**Financial Statements 2023**  
**Local Outreach Committee**

**Revenue**

Balance forwarded from 2022	\$ 3309.63
Envelope contributions designated Local Outreach	\$ 20514.22
Interest	\$ 1.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 23824.92</b>

**Disbursements and Expenses**

Adsum House	\$ 825.00
Brunswick Street Mission	\$ 2352.55
Bryony House	\$ 825.00
Camp Kidston	\$ 600.00
Club Inclusion	\$ 425.00
Fairview United Family Resource Centre	\$ 1375.00
Halifax West Food Bank	\$ 9180.00
Hope Cottage	\$ 1375.00
Laing House	\$ 825.00
Metro Turning Point	\$ 850.00
Out Of The Cold Shelter	\$ 1050.00
Phoenix	\$ 1675.00
St. Andrews Suppers	\$ 775.00
Mik'Maq Native Friendship Centre	\$ 600.00
Office Gift Cards	\$ 1100.00
Bank Charges (cheques)	\$ 76.57
Postage	\$ 67.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 23976.44</b>

<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$ 23824.92</b>
<b>Funds disperse</b>	<b>\$ 23976.44</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$ 151.52</b>

**Bank Statement \$ 5499.26**

**Respectively submitted, Gary Gallant, Treasurer**

**Notes for Financial Statement**

There are 8 cheques not cashed total of \$5650.00:

- Halifax Food Bank #017 \$1700.00
- Fairview Resource Centre . 014 \$250.00
- Metro Turning Point #010 \$250.00
- St. Andrews Supper #006 \$250.00.
- Laing House #003 \$300.00
- Out of the Cold #009 250.00 & #048 \$300.00
- Halifax West Food Bank \$2350.00.

\*Note overdraft because of extra cheque written in December see disbursement report issued for December.

## **Affirming Working Group Report**

On Nov. 28/ 2023 we completed one year as the Affirming Working Group at Bethany, a committee of Session. It was a rewarding year of education and inspiration with some trepidation along the way. We have read and viewed an abundance of resources, as well as connected with other Affirming congregations, clergy and people of the LGBTQ+ community. This has prepared us in our journey forward of welcoming all God's people to a diverse and inclusive community of faith. Our goal is to provide a safe, joyful place for all to grow together as Disciples of Christ and experience God's awesome love.

We had our first congregational education evening May 10/ 23 with guest speaker Rev. Ivan Gregan, minister at Port Wallis United church. The topic for the evening was "Why Become Affirming?" It was a well attended event and the presentation raised many questions, which is part of the process to becoming an Affirming Ministry. Rev. Gregan and our minister Kevin were able to answer many of the questions.

After summer break, we re-started our committee meetings and held our second congregational event Oct.25/ 23. Due to questions and concerns raised during the summer, it was decided that an evening of open discussion was necessary to outline the journey that we would take towards becoming affirming and to emphasize that it is a work in progress with no pressure or timelines. Our guest that night was Rev. Kim Curlett, Atlantic Canada and Quebec representative for Affirm United.

During the year we had eight committee meetings which consisted largely of planning and information gathering. There was a round table discussion held at St. Andrew's United Church on Oct. 24/ 23, in aid of supporting and meeting the needs of the LGBTQ+ community. One of our committee members attended the training session. This event was facilitated by Robert Wright. It was funded by The Living Spirit Fund of the United Church of Canada Foundation and organized by Rev. Shaun Fryday.

We will receive a report on the outcome of this event at our next Affirm event.

We applied for a "Seeds of Hope Grant" from the United Church of Canada Foundation and received \$1000. This will enable us to engage speakers and other resources to help further our knowledge and understanding as our journey continues. One of the requests of the grant committee is that the committee also raise funds to support our work. We are requested to do this in order to help us qualify for future grants. We are considering a fundraiser event in the future.

Jan.16/ 24 we held our third congregational event where we welcomed Katty Vincent-Tremblay and Karen Williams, who are members of Bethany as well as the LGBTQ community to tell their personal stories. We also welcomed Kathy Colaiacovo from Port Wallis United Church. All three guests shared their personal journeys of love and acceptance. It was an extremely moving, well received program. We will be hosting more of these programs in the future as we continue to explore what it truly means to be an Affirming Ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Grant & Yvonne Macor (co-chairs)

Members of the Affirming Working Group:

Kathy Grant (co-chair)

Yvonne Macor (co-chair)

Rick Anningson

Julie Johnson

Mavis Hicks

Marion Jay

Ann Bradley (staff liaison).



## **Children and Family Care Ministry Report**

2023 was a busy year for our Children and Family Care Ministry programs. The Sunday School continued to grow slowly and steadily, and we adjusted our approach to be more project-based. We began 2023 with the Parable of the Sower and planted seeds as an object lesson. This led to some wonderful discussions with the children as we explored growing and gardening both as ways to care for Creation and our neighbours. Our children are very aware of the fact that we have many people in our community who are cold and hungry, and they wanted to find ways to help people in those situations. These discussions proved very meaningful and strongly influenced our curriculum development for the spring and fall. We watched our vegetables grow with varying degrees of success as we learned the Parables of Jesus and prepared for our Celebration Sunday in June. We presented eleven high school graduates with prayer shawls to mark this milestone, and to wish them well as they moved into a new chapter of life. Congratulations to: Asia Aiken; Sam Atwood; Daniel Carter; Abigail Cameron; Nate Beers; Maggie Duck; Madi MacFarlane; Jenna Matheson; Rosa Melendez; Ian Monchesky; and Brendan Powell.

Vacation Bible School was held the week of July 10-14 in conjunction with Calvin Presbyterian Church. Chelsey Joudrey, my counterpart at Calvin, and I worked together to plan a program around the theme of Treasure Cove, in which we looked for the priceless gift of God's love. With the help of our summer students, Daniel Carter from Bethany, and Kate Haeslip from Calvin, we led twelve children on a week-long adventure around Bethany and Horseshoe Island. Two generous congregants loaned us metal detectors so we could go hunt for treasure, which was great fun, and we read stories, played games, and took part in activities to learn about the treasure of God's love. Fun was had by all!

Over the month of July, I also presided over three Sunday Services while Kevin was on vacation and preached on the Joy of Discipleship. I appreciate the opportunity to serve in a different way, and the chance to explore other ideas with the congregation.

Sunday School resumed in September with an energetic and growing group of children, and a project –based curriculum. After our spring discussions about what discipleship means, and how to care for our neighbours in need, we began some year-long projects. We began work on a quilt while learning about the liturgical colours of the church year. When this is completed, it will be raffled off with the funds raised going to support those who are sleeping rough in our city. We also began to plan our seed starting for the winter months and built two simple garden beds on the side lawn. These will be planted in the spring and will be open to the community to come down and help themselves to some fresh, nourishing vegetables. We also began to plan the Bethany Bargain Bonanza, which will be part of our year-end celebrations in the spring of 2024 and raise funds for the church. We worked on these projects until Advent, when we set them aside for a time and focused on our yearly Advent service project, and preparation for Christmas Eve. Once again, the children wanted to help those in our city who are without housing, so they prepared jars of hot chocolate mix with garnishes and sold them at coffee hour during Advent. The congregation's generous support enabled the Sunday School to donate \$600 to the Outreach Committee.

Our Living Nativity and Christmas Eve Services were once again supported by Dan Isner, who continues to bring the animals into the city for us for both those occasions. We are grateful for Dan's gifts of time and talent as he helps to make both those occasions truly memorable for our congregation and community. The Christmas Eve service was once again standing room only for the first time since 2019.

The Prayer Shawl ministry continues to be well-supported both by our crafters and the congregation, with donations of time, talent and treasure being offered unstintingly. In 2023, we blessed 28 shawls, and over 100 hats. The hats were sent along to the shelters that support those in need, and a number were sent to the IWK for the special care nursery. We distributed 34 shawls over the course of the year.

Bethany's funeral ministry continues to be well-supported with many dedicated volunteers who offer care and comfort to grieving families. The reception teams work hard to offer generous hospitality to the families, and their efforts are greatly appreciated. Every family we've worked with has commented on the welcome and care they feel when they are here, and I thank you all for the work that you do and your generous spirits.

I look forward to another year working with our children and families. I'd like to especially thank Elizabeth and Daniel Carter and Peyton Duggan for their work with our Sunday School. They are dedicated and generous young people who truly enjoy working with our children, and they are a gift to our program and congregation. I also want to thank the congregation for your continued steadfast and full-hearted support of our programs. I am blessed to be part of the work of Bethany, and I'm grateful for all of you and all of my colleagues. It's a great place to be and a wonderful group of people. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,  
Louisa Duck

## **Community Engagement Ministry Report**

Looking back on the early days of the pandemic, when all was very quiet throughout the week at Bethany, due to public health restrictions, and no in-person programming of any kind, I shared with Kevin how much I missed the hustle and bustle of people in the building for programs and events. I was missing the pre-covid community engagement opportunities that Bethany had to offer. Kevin responded with “Be careful what you wish for, one day we will once again be busy, busy, busy!” He was right about one thing, we have returned to the pre-covid hustle and bustle, that feel good buzz of community, but... I have absolutely no regrets of wishing for that! We are back in full swing! And I am grateful for this as I minister with each of you in my role as Community Engagement facilitator.

The Bethany Youth Group continues to meet on Sunday evenings for a time of sharing, learning about faith, how we experience God in our lives, as well as fun and games. Throughout the year we enjoyed the following: games night, movie night, volunteering at the St. Andrew’s Sunday Supper, making muffins for the Burton Ettinger School Breakfast Program, kayaked on chocolate lake, discussed the effects of climate change and learned about love and acceptance and the Affirming journey that Bethany has embarked on, we recognized Mi’kmaq Heritage month and carved pumpkins! We also invited guests to join us; Bev Grant for a night of apple pie making and crafts, Rev. Katie Taylor – Flynn from St. James Anglican, Mary MacKay and Betty Tozer for a night of pickle ball in the gym, and Laura King who shared with us her children’s book about the Halifax Explosion called “Togo to the Rescue.” In December the youth hosted our treasured Living Nativity and Old-Fashioned Christmas. A special thank you to Michael MacDonald for his treasured role as the man in red and white. As always, the Bethany congregation generously donated stocking stuffers for the youth at Phoenix House. Many of our youth also took part in the Family Christmas Eve service. Special thanks to Dana Mills for her continued support as a volunteer youth leader and to the congregation members who offer their time and talent as guests on a Sunday evening. It is a wonderful way for the young folk and older folk to be in community with one another.

JOY Lunch- our treasured senior’s luncheon made a comeback in November of 2022 after a long hiatus during the pandemic. In the winter and spring of this past year Tim Cormier and our many volunteers who make this ministry happen continued to prepare soups and sandwiches and serve them according to best safety practices. It wasn’t until December of this year that we felt we were ready to return to the pre-covid way of doing lunch with a buffet sandwich table, yes this was a huge success and believe it or not was missed, who doesn’t love a buffet table? We are very grateful to our engaging guest speakers: John O’Keefe, Manager of Social Work at Northwoodcare Inc.; Rev. Katie Taylor-Flynn, Minister at St. James Anglican; John DeMont, Author and Columnist for Saltwire (Chronicle Herald); Elizabeth Carter, Student Extraordinaire - Spain Travels and Studies; Kaitlyn Phillips, Program Specialist with Independent Living NS; Sean Connors, Maritime Helicopter and Major in the RCAF; and Laura King, Author and

Literacy Coach. Special thanks to Tim Cormier and all the volunteers who assist with this monthly luncheon. This luncheon boasts one of our largest attended programs with 50 -60 persons in attendance each month.

Walk and Talk/Drop- In program offers a place where folks can walk safely indoors and enjoy coffee, tea and conversation from January – April. Kevin joined us once a month with an engaging question for us to discuss. We have some dedicated walkers as well as some dedicated talkers in this group! We are blessed at Bethany to have so many friendly folks who welcome newcomers and make them feel at home. I have witnessed many friendships transpire from these Wednesday morning gatherings. Walk and Talk resumed in November.

Guided Meditation led by Yvonne Macor, took place in January with a beginner's class where many new folks were inspired to meditate. Our regular sessions began in February through Lent and resumed after Easter until early June. We resumed in October until December. The MacKinnon Chapel offers those who gather a peaceful and sacred experience. These sessions were well attended by Bethany folk and the surrounding community. We are very grateful to Yvonne for continuing to volunteer her time and talent as we form community meditating together.

Picnic and Prayer was offered for three Tuesdays in May. Instead of meeting at the Dingle as we had in the past (this program was a much-welcomed ministry in pandemic times when we could not gather safely indoors) we met in our beautiful Piercey Peace Garden. Folks brought their lunch and a lawn chair and enjoyed the beautiful surroundings so lovingly cared for by Linda and Mark Knechtel. While folks ate their lunch, I shared a scripture reading and Kevin offered a short reflection. We are thankful for this garden of peace, a piece of God's creation to be shared in community or in solitude. (On warm sunny days if you can't find me working in the building, you are sure to find me communing with God in the peace garden.)

ISANS (Immigration Services Association of Nova Scotia) Conversation Circle- We are always very excited to welcome instructor Julie MacDonald and her class from ISANS. This outreach ministry began in 2018 and although we had not been able to meet with Julie and her class for two years during the pandemic, it continues to be an important ministry of community engagement. We had three, eight-week sessions in the winter, spring and fall of 2023 where once a week Bethany volunteers hosted Julie and her newcomer students in a conversation circle to practice their English language skills. Our fall session from October – December was extremely busy as we welcomed an additional class led by Instructor Roxanna Villacorta. The Ladies Parlour is a bursting with energy on Monday afternoons with many new Canadians keen to learn English and make connections here in our city. We are blessed to have dedicated Bethany volunteers who make this ministry possible, their hospitality is life-giving! New volunteers are always welcome!

NS Community Health Team- before the pandemic the NS Community Health team would offer health and wellness programs at our walk and talk program. In the fall of 2022, the community health team offered two programs led by a team of health and wellness professionals who offer free programs to the community. Their staff and participants enjoyed our space and friendly staff so much they requested to make Bethany a regular site for their program offerings. This past year we hosted a number of their programs and hope to continue to do so in the future. This outreach ministry brings many new folks through our doors, inviting others to see all that Bethany has to offer.

The Congregational Care Team of Bethany consists of volunteer lay persons offering care and support to our congregation (phone calls, visits, emails and transportation to medical appointments). This ministry supplements the visitation ministry of our lead minister. The care team volunteers delivered the UCW Christmas Gift Bags to parishioners in December. A much-appreciated gesture. Many thanks to all our volunteers who make this ministry possible.

I am honoured to be the staff liaison to Bethany's Affirming Working Group. It has been a year of exploring and learning what it means to be an Affirming Ministry, a journey of hope, love and acceptance, as we experience and understand fully God's inclusive love. For more information, please see the full report of the Affirming Working Group. I am also pleased to be the staff liaison for the Community Connections Working Group. Please view that separate report.

Pancake Supper- a beloved annual community event returned in February of 2023 with vigour! This event for years was hosted by the Bethany Men's Club and organized by Rev. Vince and Anne Ihasz. Although Anne is no longer with us her spirit guides as we continue to offer hospitality at its finest! This event brings together more than two dozen volunteers of all ages and many more who attend for the delicious pancakes, made with love from scratch by Mary MacKay. This past year we served approximately 125 and expect numbers to grow!

I express my thanks to Kevin for inviting me to preside for him when he is not able. I truly enjoy this opportunity. I also express my gratitude to the Audio/Visual team, Executive Board, Session and to the staff for their continued support of the Community Engagement Ministry at Bethany. It is truly a blessing to be a part of this congregation, where a strong sense of community and unwavering faith are ever present. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Respectfully Submitted: Ann Bradley

## **Director of Music Report**

It is my pleasure to present my 'Director of Music' annual report. The last several years of working at Bethany and worshipping together as a community has been filled with rigorous rules and regulations, but this past year has felt much like it did before the start of the pandemic. Rehearsals were able to be carried out without adhering to a long list of protocols, coming together for worship felt 'normal' and because of this, there is a sense of renewed energy in the air. I see a new level of wanting to participate and/or participation is at a more consistent and regular level. People in general are more apt to take part in a rehearsal or an event. This is a good place to be currently.

The Senior Choir has seen some nice growth over the past year with an increase in numbers and a larger consistent core taking part weekly in our rehearsals and worship services. Bethany is blessed with one of the largest, most committed church choirs in the city and I feel privileged to work with all these people weekly. The choir continues to sing a variety of repertoire ranging from multiple genres and styles of music. As part of the choir program, our Lilian Piercey Music Scholarship recipient, Jace Burke, has been a wonderful addition to this group. Jace is a faithful participant and brings to the group an infectious youthful energy. This past December long time choir member Don MacKay passed away. Don sang with the tenor section for many years, and he will certainly be missed. It was an honour for the choir to take part in Don's Celebration of Life service held here at Bethany.

The Bethany Handbell Choir continues to be a consistent and diligently working ensemble. This choir meets weekly and provides music monthly for our services as well as taking part in high-festival services such as Advent, Christmas, and Easter.

As an outreach to the Bethany community and even wider, I have offered two ukulele learning sessions over the past year. One in the Fall, and one in the Spring, both with excellent attendance of over 20 people enrolled in each offering. It is a pleasure to teach such a group of participants who enjoy learning to play a new instrument or refining some of their already existing skills. It is also a wonderful opportunity for people to connect with each other within the Bethany community.

As I have said before, I am always impressed when individuals approach me and offer their time and talents to the Bethany community. This past year Peggy MacLean presented her talents as a Sacred Dancer during the Blue Christmas Service. Along with Bev Johnson singing a solo, Peggy danced beautifully during this service. Also, during advent, Karen Williams shared her beautiful voice with us once again with her moving rendition of 'Mary, Did You Know?' Finally, it was great to have Patti Fraser share her musical gifts with us this past Christmas presenting a beautiful piano/organ duet on a setting of 'O Come All Ye Faithful.'

During the year we are also blessed with guest musicians that come and participate in our weekly worship services, and this is all possible through generous contributions to the Paul Rackham Memorial Music Fund. Some of the past year's highlights include,

Aiden Russell, cellist, Debbie Miles, violin, Ellen Gibling, harp, and Katharyn Moffatt, trumpet. We are so thankful for their musical offerings.

Personally, I was very pleased to be able to offer the silent movie event again this past November. The event was very well attended and raised close to \$2000.00 for Bethany Church. As part of my annual continuing education, I attended the NS Choral Federation Choral Conducting Symposium held at Berwick United Church Camp. This year's clinician was renowned conductor Kellie Walsh, it was a great time of learning and networking with other conductors. I continue to serve on the executive of the RCCO Halifax Centre as Program Officer and this past year I was part of several events that were held throughout HRM including Nocturne Halifax 2023, and a very successful performance of Pergolesi's 'Stabat Mater.'

I am blessed to work with an exceptional staff wonderful who supports one another in their various ministries, which keeps things flowing in an easy manner. Dana Mills has joined me as we administer the two memorial music funds, she acts as a second signing partner on these accounts. I am appreciative of the guidance and support that Kevin is always ready to offer. I also appreciated the support from Louisa, Tina, Ann and Jimmy. I look forward to another great year of music making and being with all of you in the community of Christ.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawn Whynot, Director of Music  
(Soli Deo Gloria)

## Memorial Music Fund

### **Paul Rackham Fund & Lilian Piercey Fund**

The Fund consists of the Paul Rackham Memorial Music Fund and the Lilian Piercey Scholarship Fund

The Fund bank balance as of January 1, 2023: \$9350.49

#### **Revenue:**

Donations Received in 2023	\$5050.00
Canada Day Concert	\$1645.00

#### **Expenses:**

Bank Charges	\$48.00
Scholarship – T. Duck	\$1950.00
Scholarship – J. Burke	\$800.00

#### **Musician Fees:**

Scottish Night	\$250.00
Mother's Day	\$250.00
Canada Day Concert	\$1400.00
Summer Worship	\$250.00
Remembrance Day	\$200.00
Christmas Eve	\$300.00

#### **Investment - GIC Purchase:**

March 17, 2023 – Purchased \$6000.00 GIC at 4.75%  
Matures on March 17, 2024, with net gain of \$285.00.

The Fund bank balance as of January 3, 2024: \$4579.49\*

Not including GIC Investment of \$6285.00.  
Actual balance will be \$10,864.49.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Shawn Whynot, Director of Music



## **Audio Visual (AV) Ministry Report**

The talented and dedicated members of your AV Ministry team had a very busy year in 2023 as we continued to evolve and further leverage technology to stay connected with our faith community.

As you may remember, in late 2021, we combined the energies and talents of three groups within Bethany (AV Committee, Vision Ministry, and IT/Web Support) to leverage technology to help keep Bethany connected. As a result, the **AV Ministry** was created and subsequently approved by session.

The scope of the services provided by the AV Ministry continued to mature in 2022 as technology changed and we became more comfortable with our current toolset. We livestreamed virtually every worship service offered in 2023, and the livestream of funerals and weddings became a staple of our service offerings. On Christmas Eve alone, we livestreamed 3 services...a very busy day!! Our audience continues to expand as we now have over 200 subscribers to our YouTube channel, an increase of over 50% from 2022. On any given Sunday morning, between 25-45 “connections” view our Sunday service live, while over the course of the week, the number of views swells to 100-150!

We continued to offer zoom meetings in 2023, including a hybrid format with a room full of people, and virtual attendees. The Board of Managers, Executive Board, Session and Worship committees, and Kevin’s Faith studies are examples of groups who regularly take advantage of Zoom. We improved the hybrid zoom experience this past year with the purchase of a podcast microphone which is placed in the middle of the in person gathering, greatly enhancing remote participants ability to hear what is being said in the main room.

Your AV ministry team collectively is constantly looking for ways to try to improve the quality of the services we deliver.

In 2023, Barry turned his attention to upgrading our capabilities in the fellowship hall. The new screen ordered in 2022 finally arrived and was installed complete with necessary electrical work. This was our major project for 2023, costing approximately \$6,650.00. In total, our purchases for the year included:

- Fellowship Hall Screen, Installation, Electrical work
- A new iPhone for the sanctuary livestream system
- “Yeti” Podcast microphone for hybrid zoom meetings
- A new wireless RODE mic for the fellowship hall
- our annual licensing fees for our livestream and Zoom software.
- Batteries, cables, and other accessories.

## AV Ministry Financial Statement 2022

<b>Opening Balance January 1, 2023</b>	<b>\$ 10,218.04</b>
<b>Donations:</b>	<b>\$ 650.06</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$ (8,546.71)</b>
<b>Closing Balance December 31, 2023</b>	<b>\$ 2,321.39</b>

Your AV Ministry team currently consists of the following individuals: Barry Paton, Glenn Knapp, Stephen Morley, Penny Allen, and Rob Steeves, with invaluable assistance from Dana Mills. (While not an “official” member of the team, Dana manages booking of Zoom meetings, provides us advance copies of bulletins, and between her and Penny, keeps things up to date on our website.)

Kyla Mills remains a valuable resource when not at University, as she has assisted us on several occasions this past year. As well, in 2023, we were fortunate to have a VERY capable staff as Daniel Carter joined the team for the summer and was our summer service livestream operator extraordinaire.

I close this year’s report with two appeals:

- 1) We are all on our own individual journeys of learning as we cross train on the various technologies we employ. If you enjoy technology, and like playing with it, why not consider joining our team?! We’d love to have you!
- 2) We rely on directed donations to improve and maintain our services. If you like the services we provide, please consider making a donation to the “Bethany AV Ministry”.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the AV Ministry Team  
Rob Steeves

## United Church Women (UCW) Report

### MacKinnon Unit

MacKinnon Unit held eight meetings in 2023. Seven meetings included business, worship, a programme offered either by a member or guest, and refreshments. Our May meeting was a closing luncheon at the Ashburn Golf Club. In April we presented Evelyn Smith with a Life Membership. We welcomed several new members. Membership was fourteen members and two life members.

~ Kathy Brown

### Wilson Unit

Our group has not officially disbanded but has not been active for the past couple of years. Several of our members have been participating in the MacKinnon unit's activities. The Wilson unit has continued to take over the organization of a small Christmas gifts that are distributed by Congregational Care Ministry team members just prior to Christmas.

~ Ruth Bona

### UCW Financial Report

Submitted by Lynn Steeves

#### **FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

#### **BETHANY UNITED CHURCH WOMEN**

**01 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 2023**

#### **REVENUE**

Bank Balance 31 Dec 2022	1,157.13
MacKinnon Unit	660.00
Bank Interest	<u>30.90</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,848.03</b>

#### **DISBURSEMENTS**

Bethany United Church	600.00
Bank Balance 31 Dec. 2023	<u>1,248.03</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,848.03</b>

## **Coffee Hour Ministry**

We have been fortunate to be able to offer Coffee Ministry throughout 2023. Everyone appreciates the full return of this after church gathering.

On Sunday morning, our kitchen and Fellowship Hall are a busy spot as the volunteers arrive early to prepare things and then serve warm beverages and snacks after the morning service. More & more people are joining us each week. I know this for a fact as we often make an extra brew of coffee to meet the demand and have a growing number of mugs to put in the dishwasher. The tables are full, and people are mingling about. All signs of a wonderful time of community and conversation.

Most weeks we are blessed to have 4 volunteers in the kitchen sharing this work and enjoying each others company at the same time. We are always welcoming new volunteers.

I would like to thank our Caretaker, Jimmy Sweet and our dedicated volunteer, Hedley Brenton for setting up and preparing the Fellowship Hall each week for our gathering. Both of you are an integral part of the success of this ministry.

A special thank you, to all the amazing volunteers who participate in this ministry.

Respectfully Submitted, Julia Jewett-Whitney

## **Flower Fund Committee Report**

The Flower Committee has a mandate to enhance and contribute to the beauty of Bethany throughout the year by supplying seasonal decorations in the sanctuary, chapel, narthex and fellowship hall using both fresh and artificial arrangements. We are funded by a bequest from the Nan Geizer Memorial Fund and by memorial donations made by Bethany members to the Annual Poinsettias Fund at Christmas. We have accumulated a number of arrangements over the years made by members of the committee, and we work to freshen and reorganize these as occasions arise. We also have a supply of Wedding Pew markers and table decorations that are available for use.

We were saddened this December by the death of long-time member Evelyn Smith. Evelyn made many of the silk arrangements that we still use and donated both her time and many beautiful flowers to Bethany. We will miss her creativity and artistic advice.

Current members of the committee are Barbara McCurdy, Julie Johnson, Carolyn Kunz, Karen Hatcher, Zenora Rackham, Janice MacDonald and assisted at Christmas by Karen Finley, Lynne and Rob Legg, Marilyn Montgomery, Ralph Hiscock, Maryth Maxner.

We offer very special thanks to Jim Sweet who is always on hand to help out with the many chores involved setting up and putting away our decorations.

We welcome any members of Bethany who would like to lend a hand or ideas to join us at any time by contacting a current member.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara McCurdy

### **Memorial Flower Fund Financial Statement 2023**

**Opening Balance January 1, 2022** **\$1708.88**

#### **Revenue**

Donations for memorial poinsettias 2022	\$ 767.50
Credit when GIC's Renewed	\$ 26.88
Interest from GIC	\$ 25.17
Interest from GIC	\$ 16.65
Interest to acct     April	\$ 0.42
October	\$ 0.45

#### **Expenses**

Christ Candle tea lights and refurbish Christmas Arrangements December 2022	\$ 34.50
Miscellaneous need for Easter decorating summer, Fall, and Thanksgiving	\$ 240.13
Donation to Affirming Working Group	\$ 500.00
Christmas Poinsettias/Outdoor Arrangements/ Gift Card for Jim Sweet	\$ 389.37

**Balance December 31, 2022** **\$1381.95**

#### **Investments**

GIC	\$1586.18
GIC	\$1834.97
GIC	\$2397.14

**Total of Investments** **\$5818.29**

#### Notes to Financial Statement

April 10, 2023 – New advisor Reid Oxner GIC 8701812-17 into account and not reinvested as per CRA December 2019.

## **Bethany Men's Club**

In the 1920's, during the pastorate of Reverend Harry Burns a men's prayer group was formed. Over the almost 100 years since then, it has evolved into the Bethany Men's Club which provides an opportunity for men of the congregation to meet informally, enjoy a meal and a speaker. We meet on the first Wednesday of November, December, February, March and April. Men can join us by either taking out a yearly subscription or paying at the door.

Speakers for the 2023 year were:

February - Mark King who shared his involvement in exploration for the lithium.

March – Matthew Cowling from CarteNav. CarteNav develops intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance mission software for security, safety, economic, and environmental operations

April - Roy Parker, who talked about his involvement with the Pictou County Rivers Association protecting and conserving rivers through organized volunteer work and education.

November - Bob Carter shared his involvement with The Last Post Fund.

December – Annual Christmas Music and carol sing evening provided by The Pepperell's music group, made up of talented musicians living at the Berkley on Pepperell Street

We would like to express our thanks to our lead chef Tim Cormier and his support team of Lori and Molly for their continued support for the Bethany Men's Club. Tim started a new job in the fall of 2023 and had to step-down from his role in the kitchen “Thanks Tim “and family for providing all those great meals for all those years. In November 2023 Tina Gascon took on the role as lead chef with continued support provided by Dave Reid and two new helpers Pierre Gascon and Pam Carter.

We keep our members and other interested parties informed by e-mail or with a message in the Community Spirit. If you wish to be added to the email list send us a message at [bethanyunitedmensclub@gmail.com](mailto:bethanyunitedmensclub@gmail.com).

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to all who supported or help make the Men's Club the continued success it has experienced over the years. The willingness of everyone to lend a hand has made this group a great blessing. Looking forward to seeing everyone and welcoming new members

Respectfully submitted,  
Bethany United Men's Club support team  
Ian Parker, Randy Tyler Jim Musgrave, Doug Shields and Tim Cormier

## **Community Connections Working Group**

This working group provides support to community groups identified by the Community Engagement Facilitator, working by sub-committee to develop and implement projects as needed within the congregation and the greater community.

Previous initiatives include ISANS Conversation Circle; Walk and Talk; Joe Howe Digital Sign; Affirm United Affirming Process Research and Proposal to Session; Valentine Fundraisers and Community Meals. The Community Meals took place prior to the pandemic in the winter and spring months. These meals offered a time for folks to cook and eat together and focused on healthy, local foods and sustainability. We are hopeful these meals will once again be offered now that pandemic restrictions are no longer a consideration.

In January the committee was busy planning our first fundraising event since the pandemic, entitled “A Night on the West Highland Way - A Scottish Odyssey” This event took place on Friday February 17th from 7:00PM – 9:00PM in our Fellowship Hall. It was themed as a Winter Night, Scottish Pub style, with a tour of the West Highlands with Christie Chisholm storyteller and photographer extraordinaire! Guest musician Debbie Miles, fiddler and Shawn Whynot, keyboard provided many a tune and Scottish food samples made by Dave Reid and his team of volunteers were deliciously enjoyed by all. This event was a wonderful return of community fun at its finest. All profits were donated to local outreach.

Due to various activities and re-building of current programs the committee has not had new initiatives this past year. The working group is currently seeking new co-chairs and welcomes others to join our team. Please contact Ann Bradley if you are interested in being part of this community working group.

We look forward to our continued journey of connecting with others here at Bethany and the greater community, in a welcoming and inclusive environment abundant in God’s love.

Respectfully submitted: Cheri Wilson and Ann Bradley co-chairs.

Working Group Members:

Mavis Hicks  
Maureen Reynolds  
Karen Hatcher  
Bev Grant  
Bev Johnson  
Mary MacKay  
Kathy Grant  
Margie Guy  
Dana Mills