



# St. James United Church Annual Report 2024



**St. James United Church  
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## **In Memoriam**

Harvey Charles James Weir	January 10
Olive Mae Wilson	February 20
Peter Burry	March 9
Harry Stone	April 16*
Dorothy Rose Jenkins	April 20
George Wadland	April 19
Helen (Elsene) Selena Brace	April 23
Shirley Gray	April 28
Heather Claudette Cutler	May 5
June Jones	May 16*
Chesley Howell	May 18
Calvin James Small	June 19
Derek Frederick Hiscock	June 19
Beniah Hicks	June 23
Charles Lloyd Benson	June 30
Elizabeth (Betty) Tucker	July 10
Lucy Jean Burden	August 15
Roland Isaac Avery	September 10
Margaret Day	September 30
Thomas James Rose	October 6
Dorothy Anne Jenkins	October 30
Jennie Irene Bursey	December 13

\*We have been advised of passing but did not officiate funeral

**We would like to extend condolences to all families and friends and to many others who have suffered loss during the past year.**

## **Message from the Chair, St. James United Church Council**

Deuteronomy 31:6 “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you, he will never leave you nor forsake you”

Being strong and courageous is not an easy task. We often find ourselves fearful and fretful. Change and adversity seem to be coming at us from all directions, keeping us unsteady and unbalanced. It is tempting and easy to consume ourselves with the latest social media and news reports. We are worriers by nature and these are worrying times.

When the world around us feels as if it is spinning out of control, we need to pause and look inward, to focus on the forces working *for* good in our world, to focus on the things that are within our control. We need to focus on each other, support each other, listen to each other, and love each other. By living in community with others, we build strength and courage, and we allow God to work through us and to go with us.

This past year, St. James has been very much about community building and togetherness.

We grieved with our Cochrane Street family as they made the very difficult decision to disband their congregation. We support them as they move forward and find their new direction. We have been privileged to welcome some of them into our own faith family.

Linda Babstock has devoted herself to providing the post services lunches. Jean Thompson spearheaded the monthly soup lunches. But they have accomplished so much more than feeding people, they have created a space for fellowship, community and positivity. They nourish body and soul.

Rev. James has worked tirelessly, focusing on community building, faith formation, pastoral care and outreach. Recognizing that community and faith look different for each of us, he has created spaces to meet people where they are. He has spearheaded Tapestry, Taizé Prayer, Silent Vigil for Peace, Wild Light Spiritual Oasis, InsideOUT LGBTQ Prayer, and Pub Theology. All this has been accomplished while transitioning to a one minister-ministry, and while pursuing a Doctorate degree. Rev. James has shown great commitment and devotion to our St. James family.

The AOTS and UCW continue to be active with their Fish Dinners and Bake Sale/Teas. They provide valuable financial assistance but priceless community and fellowship.

St. James continues to be blessed musically. Amy Dalziel, Bob Rose and the Senior Choir continue to uplift and inspire us. The guitar groups regular ministry is always a much-anticipated event.

Robin Bartlett, through the Social Action Committee, has initiated a Conversation Café. The Café is a space for new Canadians to practice conversing in English. Robin and her group are providing community and fellowship in a different but much needed form.

Quadrangle continues to feel safe and supported. They have expanded in our space, providing support and community to so many more people.

As sadness and joy go hand in hand, we have been saddened by the loss of members this past year, but we have had the joy of welcoming many new family members. We grieve with each other, but we also celebrate with each other.

As we move together into the new Church year, let us continue to be mindful of how we can offer our time and talents to support the continued growth of our St. James community. Let us be mindful of how these contributions spread strength, courage and support to each other and the wider community. Let us be mindful of the power of positivity. Positive, uplifting thoughts lead to positive, uplifting words, which leads to positive, uplifting actions and habits.

On behalf of St. James Council, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to each and every one of you that contributes in any way, however small, to the continued success and growth of our community and family of Faith. You are seen, you are recognized, and you are deeply appreciated. We especially need to thank our treasurer. Jean is tasked with the most challenging of jobs. Her steady hand guides us in every decision we make, and these decisions are often very challenging and not always popular. But she faithfully stands by us and stands for us.

It has been my pleasure to have served as Chair of Council for the past two years. I extend my deepest appreciation to everyone that has supported me in any way. I look forward to transitioning to and supporting the new Chair as past Chair. I am very proud of who we are and of who we strive to be. We provide community, acceptance, room to explore and room to just “be”.

Yours in Faith,

Michelle Skinner

Chair, St. James United Church

## **Rev. James Ravenscroft, Minister**

Like last year, I again find myself looking over the past twelve months with both sadness and joy. We began the year with anticipation after passing not only our new Mission Articulation Plan but also agreeing to pilot a partnership with Cochrane Street United Church. You embraced this with hope and courage as both congregations decided we could do more together than apart. Sadly, after too many delays outside of our control and the challenge in finding someone to fill Susan's role, our friends at Cochrane Street United Church made the difficult decision to close. With this came a shift for me from being in team ministry to working as the solo minister. Although I've been in such a position before, I miss the energy and sociability that collaboration brings. With less total hours of ministry, we also inevitably can do less than before, and so careful discernment needs to be made to ensure that the priorities we named in our MAP get the attention they need.

To do that, members of Church Council, committees and other interested members of St. James got together in September for a planning retreat. The gathering gave me renewed hope as we affirmed the direction that we set last year and named some strategies to get us there. One strategy was to establish a Strategic Planning Team, a body that will look at ways we can develop new revenue streams as well as consider how we can both grow as a congregation and broaden our reach into the community. That team is now ready to launch its work. Another strategy was calling together a Fundraising Team to coordinate and organize fundraising efforts each year. Our monthly soup lunches are part of that. Thank you to everyone who helped make those such a success, and for the ideas suggested for future activities. If you would like to join the team, be sure to let us know.

One upcoming event is a joint fundraiser with Gower Street and Cowan Heights United Churches. This is more than a fundraiser but a way for us to live into our MAP as we said we wanted to partner with others. As we come together for the first of many such events, we also get to share a meal. As we get to know each other better, we can discern other shared initiatives. One of these is joint youth activities with Becca-Ann Bartlett from St. James assisting Rev. Rebecca at Gower Street United in hosting a youth group. Teens from St. James and other congregations are welcome to attend the bi-weekly gatherings. Likewise, Rev. Rebecca and Rev. Oliver (from Cowan Heights United) promote Tapestry with their young adults. As we look to the future, I am sure there is much more we can do together and to join with the other United Church congregations in metro St. John's as well.

Developing new spiritual opportunities is another MAP priority. To this end we rejigged some of our evening offerings from last year as we found more suitable days and time slots for the intended participants, dropped less popular offerings like Celtic Vespers, and introduced new ones like InsideOUT. The changes have brought renewed energy and new participants. In addition to leading worship and nurturing spiritual practice, it is now my responsibility to resource our Christian Education Team. With less children in the congregation, the focus has been on adult opportunities like a book study last Lent and regular Pub Theology gatherings. In anticipation of children, we still have our family area in the sanctuary and a children's chapel has been set up on the main floor.

Pastoral care is also an important part of ministry and has been a focus for me on two fronts. The first is responding to moments of crisis like an illness or a death, going to the hospital or a home to visit someone, joining with a grieving family to plan and then lead a funeral service, following up with them afterward, and offering times of prayer like the Blue Christmas service. In addition, I have joined with our Pastoral Care Team to offer support over the long term, again making home visits, making phone calls, as well as enlarging our visitation team, gaining a few people who are willing

to visit with a more senior member on a regular basis. If this is something you can see yourself doing, please let me know. In addition, an important part of my role is to connect with newcomers to St. James, to welcome them into our community and get to know them. We have been blessed over this past year with a number of new faces, along with familiar faces we haven't seen for a while. A big part of this I am told by newcomers is the warm welcome and inclusive community spirit that you have fostered at St. James over the years. I agree with their observations and am grateful for this. I am grateful not only for ourselves, but because having welcoming communities where people feel loved and supported is going to be increasingly important in the trying times that we face.

Creating such a community is one way we follow the teachings of Jesus. It is not always easy. We can face setbacks as we have seen this year. But as we have also seen we can rise to the challenge. I have every confidence that we will continue to do just that as we keep looking forward not just to live out our MAP but to live into the way of Jesus both at St. James and in the wider world.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. James Ravenscroft

## Worship and Sacraments Committee

The Worship and Sacraments Committee members are dedicated to the ongoing ministry and work at St. James. We are a very small, dedicated committee. We are always looking for people to join us. If you are interested in the planning and implementation of worship at St. James, our Social Eco plan and Pastoral care outreach, please contact me anytime to join our committee. We would love your input into planning our worship and services for St. James.

**Worship Schedule:** The worship services continue on a regular basis in person and online for 2024. Our regular Sunday morning services continue at 11:00 am, and various styles of services being held on Sunday evenings. Initially called EvenTide, these services included Taizé, Celtic Vespers and Tapestry, with Wild Light Spiritual Oasis gatherings mainly held once a month on a Sunday afternoon. Some changes were made in the Fall, Taizé moved to a Wednesday evening, a Silent Vigil for Peace also held on a Wednesday, Tapestry moved to a Saturday with a potluck, and Celtic Vespers dropped because of low attendance. This opened up time to host InsideOUT, a LGBTQIA & Spirituality Gathering that is held on the first and third Sundays of the month. So far, these changes are bearing fruit with increased participation. Thank you, James, for your continued support and initiatives to grow our congregation. Please try to find the time to take in one of the new service formats.

**Communion Report:** The Sacrament of Communion is an integral part of our expression of faith. Marilyn Adams continued to ensure the Sacrament is prepared on pre-selected dates and cleaned up following the service. Her leadership in this area is certainly appreciated and we are forever grateful for her ongoing commitment to this ministry.

**Discernment and Candidates:** Katie Vardy is a recognized Candidate for Ordained Ministry by the Office of Vocation and is in their final term of their Master of Divinity. She continues to work through her final placement requirements with convocation 2025.

**Ushering Report:** Ushering is more than handing out bulletins or taking up the offering. Ushers are the first people you meet as you enter the church and ensure everyone feels welcome and comfortable for the worship service. They answer many queries each Sunday for the congregation and provide up to date information for all their needs. As we continue to search for a Full Time Usher in Charge, as the Acting Usher in Charge, I am truly grateful for the support of **Jean Thompson** and **Marilyn Adams** these past years for their tireless support helping me usher and to Marilyn for arranging readers for every service and also for covering all during my retirement trip for three months in the summer of 2024. In addition, many, many heartfelt thanks to those who have volunteered to assist this important role of ministry and the extra support of the **AOTS** and **UCW** when called upon. Our Chief Usher position remains vacant. If you would like to serve or help in this service, please reach out to me for further details.

**Music Ministry:** The music ministry of St. James continued and flourished due to the capable hands of **Amy Dalziel** and **Bob Rose**. They continued to work with our Ministers and schedule worship services involving the various choirs, music groups and soloists to provide a varied Music Ministry to the congregation. Special services included the Memorial Hymn Sing; weekday/ lunchtime gatherings; Lenten Weekly services of reflection; a service of music with a pop-up choir, and candlelight worship for the 7:30 Christmas Eve service. The music program also contributes to St. James' Evening Services. The Taizé service includes piano accompaniment, and the Celtic Vespers service featured a small ensemble that performs Celtic-style music. They have started a brass trio in 2024, and we look forward to special 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the United

Church of Canada in 2025. We also had the pleasure of having a Young Adult Band - their first service being Christmas Eve 4:00PM. We look forward to continued services with them in 2025.

In addition to the above, we have an abundance of musical talent at St. James, most visible being our Senior Choir. While maintaining regular membership has been a challenge, this fall the choir numbers continued in an upward swing as people have grown more comfortable coming back to the choir stalls. Many thanks to Amy and Bob for all their support and efforts this year and to the choir members and many soloists for returning to St. James choir pews.

We also acknowledge the valuable contribution of the **St. James Guitar Group** who shared their musical talent with the congregation during a worship service or a concert. Sadly, they lost a treasured member this year, Harvey Weir. Deepest condolences to the Weir family and the Guitar Group. We also acknowledge the support of **Doreen Brown** for her accompaniment to Rev. James as they hold worship/hymn sings at Kennys Pond Retirement Home. She also assists Rev. Rebecca Pike as she offers a similar monthly service at Tiffany Village.

**Livestreaming:** Thank you to **Jake Thompson** for ensuring the power point and livestreaming platforms are available each week. We have seen many upgrades and improvements in 2024 with upgrading and replacing of some equipment. We are deeply grateful to **Trevor Bartlett, Keith Le Feuvre, Joel Le Feuvre, Skyler Simpson and Jake Thompson** for the many, many extra hours for carrying out this work and as they continue to upgrade our systems. We will soon have a volunteer working alongside Jake in 2025 to help the livestream and sound tasks flow easier and consistently on a regular basis.

**Based on our present constitution**, the Worship and Sacraments Committee oversees not only how we express our love for God through worship, but how we express our love for one another, both within the congregation through pastoral care, and in the wider community through social and ecological justice. Two subcommittees help facilitate this work.

**Pastoral Care Committee:** A development of the Lay Visitation Team, the Pastoral Care Committee meets so that members can check in with each other regarding the older members of St. James that they visit, as well as to discern other initiatives to enhance pastoral care for all ages. The team coordinates sending cards to members of St. James who are facing a difficulty or marking a milestone, organizing The Great Christmas Visit, a program that broadens our regular pastoral visits to people who have faced some difficulties in the previous year, as well as the Blue Christmas service, a meditative worship for all finding the holiday season to be a challenge because of a death, a job loss, or other type of bereavement. The Pastoral Care Committee is comprised of Barbara Butt, Clyde Flight, Daphne Coish, Sheilah Beckett, and Rev. James Ravenscroft. Additional members are warmly welcomed.

**Social and Eco Action Committee:** This committee is inspired by conversations that Rev. James had with congregants, people sharing how they wanted to respond to pressing social justice issues in their neighbourhood, as well as environmental issues, including concerns about climate change. Over the past year the committee has been busy with several activities, including hosting the Very Rev. Dr. Marion Parry for a special service focused on Guaranteed Liveable Income followed by a Lunch-and-Learn. While Rev. Marion was at St. James, Rev. James went to Gower Street United Church to lead a similar program. The hoped for format of this group is for people who have a particular interest in an aspect of social or environmental action to lead a subgroup to lift up their concern. The Silent Vigil for Peace emerged out of this, suggested by a group concerned about the ongoing war in Gaza as well as other conflicts in the world. Another idea that is gaining traction is hosting a Conversational Cafe to give newcomers to Canada a forum to practice speaking English.

Led by Robin Bartlett with assistance from Paul Walsh and Rev. James. New members are most welcome.

**Closing Remarks:** 2024 has been another busy year in our church life. While baptisms and weddings have been few we continue with a larger number of funerals as my Clerk of Session report indicates.

I would like to thank the members of our **Worship and Sacraments Committee** for their input and support during the year. **Marilyn Adams, Marina Adams, Ruth Baker, and Amy Dalziel.** Sadly, we lost the membership of **Gloria Le Fevre** in 2024, but we have had the pleasure of **Skyler Simpson** joining us. Thank you to you all.

**Rev. James**, thank you for all your support, input, and leadership this year and we look forward to your leadership again in 2025.

Thank you to **Stephanie** and **Bruce** for having my back each time I would reach out for help.

We are a diverse group of individuals with a true commitment to St. James and look forward to serving the committee and our church for the next year.

As always, a special thank you to all those who have volunteered or participated in the presentation of worship services.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Pike,

Clerk of Session & Chair Worship and Sacraments Committee

# **Clerk of Session Report 2024**

## **OUR NEWEST MEMBERS**

### **BAPTISMS:**

#### **March 30**

Hawa Abdul-Aziz ADULT - Sophia Abdul Rahman and Abdul-Aziz Abdulai

#### **March 31**

William Stanley Pardy, Son of Lesley Marie (Fanning) and Adam David Pardy

#### **April 21**

Everleigh Crystal Brookings, Daughter of Tenika Brookings

Christopher Lawrence David Smith, Son of Krista Marie Smith (Brookings) and Sheldon Smith

#### **November 3**

Katherine Donna Bennett-Lacey, Daughter of Kristan Bennett and Ted Lacey

### **CONFIRMATIONS:**

#### **March 30**

Hawa Abdul-Aziz

### **PROFESSION OF FAITH:**

Brian Madore

### **TRANSFER IN:**

Linda Andrews

Rev. Brian Colbourne (Settlement)

Gail Colbourne

Grace Marcoux

Berna Aslan

### **REMOVED BY TRANSFER:**

Betty Winsor

Noah Sheppard

Gloria LeFeuvre

### **MARRIAGES:**

James Calvin Small and Stephen Douglas Motty

February 9

Anthony Edward Murphy and Zulpakar

October 3

### **CANDIDATE FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY:**

Katelyn Vardy

## **Ministry and Personnel Committee**

The Ministry and Personnel Committee met on a regular basis throughout the year. Meetings were held with staff/contract employees as requested or needed. The Committee was also represented on the hiring committee for the summer student positions. Other Committee activities included the monitoring of Leave requests and involvement with various human resource issues and enquiries.

Some additions and changes were also made to the Management Handbook.

Thank you to Committee members Clyde Flight, David Adams, Barry Robbins and Verna Wroblewski for their commitment over the past year.

Respectfully submitted

Heather Hickman - Committee Chair

## **Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees of St. James United Church is currently comprised of: Rev. James Ravenscroft (Chair), Aubrey Hill, Clifford Smith and Donna Downey.

The Trustees, in consultation with Church Council and the Property Committee, are responsible for the oversight of the congregation's church property; to ensure it is well maintained and adequately insured; and to interface with Church Council and the Region on capital improvements and the lease or sale of church property. In accordance with this mandate, the Board of Trustees met for its annual meeting on March 11, 2025.

In addition to confirming the ongoing lease of the former manse property at 10 Paton Place to Islamic Circle of Newfoundland and Labrador, and a portion of the basement to Quadrangle NL, the Board of Trustees reviewed the Audrey Fillier Trust Fund and the Bethany Danielle Pike Memorial Trust Fund, both of which are externally restricted church funds. As of December 31, 2024, the balance in the Audrey Fillier Trust Fund was \$8,273.47 and the balance in the Bethany Danielle Pike Memorial Fund was \$106,100.98. Both Funds are audited in conjunction with the annual audit of St. James United Church.

The Bethany Danielle Pike Memorial Fund Oversight Committee liaises with the Board of Trustees on the Fund's ongoing administration and regularly disburses funds based on the terms of the trust. Monies from the Audrey Fillier Fund, however, have not been disbursed in recent years. The Board of Trustees are committed to reverse this circumstance, and will discern each year, in consultation with the UCW, possible recipients for the interest accrued annually on the \$7000.00 principle.

Finally, discussions with Kindred Works, the property development arm of the United Church, are on hold as we await the results of extended conversations between staff of Kindred Works and members of the Regional Council Executive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. James Ravenscroft (Chair)

## United Church Women (UCW)

Many UCWs across the country have closed their doors or have been reformatted to something else. In spite of the growing trend, our UCW was still "alive", though the going was slower and the meetings more relaxed. Importantly, we were still contributing to the life of the church. A core group of about 16 loyal members attended our monthly meetings, aptly conducted by President, Betty Pilgrim. The Active Membership List on December 31 included 24 members and the Home Membership was 8. Each year we lose a few members. In 2024 we were saddened by the deaths of Irene Bursey, Jean Jones, Edna Hunt and Mae Wilson. Of special note is Shirley Bursey, who, at 96, is still actively involved in UCW. She has been a member of UCW since its inception in 1959. Shirley continues to attend monthly meetings and is a voice of wisdom within our group. She has served in many leadership positions on the Executive.

In spite of our small numbers, UCW continued on with its history of sponsoring two Annual Sales, one in the spring and one in the fall. We are very fortunate that many church members who are not in UCW step up to the bar and assist. Both Sales were pleasingly successful, and UCW was able to give a donation to the church of \$7650.00 and \$565.00 to other local groups that UCW financially supports. Thank you to everyone who contributed in some way to the success of these fundraisers.

Last year we changed our meeting time from the evening to early afternoon. The time worked out well, but some women missed a time for interacting. Social time was always an important component of our meetings. It was decided that we have a small luncheon before the formal meeting. Volunteers contributed sandwiches, cookies and tea/coffee. This change seemed to have a positive effect.

Our Executive and Conveners in 2024 were:

### Executive

Past Co-President: Barbara Adams

President: Betty Pilgrim

Recording Secretary: Sheilah Beckett

Treasurer: Donna Downey

Assistant Treasurer: Betty Patey

Corresponding Secretary: Ruth Baker

Honorary Member: Shirley Bursey

### Committee Conveners

Membership: Shirley Downey

Visitation: Jean White

Church Council Representative: Ruth Baker

Finance Committee Representative: Vacant

We always welcome guests to attend our meetings held on the second Monday of the month at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Pilgrim (President) and Barbara Adams (Past Co-President)

**ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH WOMEN  
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS & EXPENDITURES**

Year Ended December 31, 2024  
With Comparative figures for 2023

<b>RECEIPTS</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Envelope Collection	816	971
Birthday Barrel	21	24
Fall Sale	4,348	3,550
Spring Tea	2,996	3,504
Funeral Catering		510
Christmas/Closing Dinner	475	1,768
Donations	320	470
	<u>320</u>	<u>470</u>
Total Receipts	<u>\$ 8,976</u>	<u>\$ 10,797</u>

**ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH WOMEN  
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS & EXPENDITURES**

Year Ended December 31, 2024  
With Comparative figures for 2023

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Mission & Service	500	500
East District - Membership Fee	300	37
East District – UCW		20
East District – Burry Heights	50	50
East District – Chaplaincy Fund	10	10
St James Church:       Memorial Fund	150	150
Operating Fund	7,000	7,000
Bridges to Hope	400	200
Funeral Catering – Expenses		185
Stella Circle	200	200
Honorarium & Recognition's	25	25
Christmas/Closing Dinner	475	1,679
Spring Tea	28	58
Fall Sale	39	122
Miscellaneous	117	339
Service Charges	37	42
	<u>37</u>	<u>42</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>9,332</u>	<u>10,617</u>
Receipts over/(under) Expenditures	<u>\$ (356)</u>	<u>\$ 180</u>

**ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH WOMEN**  
**STATEMENT OF CASH POSITION**

Year Ended December 31, 2024  
With Comparative figures for 2023

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Cash in Bank January 1	\$ 1,946	\$ 1,766
Receipts over/(under) Expenditures	- 356	\$ 180
Cash in Bank December 31	<u>\$ 1,590</u>	<u>\$ 1,946</u>

**AUDITORS REPORT**

I have examined the Statement of Cash Position of St. James United Church Women as of December 31, 2024 and the Statement of Cash Receipts and Expenditures for the year ended. My Examination included a general review of the accounting procedures and such tests of accounting records as I considered necessary in the circumstances beyond accounting for the receipts in the books.

With the exception noted in the previous paragraph, I report that in my opinion the accompanying Statement of Cash Position and Statement of Cash Receipts and Expenditures present fairly the Cash position of St. James United Church Women as of December 31, 2024, and the results of its cash transactions for the year then ended, on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Aubrey Hill

## **A.O.T.S Men's Club (As One That Serves)**

The Men's Club held eight regular meetings during 2024. Our meetings were held mid day on the third Wednesday of each month with the usual meal and program topics of interest to our membership. Catherine Dale presented on the topic "The Birde of Newfoundland " on April 17<sup>th</sup> and Larry Coady presented an interesting slide show on "The Outport Communities of Newfoundland" on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Our active numbers are in the range of 12-14 in attendance each meeting. We extended an invitation to the men of Cochrane Street United, and we are pleased to note that a number have joined us.

Members of our club, and indeed the whole congregation were deeply saddened to learn of the death of long-time member Tom Rose on October 6, 2024 and Bruce Hunt on October 15, 2024. Tom and Bruce were very active members of AOTS, and the Men's Choir and their presence has been greatly missed.

In addition to our regular meetings, members hosted the pancake supper on February 13<sup>th</sup> with a generous donation of pancake ingredients by Clifford Small, owner of SMITTY'S. We also catered the Easter Sunday Breakfast on March 31<sup>st</sup>. With the help of a few volunteers from the congregation, we were able to successfully arrange the ever-popular fresh fish and brewis dinner on two occasions. The events were well attended, and we are currently planning another for the spring of 2025. Members of the club also assisted with the ushering throughout the year. On December 14 members of our club joined the UCW for a Christmas dinner prepared by Aubrey and Melvin, with entertainment provided by the Guitar Group.

The financial statement for 2024 is attached to this report.

Clyde Flight

President

# St. James AOTS Men's Service Club

## Statement of Receipts and Expenditures

For year ended December 31, 2024

Bank Balance as of January 1, 2024		951.55
<b>Revenues</b>		
Dinner meetings		
Revenues	788.00	
Expenditures	<u>532.81</u>	
NET		255.19
Easter Sunday Breakfast		
Revenues	204.50	
Expenditures	<u>50.00</u>	
NET		154.50
Pancake Supper		
Revenues	1,345.00	
Expenditures	317.00	
NET		1,028.00
Fish Dinner		
Revenues	5,933.25	
Expenditures	<u>1,620.50</u>	
NET		4,312.75
Christmas Social		
Revenues	1,275.00	
Expenditures	300.00	
NET		975.00
Membership Dues		165.00
Donations		<u>100.00</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		6,990.44
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Donation - Church	6,950.00	
- Memorial Fund	100.00	
Guest Speakers	100.00	
Bank Service Charges/Cheques	22.75	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		7,172.75
Revenues over (under) expenditures		-182.31
Bank Balance as of December 31, 2024		769.24

## **Regional Representation**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council was held June 7-9, 2024, at Memorial University Campus, St. John's. Theme: "When we say yes".

The President Amanda Barnes welcomed all and extended a special welcome to The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Landsdown, the 44<sup>th</sup> moderator of The United Church of Canada and Rhonda Parkes, the General Council Director of Communications and Organizational Development and Strategy.

The theme speaker The Right Rev. Dr Carmen Landsdown shared that in the business of being a church we need to find ways to be bold disciples and shared her theological educational journey and some of her experience of what it means to be a church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and be in a community with diversified and marginalized groups. Also to think about the world's mission and evangelism acknowledging our complicated past and work toward reconciliation.

### **Theme Part II**

We have to be bold disciples and practice daring justice. She referred to the Borhoeffer book *Life Together* and Romans 15:7. To illustrate the need to be authentic, vulnerable and genuine to be in community with others, in order to let us be together in Jesus Christ. The moderator suggests investing in the children and youth and say, "yes to the future". She closed in prayer in the hope that we would head to the future as bold and humble disciples and practice daring justice.

The celebration of ministries was held Sunday, June 9 at 10 a.m. The service was live-streamed. Susan Sheppard and Alice Moores were ordained as ministers.

Liberty Matabire was admitted as minister of the United Church.

Rev. Jocelyn Cook was installed as president and announced the Theme for 2025 A.G.M "What do you want to do with us, Jesus". Based on Mark 1.

Rev. Elsie Squires President elect 2025-2026. 7<sup>th</sup> FDEE Regional Council will be held in Corner Brook Civic Centre May 2-4<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Ruth Baker

Regional Representative

## **Property Committee**

This Property Committee report presents an overview for the operations and maintenance activities for the 2024 year and actions we have taken to preserve our assets by means of our own human resource expertise with the exception to the liability requirement for certified contractors and professional cleaners. The committee's objective this past year was to seek to manage the budget approved by Council, plus address any special requirements identified for Health and Safety requirements. No major projects were planned or carried out for 2024.

The property budget for 2024 did give consideration for inflation, normal operation and maintenance and sufficient to keep the operations moving forward in a positive direction. Repairs and maintenance amount increased significantly this year due to inspections/caulking repairs on the steeple, asphalt repairs and unfortunately a small basement flood.

The difficulty arises within annual funding when the Church does not save/budget for major capital expenditures or an allowance for unknown emergency expenses. For example, the furnace and its associated piping is a growing concern and will have a significant price tag if the equipment becomes an issue.

The oil/heating cost this year was \$30,298 (reduced slightly by \$1300 from 2023) due to market conditions and the areas/volume we have to heat. The heating set points were reduced due to the building not being used to its full capacity for services and/or rentals. The oil furnace is inspected annually to determine its present condition for regular servicing and to predetermine through inspection if any potential major repairs are eminent.

### **Energy initiatives 2025:**

- Property has commenced and will continue to the change over of basement lights to LED.
- Property did renew weatherstripping and re-caulk frames and thresholds on all 8 exterior doors this past summer.

The old manse (10 Paton Street) did generate significant full year rental revenue of \$18,000 in 2023 with little maintenance required. The plan for the Paton Street manse for 2024 was to continue annual rental to generate an income to support church operations. The old manse (10 Paton St.) was leased to the ICNL for 2024 with a renewed lease for 2025, Hopefully both parties can continue the agreement into future years. Quadrangle remains to be a regular renter plus other smaller organizations, some being outreach clients. Tae Kwon-Do martial art training continues to participate weekly in the auditorium

The ongoing building maintenance, lawn mowing, snow clearing at the main entrances and exit doors and office management/administration of the property were performed for the most part by hourly paid staff.

Property has investigated a number of potential grants this past year.

1. Grant Provincial Government - Accessibility basement washroom – Not approved - Potential for 2025
2. NRC Deep Retrofit Accelerator program – Rejected not for single small projects.

3. UC Faithful footprints grants – Hopefully this program will cover a good portion of LED lights installed in 2024 plus the continuance of LED 2025 replacement.
4. Nil full funding available for the changeover from oil to other forms of energy. Federal government hopefully will have something soon. The over all project cost to complete an appropriate total change over would be in the vicinity of \$300 - \$400 thousand. Maximum grant from number 3 above is \$40 thousand resulting in the difference having to be funded by St. James.

Due to the past requirements during Coronavirus, the practicing a safe indoor environment, the church pews, sanctuary, bathrooms, offices and print rooms are all cleaned as required by a professional cleaning company.

The snow clearing and ice control agreement in place with MUN for a number of years has continued very well without any major difficulty to St. James congregation, rentals, visitors and MUN. The St. James parking stalls are limited to the first two rows towards Elizabeth Avenue. Parking passes were available for special occasions plus MUN limits student vehicles to the parking lot for St. James funerals and other special functions where appropriate.

This year St. James congregational members continue to nurture the flower gardens with perennials at the entrance to the office and four other gardens on the west side. The winter salt at the office entrance/ramp is a little harsh on the growth of the perennials but they are surviving.

The committee's goals for 2025 are as follows:

- To maintain the integrity of our St. James assets to the standards that will provide safe, long-term viability for staff, congregational members and external rental users and address any new and all Coronavirus/variants safety recommendations.
- To seek any funding/grants available to assist with energy conservation such as converting the oil to electric, LED lighting, Mini split if feasible.
- To research and remain current on new products and equipment used in the maintenance and operation of the buildings and to seek our own congregational resources to assist with related work requiring attention.
- To look at other avenues to support the financial efforts of the church through other long-term programs or initiatives.
- To continue to have the Rental committee seek additional rentals and space that may be available.
- To assist with the preparation of the annual operational budget and provide input into any minor/major capital expenditures required for the buildings within the next 5 years.
- To repair wood framing deterioration and paint the west large stained glass window.
- To install accessibility washroom in the Auditorium.

I would like to thank the St. James staff members of the Property Committee Bruce Winsor for ongoing operations and maintenance and Stephanie for assistance booking and invoicing, rental schedules, parking lot administration and other property related requirements along with their regular duties.

Also, I would like to thank all others that help the property committee when called on to assist, and others who identify any items that need attention in the world of property management.

A note of thanks is also extended to those who assisted in other aspects of keeping the facility and grounds in good condition. Thank you to the church congregational members for their continuous support complimented with our own St. James Ministry, Chair of Council/Council members whom keep us all informed through long hours of discussions in the past year and as such also assisted in property requirements with concerns and or recommendations/solutions.

Also, I would like to thank the Board of Trustees for their guidance and oversight from time to time.

The Property Committee is always looking for new members either to serve on a separate task or just for an individual repair and or an opportunity that has been identified.

Respectfully submitted.

Bill Legge, Chair Property

## **Stewardship Committee**

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for fostering a sense of Christian stewardship among all congregation members. This entails recognizing that life is a trust from God, and we must be accountable to God for how we allocate our time, talents, and resources. Stewardship extends beyond mere financial contributions; it encompasses living faithfully and caring for the world around us.

### **\*\*TIME & TALENT\*\***

Individuals can contribute their time by offering their skills to support programs, initiatives, and worship within our church and St. James. Volunteers are the foundation of our church, and their collective efforts enable us to accomplish more. Volunteers, through their dedication, can facilitate our church's expansion and deeper engagement with both our congregation and the community, thereby fulfilling our mission and vision.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our exceptional volunteers for their invaluable contributions over the past year. St. James would not be the same without their unwavering support.

To sustain these enriching activities, the Stewardship Committee is currently developing a Volunteer Program. This program aims to identify volunteers with diverse interests and availability, enabling them to participate in various events and initiatives at their convenience. We express our heartfelt appreciation to all individuals who have already registered for the program. We eagerly anticipate their participation in future events.

We are actively seeking volunteers to assist with various activities and events. Join us as we become the stewards of the time we have to offer in support of our church, the skills we possess to nurture our faith community, and the resources we can gather and manage to support the noble works through St. James.

### **\*\*RESOURCES\*\***

In September 2024, a Congregational Retreat revealed that our interests would be best served by establishing a Fundraising Sub-Committee to execute the exceptional fundraising concepts we have gathered. We have been diligently working to construct and launch this sub-committee for 2025.

Additionally, we are actively planning a pivotal Deficit Busting Campaign for 2025. Our objective is to alter the trajectory of our finances by eliminating our deficit and establishing a reserve for our resources in the future. The ultimate aspiration is to ensure the continued sustainability of our Ministry at St. James United Church.

In the meantime, over the past year, we have organized several fundraisers and events that blended fellowship and fundraising in support of our congregation and community. However, numerous additional ideas and plans have been postponed until 2025 as we develop our volunteer group.

Blessings from the 2024 Stewardship Committee,

Pamela Norman – Chair  
Rev. James Ravenscroft  
Jean Thompson  
Karen Brown

## **Bridges to Hope 2024 Annual Report to our Supporting Congregations**

The Staff, Volunteers and Board of Directors would like to express our sincere thanks for the ongoing support of Bridges to Hope by our founding and supporting congregations. The importance of our core mission, *to provide dignified, accessible, and culturally appropriate assistance to those experiencing food insecurity* has unfortunately grown throughout 2024.

**Operations:** During 2024 we have seen a steady increase in visits to Bridges to Hope. We have increased the numbers of volunteers, and the volunteer group, along with staff, are working tirelessly again in the pantry as well as the kitchen. Volunteers provided nearly 7000 hours of their valuable time to help the community in 2024!

The limits of our facilities are becoming apparent, as we proceed, but we are finding ways to meet demand for the moment. The Wednesday evening openings that we commenced in 2022 are ongoing.

During 2024 we began collaborating with Food Banks Canada to bring our operations in line with their Standards of Excellence, which will build upon the quality and delivery efficiency of our services and provide insight and guidance from other food support entities.

**Staff:** There was a significant transition in 2024, with the departure of Jody Williams in May, and the return of Lesley Burgess to assume the role of Executive Director. We thank Jody, not only for his years of dedicated service, but also for a collaborative transition process. Raylene Roche continues as our Intake Coordinator, while Emily Noel has moved into the new role of Volunteer and Program Coordinator. Sashika Dilshan was hired on as our full-time Marketing and Fund Development Coordinator. The team members work together in a collaborative and very supportive manner.

However, we did have some bumps in the road for the team, as Raylene went on medical leave prior to Christmas, and Sashika Dilshan has had to cease work while addressing immigration uncertainties. Both are hoping to be back with us soon, and we are missing their valuable contributions to our organization. We have had wonderful help from Peter Moore, hired to assist in their absence.

**Demand:** 2024 saw another dramatic increase in the number of clients coming to Bridges to Hope. Overall visits to our food bank increased by 31% from 2023! Of the 17,191 visits to our food bank in 2024, 3.5% of households were accessing a food bank for the very first time.

The largest demographic increase we saw in 2024 was among children (0-18 years). Children made up 5643 visits to our food bank last year, up from 3450 in 2023. This marks a 63.5% increase.

We continue to be open and supportive of all, regardless of religion, race, status or location.

**Programs:** Again in 2024, Bridges to Hope managed to offer valuable and essential programs and services to our clients. In addition to normal food support services, we had our Bags to School program in late summer. Thanks to the outstanding support of our donors, we were able to double the number of K-12 students we supported, meaning that 725 local students went back to

class with all the tools they needed. We also continued with the distribution of Smart Snack Kits with healthy after-school snacks for school age children.

This year saw extra support from Rotary for our annual Christmas program. Their generous boost saw us provide \$75 gift cards for groceries from Colemans to 493 of our client families, supporting 1058 individuals.

**Support:** Bridges to Hope remains very grateful for support from our founding churches, during universally challenging times. We remain an Outreach Ministry of the United Church of Canada, with financial assistance from First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council of the United Church, as well as the Presbyterian Synod of the Atlantic Provinces. And of course, donations and volunteerism from congregational members remain crucial to our ongoing mission.

Individual and corporate donations remain a critical part of our funding, in addition to grants and funding from community service groups. In challenging times, the willingness of the community to support their neighbours is inspiring.

Food drives continued in 2024, and the number of people dropping by with food, especially during Christmas, was remarkable. The support from community fundraisers, some expressly organized for our cause, is heartwarming. Our Christmas campaign set a new level of success, despite the Canada Post strike! We continue to be blessed with a talented and dedicated community underpinning us all.

Bridges to Hope continue to build upon our Sustainers Circle core of monthly donors, which provides a level of core funding through the year. Congregational supporters who join the Sustainers Circle as regular monthly donors can have their donations reported as part of your Church's annual support of Bridges to Hope. Please contact Lesley ([lesleyb@bridgestohope.ca](mailto:lesleyb@bridgestohope.ca)) to arrange.

For those with investment portfolios, it is also worth considering the significant tax advantages (re: capital gains in particular) of donating shares directly, instead of cash. Lesley can also provide guidance on how this works.

**The Future:** Bridges to Hope continue to work on the milestones in our 3-to-5-year strategic plan. We strive to build upon and enhance our core mission offerings, while adding new services and elements. However, we are realizing that our present infrastructure may be limiting our (increasingly needed) ability to meet the demand. We are consulting internally and building collaborative relationships with similarly minded groups, including Food Banks Canada, to explore new ways forward, while staying true to our Mission, Vision and Values.

*Submitted by:*

Ewan Cumming  
Board Chair, Member from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.