



St. James United Church Annual Report 2023



**St. James United Church
330 Elizabeth Avenue
St. John's, NL A1E 1B9**

Church Office: 709-722-1881

Email: info@stjamesuc.org

Website: www.stjamesuc.org

Facebook: St. James United Church

Twitter: StJamesUnited

Table of Contents

In Memoriam	5
Message from the Chair St. James United Church Council	6
Rev. James Ravenscroft, Lead Minister	8
Worship and Sacraments Committee	10
Baptisms	13
Confirmations	13
Transfers	13
Marriages	13
Candidate for Ordained Ministry	13
Christian Education Committee (CE)	14
Diversity Committee	16
Ministry and Personnel Committee	17
Board of Trustees	18
United Church Women (UCW)	19
As One That Serves Men's Club (AOTS)	20
AOTS Financial Report	21
Administration and Communications Committee	22
Regional Representation	23
Property (Building Maintenance) Committee	25
Stewardship Committee	28
Bridges to Hope	30

In Memoriam

Please Note: some did pass in earlier years, but funeral was held in 2023.

Francis Rodney Pike Soper	November 13, 2022
Cator Brown	January 9
Avalon Cecil Avery	January 15
Ralph Sparkes	January 15
Godfrey James Wedgewood	February 17
Darlene Eaton	March 12
Ruth Goff	April 20
Cynthia Smith	April 20
John Douglas Winsor	May 11
Basil James Worthman	June 8
William Oscar Seaward	June 19
Dorothy Acreman	June 21
Phillip Saunders Lane	July 14
Ruby Jolliffe	August 5
William (Bill) King	September 4
George Senior	October 1
Rev. Ettie Lovelet Gordon	October 3
Leonard Howell	October 24
William David Hapgood	November 8
(Alice) Maude Janes	November 21
Judith Smith	December 19

We would like to extend condolences to all families and friends and to many others who have suffered loss during these difficult pandemic years.

Message from the Chair, St. James United Church Council

The Greek philosopher, Heraclitus is quoted as writing “Everything changes, and nothing remains still; and you cannot step twice into the same stream”. The only constant is change. It is with us every year, every month, every week and every day. How we respond to these changes predicts our futures.

In both our personal family and in our church family we experience grief and loss, happiness and new life. The loss of a loved one is life changing but, in that loss, there is a gathering together of loved ones to lift up and provide support. There is this same gathering of love and support when we welcome new life to our families.

Over this past year we have said goodbye to many in our church family and we take the time to remember their commitment to St. James and their unwavering faith in our future. In remembering these lives, we see how we need to be committed to St. James. We have to find a way forward without their guidance. We have to come to terms with change.

We spent much time in 2023 reviewing our MAP. Once again, in following the path forward, we had to deal with change. Our finances were such that we could only sustain one full-time ministerial position. We found ourselves saying goodbye to Susan Sheppard. Susan had spent many devoted years with St. James and is truly missed.

Our constitutional review was completed in 2023. We are currently waiting on Regionals approval, but this again will bring change. This new constitution was developed with an eye to empowerment and communication, allowing ideas to flow more freely. It will recognize that those who do not wish to commit to committees may give their time for short term projects and identify areas where they feel called.

2023 saw us partnering with Quadrangle. I am pleased to say that this has been an absolute success. They report feeling very welcomed and safe in the space they rent from us. Feeling safe is more important now than ever with the growing threats facing their community. When we ask God to help us be more accepting, he gives us opportunities to practice acceptance. I am so very proud of the way St. James has embraced and welcomed Quadrangle into our space and church family.

Rev. James has worked tirelessly to allow St. James to provide worship that appeals to a wider, diverse community. The evening services provide a more intimate, personal form of worship. Pub Theology is gaining momentum and has sparked interest in St. James as a place of worship. His efforts do not go unnoticed and are very much appreciated. He is a self-proclaimed dreamer, and we need dreamers!

Amy Dalziel, Bob Rose and the Senior Choir, keep uplifting us with their music. We all wait with anticipation to see where their musical talents take us next!

Bruce Winsor, our Property Manager, continues to keep us safe and comfortable. Stephanie Harnum has settled well into her role as Office Administrator. She has been an outstanding addition to our team.

Our first ever Trunk or Treat was a great success, seeing approximately 800 children in attendance. Our thanks to Jennifer Adams who is 100% responsible for the inception and success of this event.

2023 saw us engage with Cochrane St. United to move forward with a pilot project and collaboration between our two congregations. We received approval from Regional to proceed and are currently waiting on response from the position posting.

We, unfortunately, continue to face financial struggles. As with all churches, declining membership and rising costs aren't a recipe for success. To each and every one of you that contribute whether financially or with your time, to the continuation of St. James ministry, a sincere and heartfelt thank you! This thank you extends especially to our dedicated finance committee who are tasked with managing this financial struggle. Rebuilding is a challenge, but one that we are taking on. It is a challenge that we are facing with the help of all our loyal volunteers, committee members, committee chairs and with the leadership of Rev. James.

It has been my pleasure to have served as Chair of St. James Council this past year. It was a more challenging year than I had anticipated, with several projects needing spearheading.

I would like to give a very special thank you to Marilyn Adams, who graciously stepped into the Cochrane St. project, when I could not. She has been a great support and source of knowledge to me, in her role as Past Chair. My first year as Chair has not been without its "moments" and I am eternally grateful for the patience and support shown from my fellow council members. What I might lack in experience, I hopefully make up for in my commitment to St. James.

As members of our St. James family, be assured that you are well served by your committees, committee chairs, Rev. James and everyone who gives of their time to ensure we keep moving upward and onward.

We are facing changes and change is good if we make it so.

In Faith,

Michelle Skinner

Chair, St. James Council

Rev. James Ravenscroft, Minister

As I reflect back over the past year, I do so with a mixture of pride and sadness. The two feelings go together for one poignant part of 2023, and that was the need for the congregation to engage in a significant review of our Mission Articulation Plan, effectively a new MAP, and so the consequent departure of Susan Sheppard, DLM in the fall after more than twenty years in ministry at St. James. That has been a difficult adjustment for many, including for me. I enjoyed working with Susan and I mourn the loss of our collaboration. But as we well know, the need to redo our MAP was brought on by the reality that we are living in a post-COVID world, a world where our budget had taken a hit and we needed to look at our staffing complement. Mixed with sadness though is pride because it is not easy to face that possibility, especially in a community of faith that has been such a growing concern. But you did not shy away from having really good conversations as you discerned where God is calling you.

That discernment, though meaning less ministry hours just for St. James, led you to an exciting conclusion - that you wanted to work with other groups, including other communities of faith, so that you could continue to be a place of welcoming faith and compassionate caring for everyone. In this you stepped forward to engage with Cochrane Street United in conversations about a possible partnership. Although launching the 18-month pilot has met with some time delays and as of the printing of this report we have not quite launched, I am proud of you for your courage. You took a step in hope as you engaged in the conversation, both communities of faith casting a vision of what working together can look like, not just for us but the wider church. It will take some growing pains, but I have every confidence that once we launch, we will wonder why didn't do such a thing sooner.

This past year, St. James took another leap of faith, and again I look at you with pride. The possibility emerged of St. James welcoming Quadrangle NL, a not-for-profit organization established to offer support and connection for people in the NE Avalon and throughout the province who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, to establish a community Centre in the basement of St. James. This group had been working for a long time to create a space and you helped to make this happen with your openness and commitment to inclusion, and justice for all people. A physical space could not have come at a better time. Anyone who watches the news knows that there has been a sharp increase in anti-2SLGBTQIA+ rhetoric this past year, mostly directed to people who identify as transgender or non-binary. Having a space where people feel welcome and safe has been a literal God send. We can set aside the concerns we had that 2SLGBTQIA+ people may not be comfortable coming to a space housed in a church. The opposite has happened. Not only has everyone who comes to The Quad felt welcome and loved, but you have offered a visible reminder of what Jesus actually preached.

And you haven't just been a place of welcome, but you have extended it outward in some amazing ways this year. When protesters established a tent city across from Confederation Building, you pitched in with other churches to offer food and other supports. When a call came in from Bell Island asking for help for people facing food insecurity, you stepped up, while still giving support to Bridges to Hope and Stella's Circle. When calls came in asking for support for refugees, again you said yes. When you were asked to host an interfaith vigil in support of a Guaranteed Living Income, or to offer a space of quiet for those shaken by the massacre in Israel and the subsequent war in Gaza, you said, of course. Again and again, you show caring in a world where it's in short supply.

Now you may wonder why I am talking about all these things that you, the people of St. James, have done this past year in my minister's report for 2023. I name them because a big part of my job is to support and encourage you as you seek to live out the gospel of Jesus in the world. When I lead a worship service, be it in the morning, or as part of our series of evening services, or for Wild Light Spiritual Oasis, I do it to nurture your spirit as you live into God's call as disciples of Jesus. When I give support to committee members and provide help to our church council, I do it so that together we can discern where God is calling us in our community. When I visit someone in their home or in hospital, or I officiate at a funeral (and I have led quite a few of those this past year), I do it to bring God's comfort, of course, but also to lift people up and enable them to share God's love in the world again. Even my doctoral studies are geared toward supporting you as disciples of Christ in a changing world. That's the role of a minister, to encourage you in your call as followers of Jesus, especially as you step forward with courage, take risks, show compassion and embody God's welcoming love. There has been a degree of sadness this past year, but it has been mixed with a good amount of pride as I have watched you embody what it means to be disciples of Christ. Thank you for giving me the honor of helping you to do just that.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. James Ravenscroft

Worship and Sacraments

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 continued on a regular basis in person and online for 2023. Our Contemporary worship services were held online from the beginning of the year on Saturdays at 4:30 pm until October. Sunday evening services were held with various types of services being tried at 7:00 pm. The evening service styles include Evening Tide, The Sunday Table, Story and Song, and Tapestry. Our regular Sunday morning services continue at 11:00 am. Wild Light Saturday services were held on Saturdays at various times throughout the year. We are grateful to Susan for her support up to October, and we will certainly miss her input and commitment to St. James. Thank you, James, for your continued support and initiatives in an effort 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 is looking forward to graduation this May 2024.

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. 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 scheduled 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 p.m. Christmas Eve service. The music program has started to contribute to St. James' Sunday Evening services. The Taizé service includes piano accompaniment, and the Celtic Vespers service features a small ensemble that performs Celtic-style music.

Our Music Program continues to grow and flourish due to the interest, talents, skills, energy, and commitment of our Music Directors. While St. James has an abundance of talent, the ongoing challenge is maintaining regular membership in the choir. This fall the choir numbers started back in an upward swing as people grow 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. Sadly, former choir member, Roly Hillyard, passed away a few months ago. The choir often shares memories of Roly during rehearsal, and we will feel his absence for years to come. Deepest condolences to the Hillyard family and the choir.

We acknowledge the valuable contribution to our Music Ministry of the **St. James Guitar Group** and all others who have shared their musical talent with the congregation during a worship service or a concert event. Sadly, they lost a treasured member this year, Harvey Weir. Deepest condolences to the Weir family and the Guitar Group.

Livestreaming: Thank you to **Jake Thompson** for ensuring the power point and livestreaming platforms are available each week. We hope to see improvements in 2024 with upgrading of some equipment. A special thank you to **Jake** for offering his puppets and friends from NTV's **NL Now** for hosting our 65th Anniversary celebrations this year. We hope to see them on a regular basis in 2024.

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 have been formed to 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 at St. James. This committee is overseeing the gradual implementation of the pastoral care plan developed this past year by Rev. James and Susan Sheppard, DLM. One aspect of this plan is the development of neighbourhood clusters. This task has been largely completed, thanks to the hard work of our summer students, and we hope to have this in place very soon. Another task the team coordinates is sending cards to members of St. James who are facing a difficulty or marking a milestone. The Pastoral Care Committee is comprised of Barbara Butt, Clyde Flight, Daphne Coish, Sheilagh Beckett, and Rev. James Ravenscroft. Additional members are warmly welcomed. We were deeply saddened with the loss of Rev. Ettie Gordon-Murray this fall and her leadership and support will certainly be missed. Condolences to Alison on the loss of her mother.

Social and Eco Action Committee: This committee is a recent development at St. James, inspired by conversations that Rev. James had with congregants when he first arrived, 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 in response to community needs. At the beginning of the year they worked with the Very Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy in hosting an interfaith vigil regarding Guaranteed Living Income; made sure there were some environmental facts and recycling tips in *The Visitor* and bulletin in honour of Earth Day; organized a Spring litter clean-up in the neighbourhood; collected donations and compiled personal care packages in October in support of the people encamped on Confederation Hill and in Bannerman Park to raise awareness about the lack of affordable housing in the city; joined other churches and staff of the Bell Island Opioid Clinic in a food drive to support

the clinic's food-insecure clients; led a worship service to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty; and in Advent, organized White Gift Sunday in support of both Bridges to Hope and Stella's Circle. Led by Robin Bartlett, current members of this committee are Donald Blackmore, Paul Walsh, and Rev. James. New members are most welcome.

Closing Remarks: 2023 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, Gloria LeFevre, and Amy Dalziel.** Thank you to you all.

Susan and James; thank you for all your support, input, and leadership this year. Sadly, due to budget restraints, we had to say goodbye to Susan this year. Susan, your input and knowledge will certainly be missed by many. We wish you all the best in your journey with Gods blessings.

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. We are very excited to embark on the pilot project with Cochrane Street in 2024 and beyond.

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 2023

OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

BAPTISM:

July 30

Ryan James Darrin Deir son of Denelle Amanda Stone and Christopher Orlando Jordan Deir

September 24

Arabella Nancy Laura Boyd daughter of Amanda Bessie Gates Boyd and Scott Nicholas Boyd

CONFIRMATIONS:

None

PROFESSION OF FAITH:

Glenn Burry

Lloyd Hillyard

Randy Butler

TRANSFER IN:

David Tucker

Jennifer Whitfield

REMOVED BY TRANSFER

Susan Sheppard

Hannah Sheppard

MARRIAGES

William James Martin and Jennifer Constance Dyke

July 15

CANDIDATE FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY

Katelyn Vardy

Christian Education Committee (CE)

In 2023, we had our first pancake supper since 2020, which was held on February 21, 2023. It was a great success. Due to the need for the Youth Room as a rental, we moved the library books up to the conference room to permanently move the library to that location. Our "Loose Threads" Sewing Group continued to be successful with leader Susan Sheppard, DLM, providing her expertise in all things sewing, knitting, crocheting and any other type of crafts you wished to bring. Our Book Group with Susan also continued with much success.

Susan also continued to host Forest Church, once a month on Saturday afternoons, sometimes in her backyard forest or at the Autism Society Gardens. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and meditation in the outdoors. The Tapestry, Celtic, Taizé, and Story and Song Eventide services continued with the Tapestry service being created by our young adults. The Celtic service was a mixture of Celtic and Newfoundland music and the Taizé service was created as an evening of meditation, music and chanting. Susan led the Story and Song services presenting a mixture of songs and telling of a story either by the Godly Play or Out of the box style of storytelling. These evening services were led by Rev. James and Susan.

The Potluck and Games night held once a month was enjoyed by all who attended. The Pub Theology evening at the Guv'nor's Pub was also successful with many evenings of great questions and discussions. Our Ukulele Group for beginners met on Saturdays with all enjoying the music and fellowship.

Our committee also began discussions with the Worship and Sacraments Committee for the establishment of a Family Space in the Sanctuary. This required the removal of two sets of half pews in rows 5 and 6 (across from the wheelchair accessible section) to be able to accommodate both young children and parents with space to sit and be engaged in the service at the same time. This began on a trial basis in April. In September, we continued discussions with the Worship and Sacraments Committee to have the Family Space expanded. The Family Space was well received by the congregation, and it was suggested that we expand it by removing the other halves of pews 5 and 6. Having two full pew spaces for the Family Space was a recommendation by the CE Committee and from the feedback we had received from the congregation. As Chair of the CE Committee, I want to thank all who were involved in making the Family Space happen. This included the members of the Worship and Sacraments Committee, Council, and the congregation. It has been an exciting project, and it is the committee's hope that it will make St. James inviting for families and we are able to continue to build and grow this space.

In May, Karen Brown and Gloria Le Feuvre participated in a Godly Play Storyteller training session at the Church of the Good Sheppard in Mount Pearl and were certified as Godly Play Storytellers. We are hoping, in the future, to be able to provide Godly Play stories to children and families.

In June, we regretfully saw Susan Sheppard, DLM, move on from our congregation. We, as a committee, appreciate Susan's involvement as Ministerial Team member representative and all the insights and contributions she has made over the years.

In October, we were greatly saddened by the sudden passing of Rev. Ettie Gordon-Murray, CE Committee member-at-large. Her work with our committee to be a part of her "home church" was invaluable. Her insights and friendship have and will always be greatly missed.

We, as a committee, have had many discussions over the year about committee membership and are always looking to expand. If you feel that Christian Education is something that interests you, please contact the Chair of the Committee or any member. We would love to have "More Voices" to discuss St. James' Christian Education role.

Respectively submitted,

Gloria Le Feuvre, Chair

Diversity Committee

This year the Diversity Committee focused its efforts on matters within St. James. The committee was very pleased to see the addition of the disability pride flag alongside the Transgender and Gay Pride flags on the chancel. This represents a visual sign that all are welcome at St. James. In addition, the committee consulted with the Worship & Sacraments Committee regarding the re-design of accessible spaces within the Sanctuary. The Diversity Committee also assisted in promoting participation in rallies to support of those who were marginalized in our community, notably around transgender rights. This led to a co-operative project with the Diversity Committee at Gower Street UC to first have a Minute for Mission on our call to stand in opposition when minority rights are threatened, and further the development of a panel discussion on Transgender rights. This panel will be held early in 2024.

Paul Walsh

Chair of Diversity Committee

Ministry and Personnel Committee

The Ministry and Personnel Committee met on a regular basis throughout the year. During this period, performance review evaluations were completed on Ministerial and Office staff, and the Committee was involved in the hiring process for the summer student positions. Other Committee activities included the monitoring of Leave requests and involvement with various human resource issues and enquiries.

Position descriptions were reviewed and revised for the Fulltime and Part-time Ministerial positions in preparation for the MOU with Cochrane St. United Church.

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERSHIP (2023)

The 2023 membership of the Board of Trustees of St. James United Church was comprised of: Rev. James Ravenscroft (Chair), Aubrey Hill, Clifford Smith and Donna Downey.

PROPERTY OVERSIGHT

The Board of Trustees, in consultation with the St. James Church Council and the Property Committee of Council, is responsible for the oversight of the Congregation's church property; to ensure it is well maintained and adequately insured; and to interface with the Church Council and the Regional Council on capital improvements and the lease or sale of church property.

The former manse property at 10 Paton Place continues to be leased for \$1500 per month with ICNA Canada Relief. Council also entered into a lease agreement with Quadrangle NL. Discussions with Kindred Works, the property development arm of the United Church of Canada, on potential development options for our church property is ongoing as we await the results of conversations with Regional council.

MEMORIAL/TRUST FUNDS

The Board of Trustees is responsible for managing the Audrey Fillier Trust Fund and the Bethany Danielle Pike Memorial Trust Fund, both of which are externally restricted church funds. The Bethany Danielle Pike Memorial Fund Oversight Committee liaises with the Board of Trustees on the Fund's ongoing administration.

As of December 31, 2023, the balance in the Audrey Fillier Trust Fund was \$7,868 and the balance in the Bethany Danielle Pike Memorial Fund was \$113,224. Both Funds are audited in conjunction with the annual audit of St. James United Church

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. James Ravenscroft (Chair)

United Church Women (UCW)

“The future belongs to those who learn from the past and live brilliantly in the present moment.”

As there is little news to report for 2023, we will share how our UCW has responded to changing personal and societal factors. Our members are all getting older and Covid has affected life in general. Our UCW has taken on an existence that better reflects the present circumstances while retaining the fellowship and caring that has always been at the heart of UCW. Monthly meetings have continued but are held in the afternoon and attended by a smaller number of dedicated members. The meeting room has changed from the large auditorium to the smaller, more intimate Fellowship Room, to enhance comfort and encourage better interaction of this smaller group. Rules of order for a meeting have been maintained but presented in a more relaxed manner. Members have stepped up to support the President as there is not currently a Co-President. This format is working for now, however, in future years, things will change, and we will change with them.

In 2023, total UCW membership was much the same as in 2022 but more members moved from the Active list to the Visitation list. The number of Active members was 25 and the number of Visitation was 9. During 2023, we were saddened to lose three long time members, Ruth Goff, Dorothy Acreman and Ruby Joliffe. We remember them fondly and the contributions they each made to our UCW.

We again debated the feasibility of having our two annual sales because of our decreased membership and increased age. However, with help from congregation members, we came through and put tremendous effort into both. The Spring Sale generated \$3450 enabling us to give another donation to the church. Two gift baskets were added to the Fall Sale and were a major contributor to the funds raised.

In May we held our Spring dinner and in December we had a Christmas Dinner shared with the AOTS. Pat and Sue have become our regular caterers, always providing a delicious and reasonable meal. The Guitar Group provided great entertainment and a lively Sing Along.

The Executive for 2023 included:

Executive

Past Co-President: Barbara Adams
President: Betty Pilgrim
Recording Secretary: Sheliah Beckett
Treasurer: Donna Downey
Assistant Treasurer: Betty Patey
Corresponding Secretary: Ruth Baker
Honorary Member: Shirley Bursey

Committee Conveners

Membership: Shirley Bursey
Visitation: Jean White
Church Council Representative: Ruth Baker
Finance Committee Representative: Vacant

We always welcome guests to attend our meetings held the second Monday of the month at 2 p.m. in the Fellowship Room.

Respectfully Submitted:

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

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

The Men's Club held eight regular meetings during 2023. 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. Our active numbers are in the range of 12-14 in attendance at each meeting. We have extended an invitation to the men of Cochrane Street United to join us as part of the ongoing collaborative project initiated recently.

Members of our club, and indeed the whole congregation were deeply saddened to learn of the death of long-time member David Hapgood on November 8, 2023. David was a very active member of AOTS and his presence has been greatly missed. Many of the activities we currently follow were initiated by Dave and have continued throughout each year.

In addition to our regular meetings, members assisted in the preparation of the Pancake Supper and the Easter Sunday Breakfast. 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 2024. Members of the club also assisted with the ushering during the month of May and December and the book sale March 19 and 20. On December 6, members of our club joined the UCW for a Christmas Dinner with entertainment by the Guitar Group.

The financial statement for 2023 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, 2023

Bank Balance as of January 1, 2023 915.87

Revenues

Dinner meetings

Revenues 687.00

Expenditures 380.60

NET 306.40

Easter Sunday Breakfast

Revenues 148.75

Expenditures 40.50

NET 108.25

Fish Dinner

Revenues 5,822.00

Expenditures 1,721.22

NET 4,100.78

Membership Dues 195.00

Donations 110.00

TOTAL REVENUE 4,820.43

EXPENDITURES

Donation - Church 4,610.00

- Memorial Fund 50.00

Guest Speakers 100.00

Kitchen Supplies/Equipment

Sunday Morning Coffee

Bank Service Charges/Cheques 24.75

TOTAL EXPENDITURES 4,784.75

Revenues over (under) expenditures 35.68

Bank Balance as of December 31, 2023 951.55

Administration and Communications

As a committee, we had a very busy year in 2023. In March we had a book fair, and it was wildly successful. Approximately \$1500 was raised. Then, in August, we had a flea market and the response to our call for items was more than we could have hoped for. Once all was said and done, \$500 was raised and all remaining items were donated to various charities. We also held an outreach event in October called a Trunk 'N Treat. During this event, volunteers were sought to hand out candy to neighborhood children from the trunks of their cars. We put out a request for treats from the congregation and they never disappointed. Actually, it was a good thing we had so many treats on hand because we saw 800 children that day! We lucked out with a nice sunny day so kids from all over came to visit us. It was extremely successful and the smiles from the kids were definite proof of that. Thank you to all the volunteers (too numerous to name each one personally) that dedicated their time to the success of these ventures. Without them, none of it would have happened nor been as successful.

The Visitor was produced 4 times this year: February (Easter edition), June (Summer edition), September (Thanksgiving edition), and December (Christmas edition). They were all available in print and digital formats. However, due to rising costs of materials and the shortage of zone captains, it was decided that it would be digital only from here on out. Print copies will be made upon request. Thanks to Glen Warren (editor) for his dedication to the Visitor and for his continued excellence in producing a quality newsletter, and to what I refer to as the "production team" (Jean White, Glenda Winsor, Sheilah Beckett, Catherine Rose, and Linda Babstock) that have been instrumental in ensuring the Visitor was printed, assembled, and properly arranged for ease of retrieval by the zone captains.

I thank my committee members for another year of service. You are a great group to work with. The committee includes Karen Brown, Sheilah Beckett, and Robin Bartlett. We sadly lost the fourth member of our committee later in the year - Rev. Ettie Gordon - Murray passed away in October. She was a very vocal member with many great ideas and hearing them has been sorely missed.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Adams

Chair

Regional Representation

The 5th Annual Meeting of First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council was held May 12-14, 2023, via Zoom. Created in God's image, The Moderator The Right Rev. Carmen Lansdowne through a video brought greetings and offered the call of the United Church. "Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship and Daring Justice".

The presenter Japhet Ndhlovu shared a video highlighting the work of The United Church in Mission Unit, 90 global partners and together provide basic needs, education, food security, human rights and justice for all.

Dr. Marion Pardy shared a video of Guaranteed Livable Income

The Regional Council is working on an updated Call Statement to be adopted at this meeting. The theme selected for the work of the Region this year is "I thank God, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made". The call of the region is to be inclusive of all people.

The responsibility of three Regions to work for health, joy and excellence of our ministry personnel, to provide leaders and communities with the opportunities for learning and environments of sharing, to enhance their skills, focus their energies and celebrate their practice.

The FDEE Council approved the Call Statement.

Wording of the CALL Statement...

With joy in our hearts and a song on our lips we,
The First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council of The United Church of Canada,
acknowledge that we are called by God
to love and serve all creation
as bold disciples of Jesus Christ
We believe that full participation in all aspects of our calling
is the right of people
of all races, backgrounds, creeds, ages, cultural backgrounds,
sexual orientations, gender expressions, economic statuses, abilities,
or any other lived experiences
that have led to marginalization and oppression.
Through our various shared ministries and paths of deep spirituality,
we are called to uphold the varied gifts and skills in one another;
to be accepting of change while honoring heritage and traditions;
to resist bias as we seek justice.
We are all God's children. We are not alone.
Thanks be to God!

A Remit was introduced. It proposed a change to the basis of union to establish an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within The United Church of Canada and is distributed to communities of faith to vote on.

The meeting ended with a kitchen party. A celebration of ministries service at Wesley Church on Sunday May 14 – live streamed. The President Rev. Nancy Mojica-Fisher was the preacher.

Stephanie Rose was ordained as a minister in The United Church of Canada. Rev. Amanda Barnes was installed as President of FDEE Regional Council and announced the Theme for 2024 “When we say yes” John 6:66-69 The President elect is Rev. Jocelyn Cook.

AGM on June 7-9, 2024, to be held at Memorial University. Area to be announced. The Moderator The Right Rev. Carmen Lansdown will be attending the meeting.

Thank you for electing me as your Regional Representative

Ruth Baker

Property Committee Report

This Property Committee report presents an overview for the operations and maintenance activities for the 2023 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 2023.

The property budget for 2023 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 expenditure 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 \$31,563 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 2024:

- Property has commenced the changeover of basement lights to LED.
- Property will obtain quotes from contractors to renew weatherstripping and recalk frames and thresholds on all 8 exterior doors. Pending cost and UC Faithfull Footprints program contributions this most likely will proceed.

The old manse (10 Paton Street) did generate significant full year rental revenue in 2023. The plan for the Paton Street manse for 2023 was to continue annual rental to generate an income to support church operations. The old manse (10 Paton St) was leased to the NL chapter of ICNA Canada Relief for 2023 with a renewed lease for 2024 with a new chapter branch. 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 2024
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 2023 plus the continuance of LED 2024 replacement including the door weatherstripping initiative.
4. Nil full funding available for the changeover from oil to other forms of energy. The Fed Government hopefully will have something soon. The overall project cost to complete an appropriate total changeover 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 continued to nurture the flower gardens with perennials at the entrance to the office and two of the other gardens on the west side. The salt at the office entrance/ramp is a little harsh on the growth on the perennials. Thanks to the Wedgewood family for the donation to assist with the flower gardens this year.

The committee's goals for 2024 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 stain glass window.

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 helped 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

Under the current constitution, the Stewardship Committee is mandated with “promoting and cultivating a sense of Christian Stewardship among all members in the congregation, based on the understanding that the whole of life is a Trust from God and consistent with this understanding all members must account to God for the use made of time, talents and resources.” Ultimately, stewardship can be defined as faithful living through the use of time, talent and resources as well as care of creation.

TIME & TALENT

People may give their time by offering their talents in support of programs, initiatives, and worship within our church and through St. James into the wider community. Volunteers are the foundation upon which the wider church is built, and many hands make light work. Volunteers, through their good work, can help the church reach farther and deeper into the congregation and the community to achieve its mission and vision. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our volunteers for the many and varied contributions they have made over the past year. St. James could not offer the programs, activities and events it does without the help and support of our valued volunteers. To ensure continued support of these activities, the Stewardship Committee has developed a Volunteer Program, whose purpose is to coordinate volunteers with varying interests and availability to participate on an ad hoc basis. We announced this call for Volunteers and a Volunteer Co-Ordinator in the Christmas Visitor:

Singing in the choir. Folding bulletins before a service. Playing guitar, Painting steps. Baking cookies for the bake sale. Phoning a friend who needs to hear a supportive voice. Organizing donations for the book sale or the auction. Joining in a Hallowe'en Trunk'n'Treat. Decorating the Auditorium. Cooking pancakes or serving a fish supper. Reading during a service. Tending the Family Space. Writing a report. Coffee and cake after the service. Keeping in touch with one of our groups. Planting flowers. Joining a committee. Supporting an event. Join a group. And so much more! Did you know all these things are forms of Stewardship?

Stewardship encompasses the giving of our time, our talents, and even our resources, to support the pillars of faith in our Congregation and our community. We are looking for volunteers to help with many activities and events. Join us as we become stewards of the time that we can offer in support of our church, the talents that we possess that can nurture our faith community, and the resources we can gather and manage in support of the good works through St. James. There is an old saying that many hands make light work.... If everyone does just a little bit here or there, it doesn't even seem like work. Every member of the congregation has something to give. People are busy but may have the time to jump in for an activity here or there. Whether it is just a few minutes, a single event, or joining a group, no effort is too great or too small. We would love to hear from you!

With the increased need for volunteers, we are also launching a Volunteer Development Team. If you are interested in helping the members of St. James share their gifts and interests with their community of faith, and creating a Volunteer Map, then this small 2–3-member team is for you! Contact the church office for details.

RESOURCES:

Stewardship also includes the judicious use of the resources with which we have been entrusted. As indicated in the Mission Articulation Plan, our church buildings and lands are owned outright and are in good repair. The electrical system and furnace are of an era where upgrades would provide significant efficiencies. Currently, the expenses incurred by building operations and maintenance account for a significant proportion of financial expenditures. The current Stewardship program attracts donations that contribute to the resources of our church. However, reinvigoration is needed at this time because of declining numbers, an ageing congregation, and, therefore, declining resources.

Over the past year, we have held several fundraisers and events where both fellowship and fundraising meet, in support of our congregation and community. The Committee hosted or supported several events in 2023, such as the Memorial Hymn Sing, the Spring Fling Dessert Party; some new events such as the Book Sale and The Hallowe'en Trunk'n'Treat, both spearheaded by Jennifer Adams; and the reimagined Christmas Market "Baking Spirits Bright" organized by Jean Thompson. For the first time, we held an online auction, courtesy of Bartlett Auction House and organized by Paul Walsh and Robin Bartlett. We hope to build on these events in the coming year and try new ways to build our resources. Please join us as we seek to support the life and works of St. James.

Blessings from the Stewardship Committee,

Pamela Norman – Chair
Jean Thompson
Karen Brown
Paul Walsh
Robin Bartlett
Rev. James Ravenscroft

Bridges to Hope 2023 Annual Report to our Supporting Congregations

Once again, 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 reduce the effects of poverty on individuals and families through access to essential food, and other programs that help empower our clients*, has unfortunately grown within 2023.

Operations: For the most part, 2023 has seen us operating under post-pandemic conditions, with volunteer levels at pre-Covid levels and clients re-entering the waiting area. Our dedicated volunteers are performing yeoman service again in the pantry as well as the kitchen, and over the year we have added some additional volunteers and increased our food preparation activities.

Staff: Our new staff structure has been carried through 2023, with Jody Williams as our Executive Director, Lesley Burgess as our Operations Manager, Raylene Roche as Intake Coordinator, and Emily Noel as Food Support Worker. We have a wonderful core team. We had an addition to the team mid-year, with Federal grant money providing one year funding for a dedicated Fund Development Coordinator. Sashika Dilshan has proven to be a great asset in building public and corporate awareness of our organization and its' mission.

Demand: 2023 saw continued increases in the number of clients coming to Bridges to Hope. We believe that this is primarily as a result of rises in the cost of living from inflation, but we are also seeing increased numbers of new Canadians and international students. We provided support to over 13,100 people in 2023, including 3448 children and 2214 Seniors. This is almost a 20% bump in the number of clients over 2022. The Wednesday evening openings that we commenced in 2022 are ongoing, no surprise in light of present socio-economic conditions.

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

Programs: Again in 2023, 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, which distributed 468 Back Packs full of quality curriculum based, age appropriate, school supplies to students of all grades. We distributed Smart Snack Kits with healthy after-school snacks for school age children, and through our annual Christmas program, funded by Rotary, we distributed \$75 gift cards for groceries from Colemans to 315 of our client families, supporting 662 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. It is remarkable how much the caring people of our province have supported our mission, even as their own costs of living increase. In 2023 Bridges to Hope continued to add to our Sustainers Circle core of monthly donors, which provides a level of core funding through the year.

It is important to note that 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 Jody Williams (j.williams@bridgestohope.ca) to arrange.

Food drives continued in 2023, with a gradual post-Covid increase. We had a major fundraiser in the form of our Songwriter's Circle event in March with Music NL, at Gower St. United Church, as well as numerous other events in support of Bridges to Hope. We are blessed with a talented and dedicated community underpinning us all.

The Future: Bridges to Hope has continued to advance the milestones in our 3-to-5-year strategic planning exercise conducted in 2022. We strive to build upon and enhance our core mission offerings, while adding new services and elements. We are building collaborative relationships with similarly minded groups.

Submitted by:

Ewan Cumming

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