



## ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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# St. Paul's Vision & Mission Statement

## **Vision of our Congregation**

We will be a spiritual home where:  
God and Jesus Christ are celebrated;  
diversity is embraced;  
and people are nurtured so that we can serve others.

## **Mission of our Congregation**

We will provide services, programs, and opportunities to build, to strengthen and to enrich our faith so that we can better serve our families, our communities, and our world.

## **Statement of Affirmation**

St. Paul's United Church is an Affirming Congregation within the United Church of Canada. As such we reach out with love and acceptance to all those who come through our doors regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, racial or ethnic background, differing abilities, economic or cultural background. As a community of faith, we strive to make St. Paul's United Church a safe place for all and a voice for social justice.

## **Land Acknowledgment**

We acknowledge that St. Paul's United Church is in Region 4 of the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Métis Homeland. We are part of Treaty 6 and name with respect Nêhiyaw, Dene, Anishinaabe, Saulteaux, Nakota Isga, Nakota Sioux and Niitsitapi peoples. We recognize this area as home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel.

# From the Board Chair

As I sit in front of my computer to write my first Chair's report for St. Paul's, I wonder where to start. The year has flown by with so much work going on in the background that it is hard to know where to begin. I first want to thank all the members of St. Paul's United Church, far and near, in the faith they have shown in me, to give me the absolute honor of chairing the Board. With so many talented and highly educated people in our congregation it is simply a pleasure to sit back and marvel at the work members of St. Paul's United Church perform every day. God has blessed this church with many talented people who are not afraid to step up and complete difficult tasks day in and day out throughout the year.

We have had so many committees in the background working away diligently to ensure our church not only remains vibrant, but in a very healthy state. With the retirement in June of Denise Davis Taylor, M&P stepped up, and with the help of Reverend Catherine MacLean, our Senior Minister, were able to bring on Reverend Anna Constantin as the interim Minister of Faith Formation. As one of my colleagues on the Board put it, "She is a breath of fresh air and a source of stability for our church when it is going through these uncertain times."

In the meantime, a small group of dedicated people have been working extremely hard as the "Community of Faith Profile Team". With the guidance of Rev. Stuart Jackson, who was assigned to the church from Northern Spirit Region, the team has created several extensive documents that are required by the Region to be put on the website prior to the hiring of a permanent minister(s). The profile team not only created these documents that they recently presented to the Board, but they also reached out to families of the congregation with children and youth to get their input. This work has been over a year in the making and will not only assist in the calling of the Minister of Faith Formation but will also assist the new committee that will be formed to create the documents required to search for a Senior Minister when the time comes to replace Catherine in the late fall. Words cannot express the gratitude that not only I, but the entire Board have for this committee.

I'm sure that many of you, not unlike me, are finding it difficult to fathom St. Paul's United Church without our Senior Minister, Catherine MacLean. We all knew the time would come when Catherine would announce her retirement, we were just hoping it would be "a few more years". It will be my pleasure to serve on the Board and witness the well-deserved retirement of a very loved and respected minister of the United Church.

Groups of dedicated members went to each of our homes as the pandemic lifted, and after visiting members of the congregation, presented to the Board Connexion Visitation feedback. Members were given an opportunity to discuss issues that were important to them, which was formulated into a report and presented to the Board. This also aided in determining the financial wellbeing of our church. Many hours of volunteer work were put into this effort. Thank you.

After a shaky start to the reopening of the church, and the very difficult decision the Board had to make to close the in-person worship, it was joyful to watch the congregation slowly come back into the sanctuary and start to worship in person. Words cannot express the gratitude the entire

congregation have for Logan, Samantha, Catherine, Anna, Susan and Tyson, as they not only bring in-person services together, but also continue to provide virtual services to people that are unable to attend church. These are very professional and enhance the spiritual life of many of congregants as well as new congregants that have learned about St Paul's on the internet. Thank you so much for all the efforts and love you have put into the videos throughout the pandemic and beyond.

As the pandemic winds down, and people are slowly coming out of their homes, and adjusting to life after the pandemic, we have committees that are trying to market the church space to renters. This not only affords our neighbors and friends a place to meet, but also provides our church with much needed funds to continue. With the creation of a beautiful basement full of amenities, it is only right that we are able to share our space with the community. Thank you to the Rental Committee as well as the Finance Committee.

There are so many committees in the church that require a great deal of thanks. I cannot begin to thank them all in the short amount of space I have. It would take the entire Annual Report. These committees have been working throughout the year with little or no notice. Please ensure that you read all the committee reports to get an idea of what they have done throughout the year.

In closing, I want to personally send my condolences out to the family of Anna Benowicz, our beloved Office Administrator, who was called into the arms of our Lord. It was truly a pleasure to work with Anna. She was always very happy to assist whenever she could, and made things so beautiful for the church. Anna will be truly missed.

Dean Rombough  
Board Chair

# Ministerial & Staff Reports

## The Rev. Dr. Catherine Faith MacLean

Senior Minister

Serving with and among you as minister is a joy. I have the holy privilege of coming alongside your commitment, honesty, and hope in living profoundly human and spiritual lives. My efforts this year have largely been settling the congregation beyond pandemic isolation, encouraging up-front participation, and showing visibly shared leadership for the church – which is to say much time in administration. There are reasons that the etymology of *administration* is *ministrare* - from *minister*.

January until mid-March of 2020 we continued to connect virtually. The church was never closed: several committees were very hard at work, people reached out by phone, zoom and with cards and front yard visits, children's programs continued, pastoral care was robust, and our worship videos were available on YouTube.

We will have been back in the sanctuary for only a year at the time of the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Preparing for building re-entry, Dean Rombough and I sent letters to everyone. I'm sure some people papered their kitchens with many cards from St. Paul's during covid! We worked hard to communicate thoroughly what we learned from the Re-Entry Committee. We approached worship services, church use of the building, and rentals with different protocols, each appropriate to the various building usages.

The Board encouraged gradual re-entry beginning on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Sunday by Sunday, households still return to our spiritual home, and new people who are looking for a church join us in weekly worship.

Denise's retirement was a celebration of 30 years of ministry here: relationships, outreach work, social justice, pastoral care. She and I worked closely for 19 of those years. It was marvelous. We carried different responsibilities in ministry and approached them in distinctive ways, yet always held the thriving health and mission of the congregation as the governing value.

To bridge the time between the significant responsibilities Denise carried and whatever the congregation discerns to be ministerial leadership for the future, Northern Spirit Regional Council appointed the Reverend Anna Constantin as Minister of Faith Formation. You know that I was concerned about care and programming for young members of our congregation. I want to tell you that I see happiness on young faces and hear gratitude from parents and grandparents. That decision, supported by St. Paul's Board, has given this year depth and stability.

## Worship

Deep winter is time to warm spirits and we did so with two worship series: one on Delight and another called The Bible and Trans, an Affirming theme. You will have noticed on our StPaulsUCYEG YouTube channel that Susan and Tyson create a thumbnail for each video. The final regular worship video in lieu of in-person attendance was March 13. It had a PIE Day theme lifting up our Public, Intentional, and Explicit commitment to Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people - I filmed in the church kitchen with a half dozen pies.

We resumed in-person church services on March 20, with the same safety protocols in place as we used for the four Sundays of Advent 2021. The Re-Entry plan set by the Board began with a lean format: no coffee or fellowship meeting, and singing restricted to the choir. Masks were encouraged. Godly Play continued on-line, and vaccinated children, wearing masks, were welcome to sit with their families in the pews. I have chosen to speak of *integrated worship* rather than *hybrid*, noting that our intention is to come together rather than get separated. Absorbing this shift has meant planning and adjusting worship styles that are meaningful in person and online both in the moment and later.

Between March 15 2020 and March 20 2022, St. Paul's had:

- 2 years
- 24 months
- 104 weeks
- 4 Advent in-person in-sanctuary services
- 61 hymn recordings
- 107 worship videos
- 23507 views

January to December 2022 there were over 4800 views.

Worship began at 10:30 to accommodate families who participate in Godly Play at 9:30. To achieve a brief service, respecting people's pandemic nervousness and our protocols, I created a fresh liturgy which is closer in format to our videos than pre-pandemic Sunday mornings. The new bulletin design has a photo wash with a printed prayer. Carefully, we increased participation. Each addition is a celebration: anthems, readers, candle lighters, children's story time, congregational singing and yes - announcements! Offering is presented - giving is a spiritual practice - but the plate is not circulated. About 50 people watch the livestreams or access the video later each week. We acknowledge the current pastoral need for silent prayer. Weekly land acknowledgments continue. Susan and Tyson have been diligent, encouraging, and imaginative.

Worship takes us out of ourselves with inspiration and the transcendence of the Divine - and bring us into ourselves with comfort and connection. Our personal experiences, common life, and world concerns are held in a crucible of biblical exegesis and liturgy. The seasonal calendar which I prepare brings a balance in themes as well as tone.

The Lent theme was Welcome Home! We looked at the Prodigal Son and biblical passages that read “Behold! I Do a New Thing”. Paul Preston contributed a poem “At Home”. We held a candle lighting liturgy for those we lost during covid.

*Home* was the title I chose for the devotional booklet I wrote for Holy Week. It was mailed to everyone, bringing by photo and word some of the spiritual home themes that informed our return to in-person in-sanctuary worship. On Maundy Thursday Tyson and I led a music and labyrinth walk with communion. It was integrated online. Good Friday the choir was part of worship. Easter morning Denise led sunrise worship with Katharine Moore and Rev. Blaine Gregg of Spirit of Hope in Emily Murphy Park; this joint service is a long-standing practice. In the sanctuary service the choir sang Elaine Hagenburg’s “You Do Not Walk Alone” and we celebrated having choir anthems again! Iced tea was served on the lawn. Outdoor beverages continued till mid-autumn.

Susan Farrell, Rev. Neil Glover, and I put together a Pentecost video for Aberfeldy Scotland and St. Paul’s. Our joint online viewership includes individuals for whom coming to church is not a possibility and for whom our outreach beyond sanctuary services is inspirational.

I wrote a spring worship calendar that offered some early church stories that encourage our own common life; a choir service; and opportunity to celebrate the congregation’s 30 years with Denise and bless her into retirement. On May 29 I was honoured to bring my personal and collegial remarks about Denise’s retirement.

In the summer we shared Sunday worship with Riverbend United. The experience gave us opportunity to deepen relationships with the congregation that was founded by St. Paul’s in 1980. I was supervising pastor while their minister, Rev. Valerie Oden, was on sabbatical which meant attending their Board meetings.

*Piecing it Together* is the theme directing 2022-2023. Imagine a jigsaw puzzle. We can think theologically about how “It All Fits” - belonging, God’s beloved community, the communion of saints, new possibilities, personal changes - while ensuring people aren’t pressed into a space where they don’t wish to fit. *Piecing it Together* helped with stewardship, returns-after-quarantine, adult study and more - and of course *Piecing it Together* sounds like property and thoughtful building use. You may have noticed the puzzle in the Friendship Room: Anna Constantin made it from a picture of our chancel. People put it together and take it apart and put it together again. It is symbolic of what we are doing: we are piecing it together.

A doorway is the second image we used, coming together again as an intentional and beloved community. Lance Love created a braced door frame. We used it initially for the covenant with Anna Constantin. Then Sunday by Sunday people stepped through it and said, “Here is a threshold I had to cross”, or “Here is a door that was opened for me and someone reached out and guided me through.” They shared announcements, changes in their lives, or notable thresholds they couldn’t share during the pandemic. This practice integrated our yearning for a common life into worship. Worship is both a private and a communal experience.

Autumn worship services related to St. Paul's covenant with Rev. Anna Constantin; World Communion Sunday; global indigenous relations; a walk to Kihciy Askiy; Thanksgiving; the doctrine of discovery with its fundamental shaping of climate crisis, indigenous suppression, and slavery; creation "Consider the apples"; Congregational Connexions/Step-Up; Love and All Saints candle lighting; memory and Remembrance Day. I connected World Council of Churches initiatives to our local concerns. The overall theme was "Piecing it together".

Christmas Eve there was lots of participation: Anna led a poignant service at 4pm with children in the chancel; at 8pm I welcomed five readers and two guest musicians. Worship Christmas Day, Sunday, was in video format partly because it was requested that we offer more videos and partly because the video accommodated the number of people who said they would prefer having Christmas morning at home. The Worship Committee was diligent in these decisions. I am grateful to Susan Farrell for her expertise in publishing the video, Tyson Kerr for the music he recorded, the choir for their contribution, Karin Stewart for telling a story, Anna Constantin for reading scripture, and the many members of the congregation whom I recorded waving and calling out "Merry Christmas!" to one another.

I want to highlight Susan Farrell's ingenious music choices as she brings anthems that musically piece it together, layering in canons and blending familiar tunes. Tyson makes piano allusions that catch our attention; he also offers careful leadership with our sound tech team. Anna has brought imagination, appreciative inquiry, Celtic sensibilities, and a gentle, intelligent presence to preaching and worship planning. We are piecing it together.

Denise and I conducted three baptisms in the spring. Anna and I conducted two in Advent. With regard to baptisms I wish to point out a particular pandemic peculiarity: in the spring baptisms there was: one pandemic baby now a toddler; one child from the Before Times; one baby whose family had never before been in the church building - an online connection.

Church brings order when many are feeling chaos, and uplifting messages when many are despondent. We recognize that bringing hope and lifting spirits is a significant part of worship. The weekly practice of prayer, song, and scripture enhances our daily round.

## **Pastoral Care**

Pastoral care is a privilege and a responsibility. I visited this year increasingly again in hospitals and recovery facilities, in homes, workplaces and coffee shops, and outdoors in the fresh air. I continue with many by telephone and zoom. My study is a comfortable and private room for pastoral conversations and prayer. I have been writing letters of reference for university programs, trade schools, professional advancement, housing, and citizenship.

Pastoral care calls range across urgent issues, vocational and personal identity questions, illness and health, friendships, marriage, divorce, children and older dependents, spirituality, powers, theological questions, loneliness, grief, prison, and my regular visiting through the congregation.

Families have been able to join together for memorial services and burials which they were not able to observe when people could not travel or were necessarily cautious about being part of a group. So



it is that I have the privilege of being with families as we acknowledge deaths and offer our faith and the care of the church. On our second Sunday back in the building and on October 30, close to All Saints' Day, we remembered persons who have died as we engaged liturgies with candles.

## **Congregational Life, Study Groups, Outreach, Governance**

*Connexions* were made and people were asked to *Step Up* their support in a robust initiative for which Donna Stickland, Jim Stewart, Darren Nichols, and I prepared theme, material, and process. The Board requested this stewardship visitation to make our way to a regularly a balanced budget. As leadership rotated Donna and I worked with Marianne Scott, Heather Peden, and Coleen Falk. I put considerable time and energy into preparations for our financial campaign and the visits many of you made. These relationships - your visits - are essential, and honest conversations about our resources and our intentions are critical. Details are in the Connexion/Step-Up Report.

Zoom coffee stopped when re-entry began. Zoom coffee was important and I want to thank Chris Peet, Coleen Falk, and Pat Greenways who welcomed people every Sunday and kept the coffee hour companionship going.

Since re-entry I have kept the practice of being in touch with the congregation with a weekly Tuesday Blessing email. It is an inspiration, an item of congregational news, a study resource, or a thematic reflection - and a connection. In April I suggested to Anna Benowicz that she resume the announcement-style of email that had long been the part of the Office Administrator's role. It was a way to get closer to business as usual. Karin Stewart and Lucie Gamache hosted a book exchange over several weeks, another congregational connector. As we rose from the depth of pandemic we gathered in various new or familiar ways; connecting, which was my large concern these last two years, now happens more robustly.

Mondays during Lent I gathered a group on zoom to consider *Lesser Evils: Daily Reflections on Seeking Wisdom*, edited by Alydia Smith. Full disclosure: I wrote one of the backcover endorsements. It was the 2022 Lenten book published by the United Church.

I led a few Day5 events including an introduction and follow-up to the World Council of Churches, a labyrinth evening, and Solstice. I offered the latter two as integrated spiritual experiences, which is to say in-person and online together. I introduced the labyrinth and its use to a group in person. We are piecing it together.

Anna Benowicz and I designed and wrote congregational Christmas cards. I asked a variety of members to sign them. Everyone signed each card - over 300! Recipients were greeted and cared for by members of the community as well as me.

Your Senior Minister is a member of the Trustees and I was part of those meetings and consultations. I attended seasonal meetings of the Worship Committee and convened weekly staff meetings. With Denise's retirement I offered to be the ministerial connection with the Social Justice Committee. St. Paul's offers support in a variety of ways to newcomers, some of whom are refugees. We have damage deposit coverage for persons finding new rental units, as well as grocery cards. I wrote

letters with regard to refugee status and permanent residency and am thrilled about our successful refugee applications.

Piecing it together: that is what we are doing. From stewardship visitations to who-will-make-Sunday-morning-coffee, from covid protocols to figuring out an integrated zoom-in-person Board meeting, from reconnecting with church friends to choir practice, we are *piecing it together*. This theme acknowledges that what we are putting together is not exactly what we had in the past.

## **Wider Church and Neighbourhood**

St. Paul's is not only nestled in a neighbourhood, but a member of it. Dawn Macdonald and Dave Carr gave neighbours and commuters along 76 Avenue a Christmas gift when they set up the outdoor nativity scene. Together with Shirley Perry I brought good wishes from St. Paul's to the Belgravia Music in the Arts Park. We are on the Belgravia defibrillator list. I'm very glad we posted a QR code at the front door. Many people comfortably use QR codes in restaurants; in a similar manner our QR code brings our whole website into their phone. It was Jim Stewart's idea and Paul Preston made it happen.

Your church neighbourhood now features in lectures at the Atlantic School of Theology. Professor Rob Fennell asked me to record four classes. Rather than a podium, I chose to record around the city and inside St. Paul's in thematic places. You experienced a similar thing in my worship videos. Creation, Christology, Sin and Redemption, and Trinity came from Keillor Point, the LRT, our traffic circle, and my bookshelves. I was able to employ Susan Farrell who graciously put the all the pieces of the videos together.

Regionally, Clare Irwin and I completed many years of work with the Property and New Church Development Council. This Alberta Society serves United Church investments and building projects across the province.

I recorded a podcast for the Office of Vocation with Reverends Karen Medland and Andrew Richardson.

The 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches met in Karlsruhe Germany in the late summer, a remarkable witness to the prophetic global church becoming a radically inclusive beloved community. We are united in the love of God, the peace of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Those words are countercultural. I was one of four United Church delegates in a 4000-person gathering representing 352 churches and 580 million Christians. I was rapporteur for one of the 23 Ecumenical Conversations, *Mission Reimagined: Transforming Disciples Challenging Empire*. This work was informed by indigenous ministers who are Sami and Aotearoan. The report I wrote was referred to the Central Committee to inform priorities. My Bible study group was in English and International Sign. The Assembly theme *Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity* was poignant in the context of global pandemic, war in Ukraine, rugged relationships with the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) which is an active member, and commitments to the thriving of indigenous persons and communities, and the full participation of people who live with disabilities.

The clarion call, though, was to the church's roles of hope and action in the face of ecological destruction and climate crisis. Can we possibly do enough?

I made WCC reports and presentations at Day5 and in Sunday worship as well as to Northern Spirit Region and the General Council.

I have been encouraging the generativity of younger colleagues by redirecting requests for writing, lectures, and international church work. As well, I serve the Scholarships and Academic Awards Committee for the denomination and the *Touchstone Journal* Board. The Reverends Britt Aerhart, Blaine Gregg, and I hosted a luncheon at the Muttart for United Church clergy in our Region; we hadn't been together in-person since the inaugural Regional Council meeting in May 2019.

## **Annual Study Leave and Writing**

Study is one of the joys of ministry. The United Church of Canada provides sabbaticals as study and rest time, and as opportunity for work of a different kind. 2020 would have been a sabbatical summer for me: enough said. You will find notes about a Clergy Symposium, *Then Let Us Sing!* and other activities in the Sabbatical Report elsewhere in this Annual Report.

## **Conclusion**

My energies with the congregation were finely focused in 2022: worship leadership; re-entry; stewardship and the Connexions/StepUp campaign; pastoral care.

I want to commend your Board on their leadership, foresight, faithful imagination, and patience. Each effort is noticed. I bring thanks to the members of the Ministry and Personnel Committee who are attentive to the nuances of congregational life, and especially to my liaison, Barbara Ward.

We mourn Anna Benowicz, our Church Administrator, who died in February 2023. She greeted you in the building and held space for you in the long period of pandemic. She enhanced who we are as beloved community. I worked closely with her and miss her more than words can say.

This congregation shines with leadership, ideas, ingenuity, commitment, compassion, and humour. I respect the trust you invest in me. It is truly a pleasure to minister with and among you.

It was January 2023, beyond the scope of this report, when I approached Ministry and Personnel and the Board with my intention to retire in November 2023. I will miss you deeply. And I will have much more to say about that in next year's Annual Report.

Thank you for reading this report.

Many blessings to you all.  
Respectfully submitted,  
Catherine Faith MacLean (Rev. Dr.)

**Sabbatical Report 2020-2022**  
**Rev Dr Catherine Faith MacLean**

In 2019 and 2015 I enjoyed robust sabbaticals. There was study, writing, conferences, presentations I made, rest, travel, family time: I returned to St. Paul's in fine form. I appreciate those sabbaticals and I am glad of this recent one as well.

Pandemic-modified sabbatical was a bird of a different sort.

I wrote to both the St. Paul's Board Executive and the Office of Vocation twice:

Late in the spring of 2020 I suggested to the Ministry and Personnel Committee that it would be helpful to provide continuity - with me present to the congregation - for a good part of the summer of pandemic (the summer of pandemic! Remember, we thought it might last as long as the summer.) The reassurance of continuity was more important than carrying on with my sabbatical plans. We modified the sabbatical, curtailing the weeks for 2020 with an intention to carry on in 2021.

In January 2021 I wrote the second letter. It outlined a further modification, postponing some of the summer 2021 weeks until a third summer, 2022. The reason was Denise had intentions for a sabbatical in 2021 and I didn't want to get in her way.

In the end, this pandemic-modified sabbatical stretched over three summers: 2020, 2021, and 2022. We decided to call it Annual Study Leave because it didn't fit the all-at-once experience that defines sabbatical. It meant three summers of extra weeks away from the congregation, rather than one full length sabbatical. It is not a sabbatical model for regular circumstances, but I am convinced we made good decisions.

The initial sabbatical was well planned. I set up St. Paul's pastoral coverage with Reverends Don Koots, Valerie Oden (Riverbend UC), and Linda McLaren (Garneau UC) as well as Denise, and a roster of inspiring Sunday worship leadership.

My sabbatical plan was:

April 26-May 4	Sing2025 meeting, Toronto
May	prepare <i>Saints, Soldiers, &amp; Angels</i> webinars
May 15-17	American Academy of Religion & Society of Biblical Literature Pacific Northwest meeting at St. Joseph's College U of A
May 31 – June 3	Canadian Theological Society, Congress of the Humanities & Social Sciences at University of Western Ontario, London
June 4-7	reVITALize, London
June 10-17	prepare reVITALize 2021 Halifax
June 20-July 20	cottage time
August	prepare <i>Holy Spirit</i> presentation prepare for return and the autumn programs

Over the three summers I accomplished those items and more.

Sing2025, the upcoming United Church hymn resource, got off the ground and I chair the Education, Justice, and Ethos (EJE) subcommittee. EJE wrote a Theo-ethical Framework for the resource. The Theo-ethical Framework is ***why we'll sing what we sing when we sing a new song***. It informed both what kind of music the Music Curation subcommittee would seek and how they would evaluate the submissions. EJE published two further documents: *Living with Respect: A Theology of Copyright*, and *Statement Regarding Sexual Misconduct*. The latter explains why we have regrettably had to remove some pieces from familiar hymnody, and how we will say *no* in future. The Sing2025 project includes digitization of our three current hymnals: *Voices United*, *More Voices*, and *Nos Voix Unies*. Those books will continue to be available. The new collection is named *Then Let Us Sing!* It will be available digitally in 2024 and in print copy in 2025. There will be a sampler this autumn. St. Paul's is one of the selected congregations and Susan Farrell will lead our evaluation of the sample pieces.

The Saints, Soldiers, and Angels webinars, prepared with my *Preaching the Big Questions* writing colleague Rev Dr John Young, were presented online through United-in-Learning and I brought them to Day5.

The American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature gatherings did not happen as planned. reVITALize London 2020 did not happen. reVITALize Halifax was postponed twice and will happen in June of 2023. The Canadian Theological Society went online and I attended each summer – on my verandah. I am so very glad that the year of my presidency was an in-person year! (In 2019 we met at the University of British Columbia.)

Some things adapted, some things were canceled, and some new sabbatical opportunities arose:

I participated online at the Festival of Homiletics and led a related conversation for the Atlantic School of the Theology. The Holy Spirit presentation was postponed twice, and finally happened as An Intercultural Adventure Seminar at Edmonton Korean United Church in October 2022.

After the 2020 attacks in Portapique Nova Scotia, John Young and I were asked to lead a United-in-Learning webinar for ministers, bringing theology and preaching to the tragedies: no easy or trite answers of course, but significant opportunity to think through what solid pastoral leadership is. In subsequent months we presented webinars on death, divides, forgiveness, and resurrection. I presented them all at Day5 too, with the exception of resurrection: that one is coming up this spring.

I gave a covid sermon you watched to editors who requested material for a book about preaching in each decade of the United Church's life. It will be published for the denominational centennial in 2025.

First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council (Newfoundland) invited me to lead a Clergy Symposium to inspire ministers, post-pandemic. That event got postponed twice too! I invited Diane Strickland, an ordained minister who is a traumatologist, to lead with me in June 2022. My work on pastoral ministry, preaching, and theology connected nicely with her work on trauma-informed ministry.

Last June I finally got back to the seaside cottage. Because of hurricanes great chunks of granite, half the size of my car, were installed to shore up the waterfront. The beach was irrevocably changed because of these unclimbable, forbiddingly jagged, rock barriers. It was symbolic of the many people,

places, and experiences shut down through the pandemic. And those huge rocks are protection for the future, too. They shielded the cottage roads from Hurricane Fiona which would arrive two months later, keeping the beachfront from washing away. The beach is permanently changed - and saved - because someone had the wisdom, skill, and resources to look to the future.

This pandemic-modified sabbatical was like those rocks. It protected my energies. It gave me time, apart from pastoral responsibilities, to consult with colleagues whom I trust about how we minister in these changing circumstances. It gave me opportunity for work of a different kind: work I enjoyed, and work that brought benefit to the wider church and fresh material to St. Paul's.

I am deeply grateful for this sabbatical, the support of the congregation and Board of St. Paul's, the kindness and careful considerations of the Ministry and Personnel Committee, and the attention to nuance that Barbara Ward brings to that committee. Thank you.

## **Rev. Anna Constantin, M.Div. B.Ed.**

Minister of Faith Formation

For everything there is a season,  
and a time for every matter under heaven.  
*Ecclesiastes 3*

It has been such an honour to join you for this season at St Paul's. Since September we have been involved in many "matters" with coming together in person, hybrid gatherings, zoom conversations, texts and phone calls. It has been a time to let go and say goodbye and to open ourselves to the spirit in how we are called to be community together. It has not always been easy as we tried to see how the aspects of community and God's call to us fit together.

It has been a season of reconnecting and integrating what has transpired the last while due to the ramifications of Covid. It has been a season of patience as we have identified the tension and confusion of finding a new way through what almost looks familiar and yet is a new way of coming together in community. It has been a season of thresholds and gratitude and grief and all the feelings in between and remembering that the holy is present in it all.

It has been a season of continuing my studies as a graduate Anam Cara (soul friend) apprentice with the Sacred Art of Living Centre in Bend, Oregon. This study focuses on Celtic Christianity, Ecotheology, Enneagram, walking with folks during transition times in their lives and holding space for people to honour their spirits.

It has been a season of supporting the Northern Spirit Region through the Ministry Support Committee, as well as liaison work with the congregations of Bon Accord, Coronado, Morinville and Namao as they came together to search for a minister.

It has also been a season of gratitude! In this season at St Paul's, it has been a delight to work with Jack, Lucie, Catherine and all the fine presenters of Day 5! Rondy's insight and commitment to children and youth ministry at St Paul's has been a great asset as we have created times and spaces for young people to be together on Sunday mornings, on Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons and through the wonder of zoom and texts! It has been a joy to get to know the families at St Paul's and play games, eat fun food, and have discussions of faith together to help us to experience the holy in the season we are in.

I have been grateful for the music and thoughtful care placed in worship by talented and creative Susan and Tyson and for the AV/Technically talented Logan, Samantha and Kate. I give thanks for all who share flowers and beauty and participate in worship to make it a living expression of God's love in community. It has been a wonderful season to work with the Board and M&P committee (especially my rep Helen) and all who share their time at St Paul's. It is truly a joy and an honour to minister and collaborate with Catherine. I will be forever grateful for my time with Anna with her hospitality, humour and wisdom and gracious patience in sharing resources, documents and many questions.

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. As we embrace the time of 2023, may we be guided by hope, community, and God's grace in the seasons ahead.

Blessings,  
Rev Anna

## **Rondy Kyle, Children's Ministry Coordinator**

This last year has been one of transition and discovery about what it means to be church as we move back into in-person worship and community.

We continued doing church school using zoom January through June and also in September. In October we transitioned to in-person Godly Play with two zoom Sundays a month. Quite quickly, we returned to zoom every Sunday so that families could still join Godly Play even if they weren't able to be physically at church on Sunday morning due to illness, personal comfort levels or any other reason. We meet by zoom before church on Sunday mornings, which is why you might see me popping into worship right at 10:30. This means telling the story two times, once online and once with children in person.

We were only in the renovated building a short time before Covid moved us online, and for young children, two and a half years is a very long time. It's been delightful to see our building through their eyes as they rediscover and remember our church home. The children love the labyrinth. We usually spend 5-10 minutes moving through the labyrinth in ways that are right for each person. It helps children calm down, make transitions and focus.

If you are sitting in the pews or joining worship from home, you may not see many children but know that families are joining in a variety of ways, including by zoom, or going straight downstairs instead of being in worship. There have been Sundays when I've thought there were no children, only to discover them waiting for me at the labyrinth or with the youth. Some Sundays, we join with the youth after they've had a chance to explore the boxes Anna leaves for them on the Sundays that she is at Grace United. We've also joined with Anna and the youth for decorating cupcakes, pizza after church, and for a spaghetti meal with families.

We didn't offer an in-person Church in the Woods camp last summer. This was in large part because of staffing with Denise retiring at the end of June and Rev. Anna not starting until September. Instead, we sent out Church in the Woods at-home options for families, similar to what we did in 2020 and 2021. (We will be doing an in-person camp the first week of July 2023, with details to come.)

In December, we sent out a Christmas 'sensory box' with elements of the story to feel while remembering the story. The pageant was held at St. Paul's on December 18th and there was an early service for families at 4pm on Christmas Eve.

We continue to gather in various ways, to welcome new and returning families, and to share gratitude for all the ways we are a community of faith. Know that we are here and know that you are welcome.

Rondy Kyle  
Children's Ministry Coordinator



## Susan Farrell, Music Director

What a year! In 2022, we rode the many waves and made as much beautiful music as possible, both in person and via video.

In early 2022, we began a series of videos on Delight, inspired by a book called *The Power of Fun* by Catherine Price. We were pleased to feature Brandon Wint's piece *My Body is a Poem* funded by the Edmonton Heritage Council.

During Lent, we were able to restart services in the St. Paul's building - what a joy to slowly and carefully ease back into seeing each other in person each week! Our theme in coming back to the building was 'Lead Us Safely Home', and we sang the piece of the same name by Jim Manley as well as Tyson's original piece "Together We're Home".

We continued our curated videos throughout the transition back to in-person services and it was a busy time! My personal favourite was our PIE Day video, featuring Catherine baking in the Scott Family Kitchen. So many pie puns! We made sure to include the hymn "Draw the Circle Wide", for many reasons, including the circular shape of the pastry.

For our Easter services, we featured anthems from the choir for the first time in many months. Our simplified Lenten services didn't include choir anthems yet, so it was nice to feature the choir by the time Easter came around. Our covid safety rules discouraged the congregation from singing, so the choir's role proved more important than ever in providing the singing element to our services! For our Easter Sunday service, the choir sang a beautiful anthem called "You Do Not Walk Alone" by Elaine Hagenburg and were joined by guests Paul Richey on tin whistle and Toscha Turner on double bass.

As the season continued, we sang a Choral Amen at the end of each spring service. We often get requests for a Choral Amen, so this seemed like a good time to include it for a while. We love hymn requests - please keep them coming! Around the time of the congregation being encouraged to sing again, the choir sang the anthem "There Has to Be a Song" by Andrea Ramsey. The choir also led the service on May 29, which included Denise Davis-Taylor's favourite hymns and anthems, including "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms". Catherine added her own reflections on Denise's retirement and the choir gave her a fitting send-off.

For Pentecost, I put together a video for Catherine and Neil Glover from Aberfeldy, Scotland - a very satisfying project with some gorgeous visuals from Aberfeldy and Edmonton.

During the summer, we shared services with Riverbend United, which meant sharing musical leadership with our friend Sherry Tessier who is now the music director at Riverbend. The connections between the two congregations will hopefully continue to grow over the next few years.

This fall, it was a huge pleasure to reconnect with many members of the St. Paul's Choir in person! We have built slowly but surely, building up the choir's roster and were able to program more and more anthems as the weeks went on. Over the season, we sang "Love is Love is Love is Love" by

Abbie Betinis, based on the chords from Pachelbel's famous Canon. From there, we continued to do several different arrangements which included the chord progression from this canon – "Amazing Grace", "Candlelight Christmas Canon", and "The First Noel". This canon features a pleasantly recognizable series of chords and added some continuity to the anthems. We also sang two Mozart Canons and a round to the tune of "By the Waters of Babylon" called "Shalom Pacem Peace, The Storm is Passing Over" was another favourite of the choir this fall - we programmed it for a week when we had the maximum number of choir members available to sing. We'll likely bring it back again in spring 2023!

Nicole Pernal, violinist, joined us for our choir service on December 11 and we loved having her musicality and skill as part of that service. Lynn Sutankayo was a welcome and skillful vocal soloist on November 13, as well! Thanks Lynn!

Throughout this year, I have been incredibly appreciative of getting to work with Tyson Kerr. His collaborative attitude and constant hard work benefit every service he is a part of - not to mention his aptitude with the sound system and dealing with any and all hiccups with the live streaming technology.

You may know that I am also the Artistic Director of the Braille Tones (Edmonton's choir for individuals with disabilities). We have been rehearsing in the Foote auditorium on Saturday mornings for the past 2 years and I wanted to mention how much we love the open, airy, bright space for our rehearsals. We have hosted a few concerts down there as well, including two for kids *The Cat Came Back* in February 2020 and *The Kids' Menu* in February 2023), and the setting was ideal. Thanks again to the legacy project for making the space so welcoming for community groups like ours!

Of course, I need to mention how much I love working with the staff at St. Paul's. There is never a lack of inspiration or energy at our staff meetings!

And finally, I extend my gratitude to the St. Paul's congregation for trusting our leadership and cheering us on as we continue to venture into new worship territories.

Steady earth, beneath  
It's always been there for me  
And ahead, ahead I'll be goin'  
I'm undeniably happier when you're with me,  
so Together, Together We're Home.

- Tyson Kerr, *Together We're Home*

Yours truly,  
Susan

# Connexion Strategic Planning

## Connexion Strategic Planning Document 2023-24 – Draft for Discussion

Reviewed by the Board, to be officially approved at the March 14th Board meeting

### St. Paul's United Church February 2023

*Vision:* We will be a spiritual home where: God and Jesus Christ are celebrated, diversity is embraced, and people are nurtured so that we can serve others.

*Mission:* We will provide services, programs, and opportunities to build, strengthen and enrich our faith so that we can better serve our families, our communities and our world.

*Statement of Affirmation:* St. Paul's United Church is an Affirming congregation within the United Church of Canada. As such, we reach out with love and acceptance to all those who come through our doors regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, racial or ethnic background, differing abilities, economic or cultural background.

### St. Paul's Proposed Key Priorities – February 2023

#### Community Building - Inside and Out

**St. Paul's is an affirming, open, and welcoming community of faith that nurtures relationships with one another. We reach out to connect and engage with our local community on social and social justice initiatives.**

#### *Social Justice Committee:*

1. Racecourse Community School
  - fundraising for orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia including Just One World participation (via the Annet's Place crew) – *ongoing*
  - potentially a dinner fundraiser in the Foote Auditorium – *October*
2. Garneau Strathcona Food Security
  - fundraising and logistical support – *ongoing*
  - participation in food collection and distribution – *monthly*
3. Rainbow Refugees
  - fundraising through congregational financial and in-kind donations - *ongoing*
  - logistical support including regular assistance with food as well as clothing (especially in winter) and household items - *weekly*
  - invitations made to (SPAN St. Paul's and Newcomers) to attend St. Paul's social and spiritual activities – *ongoing*
4. Affirm Commitment

- planning of educational events and participation in community events eg. PIE Auction for Affirm  $\pi$  Day, connect with Gary Simpson from MacDougall, entry into Pride Parade, walk to Pride Corner on Whyte Avenue with other churches – *ongoing*
- 5. Truth and Reconciliation
  - planning of educational events and participation in community events eg. One or two events to do with **kihcihkaw askî**, Red Dress Sunday, Blanket Ceremony
- 6. Various local, ongoing, annual outreach initiatives
  - Bissell luncheon, White Gift Sunday, No Room in the Inn

### ***Ministry and Personnel Committee***

1. Make available to the congregation practices and procedures regarding the ongoing staff positions.

## **Worship and Music**

**St. Paul's provides a variety of forms of worship and special services virtually and in-person, and conducts weddings and funerals. We celebrate and explore the gift of music in all worship events.**

### ***Worship Committee***

1. Continue collaboration with Catherine and Susan to provide challenging and meaningful celebrations.
2. Review of our celebrations and what is meaningful to the various demographics. What is working and what is not working for our children and teens, our young adults, our young families, middle aged adults and our elders.
3. Figure meaningful and appropriate protocols for serving communion post-pandemic isolation and with hybrid attendance; introducing and practicing them with a gradual return to familiar practices.
4. Discuss themes for worship that focus congregational life, speak to personal lives and faith, and engage the wider world (specifically this spring: eco-theology).
5. Keep front of mind our Affirming and Reconciliation commitments and how they are part of the worship experience of St. Paul's.

## **Programs and Development**

**With a focus on young families and children, youth and young adults, St. Paul's provides a variety of programs virtually and in-person to support all age groups as we question, learn and grow in faith.**

### ***Spiritual Nurture Committee***

1. Work with Anna C. and Rondy to gain a sense of the number of children, youth and new adult members returning to our church and church programs
2. Express appreciation of social, cultural, religious, sexual and other forms of diversity. In conjunction with Social Justice offer at least one event - *annually*

*See - Social Justice Committee- above*

## **Pastoral and Congregational Care**

**St. Paul's endeavours to reach out with care and concern to support and sustain people through life's events and to keep our faith community connected.**

### ***Membership and Congregational Care Committee***

1. To develop an ongoing program of regular contact with St. Paul's members who may be isolated (small meetings at residences, phone call program). *March 31 and ongoing*
2. To support others to become part of visiting program through a workshop sharing event. *April*
3. To continue with the Prayer Shawl ministry - *ongoing*
4. To continue to promote connections between people who come to St. Paul's (name tags, small gatherings, photo directory). To stabilize the Welcomers program through increasing team members and providing written instructions. *March 31 and ongoing*
5. To facilitate others in organizing events including congregational and intergenerational events. *Ongoing*

## **Community Outreach and the Wider Church**

**St. Paul's endeavours to put our faith into action in concert with our local community, and we participate and engage in wider church initiatives and interests.**

### ***Spiritual Nurture Committee***

1. Create opportunities within and beyond St. Paul's for comment and reflection on significant moral and political issue of the day, from a Christcentric perspective.
  - Identify key thematic issues for the coming year – April 30, 2023

*See – Social Justice Committee - above*

## **St. Paul's Underlying Essentials – February 2023**

### **Good Governance**

- Board, committee, special projects structures
- Policy that defines roles, responsibilities, processes and authorities
- Good data information systems

### **Qualified Staff and Engaged Leadership**

- Clear work descriptions for staff positions
- Staff have education and experience to fulfil work requirements
- Active participation on the Board, committees, special projects & activities

### ***Ministry and Personnel Committee:***

Per the Ministry and Personnel Manual which states that all congregations must have a Ministry and Personnel Committee, the following responsibilities will be carried out:

- Being available for consultation and support for matters involving the church staff
- Overseeing the relationship of the church staff to each other and to people in the congregation
- Regularly reviewing the working conditions, responsibilities, and compensation of all church staff
- Making any recommendations needed as a result of these reviews to the governing body
- Revising position descriptions of church staff as needed
- Conducting annual performance reviews of the church staff
- Ensuring church staff make use of opportunities for continuing education that they have been given
- Maintaining close contact with the Regional Council Pastoral Relations Committee or equivalent

### ***Executive, Membership, and Recruitment Committees and volunteers:***

- Active participation on the Board, committees, special projects & activities
- Ongoing succession planning

### ***Worship Committee***

Worship is a variety of experiences and celebrations in which the Holy uplifts, transforms, and comforts us. St. Paul's is a community who receives God's grace – and brings its best gifts to crafting opportunities for the communication of that grace: through means intellectual, intuitive and sensate, and by the talents and aspirations of congregational members as well as ministers and musicians.

## **Financial Stability & Viability**

- Enough revenue to cover costs
- Good budget management, cost control and reporting
- Funds to do the things we would like to do
- Fulfil legal obligations
- Investment funds are effectively managed

### ***Finance Committee:***

1. Fulfil legal financial obligations for St. Paul's in order to retain the church's charitable status

- Issue charitable tax donation receipts – *January 31, 2023*
  - File GST return – *January 15 and July 15, 2023*
  - File WCB annual return – *February 28, 2023*
  - File Annual Charity Return – *June 30, 2023*
  - Input financial information to annual church statistics – *by March 15, 2023*
  - Coordinate the annual review of church financial records, annually, first quarter
  - Report annually at the ACM on the state of congregational finances – *February 2023*
2. Regularly monitor revenues and expenses of church operations and initiatives to:
    - Ensure adequate cash to meet current and upcoming requirements – *ongoing*
    - Report to the Board and committees on the status of their budgets and expenditures by the *7<sup>th</sup> of each month*
    - Early alert to possible financial issues or concerns – *ongoing*
    - Maintain orderly and accurate documentation of all payments and revenue related to the church – *ongoing*
    - Participate in the Investment Committee to responsibly and strategically manage long term financial assets
  3. Ensure robust and financial and internal control systems as follows:
    - Knowledge of ADP payroll systems – *ongoing*
    - Regularly review procedures for management and control of cash and cheques on church premises – *annually and as required*
    - Establish and maintain banking arrangements for church accounts and financial assets
  4. Develop the annual 2023 church operating budget:
    - Prepare the 2023 budget plan document for distribution to committee chairs – early November 2022
    - Develop the first draft of 2023 budget – mid December 2022
    - Present 2023 budget to Board for discussion – mid January 2023
    - Budget presented to ACM for congregational approval – February 2023

## **Technology**

- Use of live stream, web site, social media, etc. to fulfil priorities
- Access to relevant technology tools & equipment
- Resources to support & manage technology platforms
- Technical platforms kept current and inviting

### ***Worship Committee***

1. Support Tyson in his care of the instruments and the sound equipment.

### ***Finance Committee***

1. Quickbooks, Powerchurch systems are updated as required – March 31, 2023

2. Support Office Administrator in calling professional technical support to resolve technical system issues for office related systems.
3. Support Office Administrator in planning and coordinating the need for new equipment (computers, printers, photocopier)

## Physical Assets

- Safe, clean and well-maintained building
- Equipment and tools needed are available
- Exterior property attractive and maintained

### **Property Committee:**

1. Maintain the exterior and interior of the church buildings:
  - Clear flat roofs of ice buildup and leaves – twice a year minimum
  - Change lights and thermostat batteries as required, ensure that all lighting equipment is in good working order
  - Paint second floor of McAllister Hall
  - Monitor waste disposal
  - Monitor sump pumps bi-annually – *due 2023*
  - Hire plumber to clean out drains and pipes from Nursery to outside biannually – *due 2023*
2. Maintain church grounds:
  - Ensure all sidewalks, steps, parking spaces are properly shovelled and de-iced – *fall thru spring*
  - Ensure lawns are mowed and maintained (leaves removed, weeding etc.) at a minimum weekly – *spring thru fall*
  - Ensure lawns, shrubs and flowers are trimmed, aerated, weeded, watered as necessary through *summer months*
  - Hire contractors and workers to look after some of the required tasks
3. Ensure that the church property is safe:
  - Check and certify that all fire extinguishers are in good working order and in proper placement - *monthly*
  - Ensure that cameras monitoring front door and parking lots are in good working order - *ongoing*
  - Ensure that the grounds are safe and free of garbage and used drug paraphernalia - *weekly*
4. Recruit and direct volunteers and contractors to conduct the required property maintenance tasks in a safe and responsible manner – *ongoing*
5. Monitor operating expenses per the 2023 Property budget to ensure no overspending – *monthly*
  - Comply with signing authority process, report to Board - *regularly*
6. Update long term Capital plan to identify and prioritize capital spending projects



- Present to Board - *annually*

***Legacy Committee:***

1. Ensure all new equipment installed in Legacy Project 2019 contract is maintained properly by installers including elevator, kitchen fan and makeup air unit, furnaces, hot water tank etc. - *quarterly*
2. Monitoring maintenance issues where necessary eg signage, flooring, lighting, painting – *ongoing*
3. Monitor elevator pit daily March – October, and twice weekly other months

## **Appendix to Connexions Planning Document**

### **Governance**

1. Review Governance Structure (Board, Committees, etc.) and Constitution, Terms of Reference for Trust Funds, etc (generally done every 10-15 years), *2025/2026*
2. Regular review of church operational policies to remain current eg. Wedding/Funeral Policy, Rental Policy, Financial Policies. *2025/2026*

Respectfully submitted,  
Coleen Falk, Heather Peden, Marianne Scott, Donna Stickland  
with Catherine MacLean

# Committee and Team Reports

## Ministry and Personnel Committee

As noted in last year's report, Denise was scheduled to retire from her position as Minister of Faith Formation at the end of June 2022. Shortly after last year's Congregational meeting the Board requested that M & P start the process of hiring someone on an interim basis while the congregation was determining the longer term Ministerial needs of St. Paul's.

With the assistance of Earl Reaburn and Stuart Jackson at the Northern Spirit Regional Council we were put in touch with Rev. Anna Constantin who was in a similar half time position at Grace United Church.

As everyone knows Anna joined the staff at St. Paul's on September 1, 2022 and is with us until June 30, 2023 as a half time Supply Appointment. Anna continues to work in a half time position with Grace United and so we share her with them.

It should be noted that unlike Denise, Anna is not involved with Faith Lift at the University of Alberta. We are very fortunate that Anna agreed to join our congregation during these times of change and the consensus is that everyone who has had interactions with her has been pleased and impressed. Thank you, Anna, for giving us your time and many talents.

The committee has not met in person during the past year and our meetings have taken place on zoom.

We are delighted that Dorothy Gulliver agreed to join our committee this year and she is the liaison for Rondy. Barbara Ward is liaison for Catherine. Helen Madill, initially for Denise, and then Anna C. Helen Lightfoot for Susan and Tyson.

On a very sad note, our Office Administrator, Anna Benowicz, died on February 20, 2023. She came to St. Paul's in the summer of 2017 and did an exceptional job running the office. She was a warm, funny and delightful person to talk to and she will be sadly missed. I am fortunate that as her liaison during the past year I had a chance to get to know her a little better.

M & P is starting the process of hiring a new person to fill this important position. We are fortunate that Donna Ross has agreed to work in the office while we are searching for a new Office Administrator.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Mullins, Chair  
Ministry and Personnel Committee

## Stewardship Committee

This position is currently vacant. Please go to the Connexion Strategic Planning report, which includes the information generally covered under Stewardship.

## Worship Committee

The Worship Committee has been working diligently, collaborating with Catherine and Susan to provide challenging and meaningful celebrations. More recently, we have been including collaborations with Anna, as well. During the coming year, we are planning to review what we have been doing with the intent of examining how well they have been meeting the needs, concerns and interests of the members of the congregation, from the children, youth and young adults to the middle aged and our elders. What is working for us and what is not working for us? During the last year we have explored meaningful and appropriate protocols for serving communion post pandemic and ways of enhancing the participation of congregants who attend in person and those who attend on-line. We are looking to a gradual return to familiar practices, with modifications where they might better meet the needs, concerns and interests. We are exploring themes for worship that focus our congregational life, speak to our personal lives and faith, whatever our age, with a view towards the wider community and the wider world. These explorations include eco-theology and our place in the natural world, keeping in mind our commitments to our indigenous brothers and sisters, keeping front of mind our Affirming commitments and other issues of justice (economic disparities, the treatment of the poor and marginalized). How can we make our celebrations meaningful and fruitful around these issues? How can we make our celebrations supportive of our daily lives in these and other areas?

Specific issues we have explored and are exploring:

- Ways of including members and visitors celebrating virtually; some Sundays, we have more than 50 people participating virtually.
- Dealing with the collection plate, when a significant portion of the community provides their offerings through PAR.
- Exploring ways for people to provide their feedback and commentaries on the services – in person and electronically. Ways of enhancing and making more active our virtual participants.
- Exploring with our young adults how we can make our celebrations more relevant and inviting for them.
- Ensuring that celebrations have leadership on days when Catherine and Anna are away/unavailable.
- Collaboration with our sister community, Riverbend United.
- Exploring ways of working with Kihciy Askiy to educate all of us about the Doctrine of Discovery, an understanding of the Land Acknowledgement and an understanding of the ancestors/communion of the saints.

Respectfully submitted

Paul Preston

Chair

## Spiritual Nurture

The Spiritual Nurture Committee offers St. Paul's congregation information on various topics related to theology, social justice, and self-improvement. The Committee organizes **Day 5** presentations each Thursday night between October and the end of April, except for two weeks around Christmas. The Committee also supports the church library, the **Godly Play** "Sunday School" for our young children and occasional spiritual projects and presentations for St. Paul's attendees.

**Day 5:** This program strives to present a wide variety of spiritually related or personal development topics that may appeal to the eclectic interests of our church family. Special emphasis has been placed this year on varied faith based topics such as hymn writing, looking at the Celtic year, "Prayers of the Cosmos" and a presentation on a World Council of Churches conference. Other topics have included: "Reflections on the Queen", "A Labyrinth Walk", "United Church Missionaries in China", "Biblical Story Telling", "Godly Play Story Telling", "Urban Peregrine Falcons" and "Hearing Loss and Aging." As happens every year, **Day 5** was able to utilize the skills of several members of the St. Paul's congregation including Amy Kaler, Chris Peet, Paul Preston, Kayleigh Cline, Dave Carr, Rondy Kyle, Anna Constantin and Catherine MacLean.

The numbers of attendees to **Day 5** varies from week to week depending on the topic, but attendance has ranged from 5 to 15 participants. All of our attendees and presenters have appeared on Zoom this past year. This technology has worked well and attendees have become very comfortable with this method of communication. As the congregation ages, many of our attendees feel more comfortable attending Zoom meetings on cold, dark evenings.

**Godly Play:** Led by Rondy Kyle, this program for children aged 3 to 12 incorporates innovative ways of teaching with active play to support learning about Bible stories and making connections with modern life. **Godly Play** is normally located in A Space Apart in the basement. The **Godly Play** group transitioned from Zoom to in-person presentations this year. Rondy will have more to say in her own report. Thanks to Rondy for all of her efforts to make **Godly Play** work for our children.

**The Church Library:** Our librarians, Karin Stewart and Lucie Gamache, worked to update the library in terms of adding new books and ensuring the books were appropriately coded. Many thanks to Lucie and Karin for keeping our library in good working order.

**Other Spiritual Nurture Topics:** Catherine MacLean is currently leading a several week Lenten series using a book titled *The Sonorous Desert*.

**In Closing:** The past year created some changes for our Spiritual Nurture Committee with the retirement of Denise Davis Taylor and the arrival of Anna Constantin. Lucie Gamache and I have really appreciated working with Rev. Constantin and found her creative ideas crucial in helping to ensure that there were several interesting new **Day 5** topics to fill up our Thursday night schedule. Thank you to both Lucie and Anna for their hard work and good nature.

Jack Jervis

## Membership and Congregational Care Committee

The mission of the Membership and Congregational Care committee is to care for, connect, and support the members of our faith community.

**Prayer Shawl Ministry:** This year we have been privileged to give 13 prayer shawls to members of our congregation.

**Christmas Gathering:** On December 4<sup>th</sup>, we had our first Christmas gathering with sixty people attending. We enjoyed a delicious lunch and then were entertained by the Moxy B Players presentation of *A Christmas Movie*.

**Welcomers and Hosts:** When we resumed in-person services in March, we arranged for hosts each Sunday. In September we returned to our plan of 5 Welcome Teams. The list of duties has been revised.

**Lawn Conversations:** We enjoyed our lawn conversations this summer and into the fall. Sometimes the group was small, other times it was larger, but the conversation was always interesting.

**Christmas Phone Calls:** Thank you to everyone who made a special call to bring Christmas greetings to our St Paul's family.

**Photo Directory:** Our photo directory is ready. We are especially grateful to Fernelle Fjerwold for heading up the project, to Paul Chan for taking many of the photos and to Anna Benowicz who did much of the layout and whose photos grace the covers.

Thank you to everyone who helped make St Paul's a caring place.

Members of the Membership Committee are Isabel Becking, Fernelle Fjerwold, Sandy Walker, Lorene Everett-Turner and Coleen Falk.

Respectfully submitted,  
Coleen Falk

## Finance Committee

The Finance Committee Report will be presented during the Annual Congregational Meeting, accompanying reports from the Treasurer.

**Committee members:** Heather Peden, Linda Breitreitz, Roy Townend, Kyle Townend, Marian Carmichael, Justin Wheler (Chair)

Sincerely,  
Justin Wheler

## Property Committee

	PROJECTS & ACTIONS	STATUS
1	10 Year Capital Plan Draft: projects - cost & timing estimates	Done 2023-02
2	Helped get water to area used by the Flower Committee near the Memorial Garden	Done in spring
3	Changed contract with Atco from variable pricing to fixed pricing to fixed pricing for power and natural gas (Encor Energy Plan) to reduce utility costs during inflationary times	Done 2022-09
4	Received quote for 2023 services from Highland Landscaping Ltd.	Done 2022-12
5	Hired a High School student to shovel snow (winter 2022-23)	Done 2022-09
6	Hired electrician to replace nonfunctioning light fixtures in sanctuary balcony area	Done 2022-09
7	Bob Miller & Dave Carr had fire extinguishers inspected/replenished	Done 2022-09
8	Bob Miller cleaned leaves and unplugged drains on flat roof above Friendship Room and inspected south flat roof and drains of McAlister Hall	Done 2022-10
9	Roof inspection with a drone (John Porter with his neighbour)	Done 2022-10
10	Provided input for the 2023 Property Committee portion of the Operating Budget to Heather Peden	Done Dec/Jan
11	Keep spending on Property items to a minimum during COVID	Ongoing

Respectfully submitted,  
 Dave Carr  
 Property Committee Chair

## Legacy Project

2022 was a year of monitoring the building, supervising maintenance and inspections of the elevator, furnaces, kitchen fan and hood etc. and managing a few updates to other areas in the church. Early in the year, the sanctuary mezzanine was reviewed with our architectural firm ACI, Catherine MacLean, Dave Carr and Marianne Scott regarding mezzanine safety requirements. Given that the mezzanine wall height is up to code except for 1 1/4" at the front of the mezzanine stairs it was agreed that nothing needed to be done. In the future if desired, the addition of 1 1/4" height, the width of the stairs, could easily be done by adding a painted strip of wood to match. ACI specified a paint colour for the railing. It was agreed that we do not want to add deterrents to viewing services and the sanctuary.

In the spring a number of holes were made on the exterior of the elevator shaft by a woodpecker. A stucco repair company was able to repair the structure in July.

The quarterly maintenance of the elevator was supervised and the condition of the elevator pit was monitored generally on a daily basis, particularly in the spring and summer. Only minor amounts of moisture were observed on the elevator pit floor in June, July and August. In November, elevator computer upgrades were installed and a five-year safety test was performed.

In the summer a carpenter was hired to install short railings on either side of the Foote Auditorium stage to ease climbing and descent of the stairs. He also reinstalled the railing from the choir room to the chancel so that it is safer to use. This work was done as a donation to the church.

In the fall, at the request of the Rental Committee, variable lighting levels were improved with the purchase of four lamps to enhance needs of renters in the Janet Bentley room. The Rental Committee also requested improvements to the Upper Hall due to concerns of renters and to increase the number of rentals. We worked with the Property Committee to choose paint colours for the hall and hallway. The colours were chosen to coordinate with colours in the lower level and the painting was completed by a number of volunteers in January 2023 under the coordination of the Property Committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marianne Scott  
Legacy Project Lead

## **Social Justice Committee**

Our Social Justice Committee has endeavoured to maintain our commitments during 2022-2023 as we recover and regroup following COVID. Our goal is to continue to promote Social Justice efforts at St Paul's and to collaborate with other churches in the area and the Belgravia Community League. We have chosen to concentrate on six main areas— **Racecourse Community School; Reconciliation and Indigenous Knowledge; Garneau Food Security; Support of Newcomers and Rainbow Refugees; Affirmation and Support of LGBTQIA2S+; and the Bissell Center.** We welcome any input from you and encourage any members with a passion for Social Justice, to join our committee. We continue to miss Tammy Irwin who was a pillar of our committee and Denise Davis Taylor who gave us support and encouragement. Our committee hosted a barbeque in Denise's honour. Thank you, Catherine MacLean, for stepping in as our ministerial support and Chris Peet for being our Reconciliation console.

Our committee would like to acknowledge and thank Terry Kaasa for her many years of diligent service to the Garneau Strathcona Food Security Program. Terry has retired and Heather Razaghi has graciously accepted the role of Coordinator.

Social Justice Committee Members: Gail Mannard-Carr, Clare Irwin, Terry Kaasa, Heather MacKenzie, Shirley Perry, Joselyn Proby, Heather Razaghi

Reconciliation Console: Chris Peet

Shirley Perry  
Social Justice Committee

## 1. Reconciliation and Indigenous Knowledge

We believe that our church should have ongoing planning of educational events and participation in community events related to our Truth & Reconciliation Commitment.

On October 2nd, 2022, Lewis Cardinal, who was assigned Project Manager of the **kihcihkaw askî** site (Sacred Earth Ceremonial Site) being developed in the North Saskatchewan River Valley, joined us at St Paul's. He attended service with us and then described his vision of having a natural setting in the Capital region that would serve as a unifying cultural site for Indigenous peoples. **kihcihkaw askî** will host spiritual ceremonies, cultural events, talking circles and sweat lodges, and facilitate intergenerational learning in an appropriately designed outdoor learning space. It was a beautiful fall day and after his informative talk, Cardinal led us on a walk along the Saskatchewan River to Whitemud Park where the **kihcihkaw askî** site is located. He gave us a tour of the site and ended the event with us all holding hands as he led us in prayer for peace. Cardinal is keen to develop future events with St Paul's.

The site is now open but there are plans for a Grand Opening in the Summer and St Paul's will be involved with this.

For more information on **kihcihkaw askî** site:

[https://www.edmonton.ca/projects\\_plans/parks\\_recreation/kihcihkaw-aski-development](https://www.edmonton.ca/projects_plans/parks_recreation/kihcihkaw-aski-development)

A decision was made to form a Subcommittee to focus on Reconciliation issues. The members of this Committee are Terry Kaasa, Chris Peet, Shirley Perry, and Joselyn Proby. Above all the Committee is focused on Reconciliation in the form of an active partnership with **kihcihkaw askî** as a specific, concrete, local, Indigenous initiative. This focus is intentional rather than a more broad, general, or generic focus on reconciliation. St. Paul's is the nearest United Church to the site. As part of this effort, we are developing a small network with nearby or interested Churches (and also Temple Beth Ora) to inform & communicate news and events and if needed to solicit interest in or assistance with **kihcihkaw askî** projects. A secondary priority of the Committee will be educational events. The United Church of Canada repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery, which asserted that lands belonged to the Christian powers that "discovered" them. We will examine ways in which we can continue our journey of listening, repentance and of building relationship with First Nation Peoples. The Committee may explore possible UCC grants for reconciliation events in future.





Respectfully submitted,  
Shirley Perry

## **2. Garneau Strathcona Food Security Program (GSFSP)**

Established in 2006, the Garneau Strathcona Food Security Program is a 100% volunteer run collaborative outreach program of three United Churches – Garneau, St. Paul’s, and Spirit of Hope – together with non-affiliated community volunteers. The program volunteers gather and distribute food on a weekly basis to individuals and families needing assistance, regardless of their religious affiliation and without judgement of their circumstances. Access to healthy food sources is provided to augment what our guests can obtain independently.

Church and Community Volunteers gather regular donations of foodstuff from the Edmonton Food Bank and baked goods from Strathcona Save On Foods, Bonnie Doon Safeway, and Crestwood Cobs Bakery. These donations are supplemented with the purchase of high-protein foods for our guests. Foodstuffs are distributed to guests every Saturday morning at Spirit of Hope United Church. GSFSP has always followed strict sanitation practices, but given the recent pandemic, we are taking additional measures to protect our guests and volunteers from infection.

The GSFSP has been providing food for approximately 200 individuals/week with 1/3 of that number being children; approx. 70% of our clients are returning and 30% are new to the program. Most guests come from South-Central Edmonton, but a recent postal code survey indicates that guests come to the GSFSP from across the city.

We received our first refugees from the Ukraine in August 2022. Some of the Ukrainian refugees have been asking for assistance in finding work, other food programs, or places to live. Google Translate is proving to be a very helpful tool!

Given the challenges of the pandemic, the pressures of the current financial crisis, and world events, we have been observing a gradual increase in our numbers, from an average of 160 individuals/week in 2020 to 200 individuals/week in 2021, and in June of 2022 we reached an average of 243

individuals/week. This increase is concerning, and we expect continued growth in these numbers, especially with the anticipated opening of the Bonnie Doon LRT station right near Spirit of Hope United Church which will make access to our program easier for many.

GSFSP has recently heard from the Edmonton Food Bank that demand for their services have increased dramatically over the past few years. It is increasingly difficult for the food bank to meet the demands of the many agencies (GSFSP is one of them) that glean the coolers. In the near future, GSFSP may be restricted from receiving frozen meat and eggs. This will have a significant effect on our guests.

**As always GSFSP appreciates the support of the St. Paul’s community. Donations of protein sources (peanut butter, canned tuna or salmon, etc.) are gratefully accepted. Monetary donations can be made on the church website. Please remember to direct your donation to the GSFSP**

**Garneau Strathcona Food Security Program Statistics – 2022**

<b>Total Guests (Hampers)</b>	<b>3619</b>
<b>Total People served</b>	<b>12,650 (7477 Adults, 5173 Children)</b>

<b>Month</b>	<b>Hampers (Average/week)</b>	<b>Adults (Average/week)</b>	<b>Children (Average/week)</b>	<b>Total (Average/week)</b>
January	58	126	92	218
February	66	135	94	229
March	62	132	93	225
April	59	126	90	216
May	65	139	100	239
June	77	157	103	260
July	80	157	109	266
August	80	158	111	268
September	74	144	89	233
October	78	158	101	259
November	74	160	114	273
December	64	134	99	234

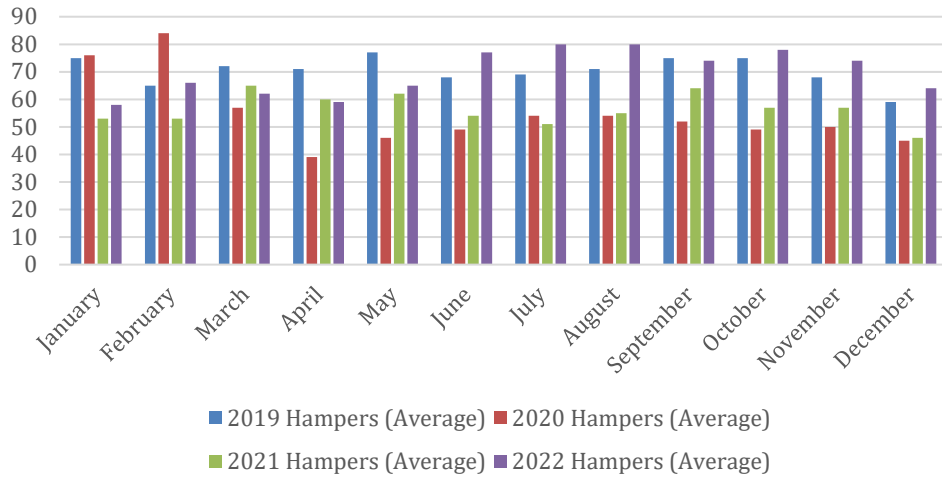
<b>Hampers distributed for families of 1-2 people</b>	<b>1138</b>
“ <b>3-4 people</b>	<b>1433</b>
“ <b>5-6 people</b>	<b>871</b>
“ <b>7 or more people</b>	<b>176</b>

<b>Month</b>	<b>Small Bags (1-2) (Average/week)</b>	<b>Med. Bags (3-4) (Average/week)</b>	<b>Large Bags (5+) (Average/week)</b>	<b>Extra Large Bags (7+) (Average/week)</b>
January	16	23	13	5
February	25	22	14	5
March	19	24	15	4
April	19	21	15	4
May	19	25	18	4
June	26	30	18	3
July	26	31	20	2
August	28	33	18	3
September	27	30	15	2
October	24	35	16	2
November	20	31	20	5
December	16	27	19	3

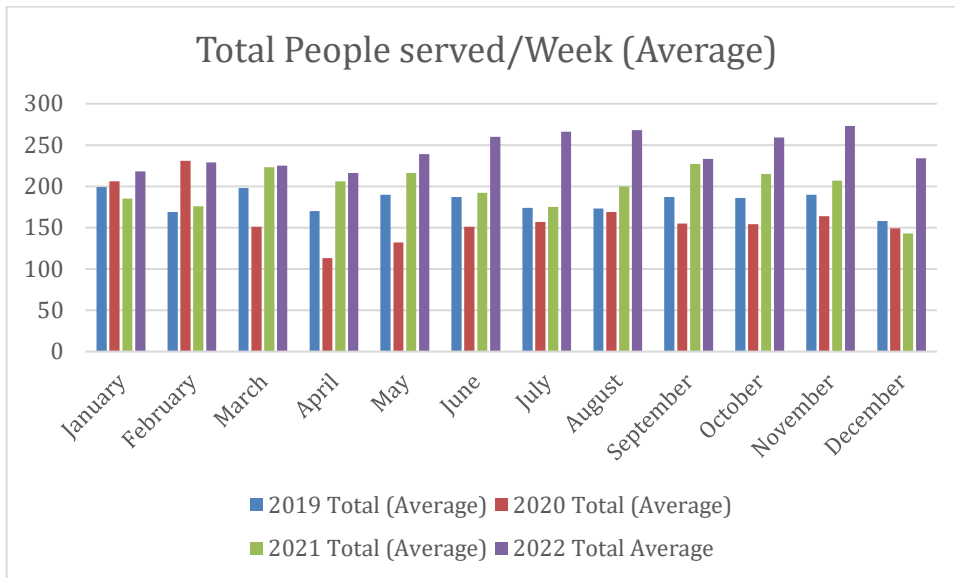
**Four-year comparison**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Month</b>	<b>Hampers (Average)</b>	<b>Hampers (Average)</b>	<b>Hampers (Average)</b>	<b>Hampers (Average)</b>
January	75	76	53	58
February	65	84	53	66
March	72	57	65	62
April	71	39	60	59
May	77	46	62	65
June	68	49	54	77
July	69	54	51	80
August	71	54	55	80
September	75	52	64	74
October	75	49	57	78
November	68	50	57	74
December	59	45	46	64
Weekly Average(Yearly)	70	55	56	70

Hampers/Week (Average)



	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Total (Average)</b>	<b>Total People (Average)</b>	<b>Total People (Average)</b>	<b>Total People (Average)</b>	<b>Total People (Average)</b>
January	199	206	185	218
February	169	231	176	229
March	198	151	223	225
April	170	113	206	216
May	190	132	216	239
June	187	151	192	260
July	174	157	175	266
August	173	169	200	268
September	187	155	227	233
October	186	154	215	259
November	190	164	207	273
December	158	149	143	234
Weekly Average(Yearly)	182	161	197	243



**Highlights –**

- **The number of hampers needed increased sharply in June/22 and remained high for the rest of the year, until December/22 when the temperatures dropped below -15 C.**
- **The average number of guests picking up groceries per week for 2022 was 70, the same as in 2019. However, the guests in 2022 had larger families (243 total people/week reported in 2022, as compare compared to 182 total people/week in 2019.)**

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Kaasa

**3. Support Of Newcomers And Rainbow Refugees**

It has been seven years since St. Paul’s United Church sponsored Ron and Daniel who arrived here as Permanent Residents. While St. Paul’s has not sponsored any others, the ministers and congregation have provided spiritual, emotional, and practical support to over eighty refugee claimants who have reached out to St. Paul’s. Especially in those first months when they are overwhelmed, stressed, fearful and completely unfamiliar with life in Canada, our welcome and compassion is the best gift that we can offer.

Many have experienced rejection by their churches back home and sometimes feel that God is punishing them. A pair of second-hand boots, a used winter coat and food staples given by St. Paul’s do so much more than keep the body warm and fed. Over the past year food, clothing, household items, linen, gift cards and bus tickets have been provided. Some items are donated directly by members of the congregation; others are purchased in thrift stores on discount days. The dedicated storage space at St. Paul’s allows us to keep items on hand for distribution when needed. If people arrive at church on a Sunday morning inadequately dressed for the weather, they can leave with proper winter garb and the biggest smile. At other times, when a member of the congregation is

downsizing, donated furniture is delivered directly to someone who is just getting set up. In addition, the ministers have provided spiritual nurture and pastoral care and sometimes the Minister's Benevolent Fund has assisted with rent issues, preventing homelessness.

Some have said that the things given by the congregation, the connections made in the Friendship Room, the invitations to people's homes and the message that they are welcome in this church is evidence that God has not abandoned them after all.

Not all the refugee newcomers have an ongoing connection with St. Paul's, although many do consider this to be their church. They attend services in person or live stream, participate in social activities and are members of the St. Paul's and Newcomers (SPAN) WhatsApp group. Several have been to Coyote Lake Lodge; some have gathered in Denise's back yard. They have helped with organizing items in the SJC storage areas and, when they can, love to sing with the choir or read a Bible passage during a service.

These newcomer refugees may also receive assistance from community agencies like the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN), from RaricaNow and from the Pride Centre. Sometimes they can also access services from inner city agencies like Bissell, Boyle Street, and the Mustard Seed although, at least initially, they can find it quite intimidating. The food bank offers a limited selection of food that is familiar to their palates and what is available tends to be heavy on tinned and starchy items. This year, although people applied for Christmas Bureau food hampers, the demand was so high that they did not receive them. It was such a blessing that members of the congregation stepped up with food gift cards and with turkeys, which made for the kind of Christmas feast that we all appreciate.

In time, these newcomers, many with post-secondary education, find accommodation and entry level jobs, often low paying and not in their fields of study. They move from refugee claimants to Convention Refugees if their hearings are successful. Then, they can apply to become Permanent Residents, and some are now Canadian Citizens.

When they were invited to St. Paul's Connexion Step-Up events at Emily Murphy Park this past summer, those who were able signed PAR pledge cards. They work diligently to become integrated into Canadian life and to provide for themselves, their families, one another, and the wider community.

Additional funds will be needed in 2023 to replenish the Outreach Fund so that St. Paul's can continue to support refugees in this way. After two quiet years due to closed borders, things have changed substantially, and the need is great. Our support of Rainbow Refugees is one way of fulfilling our commitment to action as an Affirming Congregation within the United Church. Many thanks to the congregation for the ways in which you support Rainbow Refugees. St. Paul's does make a significant difference in people's lives, of this there is no doubt.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Gail Mannard-Carr

#### 4. Affirming / LGBTQIA2S+

We have been involved in the planning of educational sessions and participated in community events related to our Affirming Commitment. During COVID the regular church videos included affirmation and the last regular Sunday video was made on March 13th, 2022, which was **PIE DAY**. March 14 has also been adopted as **PIE Day** within the United Church of Canada. This year we are hosting a Pie Auction supporting our Rainbow Refugee Ministry to honour the occasion. We encourage everyone to participate in the auction and join us in being Public, Intentional and Explicit in your commitment to Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people on March 14th and always!

We continue connection with Gary Simpson from McDougall United Church, who is a persuasive advocate for Affirmation. We will have an entry in the Pride Parade, if there is one, or a possible booth at an alternative event. Perhaps we will join other churches in a walk to **Pride Corner on Whyte Ave** this summer.

Submitted by  
Shirley Perry

#### 5. Bissell Center

We, as a church, have a long-standing history of supporting the Bissell Center. The Bissell is an inclusive, client-centered organization that recognizes the dignity and strength of individuals and communities and empowers them and offers them the support needed to overcome poverty.

We had a very successful Christmas toy drive and were able to witness the joy of grateful recipients. Thanks to all of you who donated toys.

We have, for many years, served lunch and helped with a church service on a **Sunday in the Summer**. We make sandwiches, cut fruit and vegetables and bake squares and cookies. On our designated Sunday, we attend a church service and then serve lunch to 100's of individuals. These lunches were discontinued during COVID, but we will be able to participate once again this year.

#### 6. Racecourse Community School Fundraising Initiative

The Racecourse Community School was founded in 1999 by local leaders in the Racecourse Community of Kitwe, Zambia. The local Zambian teachers and administrators started the school primarily because so many children they knew were left orphaned by AIDS and could no longer afford to attend government schools. The school is still considered a community school for vulnerable children and orphans; however, in recent years the Government of Zambia has taken over much of the administration and teaching. 2022 marked St. Paul's United Church's 19th year of partnership with this school. If you'd like a bird's eye view of the school and community, you can check it out at this link: [Race Course Primary School](#)

Here are some highlights from the year:

### **In Zambia**

In 2022 the Racecourse School continued to thrive despite the challenging circumstances brought on by the COVID pandemic. Now that the Government of Zambia has made secondary education free, and taken on much of the administration at the school, the school was able to direct funds donated from St. Paul's United Church to covid-cleaning, to the construction of a new guardroom, and to ongoing staff allowances/development. To ensure accountability for the funds donated, regular auditing and bookkeeping services are also expensed.

The School Board Chair, Rev. Kondolo recently wrote to share that, "The school has seen a tremendous increase in student numbers; this is due to improved infrastructure, good governance and combined efforts by both government teachers and our hardworking volunteer teachers."

In September 2022 he also shared that, "Racecourse School currently has well above One Thousand, Four Hundred learners (1400) and the classes per grade are large now. While it is good for the community, it is stressful to the teachers. In any case, both teachers and learners seem to be enjoying the environment. It's really a happy community and thank you for putting life in this community."

### **In Canada**

In 2022 St. Paul's United Church was able to transfer \$23,090 CAD to the school. This was an increase of \$3090 from 2021, but a decrease of \$3910 from 2020.

In 2022, we raised over \$22,700 which is about \$500 less than last year.

Due to covid, we were once again unable to host our annual fundraising dinner and auction. Please save the date of September 23, 2023 for what we hope will be the return of our dinner tradition in the beautiful Foote Auditorium of the church.

In 2022, we were fortunate to once again participate in the Just One World ethical global market. We continue to be extremely fortunate to have a very dedicated team of volunteers preparing items for sale by hand as well as displaying donated items, and then staffing a booth throughout the sale. This year, the talented volunteers have put together a new special space within which to work. The space has been generously donated by Neil Fritz of Strathcona Wealth Management. It is called Annet's Place, and is named after our dearly departed Racecourse School supporter and fellow congregant, Annet Atuhurire, who passed away in 2021.



## Annet's Place



\* Photos courtesy of Bette Fritz

Annet's Place is open on odd-numbered Friday evenings year-round at 7 p.m. and the coordinator, Bette Fritz along with her friends and family are always happy to have visitors and/or fellow crafters. It is located at 2931 101 St. NW Edmonton. Annet's Place is happy to accept donations of yarn, beads, scrapbooking paper/cardstock, cotton fabric and sewing machines for their crafting. Please email Bette at [recollections@telus.net](mailto:recollections@telus.net) to get involved or to donate supplies.

We are also very fortunate to have St. Paul's staff and volunteers manage the finances, administrative tasks, and fundraising efforts of this outreach project. This allows us to direct 100% of donations to the work on the ground in Zambia. To donate to the school, at any time you can write a cheque, donate through the St. Paul's website/Canadahelps.org, or make an e-transfer to St. Paul's United Church - all with 'Racecourse School' in the memo.

Thank you very much for the care and consideration that so many of you give to the children and staff at the Racecourse Community School. By giving to the Racecourse Community School you are ensuring that thousands of Zambian children receive their human right to an education. I look forward to continuing our work together on this important outreach activity in 2023!

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather MacKenzie  
Project Manager

# Church Group Reports

## Paulettes (United Church Women of St. Paul's United Church)

In May the Paulettes held a 95<sup>th</sup> birthday party for Jack Francis at Coyote Lake Lodge. In June we prepared the food and served at the retirement party for Denise Davis Taylor. In December we sent Christmas cards to the home-bound members of St. Paul's. We also held a joint potluck luncheon with the Quilters.

Over the year we also served at four memorial receptions.

Respectfully submitted  
Eleanor Wein, Chair

## The Quilting Group

*Service and Fellowship.*

### Activity

The Quilting Group meets regularly on Monday mornings in the southwest corner of Foote Auditorium. We are part of St. Paul's Outreach Ministry.

The organizers of the Old-fashioned Christmas event held in early December requested a quilt to display at their photo-op display. We were delighted to offer a beautiful pieced quilt for the purpose.

Members of the Quilting Group attended the Paulette's annual Christmas luncheon at Eleanor Wein's home.

### Quilt Donations and Gifts

Most of the quilts we make are donated to charitable organizations. In December of 2021 (and not mentioned in our report last year), we gave 2 pieced table runners to the Racecourse Community School fundraiser pre-Christmas market; proceeds support orphans and vulnerable children in Kitwe, Zambia. In May, we donated 27 quilts to Catholic Social Services Step-by-Step Ministry. Quilts of all sizes are welcomed by them, and the quilts often become a very important and loved possession of the recipients. In December, a quilt was donated to Coyote Lake Lodge Alberta - Wellness in Nature (WIN) Centre. A label attached to each quilt reads: **Made for YOU with God's love.**

When the Belgravia community held Arts in the Park in August, we contributed a quilt as a 'door' prize. St. Paul's was one of the sponsors of the event. The quilt was appreciated by both the event organizers and the winner of the door prize!

### General Comments

We are grateful for donations of fabric, gently used sheets and quilting related projects that won't get finished. Our imaginative quilters find ways to make everything work and be put to good use. We hope the congregation will continue to donate these items to us as they downsize or de-clutter. Directed monetary donations help us purchase new batting and other essentials.

We welcome anyone who has an interest in joining us; even an occasional drop-in helper would be appreciated. Quilts are tied as a group on Monday mornings. Sewing skills are not required. Individuals who would like to create pieced tops at home are provided donated fabric. Someone with sewing experience is needed to sew the edging around the tied quilts either in the group setting or at home.

### Quilting Group Members and Friends

The group is made up of Lois Benson, Jean Korte, Betty Mullen, Heather Peden, Donna Ross, Eleanor Wein and Claudia Wiens-Loranger. Regular attendance has been difficult for some. We were sorry when Diana Bacon moved to Ottawa in the fall; she was a regular attendee and supporter of the Quilters, and we miss her dearly. Eva Penzes-Wright (a founding member) and Betty Simmonds are honorary members.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Ross

## **The Flower Group**

We have a large group and there is much work to do. We would welcome new members. Please contact any member of the committee if you are interested in joining us.

We held our usual Spring and Fall meetings of the full group to plan our ongoing work to ensure that there were flowers to enhance the chancel every Sunday; that summer flowers were planted and properly cared for in the urns in the Memorial Garden and front of the church; and that for special holidays the church was decorated, including using the plants that we had invited members of the congregation to order in memory or tribute to someone special. Between our semi-annual meetings we kept in touch by e-mail to be sure work of our group, most of it behind the scenes, ran smoothly and efficiently.

We were grateful for and acknowledged when families left bouquets after a funeral to share with the congregation. We also wish to thank those who assisted by bringing bounty for Thanksgiving; by making a monetary donation; and who helped in many other ways.

We will greatly miss our friend Anna Benowicz. She always greeted us with her warm, gentle smile and graciously helped us in whatever way she could, which was many. We were honoured to place, on the day of her memorial service, a bouquet of red roses in the chancel in memory of and tribute to Anna.

Our current membership includes, Jane Alton, Jan Anderson, Gwyn Bailey, Marion Brooker, Marian Carmichael, Ruth Glancy, Pat Greenways, Pat McGeachy, Sheryl Lynn, Heather Peden, Betty Mullen, Lorene Turner, Margaret Russell, Marianne Scott, Dawna Wiebe and Dale Wilke. Evelyn Henderson and Anne Miller-Royds have chosen to retire this year and we thank them for their dedicated work for many years and will miss them.

Respectfully submitted,  
Betty Mullen, Chair

# 2022 Congregational Meeting - Minutes

## Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting March 6, 2022 via Zoom

### Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting

March 6, 2022 via Zoom

**PRESENT:** A total of 55 attendees (members, adherents, and ministers) were in attendance.

**MEETING NOTIFICATION:** Following the *Governance in Congregations During COVID-19* document issued by the United Church of Canada, notice of the annual congregational meeting was given three full weeks preceding the meeting via the St. Paul's page. In addition, notice of the meeting was given via email to all members for whom we have email addresses.

**GATHERING AND CALL TO ORDER:** Bob Miller, called the meeting to order at 10:10 am. He welcomed everyone to our first Zoom annual meeting and acknowledged that a Zoom meeting is a good medium for enabling us to interact together. He invited Pat to give Zoom guidance.

**ZOOM HOUSEKEEPING:** Pat Greenways offered Zoom guidance and a review of Zoom etiquette. Pat noted that in discussion periods, the speaker and questioner will be spot lit on the screen. Pat reminded everyone that when voting on motions and procedural matters, to please raise your physical hand in your Zoom window and hold. Pat noted that the meeting is being recorded to assist with creating accurate minutes, upon which the recording will be destroyed.

**PROCEDURAL MATTERS:** Through a show of hands, it was agreed to:

- Nominate Bob Miller as Chair of this Annual Congregational Meeting
- Nominate Andrea Miller as Recording Secretary of this meeting
- Extend voting privileges to adherents present at the meeting.

Procedure has carried.

**OPENING PRAYER and MEMORIALS:** Catherine MacLean welcomed everyone and took time to remember people who are part of our congregation and who died in 2021.

- Elizabeth Betty (Wickett) Arlette
- Annet Atuhurire Kembundu
- William Bill Miros Eli Boytzun
- Kiran Evelyn Cahoon
- Dorcas Aldyth (Wagner) Dunn-Berry
- Donna Vivian (Evans) (Miller) Evans
- Liam Johannes Hoekstra

- Diane Alice (Cload) Kuzyk
- Anne Gertrude (McEachern) Lightfoot
- Jean (Koziel) MacLean
- Douglas James Martin
- Harold Benjamin Ben McEwen
- Helen Jean (MacRae) McEwen
- Carl John Osadetz
- Gail Gay Helen (Dowling) Young
- Heather Ann Waldie
- Lyle Wiebe

**INTRODUCTION OF THE BOARD:** Bob Miller introduced the members of the Board who have been working hard on our behalf over the course of the last year.

**2021 OFFICIAL BOARD:**

- Chair: Bob Miller
- Vice Chair: Dean Rombough
- Secretary: Dale Wilkie
- Finance: Justin Wheler
- Legacy: Marianne Scott
- Membership and Congregational Care: Coleen Falk
- Ministry and Personnel: Lorene Everett-Turner
- Property: David Carr
- Social Justice: Jasper Woodard (regrets, not in attendance)
- Spiritual Nurture: Jack Jervis regrets, not in attendance
- Stewardship: Jim Stewart
- Worship: Hugh Stacey (Lori Stewart is Chair), (Lori sends her regrets, not in attendance)

Bob thanked Board members for their support and guidance as he took over the position of Chair in October.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:**

Both sets of minutes were included in the 2022 Annual report

- February 16, 2020
- March 9, 2021 Annual Review in lieu of Annual Congregational Meeting (due to Covid-19)

Bob asked for any questions, comments, or corrections to those two sets of minutes. Donna Stickland brought up that the spelling of Marian Carmichael's name was incorrect. No further corrections, the minutes stand adopted.

**MINISTER, STAFF and COMMITTEE REPORTS PRINTED IN 2021 ANNUAL REPORT:**

The 2021 Annual Report has been sent to everyone as an attachment to the Annual Meeting reminder email on March 1, 2022. Bob recognized that even though we haven't been meeting in

person in the sanctuary, the report indicates that there is still a lot going on within our church community.

Bob noted one clarification regarding Property on pg. 28, and stated that the 10 Year Capital Plan is a draft and has not been approved by the board. Through a show of hands, it was agreed to receive the reports as presented in the 2021 Annual Report.

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS:** No further business arising from the reports was discussed.

**TREASURERS REPORT and 2021 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:** The 2021 Financial Statement has been sent to everyone as an attachment to the Annual Meeting reminder email on March 1, 2022.

Bob Miller acknowledged that the review of the 2021 Financial Records has been completed by Jennifer McKercher Rott and Dale Rott and records were found to be in order, and he thanked them for their contribution. No questions or clarifications.

**2022 BUDGET:** Members of the Finance Committee presented the Narrative Budget for 2022. The 2022 Draft Budget has been sent to everyone as an attachment to the Annual Meeting reminder email on March 1, 2022. Heather Peden and Justin Wheler gave their updates:

Heather presented a 10-year summary of our operating expenses and revenue from 2010-2021. In 2016 we had our first deficit budget and we have had a deficit budget every year since then. In the last three years we have made special appeals to raise enough money to cover expenses, and in 2021 even with a special appeal, our expenses remained higher than revenue. This is not sustainable and a challenge we must address going forward. Special appeals have a place for special projects in our church i.e., rooftop solar, but are not a sustainable way to run our operations.

On the revenue side, our sources of revenue are donations, other special appeals and wage subsidies. Donations are our largest source of revenue. Our donor base is on a downward trend, from 268 donors in 2011, to 174 donors in 2021. We have half the number of donors that we had 30 years ago.

On the expenses side, ministry and personnel account for 76% of operating expenses, which includes salary and benefits of all of our staff and fees for two contract musicians. Property is 12% of expenses. Board expenses include payments to support campus ministry. Expenses for worship committee, including guest musicians, bulletins, and supplies, are reduced because the church has not been open for in-person worship although this is expected to trend up upon reopening. Spiritual Nurture expenses have trended down due to a special donation for children and youth programming, however that fund was exhausted in 2020 and the upward trend is now expected to continue.

Heather gave an in-depth look into the following donations and donor base trends:

Donors by Age Category: Overall, there is a sharp divide between the over and under 60 groups. 80% of donation revenue is from the over 60 age category, 30% of donation revenue is from the over 80 age category, and we have very few young donors.

2021 Dollars Donated by Age: Follows a similar trend, with the largest dollar amounts being donated by the 60+ age category. Losing these donors is a risk.

2021 Donors by Donation Range: 68% of donors donated less than \$2,000, 82% donated less than \$3,000.

2021 Dollars Donated by Dollar Range: Indicates that losing a donor at the higher end, it is highly unlikely that we will recoup this.

Heather noted that we have good people, good ideas, and a wonderful building and these are the assets we need to face these challenges. While we are not on a sustainable track, the board is focused on giving us leadership on these issues. The church is all of us, and it takes all of us.

#### Budget Overview

Revenue: On the revenue side, Heather noted the significant impact of the loss of seven donors, which resulted in a loss of \$21,000. Rentals is included at an estimated \$15,000. Although the church is not open currently for rentals, the committee will be ramping that up. The grand total of revenue is \$337,500.

Expenses: Justin provided an update on expenses listed in the 2022 Budget. The majority of expenses are for ministry and personnel in accordance with a mandatory increase for salary and benefits. However, the ministry and personnel expenses do not reflect Denise Davis Taylor's retirement and retain the full year half-minister salary. Property expenses are up, reflecting an increase in utility costs. This also reflects a drop off in volunteers to do landscaping etc., and as a result the church is incurring costs to contract landscaping, snow clearing etc. Worship expenses are back up to historic levels to reflect the hope to resume in-person worship. Board expenses have dropped, although there are no decisions made on Campus Ministry, St. Paul's will continue to support it up until Denise Davis-Taylor's retirement upon which we will wait to see the next phase of Campus Ministry.

Overall, we see an increase in expenses of over \$400,000 for the first time in quite a while, and a net deficit of approximately \$70,000. Justin noted that the Board has held a meeting entirely dedicated to addressing this deficit. The Board agrees that they are not comfortable with the deficit and that significant work is needed here, including creative ways to reduce expenses. The motion is for the interim budget to be in place until June, upon which time work to reduce this gap is concluded, and then the budget will be finalized. There are no planned transfers from net operations to capital fund due to our deficit. We are not in an emergency situation, but we are in an unsustainable position.

#### Discussion Period

Heather McKenzie had a question for members of the Finance Committee and asked if we are planning on using any reserves this year. Justin Wheler responded in saying that we don't budget for use of retained earnings, but these would be the first source of cash in a deficit. There is enough here in the short term, but not for multiple years in a row. Heather Peden followed up by saying that we



have a cumulative amount equivalent to about four months of church operations, but it is not something that we want to start relying on a lot.

Bob called on Dean Rombough to make a motion:

**MOTION: That the 2022 budget presented at the ACM be treated as interim until June 2022, and the congregation agrees that the Board, within this timeframe, will develop a strategy to address the deficit, giving consideration to reducing expenses and increasing revenues.**

**Moved By: Dean Rombough, Seconded By: Jim Mullins**

Bob stated that based on this presentation, we can see how lucky we are to have Heather Peden and Justin on finance. They have presented us with some important information in a clear and concise way. They have a calming influence; we feel that things are not dire, but there are some risks and areas of concerns. The idea of this motion is to give the board time to increase our knowledge of our financial situation and look at ways to reduce our expenses and creative ways to increase revenue. You will hear more on this strategy. Any questions regarding the motion?

Betty Mullen clarified if there will be a vote on the motion, and Bob indicated that there would be a vote if there was no further discussion.

Chris Peet responded to Heather Peden's presentation of the ten-year trends regarding both the decrease in donors and the weighting on donations from older persons. He noted that we also need to consider our current circumstances regarding COVID-19 and the Legacy Project basement renovation. A caveat to this deficit is that we are dealing with extraordinary circumstances, being the pandemic coming at the worst possible time and interfering with rentals of the new basement. We should insert these factors into our thinking and take a long-term view of our financial sustainability rather than starting to worry.

Dean Rombough thanked Chris for that point and noted that the Board has talked about that point at length. Renting is one of our biggest priorities when we get into normal times. He acknowledged that we have a very strong Rental Committee and thanked them for their work. He stated that we will strongly pursue long term renters.

Bob thanked Dean. Bob re-read the motion. A count of hands was conducted. Any opposed? No  
**Motion is carried.**

Betty Mullen thanked Heather Peden and Justin for clearly explaining the situation. She stated that she doesn't think rentals will cover our deficit. With rising costs and the fact that many of our older donors are on a fixed income, we need to reach out to our younger people for their support, too. She noted that the intent of the motion is excellent.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE:** A motion was presented. **MOTION: That the Social Justice Committee be granted \$7,500 from the Outreach Fund to assist refugees and newcomers with food, household items and clothes and \$1000 from the Outreach Fund for special circumstances and extraordinary expenses. Moved By: Heather MacKenzie Seconded By: Shirley Perry**

Bob asked Heather MacKenzie for background on this motion, and Heather indicated that this is not the first time we have seen this motion. Heather thanked Gail Mannard-Carr for administering these funds and stated that the intent of this motion is to make sure that we enable her to continue this work. Heather also noted that this work is part of our affirming ministry as most of these refugees are LGBTQ+.

Justin Wheler added that the balance of the Outreach Fund is \$12,049, meaning that there are sufficient funds for this motion.

A count of hands was conducted. Any opposed? No **Motion is carried.**

Jim Stewart noted in chat that the annual Maple Madness Drive to support the Outreach Fund for refugee work will start up again in the next couple of weeks.

## **RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION**

### **RETIREMENT**

Bob called on Lorene Turner and Helen Madill to give their tribute to Denise Davis Taylor in recognition of her retirement. Lorene and Helen reflected on some favourite memories, Denise's achievements and wished her well in her new phase of life. Lorene invited attendees to write down memories about Denise and leave them with Anna at the office. Denise responded with heartfelt thanks.

Bob Miller acknowledged the following people for their work as they are stepping down from Board Committee Chairs. He thanked them for their wonderful leadership and dedication to St. Paul's. Their contributions are clearly reflected in our operations and in weekly worship.

Jim Stewart: Stewardship Committee  
Hugh Stacey: Worship Committee  
Lori Stewart: Worship Committee  
Lorene Turner: M&P Committee  
Jasper Woodard: Social Justice Committee  
Chris Peet: Board Chair

Bob Miller acknowledged the following individuals who are retiring from their St. Paul's commitments. He thanked them for their dedication, guidance and wealth of knowledge. Pat noted that Don Gardner's 97<sup>th</sup> birthday is tomorrow, March 7<sup>th</sup> and various attendees wished Don a Happy Birthday via the chat.

Heather Peden: Volunteer Accountant  
Jack Francis: Property Committee  
Don Gardner: Trustee  
Gweth Purdy: Trustee  
Heather MacKenzie: Northern Spirit Regional Council Delegate

## **ELECTIONS**

Coleen Falk thanked Bob for stepping into this role and for his leadership. Coleen thanked everyone who has served on committees. Coleen introduced three new board members – Heather Peden, Jim Mullins and Paul Preston. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Coleen Falk provided the slate of nominees and delegates:

### **OFFICIAL BOARD:**

Chair: Dean Rombough  
Vice Chair: vacant  
Secretary: Dale Wilkie  
Treasurer: Heather Peden  
Finance: Justin Wheler  
Membership and Congregational Care: Coleen Falk  
Ministry and Personnel: Jim Mullins  
Property: Dave Carr  
Social Justice: rotating chair among members at this time  
Spiritual Nurture: Jack Jervis  
Stewardship: vacant  
Worship: Paul Preston  
Legacy Project Liaison: Marianne Scott

**MOTION: To elect the nominated slate for the Official Board. Moved By: Coleen Falk Seconded By: Isabel Becking**

Bob asked if there were any nominations from the floor and there were none. A count of hands was conducted. Any opposed? No **Motion is carried**

## **APPOINTMENTS**

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Coleen Falk provided the slate of appointees:

Coleen presented the following names as nominees for the Board of Trustees:

Allan Scott  
Clare Irwin  
Shona Nichols

Coleen presented the following names as nominees for the Northern Spirit Regional Council:

Helen Madill  
Amy Kaler  
Don Retson – absent

**MOTION: To accept the appointments as presented.**

**Moved By: Coleen Falk Seconded By: Isabel Becking**

Bob asked if there were any nominations from the floor and there were none. A count of hands was conducted. Any opposed? No **Motion is carried**

**COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR:** Bob noted that this was our first time holding the Annual Meeting on Zoom, and he was pleased with how it went. Meeting in this way gives people a chance to voice opinions and hear what the board has been working on. Bob acknowledged that it will take some time to process this information, particularly the financial deficit. He gave thanks to Pat for preparing the Zoom meeting and offering guidance on Zoom. He opened the floor up for anything else that people may want to bring up today.

Don Gardner shared that as he is stepping down from his role, they are still looking for replacements for Trustees.

Dean Rombough expressed his heartfelt thanks to Chris and Bob for stepping in, particularly as he experienced pandemic-related challenges.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Denise Davis-Taylor closed the meeting at 11:35PM time with prayer, thanking all for the leadership, friendship, and kind words that is synonymous with this St. Paul's community.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrea Miller, Recording Secretary

# Membership

## Baptisms

Nora Fay Embury  
Jerico James Norrisdieckman  
Sarah Elflayd Peart  
Harriet Lee Vanderwel-Chan  
Miriam Rose Vanderwel-Chan

## Marriages

Mary Tsakadze and Jackson Dudley

## In Memoriam

† member

Kash Bae  
† Dorothy Irene (Pickett) Casey  
† Ronald Jack Casey  
† Roger Gerald Jerry Dunn  
† William Bill James Dunn  
Donna Mary Gamal  
† Berniece Olivia Zimmerman Gildner  
† Willa Grierson  
Julia Olga (Lutzak) Hrapko  
† Peter Kamenetzki  
† Bessie- Belle Wilson Marshall  
† Valerie McKenzie  
Dorothy Moravik  
† Nina Osbourne  
† Carol Stewart  
Anne Sturby