

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Remembering Those We Lost	3
Annual Statistics	3
A Message from Rev. Michelle	4
2022 Annual Meeting Minutes	6
Meet The Team	9
Church Staff	9
Board & Committee Chairs	9
Treasurers Report	10
A Picture of Our Contributions	10
Congregational Board Report	11
Committee Reports	12
St. Paul's Trustees	12
Christian Education	15
Sunday School ~ Fall 2023 / Winter 2024	15
Adult Education	16
Property Committee	16
Ministry & Personnel	18
Worship Committee	18
Music Ministry	20
Community Outreach	21
The Pantry	21
Brown Bag Lunch Program	21
United Church Women (UCW)	22
2023 UCW Financial Report	23
FSLDW Regional Council	24

## Remembering Those We Lost

*Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My father's house has many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ~ John 14:1-3*

Joan Lautard ~ April 4, 2023

Royal MacDonald ~ June 24, 2023

Alice Gibson ~ December 8, 2023



### Annual Statistics

Weddings - 1

Baptism - 1

Confirmations - 1

Transfers In - 1

New Members - 1

Transfers Out - 3

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## A Message from Rev. Michelle

The United Church put forth calls to Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship and Daring Justice. This year we have been *bold* to name the challenges that face our congregation. It takes courage to look at and acknowledge the struggles we face. It takes even more courage and faith to acknowledge that the course we are on is heading to death of the congregation. It takes tough and deep spiritual work to say goodbye to what has been and be open to what is coming. As we grieve our losses, there is comfort in the fact that God is always working to bring life out of death. Given the central story of our faith, it should be little surprise that across church history, time and time again, what appears to be death is just God pruning to bring forth new life, resurrection moments!

Where I saw roots of this new life taking form include:

- Evening bible study: where we are deepening our spirituality and wrestling with what it means to be disciples in today's world, and the strength provided for facing life's challenges.
- Engagement of some newer younger members such as our small Sunday school, the fall church supper, and new faces helping with fellowship coffee time.
- Energy of the Spirit sensed during some of the Downtown Untied discussions, where people had an opportunity to dream about a flourishing ministry. The energy seen as individuals moved through the initial shock of the Board and Trustees recommending selling our building to imagining what Ecumenical Shared Ministry might look like.
- The group of people who are visiting members who struggle to engage in person with the congregation.

I am very grateful to the congregation for the time provided for me to take a sabbatical this summer. Thank you for the much needed time for reading, research, and rest. Both my continuing education, and sabbatical time were spent learning about churches in transition, and flourishing congregations. The general themes from the reading, research, and interviews with other ministers included:

- 1) That flourishing congregations were active in pursuing and deepening their faith, regardless of how that manifested. There were opportunities to tap into the Divine through faith and spiritual practices.
- 2) There was not one cookie-cutter "thing" that people did to be vital, but rather it was a mindset that God was directing them towards X and that X aligned with the passions of the people in the community of faith. This was important also as a touchstone during the transition to remind people why the change was important.
- 3) Decision making was done in the context of the question of what is God calling us to do and what is the faithful response. Ensuring that decisions were in line with the congregations' values.

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4) There was a focus on sharing the good news that people had discovered and inviting others to come and see.

This year has felt a little like we have been wandering through a hot and long desert. If you are feeling tired, that makes sense because walking on sand is hard. However, in the bible the desert is a transitional and transformational place. It is a place where people meet and experience God's presence and direction. The consultants from the Downtown United Project told us that the bottom of the change curve felt like this, although they used the metaphor of walking through mud. They also told us that if we held on and moved through the mud, we would gain clarity and get to the up swing/new life. At the end of 2023, after much wrestling and walking, a path started to emerge. In some ways, the timing of some events has felt like they have even been gifted to us. The work of 2024, at least from my perspective, is to lean into our renewing and strengthening faith practices, to discern and make concrete decisions on our direction, and then be the loving and compassionate community I know you are as we hold each other through the transition towards new life. As we wrap up another year know this, when I think of you, the story of this congregation, the passion and gifts, the struggles and tenacity, the joy and hope, I give thanks. For you are the people of God, St. Paul's United Church, the people whom I am called to walk with through our laughter and tears, and YOU are loved, by God and by me.

As you read through this report, the words that tell the story of our ministry in 2023, I invite you to give thanks for all who have participated and been served by our congregation. I encourage you to remember that the church in action doesn't just happen, it is powered by the joy, sweat, and tears of people like you giving of themselves, and by God's spirit at work. As we head into the decisions that 2024 will bring, please pray for our congregation, its lay leaders, and myself, so that we may all pursue God's call, that call to be Deep, Bold, and Daring.



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# 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes

St. Paul's United Church

**Annual Meeting: March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (In person and on Zoom)**

**In person: 26 and 1 guest presenter (Jill Stairs)**

**Online: 7 people**

1. Chair Donna Chauvin constituted the meeting @ 11:50pm
2. Prayer offered by: Rev. Michelle Armstrong
3. Election of secretary for the meeting: Kelly Simpson Moved Michelle Armstrong/Debbie Allison - Motion Carried
4. Extending the vote to adherents: Jane Blakely/Alanna Palmer - Motion Carried
5. Adoption of agenda as amended: Alana Palmer/Debbie West- Motion Carried - Added Ron Naugler
6. Motion to adjourn by 1pm - Blaine Irving/Greg Morton - Motion Carried
7. Remembering those who have passed: Donna Chauvin - presented names.
8. Jill Stairs - presentation of the financial review: independent review - not examining every transaction - overall felt like the books were well managed and no issues found in bookkeeping.  
  
Addressed Question about sustainability: St. Paul's is doing ok but not great. Savings previously accumulated have been carrying us through shortfalls. Note that there has been work on coming up with long-term sustainability from other income sources. St. Paul's is in the same boat as other churches. Not precarious yet. Thinking forward is required and not relying on collections.  
  
Motion to approve the financial statements as presented. Greg Morton/Ann Raper - Motion Carried
9. Ron Naugler: Motion from the floor to move \$4000 from benevolent to pantry. Moved Ron/Debbie West - Motion Carried.
10. Committee Reports: Motion to accept the reports as presented: Greg Morton/Roger Miller - Motion Carried
11. Approval of the minutes from the 2021 Annual Meeting Moved: Debbie Allison/Tammy C – Motion Carried
12. Adoption of the 2023 Annual Budget as presented Moved by Alanna Palmer/Jane Blakely

Motion to appoint Daye Kelly as financial reviewer for the 2023 fiscal year. Jane Blakely/Greg Morton -

Motion Carried

Committee	Members
Board	Tammy Coughlan (2021) Donna Chauvin (2021) Roger Miller (2021) Debbie Allison (2022) Erin Hayes (2022) Blaine Irving (2022) Treasurer: Jane Blakley (2023)
Trustees	Andrew Steeves (2021) Alanna Palmer (2021) Lois Walker (2021) Mary Dingee (2021) Bill Patterson (2021) Frank Goddard (2021) Carole Peacock (2021) Mel McGuigan (2022)
Property	Patty Trail (2021) Kyle Mathers (2021) Walter Bidlake (2021) Derrick Grant (2021) Brad Webb (2022)
Finance	Treasurer: Jane Blakely Ron Naugler Brad Webb
M&P	Ann Krause (2021) Lois Walker (2021) Blaine Irving (2021)
Worship	Roger Miller (2021) Tammy Coughlan (2021) Chris Grant (2021) Ann Raper (2021) Debbie West (2022)
Christian Education	Brad Green (2021) Erin Hayes Erin Webb
Region	Ron Naugler
Downtown United	Derrick Grant

	Ralph Simpson Mel McGuigan
Outreach	Lois Walker

13. Update and questions about Downtown United presented by Mel McGuigan. Reminder about participation needed for Upcoming meetings. Handout of interim Report presented.

14. Blaine Presenting nominations and lead call for nominations from the floor.

Motion to accept the nominations as presented. Blaine Irving/Debbie Alison - Motion Carried

15. Looking ahead:

As the Credence documents pointed out, community and music are important to us. This year, looking at community building. Focusing on what we do have. Discernment of appropriately sized action.

16. Empowerment of the board to act on behalf of the congregation. Ron Naugler/Anne Krause - Motion Carried.

17. Benediction - Rev. Michelle

18. Adjournment Time: 1:25pm





# Meet The Team

## Church Staff

Minister ~ Rev. Michelle Armstrong

Organist ~ Dr. Sharon Pond

Administrator/Bookkeeper ~ Meghan Roebuck

Custodian ~ Rusty Blakely

## Board & Committee Chairs

Congregational Board ~ Donna Chauvin  
& Debbie Allison

Worship Committee ~ Roger Miller

Property Committee ~ Patty Trail

Music Ministry ~ Sharon Pond

Christian Education ~ Erin Hayes

Community Outreach ~ Lois Walker

Ministry & Personnel ~ Ann Krause

Trustees ~ Andrew Steeves

Heritage & Resources ~ Ron Naugler

UCW ~ Donna Chauvin



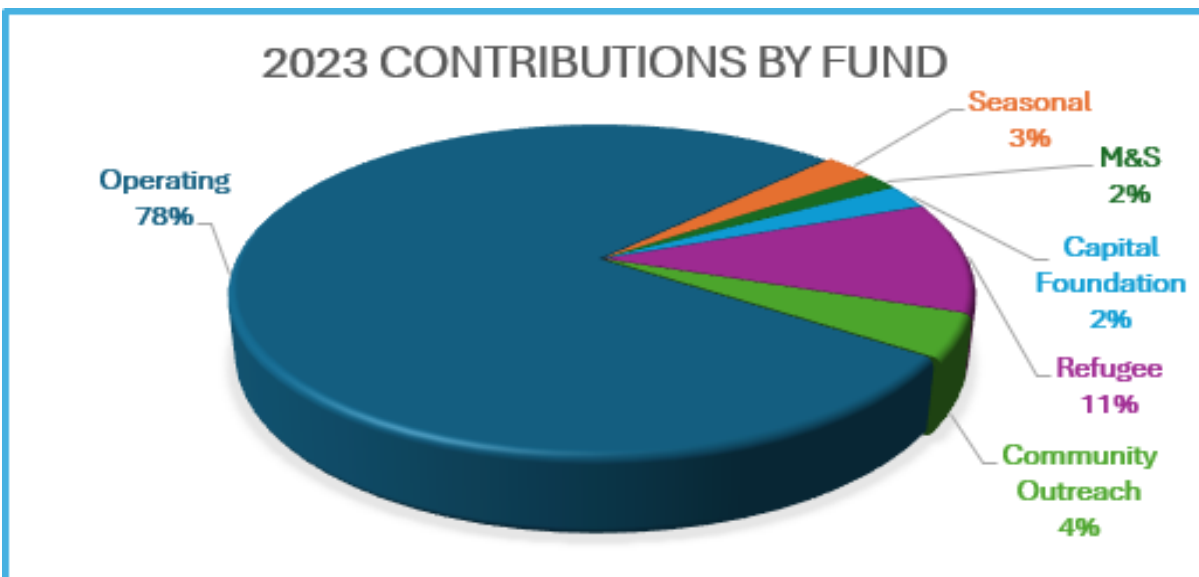
# Treasurers Report

Thank you to each and every one of you who contributed to our finances in 2023. It was our first experience with a deficit budget, and we managed to hit all the "good goals" and avoid meeting that deficit projection. Your continued support, faith, and willingness to step up is so appreciated! Thanks to the Finance Committee (Ron Naugler and Brad Webb) and a huge shout-out to Meghan, who keeps us organized and is a stickler for perfection in all things bookkeeping. We couldn't do it without you, Meghan!

Jane Blakely, Treasurer

## A Picture of Our Contributions

2023 Contribution Range Report						
						12
						\$129,058
				13		\$63,579
			16	\$26,974		\$5000+
		8	\$21,930		\$2501-\$5000	Average Amount \$10,755
	11	\$7,530		\$1501-\$2500	Average Amount \$3,346	
51	\$7,544		\$1001-\$1500	Average Amount \$2,075		
\$9,609		\$751-\$1000	Average Amount \$1,370			
	\$501-\$750	Average Amount \$941				
\$0.01-\$500	Average Amount \$685					
<b>Contribution Range</b>						
Number of Contributors		Total Number of Contributors = 130			Total Given in Range	



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## Congregational Board Report

This year has been a challenging year for the Board, in the most recent history, the Board had functioned not as a driver of the congregation but more as an oversight and reporting body. In 2023, the scope of the challenges faced by our congregation, and the reality that engagement patterns seen with COVID have not significantly changed, forced the Board to wrestle with considering the congregation's future. In January the Board had a weekend "retreat" to look at the dynamics that are affecting congregations today and looked at information about navigating change in congregations.

In January there was hope that progress was finally being made around the prospect of working with Kindred Works, as the congregation was invited to meetings to learn more about the organization and how they could potentially help us with our building concerns. A development team was appointed by the board. In the following months, it became clear that the project being suggested wouldn't adequately address the needs of the congregation.

There were concerns about the limited number of people on the Board, so the Board brought together the Trustees and other congregational leaders into what was called the Key Leadership Group, to ensure a more complete representation of the congregation was being heard as we develop a path forward. There is significant diversity around the table regarding what our situation is and what the possible solutions are. The Board accepted an invitation from Rev. Rose-Hannah to lead us in the process of building consensus around the challenges and feasible solutions. The results of these discussions were taken to Congregational meetings in October and November respectively. At the meeting in November, consent was given by the congregation to explore the process of divesting the building and entering an Ecumenical Shared Ministry with St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

The Board discussed its structure and representation, along with the need to permanently increase the number of people involved in our decision making. A draft framework was created to transition to a Council model. This document is still being worked on. This need was made even more critical as we said goodbye to Board members Erin Hayes and Donna Chauvin, who both moved away from Fredericton.

The Board received the final report from the Downtown United Committee in October. There were recommendations made for the Board to review and consult with Wilmot Council, however, this will be dealt with in the fall of 2024 when the path has been determined for divesting our Property and Ecumenical Shared Ministry options.

More than anything, the Board would like to thank everyone who donated their time and effort in 2023. It has been a year of big discussions and uncertainty, thank you for continuing your engagement. To keep our congregation going into the future, your participation on our committees, with our outreach programs, joining us at worship, and attending congregational meetings is vital. Ministers have told us that the Church is not the building but the people, now is our time to prove that right. Thank you for choosing to be part of the St. Paul's family.

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and Courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go ~ Joshua 1:9*

## Committee Reports

### St. Paul's Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for managing the financial and physical assets of the Church, acting on behalf of the congregation. The financial assets include several Trust Funds and other accounts. The physical assets include the sanctuary, hall and two social housing properties.

**Members and Structure.** The Trustees who served in 2023 were Frank Goddard, Mary Jacobs, Carole Peacock, Lois Walker, Bill Paterson, Alanna Palmer, Mel McGuigan, Andrew Steeves, and Rev. Michelle Armstrong. Andrew presided over the Trustee Meetings as Acting Chair with Alanna acting as Secretary, keeping Minutes. The Trustees also had an Investment Sub-Committee responsible for the stewardship of St. Paul's financial assets. It was Chaired by Alanna with Bill and Andrew as the other members. The group met with the congregational investment advisor on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Meetings.** During the year the Trustees held face-to-face meetings and conducted several items through email correspondence:

- January 17<sup>th</sup>
- March 16<sup>th</sup> (with members of the Board)
- July 26<sup>th</sup>
- September 26<sup>th</sup> (with members of the Board and Property Committee invited)
- October 13<sup>th</sup> (with members of the Board and Property Committee invited)
- November 8<sup>th</sup> (with staff of City of Fredericton Planning Department)

Minutes of these meetings have been submitted as they have been approved by the Trustees.

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It should be noted that, in addition to Trustee-led meetings, the Trustees were participants in several broader meetings involving:

- the Church Board (see above),
- the congregation (March 26<sup>th</sup>, October 15<sup>th</sup>, November 5<sup>th</sup>),
- the informal Leadership/Development group (October 30<sup>th</sup>, November 16<sup>th</sup>),
- Kindred Works (March 22<sup>nd</sup>), and
- the “Downtown United” initiative (Creedence consultants, January 17<sup>th</sup>, January 24<sup>th</sup>, November 26<sup>th</sup>).

Minutes and summaries for these meetings are submitted separately.

**Vision.** For several years the Trustees have been guided by a vision which the Trustees have called St. Paul’s 250. In this Vision our Sanctuary, Hall and rental housing units are in excellent repair and in regular use when the church celebrates its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2082.

To fulfill this Vision, Trustees have been aware that St. Paul’s physical assets must be supported with a solid financial footing coming from investment income and revenue streams. To this end, Trustees continued to work diligently and prudently on behalf of the congregation in 2023.

However, recent events have led the Trustees to consider a review of the St. Paul’s 250 Vision as discussed below.

#### **Activities in 2023:**

1. **Repairs and Maintenance** - A busy year, the Trustees and Property Committee have continued their efforts to keep the church’s buildings in good condition. A significant concern has been the roof of the sanctuary. Despite a prolonged search, we have been unable to find a contractor to do the sanctuary repair. Fortunately, we were able to fund the rehabilitation of the George Street fire escape.
2. **Investments in good shape.** The sub-committee met with our investment advisor (January 19<sup>th</sup>) to review our investments and returns. The sub-committee’s review affirmed our investment policy.
3. **Transfer of Documents to the Archives** of the UCC in Sackville on September 14<sup>th</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup>.
4. **Outlook – Significant Concerns.** Working with the Property Committee, Trustees viewed and discussed the future repairs and financial needs of St. Paul’s properties. With the latest round of roof and bell tower repairs, the investment account would fall to about \$75,000. Furthermore, the church faced further major expenditures over the short and medium term. For example, the repair and rehabilitation of the York Street facade of the Sanctuary had been estimated at over \$1,000,000.

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5. **A Search for Solutions.** Faced with these challenges, the Trustees, over the last 10 years, have investigated options to generate revenue for operations, repairs, and maintenance. In their latest search for a solution to our needs, Trustees and the Board have agreed to work with UPRC and its successor, Kindred Works (KW). However, KW had changed its operations and, as a result, is not a viable option for creating a revenue stream for the congregation.
  6. **Meetings of the Board and Trustees.** In their effort to deal with the challenges, the Trustees have invited the St. Paul’s Board to review the challenges our church is facing, including:
    1. a lack of reserve funds for maintenance,
    2. reduced financial resources available on our operating side (offerings),
    3. heavy demands upon our human resources (especially volunteers), and
    4. building maintenance and use while considering our congregational dynamics post-COVID.

Faced with these challenges, the Trustees, at its September 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, called upon the Board and the Region to respond to these concerns urgently. In response, the Board and Trustees, together with other involved members of the church family, formed an informal “Leadership Team” which has participated in a process facilitated by Rev. Rose-Hannah Gaskin, that has helped the team develop a path forward and plan for our congregation – a New Vision.

(Note: since the formation of the “Leadership Team” in the Fall, the Trustees have not held a stand-alone meeting. Since all Trustees are members of the Team and meet on a regular basis, they have conducted business before or after the “Team” meetings. In addition, the Trustees have responded to small items of business (expenditures below \$10 k) with motions and votes via email.)

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*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him,  
rooted and built up on him and established in the faith, just as you were taught,  
abounding in thanksgiving.*

*~ Colossians 2:6-7*

# Christian Education

## Sunday School ~ Fall 2023 / Winter 2024

For our current Sunday School season, we have been utilizing the “Living the Word” teaching guide. This guide works very well as the lessons coincide with the weekly scripture readings and serve to reinforce the message from the sermons in a way that the children can easily learn and put into practice.

We meet weekly after the “Time for All Ages” portion of the Sunday service and go back to the classroom to discuss a simplified version of the scripture reading. This is followed by either an activity or a craft the children can participate in/make, which demonstrates the key takeaways from that week’s lesson.

We currently have three children active in Sunday school on a regular basis, and although it is a small group, Sunday school is an important part of our church that provides a fun and welcoming space in which our youngest members can engage with scripture. We will continue with these lessons until summer break.

Erin Webb, Sunday School Teacher



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## Adult Education

From January - May 2023 there was an adult bible study offered on Wednesday mornings. Starting in September we shifted this study to Tuesday morning from 10:45-11:45. This group has primarily used a Lectio-Divina pattern of looking at the scriptures where no experience is needed. In September there was interest expressed in an evening faith exploration and bible study. This group of primarily younger adults has been meeting since October on Thursday nights. This group explores faith practices, life, and scripture. Both adult groups are given a take home resource for continued digging into the scriptures.

A small insert for home devotional God's Story our Story, was offered on Sunday Mornings for people to take to help them think about and go deeper with the scriptures and prayer.

Christian Education also supports the outreach and engagement with Campus Ministry. Supporting students at UNB and beyond. This year while the Campus Chaplain was preaching, the UNB Campus Ministry band shared their talents with us.



## Property Committee

The Property Committee, our busy beavers, consists of: Kyle Mathers, Walter Bidlake, Brad Webb, Derrick Grant, and Ron Yateman. Although not part of our committee, you need to know that Meghan Roebuck and Rusty Blakely lighten the load for us.

2023 began with issues with the boiler causing the congregation to bundle up for services. Over the past year, the boiler continues to test us with one issue after another... we do not expect these issues to vanish although it is cared for daily and carefully by our custodian.



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We have a new snow removal company to clean the parking lots and our staff continues to work with them to do the work the way we needed. Sanding will continue as part of the contract, but their company will be responsible for sweeping it in the spring.

We had a new leak by the elevator near Charlotte St. door. Walter did a temporary repair waiting for a professional to do a permanent repair in the summer. Over the year we have found more leaking in the sanctuary during the big storms we are having. However, Kyle has researched companies as far away as Ontario who would be capable of doing the repairs but has not found one who will even give us a quote. During the fall, we had as many as 6 leaks in the sanctuary during one storm.

During the summer of 2023, we had a student to help Rusty and learn some new skills. They took on the job of painting some of the interior doors. Along with Meghan, they were busy sorting several rooms full of unnecessary items.

Last fall, the fire escape leading from the sanctuary to George St. parking lot began to crumble in a big way. Repair has been accomplished until replacement becomes imminent. And we had annual repairs to the concrete steps leading into the sanctuary on George St.

Rusty and Tammy Coughlan worked on keeping the rental houses shoveled: the fire escapes and wheelchair ramps free from ice. Before the summer was out, both wheelchair ramps collapsed... Walter to the rescue. He also found that we needed to replace a door on 242 York St. with rotting of the sills. This was contracted to be done. Also, we installed more eavestroughing on each of the rental buildings to better protect the wheelchair ramps and the fire escape. One of our windstorms removed many shingles from 230 York St. which have been patched waiting for a new roof in the summer.

Just for your information, we did have one incident of a broken basement window on York St. that was repaired immediately.

We continue to work to keep our church family home in good repair. Anyone who would love to join us is very welcome, even if it is to get quotes for jobs to hire or work with Walter to do repairs... always more fun with a partner.

Feel free to let us know of any issues you notice so we can address them.

Patty Trail, Property Committee Chair

*For we are the temple of the living God, as God said "I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. ~ 2 Corinthians 6:16b*

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## Ministry & Personnel

Your M&P Committee (Lois Walker, Blaine Irving and Ann Krause) was busy during the past year fulfilling their responsibilities as M&P members. Problem solving and decision making were certainly required throughout the year. In every situation that we confronted, we were good listeners, we tried to problem solve and we made recommendations to the best of our ability.

Revising and updating Job Descriptions was a special project undertaken in 2023; there is more to do in this area and hopefully we can complete it in 2024.

We had close ties with Wilmot United and St. Andrews Presbyterian churches throughout 2023. We shared ideas and strategies with M&P committees in the three churches.

As I prepare this report today, I am reminded that our custodian, Rusty Blakely is completing his last day at St. Paul's. Rusty is going to study Carpentry, and we wish him lots of success with this initiative. Rusty will be dearly missed at St. Paul's!

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, we have had a vacancy on our M&P Team as Blaine Irving has taken the position of Chair of the Board. We are looking for a 3<sup>rd</sup> member, perhaps a male, to join us in fulfilling our duties and responsibilities as M&P members. Thanks for considering this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Krause, Chair of M&P

*Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. ~ Hebrews 10:25*

## Worship Committee

Well, 2023 proved to be a very interesting and perhaps unsettling year. I'm sure Mother Nature was unsettled! Your Worship Committee had an interesting, somewhat unsettled but very fruitful year as well. We grappled with the news from Credence, asking ourselves what positive things we could extract from the report and there was plenty of Good News to hold onto. Downtown United is still thriving, Worship Services were held with no interruption and Jane Blakely's first financial year report was not as grim as we thought it might be due to all our efforts and God's grace.

With positive action planning always on our agenda, we composed our 2022 report which confirmed many good and positive things that happened that year.

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We continued with positive action planning in 2023. The Congregation, your Minister and all staff continue to strive to create a positive, welcoming, non-judgmental, warm space where ALL are welcomed.

In April, Mary Stickles joined our committee, which was a big positive. Joyous Easter services were planned with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday held at Wilmot, who also served breakfast after the Sunrise Service. Easter Communion Service was held at St. Paul's. Rev. Michelle was away on April 16<sup>th</sup> and your Worship Committee arranged for Mike Bravener to officiate, bringing a joy-filled group of young students and their instruments from the university with him. Ellen Beairsto looked after Pastoral Care. Whenever Rev. Michelle is away for sabbatical and continuing education, your committee makes sure that there is no interruption to the services our Church provides. Downtown United Services were planned and held during the summer.

Fall Kickoff Sunday saw the welcome return of Rev. Michelle, bringing new ideas and perspective. Another big positive. Notable Sunday Services in the Fall were Anniversary Sunday with Rev. Rose-Hannah, and a Memorial Hymn Sing in November. Both were well attended.

Planning December services was sometimes challenging but always FUN. Our Church was so very alive at the Candles by Glow Stick Service attended by lots of children and their families, singing loudly and making a joyful noise. We held a joint Longest Night Service at Wilmot and 2 well attended Christmas Eve Services at St. Paul's. The 3p.m. Family and 7p.m. Communion Service attendance astounded us and filled us with hope.

Going forward in 2024, we will continue with positive action planning, making our services welcoming, exciting and faith filled. Special thanks to Chris Grant for acting as our Secretary and making sure our Communion services are well prepared, Ann Raper for composing volunteer sign-up sheets for our coffee and conversation hours, Roger Miller for all the many tasks he does, Mary Stickles for her calm and sage advice, and Tammy for ensuring the doors are open to all.

Thank you too, to members of our wonderful Congregational family who volunteer as Greeters, Readers, Audio Visual techs, coffee hour hosts, choir members, and all who sit on our various committees. (psst-we can ALWAYS use more). It is ALL of us who make St. Paul's run like a well-oiled ship. Without all of us, we would be moored to a very dull dry dock.

Finally, thanks be to our Lord who is always with us communicating HIS positive action plans for us!

Deborah West, Worship Committee Chair

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## Music Ministry

It was another good year of music at St. Paul's. The choir welcomed new and returning members. Recitals are once again taking place in the sanctuary. I gave an organ recital in December and Candlelight Classix has presented several concerts. The Advent Carol Festival service returned after a three-year absence, and it was a resounding success.

Thank you choir and volunteers for all your hard work.

We are looking forward to another successful year of music.

Dr. Sharon Pond, Organist & Choir Director



## Community Outreach

### The Pantry

*Mission Statement: To assist needy families in our community by providing food, and household items to augment services they receive elsewhere.*

As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, we have a total of 153 clients. This includes 243 children, 31 single women, 39 single men, 17 couples, 20 single parent families, 56 2-parent families. Most of these are immigrant families. They have between 4 and 8 children. When they come to Canada, they are given a home and some money but not enough to live on. It must be very difficult for them. Most of them do not speak English. Some are from Syria. A few can speak limited English. We also have 2 students from India.

The members of the congregation support the Pantry and Brown Bag lunches very well. One member gives us a \$50 gift certificate every month to a store where we buy most of our groceries. Several give through PAR. All eleven volunteers in the Pantry appreciate every donation, large or small. We all thank you very much.

### Brown Bag Lunch Program

I also look after the Brown Bag lunches. There have been as many as 18 people in one day coming for a free lunch. Many are homeless. I make up the bags and Meghan hands them out from the office. She records each bag she gives out. Throughout the year, 922 Brown Bag Lunches have been disseminated to 180 individuals.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Walker Gillin, Chair, Pantry.

### Brown Bag Lunch Program

2023 Program Statistics

180+ Individuals Served throughout the Year

Month	Number of Bags Disbursed in 2022	Number of Bags Disbursed in 2023
January	43	56
February	35	46
March	60	62
April	58	68
May	67	40
June	81	88
July	59	100
August	105	71
September	84	103
October	97	113
November	100	118
December	60	57
TOTAL	849	922

## United Church Women (UCW)

Hello to all from Rexton, Kent County. The southern sun is shining through my front window as I look out at the smelt nets on the Richibucto River. This has been a year of major changes for me, and for St. Paul's as well.

The United Church Women have carried on with their Mission and Service to St. Paul's United Church throughout 2023. The faithful few got the job done!

We catered for two funeral services: Vernon Green's on February 24<sup>th</sup> and Royal MacDonald's on July 5<sup>th</sup>. Lunch was provided for the Choral Society Workshop and for a 'Meet and Greet' for the Organist Society in September. As well as providing coffee/tea after Church Services, we served soup and dessert for two combined meetings with Wilmot United for discussions led by Credence.

The Wilmot UCW invited the St. Paul's ladies to join them at their monthly meetings. We all enjoyed a delicious "Summer Closing" lunch together at Gibson's famous Hall.

The UCW led two Church Services - The World Day of Prayer on March 12<sup>th</sup> prepared by the women of Taiwan, and Pentecost Sunday on May 28<sup>th</sup> with the help of the Sunday School.

For those members of St. Paul's who can no longer get out and go, home visits by the UCW ladies are always much appreciated at Easter and Christmas, with some little treats left behind.

In October we made our bottled Mincemeat. Not many pie makers left! On November 18<sup>th</sup>, we had the Christmas Bazaar. Sorry I wasn't much help, Covid hit me hard!

Finally, a BIG THANK YOU to all the ladies who hold the UCW so close to their hearts. The bodies are aging, the numbers are dwindling. Luckily there are those who will jump in when needed. You are all so much appreciated!

Who knows what the future will hold for St. Paul's United Church. The world is in turmoil all around us. With Christ's lead, we can only hope to head in the right direction... Missing you all and think of you often. Stay in touch...

Donna Chauvin



## 2023 UCW Financial Report

### Revenues

Envelope Offerings & Donations	\$730.00
Fundraising	\$4086.11
Catering	\$1480.00
Total	<u>\$6296.11</u>

### Expenses

Membership Dues	\$70.00
Fundraising	\$210.89
Catering	\$182.47
Total	<u>\$463.36</u>

Revenue in excess of expenses \$5832.75

UCW Fund Balance January 1, 2023	\$2288.11
Revenue in excess of expenses	<u>\$5832.75</u>
Fund Balance December 31, 2023	<u>\$8120.86</u>



## FSLDW Regional Council

### Financial & Mission & Service Committees

The following is a report from your regional representative on the Financial and Mission Services committee of our region.

For the past 2 years I have had the pleasure to be active on this committee and will continue for another year. The committee reports to Rev Faith March MacCuish, Executive minister for all 3 maritime regions, located in St John's Nfld.

Responsibilities of the committee members are outlined in the church manual and included the following:

- Review and approval of annual budget,
- Review and approval of quarterly financial statements,
- Review and approval of annual audited financial statements,
- Approving the appointment of auditor,
- Approving request for grants from church and associated organizations,
- Reviewing and approving quarterly financial reports of the various fund accounts,
- Approving capital expenditures for building maintenance and repairs,
- Approve recommended acquisition and renewals of short-term financial investments,
- Recommend appoint of new members to the committee,
- Other duties as requested.

Ron Naugler

Your St Paul's Regional Representative

