



Annual Report 2021

**Seeking transformation, engagement
and service for ourselves, our
community and our world**

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Cover Photo: Pride Sunday

RIGHT: The church chancel at Lent; Every Child Matters was on our outdoor sign following the discovery of unmarked graves at Kamloops Residential School

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Our Mission

As a faith-based community, we are committed to including people of all ages, economic circumstances, abilities, ethnicities, sexual orientations and gender identities in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry.

Together we seek transformation, engagement and service for ourselves, our community and our world.

Our Vision

First Metropolitan is a vibrant, diverse, justice-seeking, faith-based community rooted in downtown Victoria and branching out beyond.

Our Core Values and Beliefs

1. To love one another unconditionally as God loves us and to value each person's uniqueness.
2. To value the gifts of community and being an integral part of the wider community
3. To actively care for and live with respect in creation.
4. To nurture Christian spirituality and justice-seeking in ways that foster personal growth and creative interaction.
5. To acknowledge and respect that we live, work and worship on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish nations.
6. To celebrate that ours is an evolving faith, founded on the teachings of Jesus and relevant to our lives today.

Our Worship Services

10:00 am	Communion in the Chapel (via zoom on Thursdays)
11:00 am	Worship in the Sanctuary (online)



In Remembrance

January

CANN, Gordon	Jan 17	Former Minister
GRANT, Mildred	Jan 26	Norma (daughter)

February

COOK, Kathy	Feb 13	Andrew Faulkner (spouse)
THEISSEN, Ilse	Feb 28	

April

MALCOLM, Olive	Apr 30	Edeana (daughter)
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May

BARTEL, Elizabeth	May 07	Dennis (spouse)
TRESIZE, Ann	May 11	Jonathan (son)
MCGOWAN, David	May 26	Micia Kanstrup (sister)

June

JONES, Avenel	Jun 19	Heather Jones (daughter)
MORGAN, Glen	Jun 20	Hayley Henderson (sister)
MOURANT, Joyce	Jun 26	Steven (son)

July

POND, Phyllis	Jul 31	Tracey (daughter)
O'KEEFFE, Pat	Jul 31	Kat Rainsberry (daughter)

September

DERBYSHIRE, Sylvia	Sep 21	Elwood (father)
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October

KENNEDY, Gladys	Oct 02	Former member
CROZIER-SMITH, Lillian	Oct 30	Paul (son)

November

HOLMS, Betty	Nov 11	Bruce (son)
HENDERSON, Neal	Nov 13	Jacquie (spouse)

December

DOWSE, Joan	Dec 13	Linda Skolsky (daughter)
BEEL, Jon	Dec 25	Anne (spouse)



"I am the resurrection and the life; all who believe in me, though they die, yet shall they live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." - John 11:25, 26

Statistical Report 2021

Weddings

Hon Wah Yuen and Yanmei Zheng were married on April 6, 2021
by Rev Shelagh MacKinnon

Jason Melrose Gray and Chelsey Louise Lane were married on August 14, 2021
by Rev Shelagh MacKinnon

Christopher Ernest Godwin Chance and May Zella Osberg were married on August 29, 2021
by Rev Albert Fowler

Child Baptisms

Lachlan Klark Boon, child of Katelyn A Boon on January 31, 2021
by Rev Shelagh MacKinnon

Adult Baptisms

Katelyn Allison Boon
One adult baptism

January 31, 2021 by Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon
October 19, 2021 by Rev Shelagh MacKinnon

Church Membership

274 Members

Average number of persons attending Sunday services

9:00 am	0
11:00 am	53
Online	65



Governance and Teams

Church Board *

Edeana Malcolm, Chair
Anne Carson (resigned Sep)
Liane Clark
Ross Breckon
Jacquie Henderson (resigned Oct)
Emily MacDonald

Board of Trustees*

Jan Drent, Chair, Investments
Larry Scott, Secretary
Rennie Warburton
Marion Denton
Christine Hutchinson
Earl Jenson, Legacy Circle
Ross Breckon, Board Rep

Archives and Heritage*

Margery Hadley, Co-leader
Don Bourdon
Anne Carson, Board Rep

Christian Spiritual Development and Worship*

Marion Denton, Leader (resigned Jan)
Leslie Biederman
Gillian Chamberlin
Arlene Anderson, Flowers
Technical Resources to CSD&W:
Joan Mason, Audio-Visual
Paul Hilton, Lighting
Edeana Malcolm, Board Rep

Communications*

David Bray, Leader
Joan Mason
Edeana Malcolm, Board Rep
Janet Gray, Facebook resource

Evolving Church

Emily MacDonald, Leader, Board Rep
Heather Querengesser
Jacquie Henderson
Kyla Morrison Morgan, Staff Partner
Shelagh MacKinnon, Staff Partner
Leslie Biederman
Marilyn Banfield
Penny Bond
Vicky Atwell
Barry Rolston
Joan Mickelson
Pat Dykes

Finance and Administration

Liane Clark, Treasurer, Leader, Board Rep
Andrew Faulkner, IT Support (resigned Feb)
Jan Drent, Property
Susan Walma
Katya Rumyantseva, Staff Partner
Fiona Weber, Staff Partner

Hospitality—inactive

Library*

Denise Holmen, Leader
David Chamberlin
Gillian Chamberlin
Phyllis Duval (on leave)
Pat Davey (resigned)
Clare Lowery (resigned)
Earl Jenson
Alva Jenson
Terry Swan
Anne Carson, Board Rep

Ministry and Personnel

Leanne Prestwich, Chair
Marie McKee
Peter Clugston
Liane Clark, Board Rep

Music

Mary Byrne, Leader
Gordon Larson
Judi Swanston
Sharon Stennes
Kelly Charlton, Staff Partner
Jacquie Henderson, Board Rep

Newcomers Welcoming *

David Prestwich, Leader
Brenda Porter
Jacquie Henderson, Board rep

Outreach*

Janet Gray, Co-leader
Jan Drent, Adult Shelter Liaison
Hally & Andrea Hofmyer, Our Place
Monthly Serving Coordinators
Penny Bond, Angel Gifts
Forrest Nelson, Mission and Service

Pacific Mountain Regional Representatives

Shelagh MacKinnon, Board Rep
Janet Gray, Lay Delegate

Property

Jan Drent, Leader
Bruce Davies, Staff Partner
Ross Breckon, Board Rep
Chris Rainsberry, resource

Redevelopment Task Group*

Ross Breckon, Chair, Board Rep
Linden Holmen
Steve Gray
Peter Clugston
David Bray
Bruce Davies, Staff Partner
Shelagh MacKinnon, Staff Partner

Spiritual Care & Wellness*

Sharron Higgins, Co-leader
Irene Baddeley
Roberta McKay
Wally Lazaruk
Lynda Page (from Jun 2021)
Kyla Morgan Morrison, Staff Partner
Shelagh MacKinnon, Staff Partner
Emily MacDonald, Board Rep

Sunday School

Edeana Malcolm, Board Rep
Larry Scott
Mary Byrne
Emily MacDonald
Leslie Biederman
Micia Kanstrup, Staff Partner

United Church Women*

Joan Dowse & Marie McKee, Co-Presidents, Mildred Mossop Unit
Janet Harper, Corresponding Sec.
Patti Buchanan, President, Unity
Irene Baddeley, Secretary
Pat Davey, Treasurer
Emily MacDonald, Board Rep

*** Shelagh MacKinnon is the staff partner for all teams indicated with an asterisk.**



Minister's Report

Within the embracing presence of our good and gracious God, we have emerged from a difficult year! As we reflect on 2021, we might be struck by the wide range of hopes and disappointments for ourselves as a community of faith. As 2020 came to a close, we hoped that the COVID-19 pandemic would be behind us as people got vaccinated. We even heard talk of a "return to normal." We grew tired of the use of the word "unprecedented"!

And so, it is deeply meaningful to see what was accomplished in spite of the struggles we experienced locally and internationally because of the pandemic. Honour and thanks to those who continued to offer support and comfort in times of illness, bereavement, perplexity and stress. Through countless technologies (including the telephone and the Zoom meeting), so many members of First-Met's community served the needs of others.

The reports here are stories of carrying on through a very difficult year. I so appreciate the men and women and youth of this community of faith whose actions and gifts helped shape the experiences of others. While 2021 wasn't the year any of us hoped it would be, there were some great things that came from it. Thank you!

A special shout out to the Board who worked diligently and well, my fellow staff members who adapted to constantly changing circumstances, and to the people who participated through YouTube and Zoom meetings! The separate actions of people at home added a profoundly positive note to 2021; it is not an exaggeration to say that this church helped us to live in hope, not fear, in love not cynicism, in resolution not despair. This was a gift of the Sacred Spirit acting through the people of First-Metropolitan. We are grateful and dare to look forward to the future.

Our involvement in the North Park neighbourhood continued to grow, while we also supported outreach work across Canada and globally through the Mission and Service Fund. Many lives are affected by these resources, and this wouldn't be possible without your faithful, financial gifts. For that, we are grateful, and we hope it is encouraging to you to see how far the gifts are going through these avenues.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve as your Lead Minister. It is an exciting and vibrant time to be here! As we go into the new year, there is much to look forward to and pray for: our buildings, our community of faith, our staff and the global community of which we are a part. We are seeking to make a positive difference by reaching out and giving back to our community. I believe this is the Sacred Spirit's call to us into the future, and I am excited to see how it all looks at the end of 2022.

Shelagh
Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon



First Metropolitan United Church Board

Our regular monthly meetings were held on Zoom from 3 pm to 5 pm on the third Wednesday of every month. We had two other meetings - one on September 30, held in-person in the Doreene McLeod Room to discuss reassignment of Teams due to resignations and to find more volunteers, and a Zoom meeting on December 1 to reinstate some COVID protocols.

The Church was open for in-person worship services for a few weeks in the fall, with proof of vaccination required and masks mandatory. During that period, on November 21, we managed to have a hybrid congregational meeting, both in-person and on Zoom, in order to vote on the new Mission Statement which is the theme of this year's Annual Report. We also voted to become an Affirming congregation. I am proud to say that the vote was unanimously in favour of both motions.

I want to thank fellow Board members for the outstanding work they did in 2021. Ross Breckon continued to work on redevelopment and started a group to find letting for the Church premises. Liane Clark worked diligently looking after our finances, the minutia of administration and COVID procedures. Emily MacDonald guided the Evolving Church team that worked on many wonderful initiatives, especially in the North Park neighbourhood. She also organized the Aging to Sage-ing course. I'd also like to thank Anne Carson and Jacquie Henderson, who left the Board this year, for their valuable contributions.



Thank you to everyone who was involved in the church in one way or another during the challenging days of 2021. A very special thank you as well to Reverend Shelagh MacKinnon, who attended all of our meetings and went above and beyond the call of duty each and every day. God bless you, Shelagh.

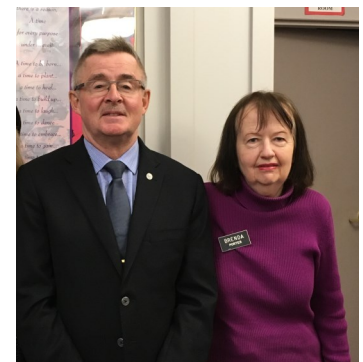
Edeana Malcolm, Chair

Newcomers Welcoming

The team consists of two members. When attendance at in-person services resumed in September 2021, we returned to greeting attendees, checking vaccine passports when required. After December 19, in-person worship was again suspended.

We look forward to welcoming you to church services when we are able to resume in-person worship.

David Prestwich, Team Leader



David Prestwich,
Brenda Porter.

Strategic Plan Update

In early 2020, the Board created a strategic plan built around three goals that would be the focus of our collective energy over the next five years in order to achieve our Vision. They provide the foundation upon which we will carry on our Mission for many years into the future. During 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed progress on these goals. The plan was updated early in 2022 and is presented here for congregational information.

Goal One: Foster Transformation and Innovation Rooted in Progressive Christian Faith

G.1.1 Design a Sunday School program that reflects our progressive Christian theology. (Completion by Dec 31, 2024)

Review current curriculum for appropriateness, determine support (e.g. workshops, classes, events) that Sunday School teachers and volunteers need to maintain their relevance, and determine what resources are needed to achieve this objective.

G.1.2 Offer youth programs in collaboration with other churches.

Invite other Sunday School Leaders from local United churches in the downtown area to discuss collaboration in order to provide relevant, sustainable and appropriate programming for this age group.

G.1.3 Become an Affirming congregation

Became affirming on November 21, 2021, with formal certification received on March 13, 2022. Next check-in date is Nov 21, 2022.

G.1.4 Design and conduct conversations to develop Evolving Church and progressive theology. (Completion by Dec 31, 2024)

Success of this objective will be measured by a common language and understanding throughout the congregation.

G.1.5 Engage with the larger community, including North Park Neighbourhood Association.

Develop initiatives (7 in 2022, 8 in 2023, and 9 in 2024) that will open our doors and our hearts to our neighbours, such as free summer BBQs, Potluck Church, sing-alongs followed by coffee and treats, Christmas Angel Gifts, nightly shelter program, non-partisan all-candidates debates, Tai Chi, healing touch and other programs and measures that will help us become more engaged with our community and our neighbourhood, with the goal of responding

More appropriately to local neighbourhood needs in ways that respond to our Christian faith. This goal is not meant to create new church members.

G.1.6 Review and update Spiritual Care and Wellness strategic plan yearly and present to the congregation so that Spiritual Care and Wellness can continue to offer programs and services that respond to both the congregation and the community. (Completion by June 30, 2024)

The Spiritual Care and Wellness Team currently supports a number of umbrella groups that respond to needs both within and outside First Met such as Prayer Connections, Visitation and Care Calls, Caregiver Support Group, Healing Pathway, Tai chi, Gentle Yoga and Chair Yoga, Mindfulness Meditation, Knitting Group, Pastoral Care visits and Summer Strollers and may embrace fewer or different ones in the future. This team also supports education for these programs through the Bursary fund.

G.1.7 Develop and implement a clear mandate and action plan which will facilitate reconciliation with First Nations. (Completion date December 2024)

The Outreach Team will work with others, both inside and outside the church, including First Nations leaders to implement strategies for reconciliation, in conjunction with First Met programs and ministries, that will respond to the needs of local First Nations peoples as stated in the TRC's "94 Calls for Action".

G.1.8 Develop a plan on how First Metropolitan United Church will work cooperatively with other organizations to support the settlement of refugees.

FMUC acknowledges that the settlement of refugees in our community is a social justice issue requiring our attention. Our Outreach Team most recently worked in collaboration with the congregation of St. John the Divine Anglican Church, sponsors of a refugee family who have immigrated to Victoria. This work has come to a successful conclusion and FMUC must now chart a course forward to continue our action in this arena of social justice.

Continued on p. 10

Strategic Plan Update continued from p. 9

We will use the lessons learned from our recent work with St. John the Divine, the experience of other United Church Congregations across Canada and the policies and programs put in place by the General Council of the United Church of Canada to decide how best to move forward.

G.1.9 Update and renew worship life.

The Lead minister, Director of Music Ministry and their teams will work in collaboration to animate and invigorate our worship life, reflecting our progressive Christian faith through relevant, aware, and forward-looking choices of spoken and sung word, visual imagery, music and prayer.

Goal Two: Support a Diverse Team of Volunteers and Staff

G.2.1 Determine essential ministries. (Completion date December 31, 2024)

Develop criteria to determine what is essential. Determine if the HALO project can help with determining which ministries are essential and communicating why they are. The pilot ministry for review will be memorial services. Implement an ongoing annual review process to continue identifying essential ministries.

G.2.2 Create a position of Coordinator of Volunteers.

This goal is possibly being dropped.

G.2.3 Support and expand our volunteer base. (Completion by December 31, 2024)

Develop a communication plan to explain to the congregation the programs and ministries and the list of volunteer positions available with a brief description of what each job entails. Evaluate unfilled volunteer positions and determine the best way to fill any gaps. Review the already prepared materials for volunteer management, revise materials where necessary, develop a plan to 'catch up' current volunteers, and develop a plan to recruit and maintain new volunteers. Recognize and celebrate volunteers on a regular basis.

G.2.4 Determine best practices for welcoming and retaining community of faith participants (Completion date December 31, 2024)

Consult with others on best practices for

welcoming and retaining community of faith participants, including recognition of diversity. Conduct discussions on merging Hospitality and Newcomers Welcoming teams. Implement results of consultations and discussions.

G.2.5 Prepare and implement a short- and long-term succession plan for paid staff and key volunteers.

Have discussions with present staff to know future plans including retirement dates. Find out what suggestions they have regarding succession. What do they see as needing to be changed in their job descriptions? Prepare new job descriptions based on our needs and their suggestions and update annually. Have discussions with key volunteers to know future plans including stepping down dates. Find out what suggestions they have regarding succession. Assign ongoing responsibility for staff and volunteer plan maintenance to appropriate teams.

G.2.6 Develop a staffing plan (Completion date December 31, 2024)

In consideration of our strategic plan as a whole, determine what staff would be optimal to carry out the objectives of the plan. Consider if we have the resources to hire any additional staff that is required. After a review with current staff members, determine which tasks are essential to continue and what would be the most efficient staff complement to carry out those tasks.

Goal 3: Transform the Church through Vibrant Redevelopment and Financial Revitalization

The transformation and revitalization of our physical and financial assets over the next five years will lead First Met to a sustainable future as a vital and vibrant downtown Victoria church. Delays over the past years require overhauling the redevelopment project proposal, formalizing new agreements with project partners, updating our policies and procedures for fundraising, finding new tenants for vacant space, preparing and implementing a cost-effective plan to deal with First Met's aging building systems, annually reviewing the strategic plan, and having an annual discussion of our legacy. These matters will be the subject of consultations with the congregation.

Edeana Malcolm, Chair

Becoming Affirming

After a year of discussions and studies on Zoom in 2020, we continued our journey to become an Affirming congregation in 2021.

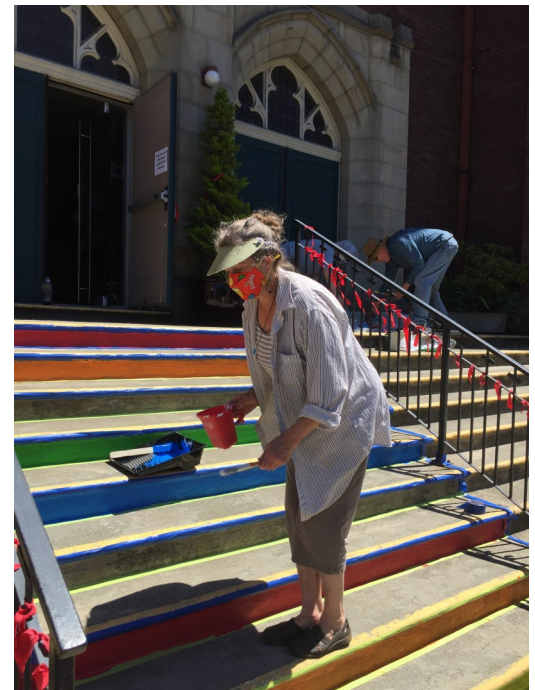
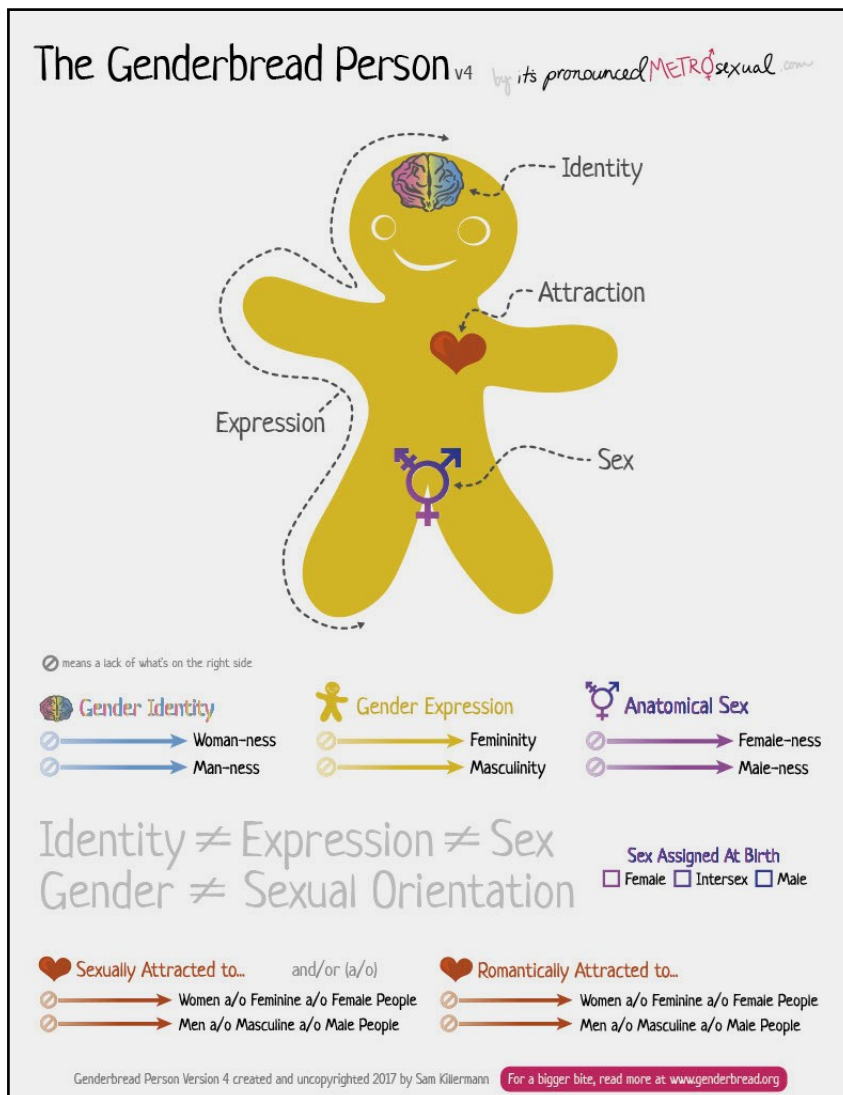
On February 2, 2021, we had a Zoom session with Corey Keith of Spectra Services in which we learned a great deal, especially about what being transgender means. Then in June, a group of volunteers painted the Quadra Street steps in rainbow colours. The Sunday School also painted the steps leading to the yard on Quadra Street.

On November 21, we held a hybrid congregational meeting, that is, both in-person and on Zoom, to vote on our new Mission Statement and on becoming affirming. Both motions passed unanimously! This, through the culmination of two years of study and education, is only the beginning of our journey.

The year 2022 will begin with a celebration on March 13 when we receive a certificate from Affirm United welcoming us into the fold. It will continue with our efforts to become more inclusive by making the washroom in the concourse available to all regardless of age, ability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Also, we are working with the Inter-Cultural Association and Friendship & Freedom Refugee Sponsorship Group to sponsor an LGBTQ2SA+ refugee. We will do this with money that we have already raised that is devoted to refugee sponsorship, thanks to, and in memory of, our friend Kathy Cook.

Edeana Malcolm, Chair



ABOVE: Volunteers painted the risers of the church steps in rainbow colours.

LEFT: Facilitator Corey Keith used this graphic to help participants understand the complexities of gender identification, expression and sexual orientation in a February 2 workshop.

Christian Spiritual Development and Worship



Lent 2021: The image of sea glass conveyed that even brokenness can be beautiful and holy.



Good Friday scripture readings recorded around Victoria



Summer 2021: Beguiled by Beauty

Over seven Sundays, from July 11 to August 22, worship with us as we explore beauty, sacred worth, the beauty and resilience of the natural world, contemplation and radical compassion.

ABOVE: Summer Worship series
BELOW: Pride Sunday, July 4, 2021



In-person attendance at worship was suspended for most of the year and all services were live-streamed, including some that were not previously available online.

Planning for worship services was conducted by an ad hoc worship team consisting of Shelagh MacKinnon, Kelly Charlton, David Bray, Joan Mason, Mary Byrne and the current cooperative education student. Through the year, worship resources were adapted from Worship Design Studio materials including *Holy Vessels* (Lent 2021), *Beguiled by Beauty* (Summer 2021), *Housing the Holy* (Advent 2021) and *Angels Among Us* (Christmas Eve 2021). In addition, the services for the Season of Creation (Sep 5 to Oct 4) took inspiration from *A Home for All* resource created by the World Council of Churches.

We are grateful to the individuals who were lectors for the services including David Bray, Liane Clark, Edeana Malcolm, Sharon Stennes, Pat Dykes, Kyla Morrison Morgan, Shirley Chatfield, Wende Fenske, Larry Fenske, Marion Denton, Jodie Brady-Quinton and Larry Scott. We are also grateful to those who provided flowers for the chancel, especially Arlene Anderson, Joan Mason and Sharron Higgins.

Limited in-person attendance at worship services began in August 2021. Our choir returned on Sep 12 to the delight of the congregation. The Thanksgiving Sunday service collected food and socks for Our Place. Attendance was suspended again following the Dec 19 Christmas Sunday service when the Omicron variant of COVID caused infection and hospitalization rates to soar.

Communion was offered at services on Jan 10, May 2, Aug 22, Oct 3 and Nov 28. Prior to August, communion was virtual only. Once in-person attendance commenced, communion was offered using prepackaged communion wafers and juice. The 9:00 am worship group met weekly on Thursday mornings with Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon for a virtual communion service throughout 2021.

We were blessed to have cooperative education students Peter Chalmers, Jodie Brady-Quinton and Lindsey Bellman work as part of the technical crew at the back of the sanctuary for the January to April, May to August, and September to December work terms respectively. Trison Nguyen, who first worked at the church during a work term in 2014, continues to provide technical support most Sundays; we are very grateful to have his continued participation. Ryan Lee (a 2020 cooperative education student) and Jodie Brady-Quinton have filled in as casual digital communication technicians when required.

Continued on p.13

Worship and Christian Spiritual Development continued from p. 12

In 2021, the aging plasma choir monitors were replaced with newer, larger LED monitors funded in part by donations in memory of Jim Anderson. The wiring to the monitors was upgraded to current standards. Lindsey Bellman was instrumental in isolating some of the problems we had with “muddy” sound from our musical selections allowing Pacific Audio Works to resolve these issues by changes to the programming of our broadcasting software. We continued to have problems with our aging sound board, with the sound cutting out unexpectedly during services. This resulted in a decision to replace the sound board with a new digital board, expected to arrive in May 2022.

Christian Spiritual Development programs were also affected by the COVID restrictions. The Women Exploring Spirituality met via Zoom throughout the year, discussing the book *On the Brink of Everything* by Parker Palmer.

Achievements:

- Sunday services were streamed for all 52 Sundays in 2021 with an average viewership of 98.
- A Blessing of the Animals was included in the January 31 service.
- TRC Calls to Action and UCC responses to the abuses of residential schools were incorporated in services throughout the year.
- Special services were streamed for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, December 6 and Blue Christmas (Dec 16). Thank you to Megumi Matsuo-Saunders for organizing the Dec 6 interfaith service.
- Our Good Friday service featured gospel readings videotaped around the Victoria community (e.g., Jesus praying in the garden of Gethsemane recorded in Beacon Hill Park).
- Interviews with Julian Daly and Jodie Brady-Quinton augmented our services.
- Thank you to guest preachers including Liane Clark, Rev. Al Fowler, Rev. Larry Scott and Rev. Ingrid Hartloff Brown.
- An online-only Christmas Eve service and Christmas Day message were streamed.
- Marion Denton and Joan Dowse oversaw the creation of a Lenten reflections booklet. Marion also collected and compiled a Summer Reflections guide on gratitude. Thank you Marion and Joan!
- An Advent Reflections guide was distributed along with an Advent mailout and via the website.
- Video clips of the sermon and blessing for each Sunday service were posted to YouTube, the website and occasionally to Facebook.
- In the fall of 2021, we began adding MP3 files of choir anthems to the Music page on our website.

Joan Mason and Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon



Rev. Ingrid Hartloff Brown



ABOVE: Feather banner created by the children to commemorate the 215 unmarked graves of children; BELOW: Dec 6 service participants.



Dec 16 Blue Christmas service.

Music Ministry



ABOVE: Annalysa Tylor, Jennifer Turner and Mary Byrne provided song leadership during Sunday worship. BELOW: Bambi Maree was at the keyboard when Kelly was away in July.



To say the Music Ministry had many obstacles to overcome in 2021 is the understatement of the year. But overcome them we did - at least most of them. I cannot be more proud of how our Music Ministry colleagues rose to the challenges of a very difficult year. We sang, we rang, we played. As much and as best we could. We raised our voices in joy, praise and compassion. Whether in celebration or commemoration, we trust our songs flooded the dark moments of the year with light and injected harmony into a year that seemed intent on disharmony.

Singing in choirs was a super-spreader of COVID. To keep everyone safe, we suspended the choir for most of 2021. The Pringle Bells took a break in early 2021 but were able to ring through the fall, giving that group a rare pandemic treat: fellowship through music. Our choral scholars kept close. In dire need of a place to practice while the pandemic kept universities and conservatories closed to in-person activities, we were able to help our scholars by allowing them to use our quiet spaces. The Choral Scholars' Bursary program was initiated nearly two decades ago as outreach to the youth community. True, it took an unexpected turn this year, but we must take great pride that we showed inspired resilience and continued our outreach to these valued members of our Music Ministry.

We acknowledge the uncompromising dedication of our Music Ministry leaders to provide a little bit of melody to enliven the word. Thank you to Mary Byrne, Jennifer Turner, and Annalysa Tylor. The choir may have been silent for much of the year, but every Sunday service was filled with music. How odd it was to sing and play to a nearly empty room! If ever faith were required to give meaning to a strange task, this was it. We knew and could feel that the congregation was there at the other end of a live-stream so we freely gave what was needed. Our Music Director, Kelly Charlton, was at the keyboard for fifty of fifty-two Sundays in 2021. The Choral Scholars sang at the microphone whenever they were asked. We kept the music flowing!

When the choir came back together in September, it was as if we had never been away. At Christmas time I told Kelly, on behalf of the choir, that he had enabled us to do something many of us feared would never happen again: to sing together and to be a Music Ministry to this congregation. What a wonderful fall it was!

Continued on p. 15

Music continued from p. 14

Special mention must be made of the service *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* for All Souls' Day. Far more than a date on the annual calendar, this service is near and dear to the collective hearts of the Music Ministry. Especially in a time of social exhaustion, pandemic, loss and world-weariness, we felt it was important to work through music to nourish faith and articulate the otherwise inexpressible. That Sunday morning, the congregation was the largest of 2021. The congregation contributed more than \$4000 toward the Choral Scholars' Bursary program through personal dedications and remembrances. Afterwards, messages to the Music Ministry from the congregation shared personal stories. We are so pleased to have walked that path with you.

By late December the choir was silenced again due to the upsurge in the Omicron variant, resulting in no live services on Christmas Eve.

In 2021 Music yearned to do more, to be together more, to make more music. The Music Ministry gives its final thanks for this annual report to you, the congregation. You have been free with your messages to us this year. We hear from you that this ministry through music has been a companion to you in your faith. We hear that when services have been at their most introspective – Remembrance Day, *Let Not Your Heart*—music has brought you to your deepest place and that our joy is your joy. Thank you, for sharing these messages with us. We look forward to a most-musical, spiritual and faith-full 2022

Mary Byrne, Music Team Leader

TOP RIGHT: The choir returned on September 12 to the delight of the congregation; Pictures to RIGHT: The *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* service on Oct 31, with choral scholar Louis Dillon singing a solo; BELOW: The Christmas Sunday service on December 19 was the last in-person service of the year.



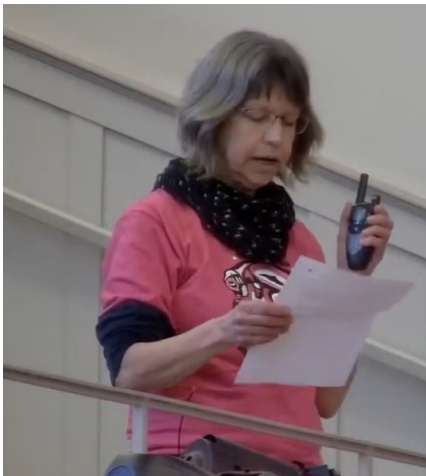
Children and Youth Ministry



Have a Heart graphic created by the Breckon-Oliver family.



Pink Shirt Day was marked by creating a driftwood wreath. BELOW: Shelagh and Micia talked about kindness via handheld radios.



The coloured feather that inspired the feather banner created by the children for the sanctuary (shown on p. 13)



January

Themes for the season—All Things Bright and Beautiful, and The New Creed.

Families invited to participate in communion virtually from their homes during worship.

Janet Harper continues her many years of maintaining the Cradle Roll and welcoming new babies. She sends out birthday cards to the children throughout the year.

Families invited to send in photos of pets for Blessing of the Animals service online.

Weekly newsletters continue to go out to 83 recipients.

Outdoor Sunday School suspended temporarily due to COVID protocols; we kept in touch by phone, email, mail, etc. and Faith at Home kits were sent out regularly, with at-home activities and crafts.

February

Have a Heart Day information and prayer provided in newsletter.

Pink Shirt Day packages delivered to families, including fabric masks and treats. Each family also received driftwood, paints, and paintbrushes. They painted the driftwood, added their names, and we put the individual pieces together to make driftwood wreaths. These showed that we would 'never drift apart'.

Families in need of extra comfort and care received much-appreciated warm knitted shawls and blankets, made by the First Met Knitters.

Newsletters began to include Community Resources for mental health and anxiety support.

Black History month - book lists sent to families.

March

Palm Sunday Children's Time with Reverend Larry Scott and Bullwinkle, who tried to eat the palm branches!

Palm crosses were delivered to all families.

Handheld radios and the phonetic alphabet during Children's Time with Reverend Shelagh, talking about how to deal with feelings of anger and hurt.

April

Easter Family Community Event took place in distanced individual family groups at five stations in the community.

Hosted by Rev. Shelagh, Larry Scott, and Liane Clark, activities included a scavenger hunt, collaborative beach art, seed planting, egg hunt, crafts, and ended with pizza and chocolate.

May

Christian Family Sunday (aka Mother's Day) colouring posters from families to decorate the sanctuary, and small take-home bouquets for the congregation and the community (offered on front steps of church).

June to August

Families coloured 215 paper feathers to honor the families in Kamloops. Distanced gatherings were held in the church garden to colour feathers. A large feather banner was created for the sanctuary, and families tolled the church bells 215 times.

Kathy McMillan read a beautiful Ojibwe prayer during worship, for the Indigenous Day of Prayer.

The Quadra garden steps were painted in rainbow colours with the Breckon-Oliver family.

Continued on p. 17

Children and Youth Ministry continued from p. 16

Goldstream camps for distanced family groups held from May to August. Included smudging and Indian Tacos with Kathy McMillan as well as scripture-based scavenger hunts and campfires.

Camp Pringle Family Camp was a long weekend of faith-filled fun at our beautiful Camp Pringle.

First Met families' food drive: families delivered flyers one weekend and went door-to-door the following Saturday to collect donations. The many bags of food collected were then distributed to families in need by the North Park Neighbourhood Association.

We sent abstract art posters to families, who coloured them and returned them to the church. The pieces were put them together to reveal a huge, colourful butterfly!

Outdoor treasure hunt over the summer –themed “Colour and Sound”. Families were given clues and searched for the items in their neighbourhood.

September to December:

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation—church bells tolled Orange Shirt Day: stop action pumpkin video created and shown during live-streamed worship.

Celebration of the five First Met youth who graduated from high school last spring included interviews and a slide show during worship. Each graduate was given a prayer scarf along with others small gifts and treats.

Butterfly Blessings! Joan Wilkinson and her sister Betty crocheted dozens of colourful butterflies that the children dropped from the balcony with blessings for the congregation. Outdoor Sunday School resumed, with a special visit from Pat Dykes, and tulip planting with Larry Scott.

Confirmation Group started! Seven youth, including youth from the Anglican Church, met at various locations for learning, food and fun. We visited Pumpkinfest at Galey Farms and talked about All Souls Day, planted trees to learn about caring for the earth, had a flashlight scavenger hunt in the church to learn the names of the parts of the church, learned about sacred places and communities of belonging with Reverend Shelagh learned about the Orthodox church with Larry Scott, made clay masks and explored the Enneagram with Minister-Emerita Megumi, had a tour and lesson at St Luke Anglican church hosted by Reverend Daniel Fournier.

Remembrance Day wreaths were presented by Hannah B, James P and Oliver D, who are also members of Girl Guides and Scouts Canada. Ava B recorded a touching reading of “In Flanders Fields”, shown during the morning worship.

During the Advent and Christmas season the confirmation group created a holly banner with words of hope that was displayed in the sanctuary.

The Sunday School asked the congregation to fill a big box with gently used books and toys for the Compassionate Warehouse. (After Christmas we brought four big boxes to the warehouse!). Families recorded themselves lighting the Advent wreath to be shown during worship.

A beautiful Christmas Eve Family Service was meticulously written (thank you Mary Byrne!), a cast created, and all things planned (thank you to the many volunteers!), but we had to cancel due to COVID safety concerns. We look forward to the event for December 2022!

Micia Kanstrup, Sunday School Coordinator



Breckon-Oliver family ringing the church bell to remember the 215 children.



Butterfly created from abstract art posters.



Ava reciting “In Flanders Field”.



Holly banner created by the confirmation group.

Outreach

"As soon as I wake up... I remember that everything is interrelated, the teaching of interdependence. So then I set my intention for the day, that this day should be meaningful. Meaningful means, if possible, serve and help others. If not possible, then at least not to harm others. That's a meaningful day." Archbishop Desmond Tutu (died Dec. 26, 2021)

As with many activities during this COVID pandemic, some Outreach activities have continued, both online and a few outside, but some were on hold or did not happen with volunteers, like Our Place.

One thing that the COVID virus has shown is how very interconnected our global community is, and what happens to one of us can indeed happen to all! We are grateful for the health resources that we have in Canada, along with access to vaccines, but we also acknowledge that millions of people around the world have not had access to either hospitalization or vaccines.

Fourteen people met online for five weeks in Spring 2021 to discuss the book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

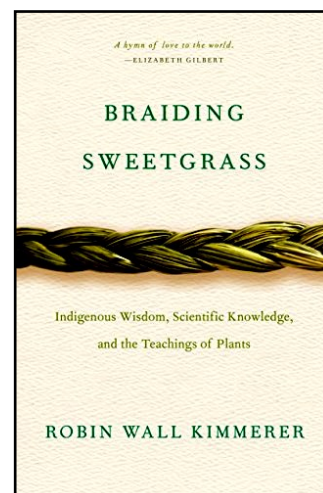
"Action on behalf of life transforms. Because the relationship between self and the world is reciprocal, it is not a question of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting. As we work to heal the earth, the earth heals us." — Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

In May 2021, ground penetrating radar found 215 unmarked graves on the grounds of the Kamloops residential school. This was not unexpected news as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission heard and recorded that children disappeared from all the residential schools and families never knew what happened to them. Kamloops was only the first of many communities across Canada to find and begin to bring some closure to this horrific abusive past. First Met marked this day by tying 215 red ribbons on the railing outside the front of our building. They remain there to this day.

September 30th was Canada's first National Day of Reconciliation and it was marked at First Met by selling orange T-shirts to honour the story of Orange Shirt Day and the survivors of residential schools, and to acknowledge the intergenerational trauma caused by the residential school legacy. What are next steps we might take as a community to learn of our past and work towards reconciliation?

Continued on p. 19

Braiding Sweetgrass was the subject of a Spring 2021 book study.



ABOVE and BELOW: Janet Gray, Clare Lowery and Shelagh MacKinnon tying red ribbons on the railings.



BELOW: The orange T-shirt design created by Carey Newman, an Indigenous artist and author.



Outreach continued from p. 18:

“Human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe” said the International Panel on Climate Change report in August 2021. June 2021 was one of the hottest on record in British Columbia with a heat dome lasting weeks and causing over 600 deaths. Scientists and the head of the United Nations called their report a “Code Red” for humanity to quickly begin to make the necessary changes to cut carbon emissions which are causing overall temperatures to rise. How are we being called to respond to this human induced climate emergency as a church, nationally, regionally and locally?

In late fall 2021, the 26th UN climate conference (COP) took place. I was honoured to attend online as an official observer as part of the For the Love of Creation delegation. I was particularly pleased to see and hear from many faith groups at COP speaking out about climate justice. Nationally we not only must cut carbon emissions, but along with other fossil fuel producing nations we must contribute funds to help millions of people in countries already faced with life-threatening climate changes. How are we being called to respond to the climate crisis, personally and as a community?

Christmas sales of Zatoun products, olive oil and spices, were our small way of keeping Palestine and the ongoing conflict with Israel in our hearts and minds.

In March 2022, nine people met online to pilot the *For the Love of Creation* climate conversations for three sessions. These were wonderful opportunities to learn, share our questions and concerns and motivate each other. Stay tuned, we will be offering these conversations more widely to as many people as possible in the coming year.

First Met has participated in quite a number of refugee sponsorships over the past years, often in partnership with our neighbours, St John the Divine Anglican. The last family that we welcomed was in August 2018 and they are just now in process to get their Canadian citizenship. It is a long and not always smooth journey to become a Canadian!

First Met has held funds earmarked for refugee projects for the past few years. We have decided to share these funds with a local sponsorship group called the Friendship and Freedom group. This group has the people, previous refugee sponsorship experience and the energy to take on another sponsorship but they needed some help raising funds. We feel it uses the earmarked money for the purpose it was intended and supports this group at the same time. The group is still awaiting information from the Intercultural Association about who they might sponsor, but thanks to First Met donations they are well on their way to having the financial resources for refugee support.

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” “Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world” Desmond Tutu

Janet Gray, Outreach Team Leader



An example of the graphics created by Janet Gray to summarize some key points from COP 26 each day.



Zatoun Products were sold at Christmas.

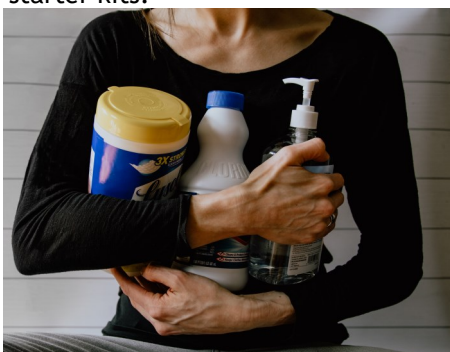


Refugee funds raised previously will support a local sponsorship group.

Evolving Church Team



ABOVE: Treats were added to the Food Hampers on special occasions. BELOW: Cleaning products are just one component of the tenant starter kits.



The Evolving Church Team has been meeting since 2019. We are an open group of approximately 10 people who are seeking new ways of being Christian. While we honour the traditional ways of being church, we feel a need to move forward in finding new ways of understanding the Christian message.

Knowing we are located in the poorest neighbourhood in Victoria, we are trying to find ways to know and support this vibrant little community that sees itself as “edgy” and not “troubling” (which seems to be the city’s perception).

The team has been working closely with the North Park Neighbourhood Association (NPNA), which has its finger on the pulse of the community. The NPNA runs a food hamper program out of our Fellowship Hall on a weekly basis. There are 25 families with 55 children who are part of the program, as well as others. The Evolving Church team has been raising funds to provide special treats for the children in these families for special occasions, such as Hallowe’en, Christmas, Summer, and Easter. We have received very positive support of this venture from the NPNA.

We have also been supporting Our Place by gathering Tenant Support Kits to outfit unhoused people who are starting anew in an apartment. Donations have been very generous.

The pandemic has kept the team from having meetings and events that might help us get more acquainted with the people who live in North Park, and find out the needs and desires of this community of folks who describe themselves as “edgy to the core.”

Emily MacDonald, Team Leader

Social Groups



Friendship Club Christmas gathering.

Friendship Club

Regular luncheon meetings were paused when pandemic restrictions came into place. During the summer and fall, the group met for socially distanced picnics in local parks until poor weather caused cancellation once more. A special treat was a gathering at the Four Mile Pub just before Christmas. Members keep in touch via an informal telephone network.

Men’s Water Into Wine Pub Night

This monthly gathering has remained virtual due to the challenges of dealing with vaccine passports. Attendance has been brisk and self-supplied beverages need not be virtual! Thanks to Ross Breckon for organizing the Zoom sessions.

Men’s Luncheon Group

The First Met Men’s Luncheon group continued to meet via Zoom for most of the year from January to October. Speakers from the University of Victoria offered stimulating presentations followed by discussions on topics of interest. Later in the year some presentations were led by several of our own members and open to all who wished to join the Zoom gatherings. In June, Earl Jenson and Cyril Nasim stepped down as co-chairs. To date, no one has stepped forward take on the leadership of this group. We are grateful to all for the interest and support of the First Met Men’s Luncheon group through many years.

Spiritual Care and Wellness

The Spiritual Care and Wellness Ministry serves to support and enhance spiritual care and wellness of all individuals at First Met and the surrounding North Park Neighborhood. This year, everyone continued following provincial Public Health and Pacific Mountain Region protocols, protecting our faith community and their families.

Highlights for 2021:

In January, First Met welcomed back Kyla Morrison Morgan as Health and Wellness Advocate from leave. In May, the Advocate's job description (20 hours per week) was updated and unanimously approved by the Board.

The Margaret Cameron Trust Fund Estate (MCT) 2021 Distribution:

- \$4,000 was donated to Our Place Society to assist mental health and addiction programs at the New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Centre. A new computer work station supports access to education and clinical counselling. Staff have also been able to provide work therapy projects such as Chef Training and Organic Gardening.
- In June, \$3,000 was provided to enhance the newly restored Spiritual Care Services Chapel at Our Place. The non-profit society also provided Self-management, Recovery Training (SMART) sessions and Creative Drumming Workshops for clients.
- The First Met Evolving Church team received MCT funds for several projects: Our Place Tenant Starter Kits, Christmas gifts for Fellowship Hall Shelter Visitors and the Tiny Homes Project.

Wally Lazaruk, Ph.D. contributed timely articles to the newsletter on topics such as spiritual health, compassion and self care that invited further study. Wally also had a liaison role for the MCT donations. Each year, the Team considers donation feedback an important part of our First Met philanthropy.

In the spring, First Met joined and donated to the "Seniors Serving Seniors" Office membership drive located in the North Park Neighborhood. This local office has produced a 2021-2022 "Seniors Services Directory." Another free resource called *Catching Your Breath in Grief* by Tom Attig is available from the Health and Wellness Advocate's Office.

In December 2021, Kyla had the opportunity to attend a week-long Death Doula training course called "End of Life", presented online through Douglas College. As a follow up, the Spiritual Care and Wellness Team intend to offer the congregation educational opportunities related to the topic of death and dying in 2022

Continued on p. 22



Chef Training at New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Centre.



Maria Green, Our Place Chaplain in the restored chapel
(Photo credit: Adrian Lam, *Times Colonist*).



Drumming Workshop

Spiritual Care and Wellness continued from p. 21

Umbrella Ministries:

The Spiritual Care and Wellness Team appreciates and embraces all the Umbrella Group volunteers as a vital part of First Met's Spiritual Care and Wellness Ministry. This past year, several programs paused scheduled activities for a few weeks as the viruses continued to challenge populations locally, provincially and globally.

Visitation/Care Calls Ministry

In the Spring of 2021, a Working Group took on the task of reviewing the FMUC Congregational database with the goal of revising the 2016 Visitation/Care Calls Ministry. An Action Plan was developed by Irene Baddeley, Shirley Chatfield and Sharron Higgins led by Health and Wellness Advocate, Kyla Morrison Morgan and supported by Lead Minister, Shelagh Mackinnon.

The task group worked over the Spring and Summer, connecting with volunteers and those wishing to receive visitations. In the early Summer, Kyla recruited Minister Emerita, Megumi Matsuo Saunders and Sheila Anderson for the roles of Ministry Coordinator and Record Keeper respectively. The Visitation Ministry was officially relaunched in Fall 2021 with great success. Since then, Megumi and Kyla have hosted quarterly meetings offering volunteers opportunities for support, fellowship and reflection. As a result, 12 Visitation volunteers reached out to over 23 congregation members who are homebound or living in residential care.

Prayer Connections Ministry

Ten prayer team members continued to receive calls or emails throughout the year. Congregation members, volunteers and staff prayed for others both here and around the world as people struggled with many pandemic issues for themselves and their families. The Team worked to recruit new members and raise the profile of the Ministry. Anne Sikstrom continues as the dedicated Coordinator for this meaningful Ministry.

Caregiver Support Group

The Caregiver Support Group, facilitated by Kyla Morrison Morgan, RSW and Emily MacDonald, BSN, MN, continued to meet monthly in the Chapel. Since 2012, we have been meeting as an independent group, open to the public, of the Alzheimer's Society. The purpose is to support a family member that is caring for someone with dementia, either at home or in a care facility. There are currently five members.

Gentle Yoga & Chair Yoga Classes

Gentle and Chair Yoga classes led by professional teacher, Elaine Duke, were fewer this year because of pandemic protocols. Average Attendance: Chair Yoga - (July to Dec)- eight to nine; Gentle Yoga (July to Dec) six to eight.

Tai Chi Classes

Chen-style Tai Chi classes held fewer classes this year. Five to ten people on average attended. Donations support the First Met Health and Wellness Bursary Fund. Due to the lack of an instructor, the class is unable to accept new members at this time.

Knitting and Prayer Shawl Ministry

This year First Met knitters have continued to knit beautiful, colourful sweaters, prayer shawls and unique wash cloths. Twelve colourful crib afghans were created and delivered to The Q'walayu House in Campbell River for families of children in hospital. Thank you to Shirley Chatfield and Joan Michelson for coordinating this special ministry.



Yoga instructor Elaine Duke with Christmas gift basket. .

BELOW: Afghans donated to Q'walayu House In Campbell River.



Spiritual Care and Wellness continued from p. 22:

Flatlanders Walking Group

The Flatlanders Walking Group led by rotating volunteers was formed in November 2020. This past year, the group walked the Gorge Waterway, the Songhees waterfront and Swan Lake trails. New participants are always welcome to join the walks.

Ramblers Hiking Group

Hiking was resumed in July with a visit to Beechey Head in East Sooke Park. During the next four months the group hiked Jocelyn Hill in Gowlland Tod Park, Mt. Finlayson via the back route, along the Mt. Matheson Lookout Trail, and Stewart Mountain and Scafe Hill. As usual, the group ended the year with a 'Carols in the Forest' event in Goldstream Park. There is a core membership of eight people and another eight or so occasional participants.

Healing Pathways/Healing Touch Ministry and Summer Strollers Ministry

These Ministries did not restart this year due to health and safety issues for participants.

Sharron Higgins, Spiritual Care and Wellness Team Leader and Kyla Morgan Morrison, Health and Wellness Advocate

PICTURES RIGHT: Ramblers Carols in the Forest gathering; Flatlanders walk along WestSong Way



Property

Our night shelter for Our Place continued. The number of users was restricted to 36 in 2021 because of Covid but has been 50 since January 2022. Bruce supervised anticipated maintenance through the year. We contracted to have the window and door frames on the Balmoral side of the Christian Education wing painted. Two other contracts were to replace the shabby linoleum floor in the Fellowship Hall entrance at the Balmoral end and to remove accumulated grime and wax from the Hall floor. This was followed by applying new floor polish.

Gardening

First Met isn't surrounded by botanical gardens, but we use a combination of staff and volunteers to make the church grounds as tidy and inviting as possible for the North Park neighbourhood. As in previous years, Bruce Davies cut the lawn in the Quadra yard and cleared the preschool play area of fallen leaves and husks from our large Spanish chestnut tree each day. The tree has edible chestnuts, and last year some of the Intercultural Association staff organized a chestnut roast for the children and for church staff.

Alas, the tree is over a hundred years old, and in 2021 it suffered some storm damage, which was promptly remediated by Bartlett Tree Service. This followed earlier pruning and soil remediation, to comply with a health assessment done on the tree by Bartlett. Maintaining a heritage tree does have its challenges, but generations of children and congregants have enjoyed our chestnut's shade and aesthetic presence beside the church.



ABOVE: Night Shelter.
BELOW: Assessing tree health.



Property continued from p. 23

Caring for the various flower beds and planters is done on a volunteer basis by Larry Scott from spring through late fall. We do not compost the resulting garden waste on site, but Jan Drent transfers bags of the material to the City of Victoria Public Works Yard on Saturdays.

The Quadra yard is surprisingly productive, and not only for the chestnuts; we have had a row of scarlet runner beans along the chain link fence. The green beans were ready in mid-summer and given to passing neighbours, or to church staff and volunteers. The plan for 2022 is to grow even more green beans along the fence and contribute them to the North Park food hamper program. A crabapple tree bears abundant fruit that was transformed into crabapple jelly by some of our congregants. Passers-by regularly admire the Quadra yard and flower beds and express appreciation for the church's effort to provide green space in a semi-industrial and commercial neighbourhood. This seemed even more important for community morale when we had COVID shutdowns. The flower-beds provide an excuse for neighbours to stop and chat with the church gardener and sometimes with other neighbours.

Jan Drent, Property Chair and Larry Scott



United Church Women

2021 was a challenging year for all of us. Throughout the year we supported each other and other women of the Church through frequent cards, phone calls, emails, and socially distanced visits. However, in the later part of the year we held three special events: a Least Coin Service, prepared by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, collected "coins" to support special projects for women and children around the world, a Mission and Service fund-raising service with Allan Saunders who presented an update of the work and expanded services of Our Place, and then in December, a Christmas luncheon with a special time to remember and honour Joan Dowse, UCW Co-chair. We grieve the loss of Joan who died on December 13, 2021.

Some of our members contributed to the "Let Us Move Through Lent Together 2021" booklet and the Summer Gratitude booklet, and assisted the Visitation Team with the delivery of these booklets.

Through the Reach One Touch One Ministry, we continued to support two African elders in Uganda. We supported and donated to the Coldest Night Walk, collected socks for Our Place, and donated to the Angel Gift program. In addition, we supported Micia and the excellent Sunday school program she presents to the children of First Met. We are grateful for the special work of two of our members: Marion Denton who donated the profits from the sale of Christmas cakes and jam, and Janet Harper who connects with First Met Young adults and children through cards and handmade gifts.

Looking back, we are proud of all we have been able to accomplish in spite of COVID!

Marie McKee



RIGHT ABOVE: Least Coin service participants.
RIGHT: Mildred Mossop unit organized sewing supplies for the Compassionate Warehouse.

Archives and Heritage Team

As a United Church of Canada congregation, we are responsible for maintaining and preserving all official records of the church until it is time for their transfer to the Pacific Mountain Region Archives. The archival records for First Metropolitan United Church, 1997 to date, remain on site and are cared for by the Archives and Heritage team, as is a sizeable collection of artifacts and print material.

Committees and individuals with church records in their possession are asked to consult Archives & Heritage about transfer of records to care of the First Met Archives. Any building redevelopment plans must take into account the ongoing need for on-site archival records storage space.

Completed 2021

There was little on-site work done on Archives and Heritage holdings during 2021, and few goals outlined in the 2020 annual report were met. However, we did work remotely on the following:

1. Information and document copies were supplied in response to internal and public inquiries, as well as to inquiries in conjunction with the Pacific Mountain Regional Archives. Queries pertained to: Ada Lee (Garbutt); vital records for early Methodists; Methodism history in Saanich area; Arthur Lee family Bible; Laura Butler; Remembrance Day service prep.
2. Submissions to the church newsletter featured: In Memory of Ann Tresize; Camp Pringle; featured photographs; 25th anniversary of amalgamation.
3. Editing and coding First United and Metropolitan data records to facilitate the development of series descriptions for the fonds.
4. Continued acquisition of council and board minutes for the years 2018 to 2021.
5. Continued development of a topical file system for information relating to church history.

Given the continuing operating limitations due to the pandemic, Archives & Heritage has cancelled plans to update and re-issue the *Historical Guide to First Metropolitan United Church* (2004) as a 25th amalgamation anniversary project. We will instead focus on newsletter articles and improving management of the First Metropolitan archival records.

We are anxious to get back to working on-site at the church so that we can carry on with these initiatives:

- Adapting and promoting United Church of Canada records management strategy and records transfer schedule to First Met church-wide.
- Finalizing the Archives' topical file system.
- Reviewing artifact holdings and improving storage conditions.
- Adding digitized heritage content to the Church website and Flickr site. We are grateful for the Flickr Pro account that provides public access without the interruption of ads and is provided free-of-charge by Flickr since 2020. See: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/firstmetarchives/albums>.

Margery Hadley and Don Bourdon, Archives and Heritage Team

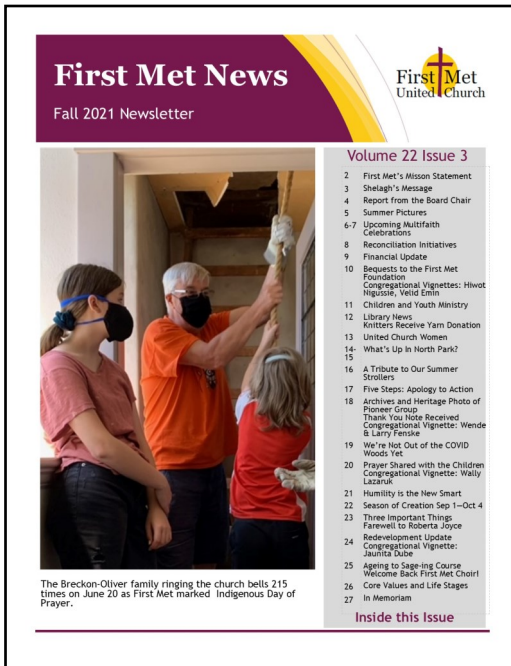


Earth Day walk 2015 (FMUC_2017-001).



Welcome service for Ivy Thomas, Fall 2016 (FMUC_2017-001).

Communications



ABOVE: Fall 2021 Newsletter.
BELOW: Our sign promotes church events and messages of solidarity and support.



And we thought the pandemic would be short lived! We did not foresee that our mask mandates, handwashing, social distancing and other COVID-related restrictions would extend through 2021, but when those conditions continued, so did our communications strategies.

We had already cranked up our online efforts through 2020 when the pandemic first arrived, with actions such as increasing our email updates to the congregation to weekly distribution. We were able to continue most of those efforts through 2021. We reverted to biweekly updates during the summer as some restrictions were eased and continued that for the rest of the year.

Speaking of the updates, those email news and information roundups go to nearly 400 people, many of them from outside First Met, in keeping with our Mission Statement's commitment to ".seek transformation, engagement and service for ourselves, our community and our world."

We also produced four quarterly Newsletters, included as part of those email updates and posted to our website from where they can be downloaded and printed. Without a physical congregation for much of the year, we limited the number of printed copies available but made newsletters part of congregational mailout packages.

There were other challenges, too, of course. The church returned to in-person Sunday worship in September and with many people still nervous and unsure about coming back, we were pushed to meet the needs of two congregations – one in the Sanctuary and another at home. We have discovered that it can be done but it is not easy.

It became apparent during the pandemic that communications and audio-visual functions, which had been separate, were increasingly overlapping and the decision was made to combine the two into one team.

Thanks to the help and expertise of our cooperative education students, Peter Chalmers, Jodie Brady-Quinton and Lindsey Bellman, who all brought different talents and points of view, we were able to improve our livestream production with better sound and increased use of video to provide what we hope is a more inclusive, informative and meaningful worship.

Continued on p. 27

The greater the diversity, the greater the perfection.
~ Thomas Berry

Communications continued from p. 26

We also thank those congregants who took time to make positive and helpful comments and suggestions and we have tried to adopt some of them where possible. The reality is that with a small team already working with a full plate many other ideas, however worthy and interesting, have to remain in the suggestion box until we can recruit more volunteers.

Our Quadra Street sign continues to be a valuable tool in spreading our message. The sign not only advertises our special First Met events, it helps promote activities of interest to the general community. Messages in support of causes such as the Cridge Centre for the Family have received many positive comments and public notice.

We have also used the church's Quadra Street entrance to display a series of banners with Christmas, Easter, Pride Week and other special messages. We give a special thank you to Building Supervisor Bruce Davies for his work in hanging those banners.

A portion of the Quadra Street stairs were painted in rainbow colours in June 2021, in time for Pride Week. This was part of First Met's process of becoming an Affirming Congregation. First Met's Mission Statement says we include people of "all ... sexual orientations and gender identities in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry". The Communications Team mandate includes "to promote and communicate programs, activities and services ... to the broader community." Thanks to the team of volunteers who wielded paint brushes to help extend a visual message to the world.

And, finally, many words of thanks to Joan Mason who, in addition to heading the audio-visual crew that makes our live-stream and online worship experience happen, also edits the quarterly Newsletters and takes the lead role in recruiting and supervising our superb contingent of co-op students. Our thanks also to our Lead Minister Shelagh MacKinnon, our staff resource, for her suggestions and assistance.

David Bray, Communications Team leader

Some of the banners and advertisements we used to keep our presence known in the community even when our doors were shut. Note that our Christmas advertising went out before the rise of the Omicron variant caused us to shut our doors after Dec. 19.



Discover the true meaning of Christmas!

Holiday services:

Blue Christmas	Dec 16 2:00 pm
Christmas Sunday	Dec 19 11:00 am
Family Christmas Eve: "The Shoemaker of Bethlehem" (livestream only)	Dec 24 4:30 pm
Christmas Eve	Dec 24 8:00 pm
Christmas Message (livestream only)	Dec 25 11 am

Please wear a mask at our in-person services.

[firstmetvictoria.com/pages/live-stream](https://www.firstmetvictoria.com/pages/live-stream)

First Metropolitan United Church
Quadra at Balmoral



Ministry and Personnel Committee



Leanne Prestwich, Peter Clugston, Marie McKee.



Kyla Morrison Morgan
returned from leave
in the Spring.



Our cooperative
education students
in 2021: Peter
Chalmers, Jodie
Brady-Quinton and
Lindsey Bellman.



2021 proved to be another challenging year for us all in so many respects. Throughout the pandemic, staff were able to continue their stellar work changing how they worked (including working from home when possible) to meet the changing restrictions and workplace/building requirements. When in person services were allowed to resume, the staff rose to the challenge and welcomed congregants back safely.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee has done most of our work via email and phone but has met in person when the situation required it. We are a small committee but are grateful to work alongside such an amazing staff team.

Custodial Casual Staffing

First Met, as many other businesses and organizations, continued to have great difficulty in attracting and retaining casual custodial staff. Several candidates were interviewed and hired and most left shortly after starting for a variety of reasons. One stayed 3 months. Mohamad Ahmad, casual custodian, who left us earlier in 2021 for full time work elsewhere, was kind enough to come back and help over some weekend shifts when building rentals returned in the fall.

Hellos

Co-op Communications Technicians:

- Peter Chalmers - January to April 2021
 - Jodie Brady-Quinton - May to August 2021
 - Lindsey Bellman - September to December 2021
- We are pleased both Jodie and Lindsey decided to stay on as casual AV Technicians.

Our Roles

Ministry and Personnel is the only committee that is mandatory for any church to have. Our main activities are:

- Being available to consult and support around staffing matters.
- Advising hiring groups (task groups) on personnel matters.
- Conducting staff performance reviews as we are able.
- Overseeing the relationship of staff with each other and with the congregation.
- Reviewing job descriptions and updating as needed.
- Working with staff to ensure they make use of continuing education opportunities.
- Updating Human Resource policies.

Leanne Prestwich, Chair, Ministry and Personnel Committee

Mountford Library

Collection Development

Ordered 17 new books and catalogued 19 books. Downloaded reports from websites on Indigenous and inequality issues that Fiona printed for the Library. Accepted with thanks several excellent new Indigenous book donations.

Borrowing

A few items were borrowed when the library was open, i.e., when the Church had live Sunday services. Due to Covid restrictions loans were fewer than usual.

Promotion

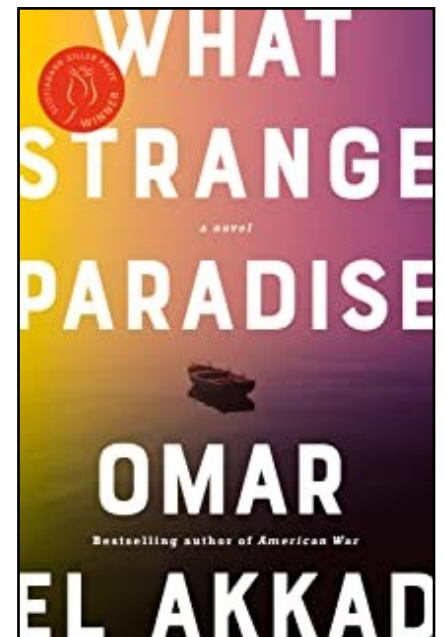
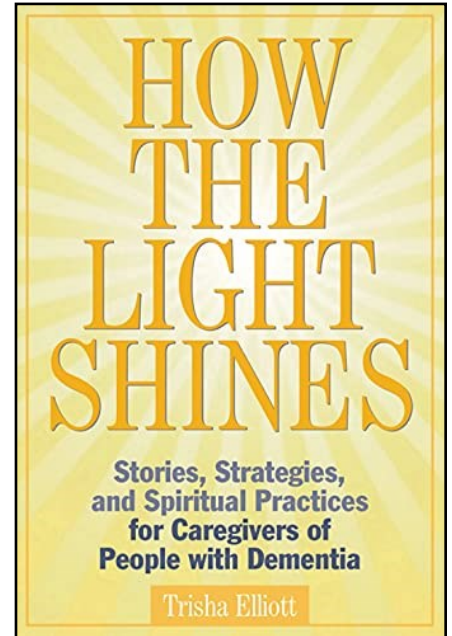
The bulletin board outside the Library was changed twice. Book reviews were submitted for the Church's newsletters and web news site. An updated list of Indigenous books and articles was sent to Communications or the Library's web page.

Administration

Accepted with many thanks for their dedicated library service the resignation of Pat Davey and Clare Lowery from the Library Committee. Accepted with regret Phyllis Duval's extended leave from the Committee. Grateful to Jill Chamberlin and Terry Swan for covering all library services for several months. Recruited Alva and Earl Jenson, and gave them orientations to offering Sunday library services.

Forwarded messages from our Church council liaison to committee members regarding Church COVID restrictions, etc.

Denise Holmen



ABOVE: Two recent books purchased by the Mountford Library.

Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.

~ Mahatma Gandhi

Redevelopment Task Group (RTG)

In summary 2021 was a year of continuing delays for First Met's redevelopment project.

The United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) was established by the United Church of Canada in 2019 as a subsidiary company with a mandate to assist faith communities across Canada plan and implement property redevelopment projects. In the fall of 2020, the Pacific Mountain Region (PMR) and the RTG approached the UPRC to explore what assistance could be provided by the UPRC to restart First Met's redevelopment project. The project had been stopped by the PMR early in 2020 when BC Housing refused any further funding of PMR's redevelopment proposal for First Met.



In January 2021, the UPRC presented a proposal to the PMR and the RTG to evaluate the feasibility of a redevelopment project for the First Met Balmoral Road site. The RTG, PMR and UPRC agreed to proceed with the feasibility study.

In July 2021, the UPRC met with the PMR and the RTG to provide an update on their feasibility study. The UPRC concluded that it would be feasible to construct a 10-storey apartment building with 30% affordable units on the Balmoral Rd site, replacing the Christian Education Wing, Social Suite Building, and Fellowship Hall. The UPRC also concluded that there could be no upfront funding from the apartment housing project for the restoration and renovation of the Heritage Building and Annex (HBA). The original proposal from the PMR had proposed \$3M of up-front funding.

In early November 2021, the UPRC met again with the PMR and the RTG to report on their progress and requested additional time to evaluate the possibility of obtaining government grants for restoration and renovation of the HBA and report back in the early part of 2022.

In November the RTG met with staff and volunteers to gather input for planning the letting of church space after ICA leaves in April 2022. A Letting Team was organized to plan and implement a project to secure new tenants. Membership of the team includes Ross Breckon, Jan Drent, Linden Holmen (Team Lead), and Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon.

Ross Breckon, Chair

BELOW: The UPRC's mission as shown on their website:
<https://uprc.ca/> in April 2022.



Finance, Administration and Stewardship

The Finance and Administration team of Liane Clark (Treasurer), Susan Walma (Member), Katya Rummyantseva (Staff Partner) and Fiona Weber (Staff Partner) coped with the COVID-19 pandemic and carried on by:

- Closely monitoring the church's cashflow and, with the support of the First Met Foundation Board and a generous bequest, not needing to take advantage of any government COVID support programs except for student grants to offset about 40% of the cooperative education student staffing costs.
- Using volunteers to cover administrative staff vacation.
- Holding a successful Stewardship Campaign of \$184,000 in pledges which represents over 100% of the \$180,000 stretch goal.
- Updating and managing the church's COVID safety plan mandated by WorkSafe BC.
- Enabling staff and volunteers to access the new Microsoft Azure server from home

The team also coped with a huge amount of change including:

- A transition from Microsoft-based software to Microsoft Office 365 with the main benefit being increased system security as a result using the most up-to-date versions.
- The "move off the 2013 church server" project required the transition of business software for accounting, facilities booking and congregant database management to a Microsoft cloud server with data held in Canada. This incurred planned and unplanned costs of upgrading before the transition could take place.
- Handling the issues that arose from both of the above projects led to a lot of staff and volunteer time spent finding solutions for these issues and testing them. One issue that was not resolved in 2021 is the transition of the facilities booking software, which is no longer supported by the vendor.
- Microsoft two factor authentication was implemented to prevent hacking.
- A new bookkeeping firm was hired after the previous firm gave just two months notice that it was going to close. The company First Met was using stated "it had been a pleasure to work with such well organized individuals". The new bookkeeping firm will do the operating statements. The restricted fund statements which have very few transactions are now being done by the Assistant Bookkeeper.
- A new payroll system had to be implemented with just one week's notice while the Assistant Bookkeeper, who normally uses the system, was away on vacation.
- The Treasurer announced that she would be resigning effective April 30, 2022.

On behalf of the team, I would like to thank Andrew Faulkner who provided Information Technology support. He stepped down in 2021 as a member of the Finance & Administration team. His insightful guidance and information technology knowledge has been an invaluable gift to First Met over the past seven years.

Liane Clark, Treasurer

Editor's Note: A big vote of thanks is due to Liane Clark for her many years of service as the Treasurer and the multitude of additional tasks she took on to support the work of the church.



Liane Clark, Treasurer.
BELOW: PowerPoint slide with Stewardship Campaign results.



First Met Foundation and Trustees

Foundation

The FMUC Foundation holds two trust funds for the congregation. The trustees appointed by the congregation automatically become Foundation Directors. We held a virtual AGM on June 21 with Liane Clark in attendance. We reviewed financial results for 2020 and had a report and discussion with our financial consultant, Richard Dykeman of PI Financial. The annualized return on the foundation holdings in 2020 had been 12.94 %. The Foundation had supported the Church operating budget by \$268,036 compared with \$223,653 in 2019. Because the Foundation revenue exceeded expenses in 2020 it contributed \$20,000 to the United Church Mission and Service Fund, adding to the \$26,464 contributed out of the FMUC operating budget for a total of \$46,464. Other revenue was reinvested.

The Church received a generous bequest during 2020. A portion of all bequests large and small become part of the Memorial Endowment Fund where these gifts are invested. The future earnings by these contributions can continue to support our downtown ministry in future years.

Bequests/ Endowments and Donations: In 2021, the Foundation Trust Funds and Church Restricted Funds received gifts through wills, endowments, and donations. The Foundation would like to thank those who gave:

- The family of Laura Butler.
- The family of Margaret Cameron.
- The family of Thomas Lane.
- The family of Thomas Mayne.
- The family of Nellis Roy and Mary Elizabeth Moyer.
- The family of John and Pauline Mustard.
- The family of Laurie Simpson.
- The family of Hazel Thurber.

The Foundation also thanks the three living legacy donors who made gifts in 2021

Trustees

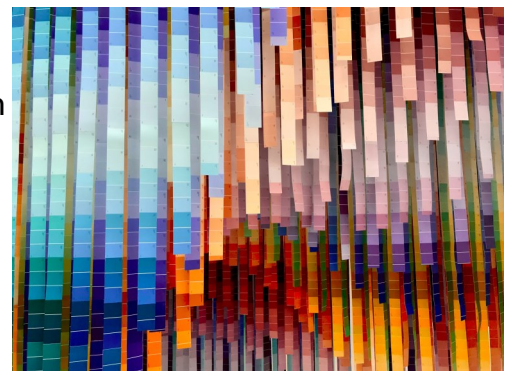
The Board of Trustees is responsible for the congregation's property including funds other than those in the operating account. The congregation appoints trustees to serve for a minimum of three years and normally for a second three-year term. This six-year commitment can be extended to eight years. In 2021 Pam Shemilt resigned after six years of faithful service. Christine Hutchinson was appointed as a new trustee at the Congregational AGM in November. The trustees had a virtual meeting on June 21.

The trustees are responsible for arranging insurance. It's worth noting that these costs have been increasing steeply because of world-wide stresses on the insurance industry. They also reflect the cost of operating our large downtown property. While insurance cost us \$27,390 in 2020, we will have to pay \$38,219 in 2022, an increase of 38% in just three years!

Jan Drent, Chair of Board of Trustees



FMUC Foundation logo.



FIRST METROPOLITAN UNITED CHURCH
Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2021

	Operating Fund	Restricted Funds (Schedule 1)	2021	2020
ASSETS				
CURRENT				
Cash	\$ 41,320	\$ 9,741	\$ 51,061	\$ 94,443
Accounts receivable	12,315	-	12,315	13,054
GST receivable	2,446	279	2,725	6,451
Due from Foundation (Note 4)	170,540	-	170,540	137,840
Due from Operating Fund	-	635,410	635,410	577,791
Due from Restricted Funds	1,000	-	1,000	3,855
Prepaid expenses	36,263	-	36,263	2,475
Investments	10,388	67,481	77,869	51,339
	274,272	712,911	987,183	887,248
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (Note 5)	-	645,219	645,219	699,802
INTANGIBLE ASSETS (Note 6)	-	14,708	14,708	20,288
	\$ 274,272	\$ 1,372,838	\$ 1,647,110	\$ 1,607,338
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
CURRENT				
Bank indebtedness	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,293
Accounts payable	134,397	-	134,397	113,661
Due to Operating Fund	-	1,000	1,000	-
Due to Restricted Funds	635,410	-	635,410	581,646
Unearned revenue	11,762	-	11,762	-
Deferred revenue (Note 7)	6,494	-	6,494	8,537
Current portion of deferred contributions (Note 8)	-	1,000	1,000	1,000
	788,063	2,000	790,063	707,137
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS (Note 8)	-	1,000	1,000	2,000
	788,063	3,000	791,063	709,137
NET ASSETS (DEFICIT)				
Internally restricted	-	1,369,838	1,369,838	1,367,251
Unrestricted	(513,791)	-	(513,791)	(469,050)
	(513,791)	1,369,838	856,047	898,201
	\$ 274,272	\$ 1,372,838	\$ 1,647,110	\$ 1,607,338

COMMITMENTS (Note 9)

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

Director

Director

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

FIRST METROPOLITAN UNITED CHURCH

Statement of Operations

Year Ended December 31, 2021

	Operating Fund	Restricted Funds (Schedule 2)	2021	2020
REVENUE				
Donations from registered charities	\$ 308,030	\$ 12,419	\$ 320,449	\$ 284,803
Gain (loss) on investments	212	(1,018)	(806)	(453)
Givings	256,621	3,808	260,429	268,753
Investment income	3	1,502	1,505	36
Letting, net	269,890	-	269,890	247,593
Other income	15,765	419	16,184	95
	<u>850,521</u>	<u>17,130</u>	<u>867,651</u>	<u>800,827</u>
EXPENSES				
Administration (Schedule 3)	70,317	82,301	152,618	164,831
Building and grounds (Schedule 4)	238,513	-	238,513	212,533
Staffing costs	439,760	-	439,760	365,225
	<u>748,590</u>	<u>82,301</u>	<u>830,891</u>	<u>742,589</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES BEFORE PROGRAMS				
	101,931	(65,171)	36,760	58,238
Net program deficit (Schedule 5)	<u>(78,914)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(78,914)</u>	<u>(39,904)</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES				
	\$ 23,017	\$ (65,171)	\$ (42,154)	\$ 18,334

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

FIRST METROPOLITAN UNITED CHURCH
Statement of Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended December 31, 2021

	Operating Fund	Restricted Funds (Schedule 2)	2021	2020
Net assets (deficit) - beginning of year	\$ (469,050)	\$ 1,367,251	\$ 898,201	\$ 879,867
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	23,017	(65,171)	(42,154)	18,334
Inter-fund transfers (Note 10)	(67,758)	67,758	-	-
Net assets (deficit) - end of year	<u>\$ (513,791)</u>	<u>\$ 1,369,838</u>	<u>\$ 856,047</u>	<u>\$ 898,201</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

2021 First Met Staff



Kelly Charlton
Director of Music
Ministries.



Micia Kanstrup
Sunday School Leadership



Shelagh MacKinnon
Lead Minister

Kyla Morrison Morgan
Health and Wellness Advocate



Fiona Weber
Church Office/
Letting



Katya Rumyantseva
Assistant Bookkeeper



Velid Emin
Custodian



Bruce Davies
Building Supervisor

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