



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Comox United Church

- Reports of committees and groups associated with Comox United Church
- 2023 Financial Statement
- Proposed Budget for 2024
- Minutes of 2023 Congregational Meeting

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Front cover: Alan Brown

Mission Statement

Comox United Church, an Affirming Ministry: centred in God, followers of Jesus Christ, and called to radical love.

Vision Statement

Embraced by a loving God, guided by the Holy Spirit, inspired by the life of Jesus, and open to the revelation of Scripture, as an affirming faith community, we:

- *Celebrate diversity and welcome those of all sexual orientations, gender identities, ethnicities, ages, marital status, social or economic circumstances, and abilities.*
- *Commit to justice, peace, and hospitality.*
- *Engage in proactive stewardship of the environment, people, and other resources.*
- *Embrace authenticity and encourage critical thinking*
- *Include all at God's table, sharing sacred time and sacred space.*

With spirits, minds, and hearts nourished and enlarged, we go out to serve the world with intention, passion, and compassion.

Milestones on Our Journey

The founding churches...

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1876 | Two church buildings planned in the Valley: St. Andrew's Anglican at the bottom of Mission Hill and St. Andrew's Presbyterian at the top (Sandwick) |
| 1877 | St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church built at the top of Mission Hill |
| 1900 | Bay Presbyterian Church built in Comox on Church Street |
| 1914 | St. George's Presbyterian Church built in Courtenay on Fitzgerald Street |

The beginning of the United Church in the Comox Valley...

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1925 | Three churches (Bay, St. George's, St. Andrew's) join the newly amalgamated United Church of Canada as a three-point charge |
| 1940 | Bay Church is renamed Comox United Church |
| 1949 | First woman nominated to the Session. A lychgate is built over church entrance. |
| 1954 | Newly constructed Sunday School hall dedicated |
| 1957 | Lot adjacent to church purchased for expansion |

(Milestones continued...)

- 1961 Amalgamation of St. Andrew's United Church and Comox United Church while St. George's becomes separate pastoral charge the following year
- 1964 Rev. Kenneth Edmondson

Comox United Church moves to Beach Drive...

- 1966 Church buys three lots on Beach Drive for a new church building
- 31 Mar 1968 First service held in the new sanctuary
- 1970–1976 Building shared with St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic congregation
- 1972 Rev. R.D. Cornish
- 1979 Margaret Elliot, Associate Pastor
- 1982 Christian Education wing added above the Fellowship Hall
- 1985 Rev. Robert "Roy" Cowiesen

New beginnings...

- 1988 Following 1988 General Council decision to ordain LGBTQ candidates, a divisive vote at Comox United sees majority of congregation leave to found Bay Community Church
- 1988 Rev. Franklin Lough
- 1988 Rev. John Fullerton
- 1989 Rev. Bob Stiven
- 1991 Paul Colthorpe hired as choir director.
- 1990–2000 Upgrading of facilities: new roof, painting, new floor for Fellowship hall, new office computer. *Whole People of God* curriculum.

The Twenty-First Century...

- 1999 Rev. Maggie Enwright
- 2001 Tim Lissimore, Ministerial Intern
- 2002 The Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship begins sharing our building
- 2005 Christine Welch, Staff Associate
- 2006 Gloria Herauf hired as Accompanist
- 2008–2015 Saturday evening worship services
- 2009 Comox United Council decides to consider becoming an Affirming Ministry, a decision that is endorsed by the congregation. Two years of exploration and education follow.
- 2010 Cathie Talbot, Congregational Designated Minister for Children, Youth and Family
- 2011 Comox United becomes an Affirming Ministry
- 2013 Sanctuary renovated

(Milestones continued...)

2015	Rev. Keltie van Binsbergen
2017	Hall and sanctuary audio systems updated
2018	Renovations/updates to upper and lower levels of the church
2018	Rev. Ted Hicks, Interim Pastoral Minister
2019	Rev. Trevor Malkinson, Interim Minister
2020	Wayne Hughes, Minister of Pastoral Care and Congregational Life
2020	In-person meetings and services suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic
2021	In-person services with safety protocols resume
2021–2022	Visioning Process facilitated by Rev. Deb Bowman, who also shares worship leadership with Rev. Phil Spencer
2022	Rev. Keltie van Binsbergen resigns
2022	Premiere of Livestreaming
2022	Heat pumps provide heating/cooling to church offices
2022	Partnership with Care-A-Van (Comox Bay Care Society)
Jan 2023	Rev. Karen Hollis, Congregational Minister
Jan 2023	Wayne Hughes retires
Jan 2023	Heat pump provides heating/cooling to sanctuary
Aug 2023	Participation in Courtenay's first Gay Pride parade

Message from Rev. Karen Hollis

The Holy Spirit was clearly at work when I was called to Comox United Church and arrived in January. This year has been nothing but an affirmation that this call is the right fit at the right time and blessed by God.

My first project was to get to know the Comox United community. I met with existing small groups, visited with people after church—thanks to M&P members, who often handed me a cup of tea in the entry way. I built relationships with staff members, the church council, and clergy colleagues. In the spring we set up neighbourhood gatherings that were mostly hosted in people's homes. Around dining room tables and in living rooms, I heard people's stories, thoughts about our congregational values, and hopes for our church as we look to the future. My summer preaching series on our congregational values was significantly influenced by these discussions.

Early in the year I was invited to a clergy lunch with the United, Presbyterian, and Anglican ministers, where we made a high-level plan for shared services during Holy Week and the month of July when many clergy go on holiday. The Comox United contribution to Holy Week was a Maundy Thursday dinner liturgy in the hall, which I co-led with Ingrid Brown from Weird Church. The hall was packed with people and had representation from all six churches. Ingrid and I also led a small and heart-felt All Saints/Souls service on November 1st at No. 6 Mine park in Cumberland, with candles, silence, photos displayed of loved ones, names spoken aloud, and cello music.

I have also enjoyed getting to know Arran Morton, the Unitarian minister. We met several times over Zoom before we finally met in person in the fall. Arran and I did a preaching swap in October. He led our morning service, and I led their 4pm service in the hall. I was warmly welcomed into their beautiful worship practice and their community, which has strong commitment to being church together.

As an Affirming congregation, we are in an ongoing dialogue about what Affirming means for us today and how to shape this ministry. After talking with the Affirm committee – and hearing requests from congregation members for Bible — I began offering Queer Bible Study. Queer Bible Study is for everyone



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and is a place where we query the text . . . we ask why did they tell it that way? What happens when we step into it? How do we clear away the baggage of misinterpretation? We studied the book of Acts in the fall and even queered the boundary between what we do and don't consider scripture by including a tangential story to Acts that was written in the 1st or 2nd century but wasn't included in the Bible.

I had the honour and privilege of walking with several families as they navigated the death and dying process with a loved one and planned services of remembrance. Each service was as unique and beautiful as the individual.

I was also invited to perform three wedding ceremonies over the summer. One was an at-home wedding — I enjoy the intimate environment of home for such an important life moment! The other two were outside, among the trees with beloved family and friends gathered. It's always a joy to walk with people in this way.

When I arrived at Comox United, I heard from the church leadership that they wanted to continue on where the visioning process left off by creating and implementing a strategic plan, make our governance structure work better for who we are now, and possibly hire some more staff. So, this year we've been working away at this project. I began leading a strategic planning process in the fall, which is continuing into 2024. We're asking questions like: How do we live into our values? What is important to do first? What is standing in our way? What is still our ministry and what is not currently ours to do? What do we need from our governance structure? This is big and important work, which we are doing with intention and generosity toward one another.

Alongside strategic planning, I invited the council to read the book, *How to Lead When You Don't know Where You're Going*, by Susan Beaumont. She teaches about how to navigate as a church community liminal seasons — the seasons in between — by leading with presence, tending the Soul of the institution, deepening group discernment, shaping institutional memory, clarifying purpose, and engaging emergence. So far, we have found the chapters thought-provoking and useful in the context of CxU.

We have enjoyed a rich worship life this year thanks to all those who work together on the various aspects of the service! We've made some tweaks and changes along the way, like inviting some lay people to be on a roster for prayers of the people so that the prayers can truly be "of the people." To increase communication about worship, I began sending an email after the service each week to those who helped to lead the service asking for feedback. I then organize the input and send it out to the relevant people. So far, we have

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found it very helpful. The worship committee and I hope the changes and conversation have a net positive impact on the congregation's ability to worship together.

In December I planned various services for Advent and Christmas, beginning with a couple of Taizé services, which were held here on a regular basis back in the day. We collaborated again with the Hospice Society on the Blue Christmas service. There was some confusion as to our involvement this year after Hospice opened their new building; however, once we had clarity, we pulled together a service that was extremely well-attended and received. The staff and volunteers affirmed that Comox United is the right setting for the service and they look forward to continuing our practice of collaboration. We had one Christmas eve service this year — “Lessons and Carols” at 8pm — which was packed with people, music, candlelight, and the joy of the season.

The year flew by and here at the end of it, I am grateful and excited to be here in ministry with you all! We're just getting started! We're getting to know each other in a deeper way, learning how to work together more efficiently, getting clearer on our needs as a community, and much more. With the help of the Holy Spirit and our church community, I look forward to much more in 2024!

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Karen Hollis

Message from Past Chair of Council

(The position of Chair of Council is currently vacant)

2023 was a year of hope at Comox United Church.

Rev. Karen Hollis began her ministry with us on January 8, 2023. Comox United Church entered into a covenant relationship with Karen during the worship service on March 12, 2023. As minister and congregation, we are gradually getting to know each other—our strengths, our personalities, and our dreams. We are so blessed to have Karen as our minister. This relationship seems to be a “match made in heaven”! Please read Karen’s report to learn more about what has been happening from her point of view.

Wayne Hughes concluded his ministry with Comox United on January 31, 2023, and a formal farewell to Wayne happened on February 12, 2023. We are grateful for Wayne’s presence with us over the previous three challenging years.

Beginning in November, our office administrator Lorna Tutte, took a 3-month leave to deal with health issues. We welcomed the energy and joyful presence of Karasima Brands who capably filled in for Lorna from November 2023 until February 2024.

One area of focus this year for Council members (and anyone else interested) is the Strategic Planning sessions facilitated by Karen. This work is based on the Visioning Process of 2021-2022. Now we are looking at how to live into our values of Spirituality, Radical Love, Openness, and Care for the Common Good. We are looking at how to make the most of our gifts (physical and financial) and how to address our challenges. We’ve also been discussing our Governance structure — what is working, what needs adjusting, and how to do the work of the church by involving the right people and without burning out our volunteers. Everyone in the congregation is invited to attend and participate in these Strategic Planning sessions. Please watch the newsletter for the dates and times of the next event. More people mean more ideas, better discussion, and better results. Let’s hear from you!

Another area of focus during Council meetings is discussion of the book *How to Lead When You Don’t know Where You’re Going* by Susan Beaumont. This book is very timely for Comox United leadership as our church navigates during this liminal (threshold) season. If you are interested in any kind of leadership at Comox United, I encourage you to read this book.

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Leadership Changes:

- In February, Robin Giles, our Treasurer for over 6 years, handed over the reins to Gisèle Plouffe, a retired high school principal. Gisèle embraced the Treasurer's responsibilities and is passionate about the financial well-being of our faith community.
- After doing a great job of steering our Worship team through COVID, Joyce Wagland retired as the chair of the Worship Committee. Marni Fisher is the current chair of Worship.
- Mike Stewart is stepping down as chair of the Ministry & Personnel Committee, though he will continue on M&P.
- Bev Agur wrapped up the activities of the Becoming Team and stayed on Council as a Member-at-Large. We continue to appreciate her wisdom and perspective.
- At the end of June, I retired from the position of Council Chair. I am still active as Past Chair.
- As of September 2023, Andrew Black took on the duty of chairing the Council meetings only.

Comox United is blessed with wonderful, willing volunteers. Over the year, people in leadership roles moved on, changed positions, took a break, or returned from a break. Many more volunteers continue to do the "small jobs" around the church, from changing light bulbs to writing newsletter articles. Thank you ALL for giving your time and energy so graciously.

This year Comox United demonstrated "Care for the Common Good" in at least two ways:

- In January 2023, two heat pumps (including air conditioning) were installed for the sanctuary, and our fossil-fuel furnace was decommissioned. Thanks to Joan Gillies and the SAGE team for pushing us to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.
- Our building continues to host the Comox Bay Care Society, its Care-A-Van, and its donation sorting hub. From their website: "Comox Bay Care Society Care-A-Van is a non-profit, community funded mobile outreach health unit, providing no fee health care and social development services directly to clients on the streets of Comox Valley."

Revenue Initiatives:

- A Venue Team was created in April to seek and welcome more outside groups to use our building. Revenue from "Facilities Usage" in 2023 increased 32% over 2022. The Venue and Property teams continue to improve the physical appearance of the church. (continued.../)

- The Matthew Mystery Project, inspired in faith by Matthew 25:14–30 and initiated by Elaine Brown, began in October 2023. Over 80 people are enthusiastically multiplying their \$20 bill in fun and creative ways. One Market Day was held on November 19th and another one is scheduled for March 17th. The project will wrap up on April 28, 2024 with a celebration.
- “Called to Be the Church”, a month of education about stewardship, ran during October–November, led by Alan Brown, Beverly Sparks, and myself. The success of this campaign is detailed elsewhere in this report.

Policies:

Two new policies were approved by Council in 2023. One was the “Serving Alcohol at Events” Policy, which was endorsed by the congregation at the Annual General Meeting in February 2023. The other was the “Event Booking Cancellation” Policy. Council also adopted a Policy Template to be used for new policies. A small team has been assembled to reformat existing policies using this template, with the aim of completing this work in 2024.

Relationship with Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship (CVUF):

As many of you know, we have been in a covenant relationship with the Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship (CVUF) since 2010. This means sharing our building and collaborating on joint initiatives like climate action, social justice and *Our Whole Lives* sexual education program. This year CxU and CVUF held a joint picnic at Kin Beach Park complete with food, games and live music. There was a pulpit exchange in October between Karen and Aaron Morton, the CVUF minister. In December we renewed both our covenant and our lease agreement with the Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship for another 3 years.

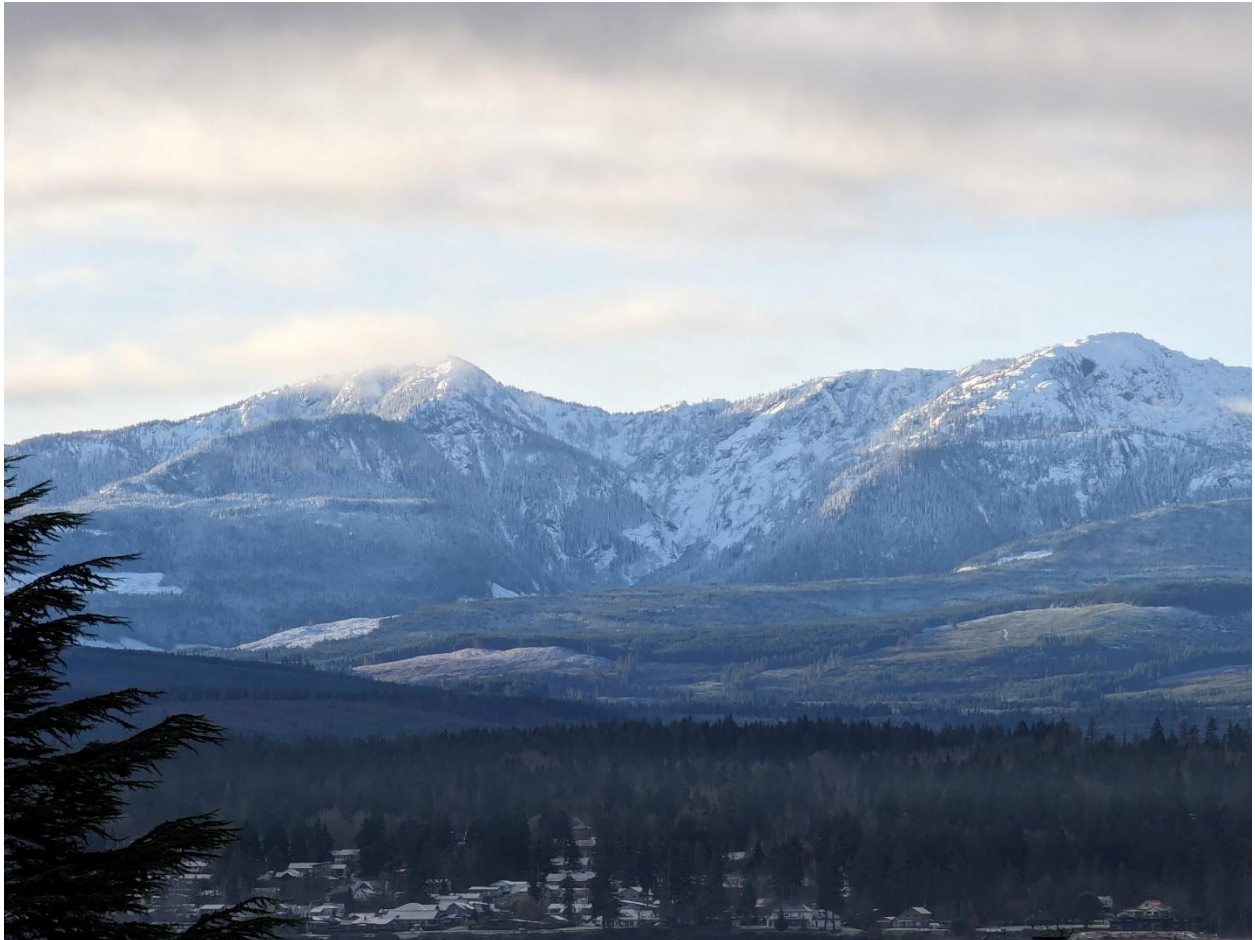
As you will see by reading the rest of this Annual Report the volunteers and committees of Comox United Church achieved much during 2023. Additional volunteers are always welcome. Whatever time you can commit this coming year will be appreciated. Offer what you can by emailing CouncilChair@comoxunitedchurch.com or talking with a Council member or Karen.

Thank you to our staff for all your work this past year. Thank you to the dedicated Church Council members who give their time willingly to grapple with important issues and make decisions. Thanks again to our tireless volunteers. Thank you to the congregation of Comox United Church for your continued financial support and your belief in the future of our church community.

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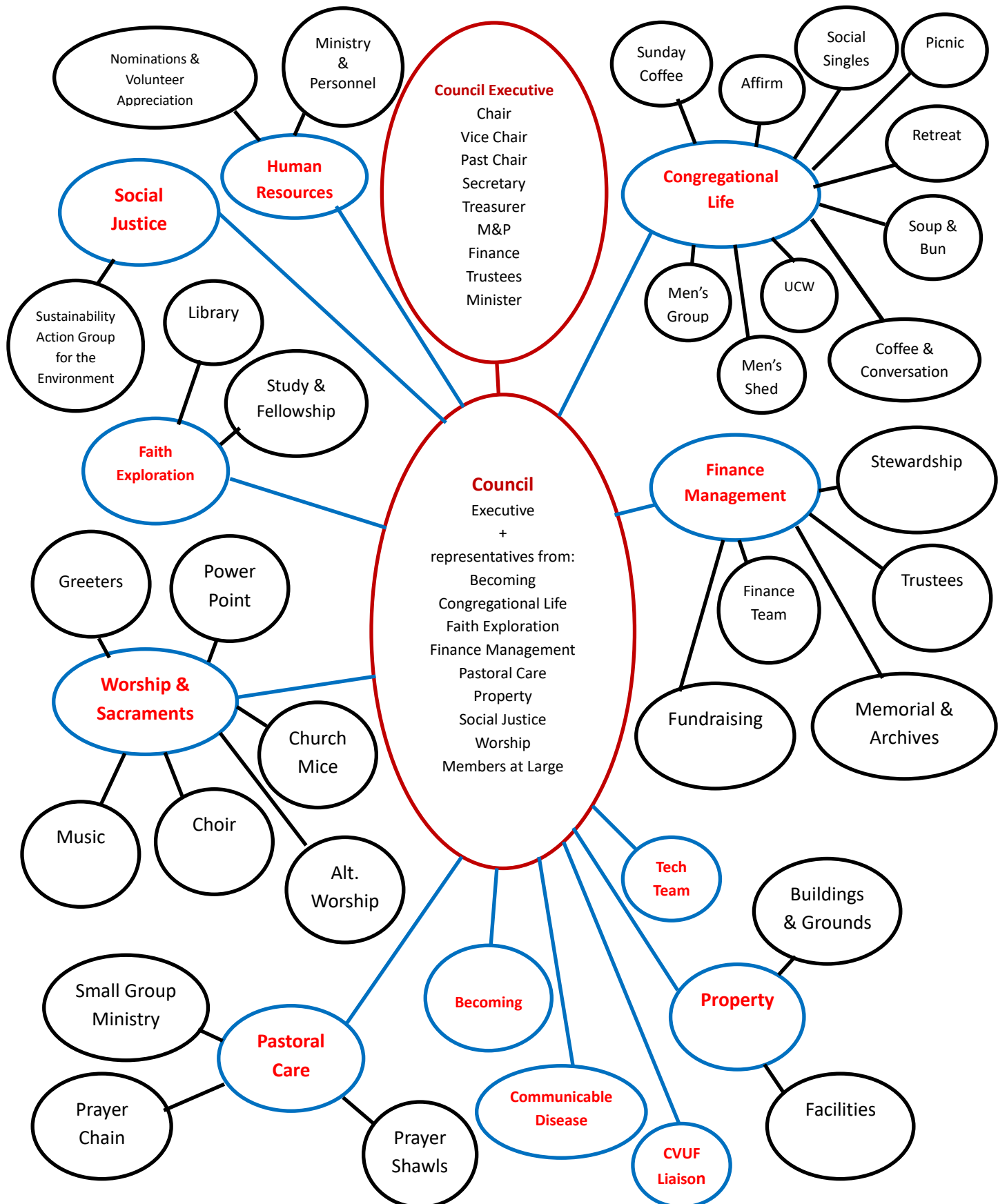
Yes, 2023 was a year of hope. For me, this hope sparked joy and excitement about our future. Together may we live into being the open, loving, spiritual community we know is possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Wiens, Past Council Chair



The view from the porch of Comox United

Structure of Church Council



Reports from Church Council Committees & Groups

Becoming Team/Visioning

The Becoming Team was formed in 2016 with the mandate to look at what Comox United Church could “become”. Since then, the team facilitated a number of small groups within the congregation and partnered with Comox Valley Senior Peer Support Society to provide Creative Caregivers workshops.

The team added two members in 2021 and, as the Visioning Team, spearheaded the visioning process in 2021 – 2022 under the leadership of Rev. Debra Bowman.

Visioning and strategic planning are now being overseen by the Church Council and, with the approval of Council, the Becoming Team was disbanded in October 2023. Funds that remained of a ProVision grant for the Creative Caregivers program will be administered by the Pastoral Care Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Bev Agur

Faith Exploration

(formerly Congregational Education)

During 2023 the Congregational Education group changed its name to Faith Exploration. Our activities during the year continued to provide several book studies and opportunity to explore the faith of Christianity and other spiritual traditions. Spirituality and Indigenous History were explored jointly with the Unitarian Fellowship during the year through in-person sessions and Zoom.

The Faith Exploration group wishes to thank those who developed and delivered the various programmes and book studies including Robert McDonald, Howard Robertson, Margie van Binsbergen, and Dayna Andrews. The church's new minister, Rev. Karen Hollis, is now the group's staff liaison. She has provided both excellent leadership and active faith exploration during services. The library in the fellowship hall continues to be a resource for faith exploration. Our group's work is hampered, however, by a paucity of committee members which severely limits the development and delivery of new programmes.

Below are some details of our activities during 2023.

Adult Activities

- Bible Study: Rev. Karen is now offering a Bible study ministry in 6-week sessions spaced out over the year. Each round of sessions focuses on a particular topic or theme. In 2023, she held a 6-week session in October and plans to continue this ministry in 2024.
- Dialogue Group: This group met three times in March and April to explore the topic of "Expanding Spirituality." Average attendance was 13-16 people. All were engaged with the discussion and appreciated the opportunity to talk about experiences and not just concepts.
- The Gospel of Thomas study group: This group took a hiatus for the first half of the year but then resumed in September. They tackled the challenging book by Jack Miles entitled *God: A Biography*. They plan to continue to meet in 2024 with a new book. The group meets every other Monday and is attended by 13 people via Zoom.
- Indigenous Canada: Our church co-sponsored with the Comox Unitarian Fellowship a new program providing education and group discussions about the Indigenous peoples. Wayne Wilson served as the representative for our church. The program was a free online course offered by the University of Alberta. It consisted of 12 modules, running from January–April.

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Youth and Children Activities

- Sunday service youth and children: The pre-COVID procedures for youth and children coverage continued to be provided for when any youth or children attended services.
- Annual Summer Day Camp hosted by St. George's United Church: No CUC youth attended in 2023. However, we continued to support this activity as our commitment to providing United Church youth opportunities in the valley. Each year we donate \$250.
- Comox Valley Youth (CVY): This group started in Oct. 2020 and is a collaborative effort by St. George's United Church and St. Peter's Anglican Church. As with the Summer Day Camp, we are limited to supporting this program financially. That support began in 2023 with a \$200 donation.
- OWL: Rev. Karen provided the following brief description of OWL: "OWL stands for *Our Whole Lives*, sexuality and our faith. It is a comprehensive sex education program for all ages, created by the Unitarian Universalists and United Church of Christ (sister denomination to the United Church of Canada) in the States." The Unitarians have asked our church to sponsor the program by providing church space. Teachers trained in the programme for K-1 level would be the leaders. A 2024 spring start-up is projected. The programme falls under the umbrella of the Faith Exploration group. There has been some discussion of the programme being extended to other age groups. If so, we have expressed a concern about us sponsoring the programme for other school age levels until the school board(s) are consulted to prevent any conflict or overlap with possible similar programmes offered by the schools.

Church library

- Our library continued to operate as usual. During the year's annual cleanout, many dated and underused books were removed. They were offered to the congregation for free in the church hall after two church services. The remaining books were given to the Rotary Club for its book sale.

Broadview Magazine

- The church continued to offer the congregation a group subscription.
- As in past years, announcements were made in the church newsletter to renew or start a subscription to the magazine.

Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Zimmerman

Congregational Life

We started 2023 off with much excitement, joy, anticipation, and cake with the arrival of Rev. Karen Hollis in early January. It has been such a delight getting to know Karen. We appreciate her gentle leadership approach, warmth, intelligence, and deep faith.

Comox United Church is a vibrant hub of activity that serves both our surrounding community and our own congregation. Sunday morning services and coffee hour after church are the cornerstones of Congregational Life, but there is so much going on during the week and calendar year that both challenges us and helps create a supportive faith community.

Activities included: Bible studies, potlucks, meals with combined congregations, Soup & Bun luncheons, UCW lunches. Knitting and walking groups, Men's Shed, and monthly Men's Breakfasts are just some of the activities and events that have been ongoing in 2023. Within the Comox community, congregants enjoy weekly Coffee & Conversation at the Comox Golf Course, and Super Singles sometimes meet at local parks. We participated in the first Courtenay Pride Parade (thanks to Merrilee for creating a beautiful CUC banner), as well as Coldest Night of the Year which supports and brings awareness and understanding to the homeless population in the valley.

We had a variety of entertainment events throughout the year including Gloria Herauf's annual *Have a Heart* musical. Over the years, the musicals have raised much needed funds for our church and many other important charities and organizations throughout the Valley. Thank you to Gloria and all those who are involved on stage and in behind! We enjoyed a Talent Show, a Christmas Singalong, and the Charles Dickens reading as part of the Matthew Mystery Project (see *Fundraising*).

Looking ahead — we have booked Camp Homewood on Quadra Island for the fall. Please save the first weekend of October (4th–6th) and come join us as it will be a time of relaxation and community building in a beautiful and peaceful setting. We will plan for a Hanging of the Greens potluck and service at the beginning of Advent, it was missed this past year.

I offer my grateful thanks and appreciation to all the volunteers who give of their time and energy to the groups who compile Congregation Life. To Elaine and Ruth who took care of the Congregational Life table for many years, to the dedicated volunteers who prepare coffee and tea for us to enjoy after the service each week. Thanks to those who made soup, brought buns, helped set and clean up after events.....so many thank yous! To the people who lead the various groups: Cameron, Merrilee, Margie, Scott A., Bev A., Carol, and many

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(Congregational Life continued...)

others — I give my grateful thanks and appreciation. If you have any suggestions for this committee or if you would like to get involved, please reach out to me at 250-897-6196 or speak to me after church.

I invite you to wear your name tags and if you need one, please use the sign-up sheet on the table in the Narthex as you come into the church.

As seen in the upcoming budget for 2024, you will notice that approximately 20% of total CUC funds comprise the CL budget. Items include: 20% of Rev. Karen's salary, some administration costs and employment benefits, a portion of the building fees including maintenance and security costs, and some book fees.

Respectfully submitted,
Fiona Curry

Groups Associated with Congregational Life

Coffee and Conversation Group

The Coffee and Conversation group was started several years ago to offer an opportunity to meet in an informal, off-church site, for those that wanted another social activity with fellow members. This group is part of our Congregational Life practice at Comox United.

We continue to meet on a weekly basis on Tuesday mornings at 10 am at the Comox Golf Club. That location allows us to meet outside when the weather is pleasant and inside when it becomes inclement. The staff there are accommodating and welcoming and there is always space available. This year, starting in the late fall, we began to use the golf club's board room for our get-togethers. This location allowed us to meet without the noise distractions in the main room, which, while it is a great location, has the reputation of poor acoustics, especially for those with hearing loss issues.

Most times about eight to ten folks joined in on a regular basis. We welcome any CUC members or friends of members who want to join in. Please contact me at cairncross@live.ca or at 250-339-0739.

Respectfully submitted,
Cameron Cairncross

Knitting Group

The knitting group meets weekly throughout the year. During the summer months we met outdoors and the rest of the time we met at the church. The group has about 12 members.

Members of the group knitted and crocheted a variety of projects — slippers for the Comox Valley Transition House, items for the church bazaar, prayer shawls and socks as well as projects of their own. The socks are given to the “Sock it to ‘Em” program — a project run by a Comox Valley woman who sells handmade socks and uses the proceeds to buy heavy duty socks for the disadvantaged in our community. Some of the proceeds from the bazaar were used to purchase yarn for prayer shawls. Additionally, a donation was made to the music ministry program of Comox United Church which covered the cost of additional music stands and folders for music for the choir.

Not only do the members enjoy knitting and crocheting together but they also provide companionship and support for those living alone.

New members are always welcome to join us, whether they are wanting to learn to knit or crochet, experienced, or somewhere in between. Come for community and friendship — lively discussion guaranteed!

Respectfully submitted,
Bev Agur

Men’s Shed

Men’s Sheds or Community Sheds are non-profit local organizations that provide a space for a making of things and for social interaction. The movement originated in Australia around the 1980’s as a way to improve the health and well-being of older men. There are over 900 Men’s Sheds located across Australia, with thousands of active members. Men’s Sheds can be found also in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Finland, Estonia, New Zealand and Greece. On Vancouver Island there are Men’s Sheds in Victoria, Sooke, Sidney, Salt Spring Island, Bowen Island, Parksville, Nanaimo and Comox. In the province of BC there are 49 registered Men’s Sheds.

An important slogan for Men’s Sheds is “Shoulder to Shoulder”, shortened from the original expression, “...men don’t talk face to face, they talk shoulder to shoulder...”

The first Men’s Shed was opened in Tongala, Australia on July 26, 1998.

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(Men's Shed continued...)

Sheds were inspired by backyard sheds, where a man would go and carry out tasks such as restoring furniture or repairing lawn mowers. Men's Sheds can be seen also as an extension of the original nineteenth-century idea of working men's clubs in the United Kingdom and Australia that provided recreation and education for working class men and their families.

Our Story

About four years ago, a handful of men from Comox United Church and the Comox Valley renovated an abandoned room in the basement of the Comox United Church building. Unwanted items were taken to the landfill. An old cupboard system was removed and replaced with a cupboard system sourced by one of our men. We painted the walls. A workbench was constructed by one of the men. Tools and books found their way into the Shed. A refrigerator was donated by a church family. A used sofa, chairs and a coffee table found a home in the shed. The Covid-19 pandemic slowed us down, but we continued to meet outside in parks. When the pandemic disappeared, we moved back into the Shed again.

What does a week in the life of the Comox Valley Shed look like? On Fridays from 10–12 noon, we enjoy coffee, cookies and conversation. There is usually a check-in time where we introduce ourselves and share a bit of our story. Our attendance has varied from 12 – 20 men: some are from Comox United Church or the Comox Valley Unitarian Church, but a good number come from the greater community. When we have extra participants, we can spill over into an adjoining room. There is a certain richness and meaning in getting to know one another as we stand “shoulder to shoulder” in conversations that unite us in joy, laughter and mutual support.

On Thursdays, from 9 – 12 noon, we open the shed to men who want to make something out of wood. Currently, men have constructed two library book holders which will be put on posts and placed somewhere in the community. Used books will fill the book holders which will be available for folk who enjoy reading and who also may have some books they want to donate. The wood that we used has been from recycled materials.

We are experimenting with offering opportunities to learn to play cribbage on Sunday afternoons from 3 – 5 pm. We usually put on some coffee. You are warmly invited to come and be a part of this new activity. In addition, from time to time, we go out for dinner in a restaurant and we are planning a visit in good weather to Port Alberni to have a day trip on the *MV Frances Barkley*.

We also like to ‘give back’. The ways in which we do this is to be responsible for cutting the church lawn and for raking leaves and keeping the

parking lot tidy in the spring, summer and autumn months. Recently, we used our own funds to purchase an electric, cordless lawn mower and cordless trimmer. When spring arrives, you will see one of us out on the property, keeping the lawn looking cared for. We sometimes also carry out odd jobs around the church.

On behalf of the Shed Executive, a warm invitation is extended to all men to be a part of “The Shed”. If you are looking for interesting conversations and a place to call ‘home’ with other men, please drop by on a Friday at 10 am in the Shed (in the church basement). We will be glad to see you!

Warmly,
Scott Agur

Social Singles

In 2023 we welcomed a few new members & said goodbye to others, so our membership number stays relatively stable. Loreleigh Fitzgerald has replaced Ruth Gibson our leader. We adjusted our gatherings from dinner in the lighter months of summer to lunch at the church during the winter months. This year we enjoyed a turkey dinner at the White Spot restaurant.....it was nice.

Respectfully submitted,
Merrilee Cameron

Soup & Bun

The last Sunday of the month was a time for gathering in the church hall for a bowl of soup and a bun. Most Sundays 60 people attended, and donations of about \$300.00 were divided between St George’s Son-shine Soup Kitchen, St. Peter’s Unity Cupboard, the Care A Van, and Comox United. While there is great enthusiasm to attend Soup & Bun, it has become increasingly difficult to find people willing to provide it. The plan to have the various groups on the church take a turn has had limited success due to small numbers. At the time of writing this report there will be a pause.

As the Coordinators of this activity, we would like to thank all who have participated in shopping, chopping, cooking, stirring, bringing, serving, setting up and taking down. It worked like a well-oiled machine with no hint of the sacrifice you have made to do it.

Respectfully submitted,
Merrilee Cameron & Leslie Fraser

Walking Group

The Walking Group meets on the last Sunday of the month for a walk of about an hour with an average attendance about 8 –10 people. The group has explored a variety of trails throughout the Comox Valley and always welcomes new walkers.

Respectfully submitted,
Bev Agur



The Walking Group at Seal Bay

Financial Management Group

Givings Administrator

You may notice that I am now going by the title of Givings Administrator as opposed to Envelope Secretary. The duties of this volunteer position encompass so much more than managing, recording and receipting envelope offerings. The new title is more reflective of the scope of duties I perform.

In addition to liaising with the United Church of Canada Head Office with frequent updates to PAR donor information, I work closely with the offering counters (under the capable leadership of Ruth Giles), the Church Treasurer and the Church Office Administrator. I work with the Treasurer every January to reconcile my figures with those on the financial statements, and I attend meetings of the Finance Team and contribute to budget preparation.

Gisèle Plouffe has done well transitioning to the role of Treasurer this past year, and I appreciate the guidance that Robin Giles provided (and still provides from time to time). I enjoy working and problem-solving with Gisèle. She has developed a good understanding of everyone's roles, including that of the bookkeeper, and has implemented process efficiencies that will save time and help us work better together.

Karasima, who is providing relief in the Church Office, is a bright, positive individual and has been a delight to work with. Lorna, of course, is always helpful. I also appreciate the assistance of members of the congregation to distribute tax receipts, which saves on postage.

In addition to the routine pieces of my role, this fall I was heavily involved in the Stewardship Campaign (receiving confidential responses, implementing Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR) changes, liaising with Council members, etc.). As well, I was responsible for receipting Matthew Mystery profits, following up with individuals and the co-ordinator for clarification and ensuring adherence to Canada Revenue Agency guidelines.

* * * * *

(continued.../)

(*Givings Administrator continued...*)

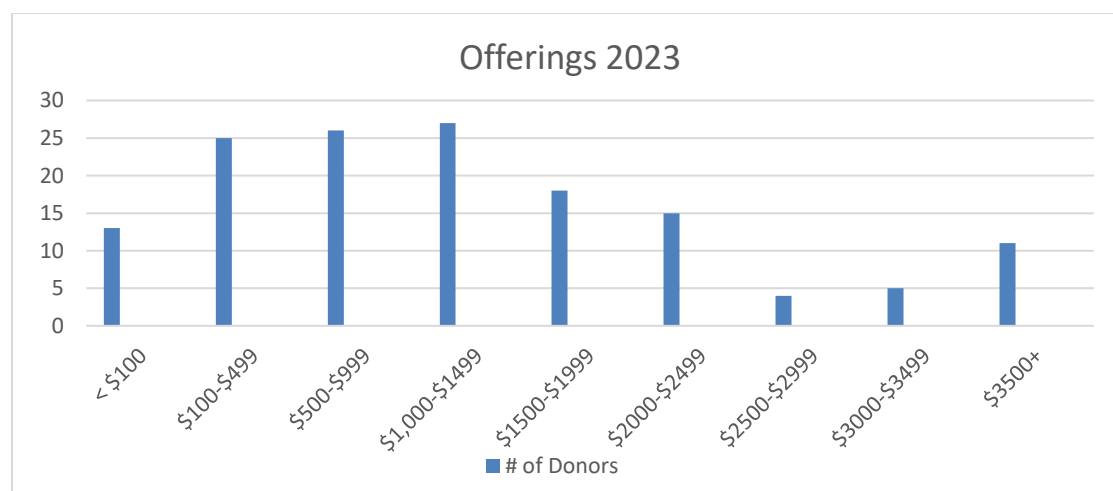
Offerings received through numbered envelope sets, Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR), Interac and other identifiable means were as follows:

	<u>2023</u>
Local Offerings	198,884.56
Special Appeals	2,995.00
Memorials	0
TOTAL:	\$201,879.56

Please note:

Local Offerings and Special Appeals also had “open” donations not recorded by the Envelope Secretary. See the Treasurer’s Report for final totals.

The annual level of giving below includes ten occasional donors and 16 one-time donors who were not on PAR and who did not give regularly via envelopes or Interac.



In 2023, 28 envelope sets* were issued, as compared with 29 in 2022:

- one envelope holder passed away;
- two envelope holders switched to PAR;
- the church gained two new envelope holders.

*To save money, I continue to make up personalized packets rather than ordering boxed sets.

(continued.../)

(Givings Administrator continued...)

Nine individuals chose Interac as their means of donating to the church. The last of the individuals who were giving via direct deposit from a bank account passed away in 2023.

Eighty-two individuals/families were on the United Church of Canada's PAR system at the end of 2023, the same number as the previous year. We lost two PAR donors due to death and three for other reasons, but we gained five new PAR donors during the year. Throughout 2023, 11 PAR donors increased their offerings by a combined total of \$265 per month. On the other hand, the monthly amount lost from the cancelled PAR/Direct Deposit deductions totalled \$680 per month.

Forty-one donors gave generously to Special Appeals in 2023. Please refer to the Treasurer's Report for totals.

Anyone wishing to receive a packet of offering envelopes, register for PAR or discuss other donation options is invited to contact me by phone at 250-871-4073 or by email at envelopesecretary@comoxunitedchurch.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McMahon, Givings Administrator



Treasurer's Report

February 25th, 2024

Dear Congregation Members

It's a challenge for me to be here today. For different reasons. The first is having agreed to replace Mr. Robin Giles whom I salute for his excellent work and being supporting so much. The second is my level of English of course and I thank you for your understanding. (smile) Then, although it was the best way to discover a community as a whole, building relationships and discovering the pearl in each of the people I met was a challenge. Not because you are difficult, but rather because I was confronted with my personal limits of health and ego. And it is within these limits that I make the links between money management and my spirituality. Yes, for me the management of the community's money led me to continue my flowering from the point of view of the four values of the community.

Spirituality, Openness, Care for the Common Good, Radical Love

But I will not tell you that here because the purpose of this meeting is to present to you the financial statements and the 2024 budget. However, know that it is possible to meet individually or in a small group to talk about it. It will be my pleasure.



250 Beach Drive Comox,
BC



819-712-8632



treasurer@comoxunited
church.com



[https://www.comoxunited
church.com/](https://www.comoxunitedchurch.com/)





The budget has some points of interest:

Investment: The Finance Committee has been reviewing our investments to make sure they align with the church values e.g. no oil or tobacco. The investments were adjusted to continue to be diversified. The committee targets 70% in medium risk and 30% in low risk.

M&P changes: Increase in the salaries of the minister, the office manager and the bookkeeper and the number of hours of the Bookkeeper.

Addition of a clerk administrator to do administrative tasks in order to relieve Minister Karen Hollis of administrative tasks to spend more time in pastoral care.

F&M Upgrade tools: the congregation is now fully active and the Accountant Sage tool free version 2016 was no more accurate. Sage 2024 will be downloaded and we will have upgrade course to get it efficient.

The income and statement 2023

After Covid, it is the resumption of activities in all spheres of the congregation. With the arrival of Minister Karen Hollis, her vision, her leadership and her youth, we have seen different forms of life rise from the ashes or take shape. The energy is palpable. In the income, we can see life in a tangible way especially with the involvement of several community members in the Mathew Mystery Project.

On the expenditure side, consequently, we see the normal increase in the cost of living. Otherwise, this income statement appears to reflect the usual expenses of the congregation. We end the year with a surplus of \$32,384.





Interesting point in Balance sheet

Assets: The church investments are under Canoe Defensive Global Balanced Fund. The new balance is \$301819.08. They included \$145,715 for bequest, ProVision and other accounts in the balance sheet. By the way, ProVision grants are awarded by the Pacific Mountain Region ProVision Fund Committee and it is possible to make requests to get new funds.

Consequently, Church has a \$156,100 for good stewardship. It was time to talk about our risk tolerance for this account, the investment objective and the time horizon. The FM committee seat to make recommendations about the investments. The funds are modified and the process is done. The funds are available if needed.

Property history:

- 1). Several years ago, we put aside many dollars to put towards eventual roof costs - from one of the bequests, as we knew that our 4 separate roofs each have their own history, and are potentially costly.
- 2) In the Fall of 2019 we commissioned a "roof condition assessment" to be done - to give us a road map and a plan for doing work and maintenance on the roof. I want to get back onto that road again. Of course, maintenance is way cheaper than repair!!





2024 Strategies and treasurer recommendations:

To be wise, from my point of view, we should talk more about the Pastoral Care of the congregation members. We should increase the investment in an administrator paid for his services because a treasurer is not an administrator employee working for free as a volunteer. The first chair M&P committee should be responsible of ADP file till a full time administrator will be officially in place.

Thanks

I want to thank everyone for their support, especially Heather and Claude Dalley, Midge Swedberg, Joanne Wiens, Cheryl McMahon, Karen Hollis, the board members and Ruth Giles as responsible of the counters committee. These people were present, supportive to keep me on the path of Life by their way of being and the help provided in my work is very appreciable. It has been a privilege to work as treasurer for the community. I am blessed. May God's love continue to guide me.

"Many on earth will value your life by what you do, your influence, your possessions, or your ministry, but I value you and measure you by my love. My love will be your guide when you do what I asked of my servant."

Respectfully submitted,

Gisèle Plouffe, Treasurer

2023 Budget & Proposed 2024 Budget

1	FACILITIES	Budget 2023	Budget 2024
2	Facilities Usage	\$20,000.00	\$25,000.00
3	Funeral/Weddings	\$0.00	\$0.00
4	Unitarian Fellowship Contribution	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
5	Total Facilities Income	\$27,500.00	\$32,500.00
6			
7	OFFERINGS		
8	Open Collection	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00
9	PAR	\$140,000.00	\$140,000.00
10	Envelope Offerings	\$55,000.00	\$55,000.00
11	e-Transfer	\$9,500.00	\$3,600.00
12	Total Offerings	\$206,500.00	\$201,100.00
13			
14	OTHER INCOME		
	Friendship and fellowship		
15	Broadview Subscriptions	\$650.00	\$450.00
16	Dividends/Interest Earned	\$25.00	\$1,650.00
17	Investment Income	\$0.00	\$0.00
20	Fund Raising	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
18	Congregational Life Food and Fellowship	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
21	Donations	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
19	Congregational Education Income	\$850.00	\$0.00
	Worship Income		
22	Property Income	\$0.00	

(continued .../)

		Budget 2023	Budget 2024
	Pastoral Care income		
	Knitting group Income		
	Misc Income		
	Sage income		
23	Financial Management Income	\$500.00	\$500.00
24	Total Other Income	\$2,025.00	\$15,100.00
25			
26	SOCIAL JUSTICE AND OUTREACH GROUP		
	CV Food Banks		
27	Healthy Babies	\$0.00	
28	United Church Emergency Response	\$0.00	
29	United Church Healing Fund	\$0.00	
30	Comox Valley Food Bank	\$0.00	
31	Our Place	\$0.00	
32	Sleeping Children around the World	\$0.00	
	Miscellaneous donation Rainbow house		
	Soup and sandwich		\$1,250.00
33	white Gift	\$0.00	
34	Total Social Justice and Outreach Group Income	\$0.00	\$1,250.00
35			
36	TRANSFER FROM DEFERRED DESIGNATED FUNDS		
37	Choir Music Fund	\$0.00	

(continued .../)

		Budget 2023	Budget 2024
	Fund Raising		
38	Thomas Bequest	\$0.00	
39	Howard Bequest	\$0.00	
40	Deferred Revenue	\$0.00	
	Provision Fund - Caregiver Retreat		
41	Moving Expense	\$0.00	
42	Total Transfer from Deferred Designated Funds	\$0.00	\$0.00
43			
44	TOTAL REVENUE	\$236,025.00	\$249,950.00
45			
46	EXPENSES		
47			
48	MINISTRY AND PERSONEL GROUP	BUDGET 2023 Budget 2024	
49	Minister 1 – Hollis	\$80,770.00	\$85,859.00
50	Clerk administrator	\$13,500.00	\$6,949.00
51	Office Manager - Tutte	\$27,011.07	\$27,552.00
52	Book Allowances	\$0.00	
53	Streaming Technician	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
54	Minister's Cont Ed and Resources	\$1,543.00	\$1,640.00
55	CDM, Music Dir, Sec Prof Dev and Book Allowances	\$500.00	\$500.00
56	Minister's Telephone	\$720.00	\$720.00
57	Fee for Service, Music/Relief	\$10,000.00	\$12,000.00
58	Book Keeper Contract	\$1,750.00	\$2,800.00
59	Office Relief	\$500.00	\$500.00

(continued .../)

		Budget 2023	Budget 2024
	Wages Funerals and services		\$0.00
60	EI-Employer Expense	\$1,750.00	\$1,750.00
61	CPP Expenses	\$5,000.00	\$5,500.00
62	UCC Pension Expense	\$7,500.00	\$9,000.00
63	UCC Bens Expense	\$6,000.00	\$9,500.00
64	Sabbatrical Leave Reserve	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
65	NOVA	\$150.00	\$150.00
66	Staff Appreciation	\$500.00	\$800.00
	Hospitality		
67	Travel Costs	\$500.00	\$500.00
68	Work Safe BC	\$150.00	\$150.00
69	ADP-Payroll Expense	\$350.00	\$360.00
70	Total Ministry and Personnel Group Expenses	\$161,194.07	\$167,230.00
71			
72	UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA		
73	United Church of Canada – Donated Funds: M & S	\$20,650.00	\$20,110.00
74	General Council Assessment	\$9,023.00	\$11,145.00
75	Regional Assessment	\$902.00	\$1,115.00
76	Total United Church of Canada	\$30,575.00	\$32,370.00
77			
78	MINISTER'S DISCRETIONARY FUND		
79	Minister's Discretionary Expense	\$250.00	\$250.00

(continued .../)

		Budget 2023	Budget 2024
80	Total Minister's' Discretionary Expenses	\$250.00	\$250.00
81			
82	CONGREGATIONAL EDUCATION GROUP		
83	Adult Study Resources	\$75.00	\$75.00
84	Summer Day Camp	\$250.00	\$250.00
85	Comox Valley Youth	\$200.00	\$200.00
86	Library	\$30.00	\$30.00
87	Congregational Education Expense	\$0.00	\$130.00
88	Broadview Costs	\$0.00	\$475.00
89	Total Congregational Education Group Expenses	\$555.00	\$1,160.00
90			
91	CONGREGATIONAL LIFE GROUP		
92	Congregational Retreat	\$500.00	\$500.00
93	Congregational Life Supplies	\$0.00	
94	Congregational Life Food and Fellowship	\$850.00	\$1,250.00
95	Congregational Life Expenses	\$0.00	
96	Affirm Expense	\$130.00	\$150.00
97	Men's Outreach and Education	\$0.00	
98	Total Congregational Life Expenses	\$1,480.00	\$1,900.00
99			
100	FINANCE MANAGEMENT GROUP		
101	Hydro, Heat, Utilities	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
102	Bank and Visa Charges	\$200.00	\$200.00
103	Advertising	\$300.00	\$300.00

		Budget 2023	Budget 2024
104	PAR Service Charges	\$500.00	\$500.00
105	Investment Loss	\$0.00	
106	Insurance	\$11,000.00	\$11,700.00
107	Office Expenses	\$850.00	\$850.00
108	Office Supplies	\$600.00	\$600.00
109	Professional Fees	\$200.00	\$200.00
	Other Office Expenses, Equip		\$800.00
110	Photocopier	\$400.00	\$500.00
111	Telephone Internet	\$1,650.00	\$1,650.00
112	Water & Sewer	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
113	Total Finance Management Group Expenses	\$24,700.00	\$26,300.00
114			
115	PASTORAL CARE GROUP		
116	Resources	\$0.00	
	Cards and postage		\$200.00
117	Gifts for shut-ins	\$125.00	\$300.00
118	Workshops	\$0.00	\$300.00
119	Caregiver's Retreat (6K-3K)	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
	Pastoral Care Minister (M&P section)		
120	Total Pastoral Care Group Expenses	\$125.00	\$3,800.00

(continued .../)

		Budget 2023	Budget 2024
122	PROPERTY GROUP		
123	Property – Fixtures and Fittings	\$3,000.00	\$1,000.00
124	Property – Maintenance and Repairs painting, baseboards, etc	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
125	Property Other: electrical and plumbing	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
126	Cleaning Services	\$21,500.00	\$24,000.00
127	Security	\$1,650.00	\$1,800.00
128	Tech Team	\$3,630.00	\$700.00
129	Safety (cement barriers in parking lot, extinguishers)	\$90.00	\$1,000.00
130	Snow and ice Clearing	\$3,750.00	\$4,000.00
131	Total Property Committee Group Expenses	\$34,620.00	\$35,000.00
	Stewardship committee		\$300.00
132			
133	SOCIAL JUSTICE AND OUTREACH GROUP		
134	Outreach Committee Expenses	\$100.00	\$0.00
135	Other Expense	\$0.00	
136	Care-A Van	\$0.00	
	Dawn to Dawn		

(continued .../)

		Budget 2023	Budget 2024
137	St. George's Pantry	\$0.00	
138	St. Peter's Unity Cupboard	\$0.00	
139	Sonshine Lunch Club	\$0.00	
140	Healthy Babies	\$0.00	
141		\$0.00	
142	United Church Emergency Response	\$0.00	
143	United Church Healing Fund	\$0.00	
144	Comox Valley Food Bank	\$0.00	
145	Our Place	\$0.00	
146	Sleeping Children around the World	\$0.00	
147	Total Social Justice and Outreach Group Expenses	\$100.00	\$0.00
148			
149	WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS GROUP		
150	Worship Committee Expenses	\$450.00	
151	Candles: providing candles	\$100.00	\$150.00
	Easter supplies		
152	Piano	\$160.00	\$350.00
153	Music	\$0.00	
	Communion supplies		\$120.00
154	Congregational Music: Licensing	\$485.00	\$1,020.00
	Liturgical decorations		\$300.00
	Other expenses		
	Manuals publication		\$350.00

(continued .../)

		Budget 2023	Budget 2024
155	Pulpit Supply	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
	Funeral expense		
156	Total Worship and Sacraments Group Expenses	\$2,195.00	\$3,290.00
157			
158	EXPENSE FROM DEFERRED DESIGNATED FUNDS		
	Choir Music funds		
	Fund Raising		
	Fund Raising		\$250.00
159	Thomas Bequest	\$0.00	
160	Howard Bequest	\$0.00	
161	Deferred Revenue	\$0.00	
	Provision fund - Caregiver Retreat		
162	Moving Expense	\$0.00	
163	Total Expense from Deferred Designated Funds	\$0.00	\$250.00
164			
165			
166	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$255,794.07	\$271,850.00
167	TOTAL REVENUE	\$236,025.00	\$249,950.00
168	deficit	-\$19,769.07	-\$21,900.00
169	SURPLUS		

Income Statement, 1 Jan 2023–31 Dec 2023

REVENUE

Facilities Income

Facilities Usage	26,730.75
Funerals/Weddings	5,385.00
Unitarian Church	7,012.35

Total Facilities Revenue	39,128.10
---------------------------------	------------------

Offerings

Open Collection	3,917.30
Par Offerings	132,682.00
Envelope Offerings	47,253.70
e-transfer	<u>19,383.86</u>

Total Offerings	203,236.86
------------------------	-------------------

Other Incomes

Friendship and Fellowship	204.50
The Observer Subscriptions	450.00
Dividend/Interest Earned	1,679.39
Investment Income	22,959.47
Fund Raising Income 1	5,065.15
Congregational Life, Food & Fello...	2,123.25
Donations	1,065.00
Congregational Education Income	24.00
Worship Income	160.00
Property Income	788.74
Pastoral Care Income	100.00
Knitting Group Income	216.00
Misc Income	185.00
Sage Income	102.00
Financial Management Income	<u>240.00</u>

Total Other Incomes	45,362.50
----------------------------	------------------

Outreach Offerings

C V Food Banks	1,115.00
Healthy Babies	400.60
Miscellaneous Donations	105.00
Soup and Sandwich	1,299.25
White Gift	<u>1,210.00</u>

Total Outreach Offerings	4,129.85
---------------------------------	-----------------

(continued .../)

Social Justice & Outreach

United Church Healing Fund	515.00
Our Place	50.00
Sleeping Children Around the World	<u>2,270.75</u>

Total Social Justice & Outreach	2,835.75
--	-----------------

Transfer from designated funds

Choir Music Fund	718.97
Fund Raising	2,000.00
Thomas Bequest	22,870.38
Howard Bequest	7,020.40
Deferred Revenue – RCP	6,769.42
Provision Fund - Caregiver Retreat	5,979.01
Moving Expense	<u>8,362.35</u>

Total transfer from designated funds	53,720.53
---	------------------

TOTAL REVENUE	348,413.59
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EXPENSE**Ministry and Personnel Expenses**

Minister's Salary	80,448.42
CDM Salary	2,542.28
Secretary's Salary	26,668.52
Book Allowances	81.58
Minister's Cont. Ed & Resources	1,343.14
Sick Contingency	1,000.00
Minister's Telephone	770.00
Fee for Service, Music, Relief	13,101.22
Bookkeeper	2,326.01
Office Relief	147.56
Wages	400.00
EI - Employer Expense -	1,747.16
CPP Expense -	5,296.90
UCC Pension Expense	9,493.91
UCC Bens Expense	9,736.74
Nova	125.00
Staff Appreciation	1,283.37
Travel Costs	392.94
Work Safe BC	110.50
ADP - Payroll Expense	<u>365.08</u>

Total Ministry and Personnel	157,380.33
-------------------------------------	-------------------

(continued .../)

United Church of Canada

Donated Fund - M & S	20,453.00
General Council Assessment	9,023.00
Regional Assessment	902.00

Total United Church of Canada	30,378.00
--------------------------------------	------------------

Congregational Education Group

Congregational Education Expenses	112.00
Observer Subscriptions	475.00

Total Congregational Education	587.00
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Congregation Life Group

Congregational Life Supplies	68.28
Friendship and Fellowship	735.52
Congregational Life Expense	270.83
Affirm Expense	97.58
Men's Outreach and Education 7	7.75

Total Congregational Life	1,249.96
----------------------------------	-----------------

Finance Management Group

Hydro, Heat, Utilities	7,892.05
Bank and Visa Charges	201.54
PAR Service Charges	480.50
Insurance, building	11,365.00
Office Expenses	562.24
Office Supplies	2,406.05
Other Office Expenses, Equip.	330.47
Photocopier	458.72
Professional Fees	197.97
Telephone/Internet	1,721.11
Water and Sewer	1,456.82

Total Finance Management Group	27,072.47
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Pastoral Care

Resources	18.86
Gifts	142.21

Total Pastoral Care	161.07
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Property

Property Fixtures and Fittings	974.77
Property Maintenance & Repairs	4,074.78
Cleaning Services	21,961.92
Security	1,718.76
Tech Team	838.02
Safety	971.76

(continued .../)

Snow Clearing	4,827.00
Total Property Expense	35,367.01
Stewardship	
Stewardship Committee	330.02
Total Stewardship	330.02
Social Justice and Outreach	
Other expense	935.00
Mission & Service	105.00
Dawn to Dawn	1,160.00
Healthy Babies	400.60
United Church Healing Fund	415.00
Comox Valley Food Bank	1,115.00
Our Place	50.00
Sleeping Children	2,270.75
Total Social Justice and Outreach	6,451.35
Worship & Sacraments Group	
Candles	149.14
Easter Supplies	202.53
Piano	250.00
Communion Supplies	10.49
Congregational Music, Licensing	1,020.00
Liturgical Decorations	178.46
Other Expenses	642.35
Manuals / Publications	378.40
Pulpit Supply	1,134.05
Funeral Expense	2,250.00
Total Worship & Sacraments	6,215.42
Designated Funds Expense	
Choir Music Fund	518.97
Fund Raising	2,000.00
Thomas Bequest	22,870.38
Howard Bequest	7,020.40
Deferred Revenue - RCP	6,769.42
Provision Fund - Caregiver Retreat	3,141.01
Moving Expenses	8,516.68
Total Designated Funds Expense	50,836.86
TOTAL EXPENSE	316,029.49
NET INCOME	32,384.10

Balance Sheet as of 31 Dec 2023

ASSET

Current Assets

CV Credit Union-Chequing	29,187.14	
Savings Account	23,540.75	
Equity Share Account-CV Credit Union	111.41	
Defensive Global Balanced Fund	301,819.08	
Cash Total		354,658.38
Accounts Receivable	2,138.28	
Federal Receivable (GST5/12)	2,282.97	
Sub-Total Current Assets		4,421.25

Total Current Assets 359,079.63

TOTAL ASSET 359,079.63

LIABILITY

Current Liabilities

Accounts to Pay	3,251.05	
Sub-Total Payables		3,251.05

Total Accounts Payable 3,251.05

Deferred Specified Funds

SAGE	25.74	
Choir-Music fund	481.03	
Congregation Retreat Fund	326.20	
Contingency Property Reserves	5,313.16	
Provision Fund-Caregiver Retreat	92.13	
Provision Fund - Art Therapy	4,364.00	
Provision Fund – Vespers	5,800.00	
Thomas Bequest	25,210.18	
Howard Bequest	77,846.51	
Memorial Fund	8,045.47	
Presbytery Trust Fund	2,182.16	
Deferred Revenue - RCP	6,769.42	
Moving Expenses	7,637.65	
Interview Costs	1,621.48	
Sub-Total Specified Funds		145,715.13

Total Specified Funds 145,715.13

TOTAL LIABILITY 148,966.18

EQUITY

Retained Earnings

Retained Earnings	177,729.35	
Current Earnings	32,384.10	

Total Retained Earnings 210,113.45

TOTAL EQUITY 210,113.45

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY 359,079.63

Groups associated with Financial Management

Fundraising

At the May 2023 Comox United Church Council meeting, Council approved a \$2000 expenditure to fund a special one-time fundraising initiative to be coordinated by congregation member Elaine Brown. This expenditure was approved in faith with only our minister Rev. Karen Hollis knowing the details of the project. Council was promised that the \$2000 would be returned to the church with additional funding added in the spring of 2024.

On October 1, 2023, the project titled *The Matthew Mystery Project* launched. Each member of the congregation was surprised by being gifted an envelope containing a \$20 bill and instructions to multiply the provided 'seed money' as much as possible before the project concluded on April 28, 2024. Inspired by scripture (Matthew 25: 14-30), Rev. Karen encouraged congregation members to use their talents to grow the \$20 to assist Comox United to fulfill its mandate of Spirituality, Openness, Care for the Common Good, and Radical Love.

Throughout the fall, congregation members enthusiastically began their individual projects including a Ukrainian dinner, an afternoon tea, and Healing Touch sessions as events. In addition, there was a Matthew Mystery Marketplace on November 19th where 28 vendors sold baking, crafts, and services in support of the project.



Marketplace, Nov 19th

At the conclusion of 2023 many more projects were underway with some participants starting to turn in some of their profits from early fundraising efforts. Just over \$5000 was raised in the first three months of the seven-month project.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Brown

Stewardship

(Alan Brown, Bev Sparks, Joanne Wiens)

Stewardship refers to how we use our own personal resources to help further the mission of our church community. This year our Stewardship campaign was titled “Called to Be the Church”, and our essential message was “Stewardship is not being part of Comox United for just one hour on Sunday mornings, but being part of this church community every day of the week.”

Over three weeks in October and November, we made short presentations during Sunday worship where we sang with you, talked about Stewardship, and listened to some of you describe how you give of your Talents, your Time and your Treasure.

We asked you to share with us what talents you could offer to the church, and many of you responded. We asked you to consider your current level of givings and if you would consider raising that weekly or monthly donation, and many of you responded.

On the fourth Sunday, following worship, we celebrated — with cake, of course! — our ongoing support of Comox United’s mission through our participation in this faith community.

We are called to be the Church! Thanks be to God.

Respectfully submitted,
Alan Brown

Trustees

(Les Herauf, Leslie Fraser, Andrew Black)

The trustees of Comox United Church are tasked with the responsibility of holding the property of Comox United Church for the benefit of the Comox United Congregation.

In practice, this means that we ensure that the insurance is paid for and the application for exemption from municipal taxes is submitted in a timely manner.

On occasion, the trustees may work with the church council in order to ensure that church funds, such as those resulting from bequests, are invested responsibly in accordance with the wishes of our Christian community.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Black

Ministry & Personnel

(Marion Bryden, Dale Erhart, Trevor Fox, Wendy Stewart-Fox, Mike Stewart)

The Ministry & Personnel Committee is charged with the responsibility of looking after the church's staff. The work includes maintaining meaningful contact with each staff member, being a listening ear and lay counsel to the extent we are able. The job also involves dealing with many routine personnel tasks from approving leaves to discussing career plans, training needs, evaluating staff performance, and acting as a resource to congregation members in case of misunderstandings or questions regarding our staff and their work among us. All this is done with confidentiality.

In the past year we have solidified our relationships with staff, learned to deal with the church sick leave plan; have increased our knowledge of the ins and outs of the committee, our roles, and the work required. We have accomplished some staff evaluations, and another is in process.

I feel fortunate to work with a group of thoughtful, intelligent, caring, and creative folks. When I'm stumped, someone else has a good idea or solution. My thanks to the committee members for their work to date and for their willingness to continue on next year. After Marg Silman stepped down from M&P in the spring, Dale Erhart joined us as a replacement, and he has been a welcome addition.

We need a new chair. I have been M&P chair for 17 or 18 of the last 30-odd years, and I don't feel I have energy to continue that role. New leadership is needed, but I will stay on as a committee member and offer my support to a new chair. We have found 6 or 7 members is a good number; it offers a variety of viewpoints and experience, and some depth in dealing with issues and crises – usually one of us is available to step up at any given moment. I have also found that an increasing number of computer-based requirements have made it harder to do the prime work of supporting and overseeing staff & their effectiveness within the congregation.

I also want to thank Treasurer Gisèle Plouffe who has worked with us to help solidify some processes and fiscal issues we hadn't understood all that well, all while she was learning a huge new job, herself. Thanks also to our capable and engaged staff and the past members of the M&P committee who have been helpful and supportive all along.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Stewart

Ministry Profile & Search (MPS)

(Alan Brown, Barb Craig, Dale Erhart, Sue Fabrizio, Robert McDonald, Ken Newman (chair), Serena Patterson, Sue Sutherland-Justice)

Following the resignation of the Rev. Keltie van Binsbergen in 2021, a Ministry Profile & Search (MPS) committee was formed to assess the ministerial needs of our church, and then to find a suitable candidate to fill that need. The MPS Committee found that the work of the Visioning Team completed in 2022 was extremely useful.

In May 2022, the MPS Committee recommended to the congregation that Comox United needed a full-time minister to fill the vacancy, and this recommendation was accepted.

After spending the summer of 2022 finding and interviewing candidates, in September 2022, the MPS Committee presented the name of the Rev. Karen Hollis to the congregation as a suitable candidate, and the congregation subsequently issued a call to Rev. Hollis.



*Rev Karen Hollis, Rev Phil Spencer,
Covenanting Service, March 12th*

Rev. Hollis started her work at Comox United in January 2023. On 12 March 2023, a Covenanting service was held where covenants were exchanged between Rev. Hollis, the congregation, the wider community, and Pacific Mountains Regional Council. At that service, the members of MPS were recognized for their efforts, and then the committee was disbanded.

Respectfully submitted,
Ken Newman, Chair

Pastoral Care

The pastoral care committee continues to care for the needs of members of Comox United. We have been blessed to have Rev. Karen Hollis supporting the team. We thank Rev. Karen for her compassionate care in a very difficult year filled with memorials. Her care and understanding of the needs of those around her is a gift that we gratefully accept.

The pastoral care committee is made up of 5 members. We were saddened to lose our newest member, Wendy MacDougall, by her sudden passing. She was a wonderful person to have on our visiting team with her positive conversation. The team visits shut-ins at least twice a year. We also visit those in the hospital or home as requested in support of Rev. Karen.

Glacier View: Comox United under the leadership of Carol Jennerman is continuing to lead a service, mostly of music, on the first Sunday of every month. Thank you to those who come to assist in leading the singing and turning pages for the residents. Help is welcome, just contact Carol.

Berwick: Rev. Karen, with the help of Sandra Garrow and Elaine Burnell, leads a devotional discussion gathering once monthly at Berwick.

Prayer Group: There continues to be a small prayer team. Members are always welcome. We pray independently as requested by the congregation.

Healing Touch/Reiki: We continue to support those taking treatments for cancer with a weekly opportunity for Healing touch or Reiki. We thank the Hospice for their support to continue this program. Appointments can be made by phoning the Hospice at 250 871 0696.

Cards: This year Mae Pagdin sent out 22 cards. Thank you, Mae. Please contact Heather Flint if you know of anyone who should receive a card for either joyful or challenging times.

Prayer Shawls: This year 4 prayer shawls were delivered. We thank Valetta Nixon for facilitating this. Please contact Valetta if you know of someone who would benefit from receiving one. The recipient does not have to be a church member.

Respectfully submitted,
Noreen Robertson

Property

This past year has seen lots of basic maintenance and upgrades to our building. We continue to work at sharing our space with an increasing number of groups, both within our church and within the broader community. We are increasing our rentals significantly, which is wonderful. Within the property committee we are working to keep up the needs of the multitude of groups and of course with the needs of our congregation.

- We strive to maintain a positive and welcoming approach to our building, maintaining a bright and healthy front and side garden.
- Some basic upgrades to individual rooms were done – for example the Family Room had its old carpet torn out, and new flooring put down. We are already finding this has enhanced its usage as a “flexible space” for many groups, not just families with children.
- We upgraded the minister’s office before Rev. Karen arrived with new flooring and new paint.
- We replaced the carpet on the ramp leading from the entranceway down towards the women’s washroom.
- From a basic maintenance perspective, we replaced the old and non-functioning fans in the men’s and women’s’ washrooms on the main floor.
- The electrical plugs in the kitchen received a much-needed upgrade — and same as at home — please remember not to overload every plug with a kettle or slow cooker, or we will blow the fuses again. ☺
- This year, the Care-A-Van increased its need for storage of clothing and other items needed for their work with the unhoused, so we upgraded a second room upstairs in preparation for their storage needs.
- We continued with the basics of cleaning carpets, replacing light bulbs, fixing toilets. It’s always something ☺.
- We also liaise with our various contractors — we have contracts with a company for cleaning the building three times per week, and a contract for snow clearing, a separate one for clearing our sidewalks, and one for outside security.

As a committee we want to give a big thank-you and a shout out to the many individuals, and also to several private contractors who donate their time and talents to the maintenance of this dear building of ours.

We are also very grateful to the diligent, loving attention each of you give this building, checking doors to ensure they are locked when you leave, turning off lights and turning down thermostats, reporting to us (through admin or directly) when lights are burned out, chairs broken, water dripping, toilets not flushing or windows left open etc.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Griffith Cochrane and Margaret Morin
Co-chairs, Property Committee

Social Justice

The role of Chair of this group is currently vacant.

Groups associated with Social Justice

SAGE (Sustainability Action Group for the Environment)

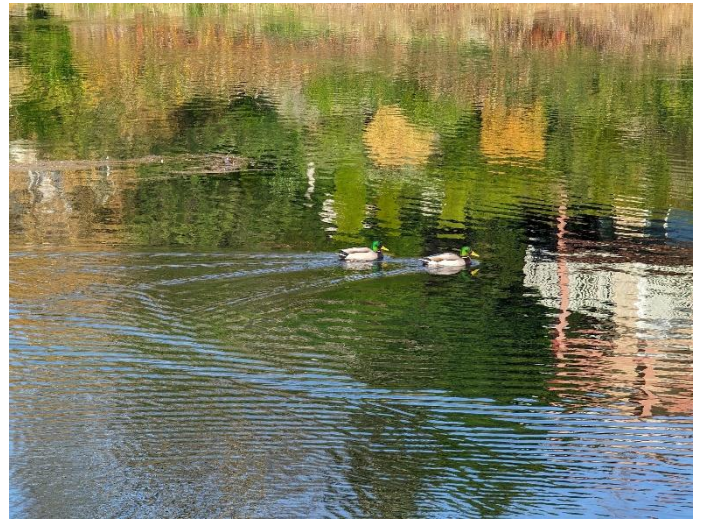
After a Pandemic-imposed hiatus, SAGE re-entered the field of providing environmental education opportunities for the Comox Valley community.

With the Comox Valley Unitarian Justice team, we hosted a 3-part climate action series:

1. Healthy Habitat (March 2023):

a) Meredith Martin (Snuneymuxw Nation) provided an indigenous perspective on **“Coming Home through Relationship with the Land”**.

b) Karen Cummins (Comox Valley Nature, horticulturalist and arborist) and Jan Smith (Mars Wildlife Rescue Centre and educator) educated on **“Welcoming Biodiversity to our Gardens from the Ground Up”**.



c) Robin Harrison, (Millard Piercy Streamkeepers) presented on **“Keeping our Streams and Wetlands Healthy”**.

2. Hot and Bothered (Apr 2023): An interactive virtual conversation with Tzeporah Berman (Internationally known Canadian advocate for Climate Change action)

3. An Introduction to Finding Climate Action (Dec 2023): An interaction workshop put on by RegenerateBC (Climate Change Education Society)

January featured a well-attended, 5-part interactive series to expand on

(continued... /)

(**SAGE** continued...)

the topic of *Finding Climate Action (RegenerateBC)*. In Spring 2024 we plan to host sessions on green burial options, and a talk by an author of a book focused on living a sustainable life.

Our hope for this coming year is to work more closely with church teams to achieve the goal of becoming a more sustainable church.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Gillies



Worship & Sacraments

Worship Leaders: On January 8, 2023 we welcomed our new minister, Rev. Karen Hollis. We have appreciated her willingness to work with the Worship group, as well as her suggestions for new worship experiences. We had some pulpit supply this year when Karen was on vacation, taking study time and attending the Pacific Mountains Annual General Meeting. Rev. Brenda Reilly, Rev. Ingrid Brown, Serena Patterson and Carolyn and Geoff Whitney-Brown covered those services for us. In October, Karen and Arran Morton (Unitarian Fellowship minister) did a pulpit “swap.” We also shared services at Easter, Christmas and during the month of July with St. George’s United Church, Comox Valley Presbyterian Church and St. Peter’s Anglican Church.

Music: Paul Colthorpe continues to ably lead the choir and the congregational singing (and the congregation really enjoy his energetic directing), and Gloria Herauf plays for most services with some congregation members filling in when she is away.

The choir started out the year with a few members and is gradually gaining new people. They are very glad that a flat-screen monitor has been provided so they can see what the congregation sees during services.

Worship Services: In October, Rev. Karen and Arran Morton (Unitarian Fellowship minister) did a pulpit ‘swap’. We also shared services at Easter, Christmas and during the month of July with St. George’s United Church, Comox Valley Presbyterian Church and St. Peter’s Anglican Church.

Easter Sunrise Service: This was planned with the help of detailed instructions from Tracey Windle. It turned out to be a very windy and rainy morning, so the service was relocated to the church. The grill was set up under the overhang at the front entrance and the service was conducted in candlelight in the renovated room upstairs with a view of the water and mountains. The grilled fish was served in the hall to about 30 people who attended.

Maundy Thursday: Comox United and Weird Church hosted a Maundy Thursday dinner liturgy at Comox United. St. George’s United, Comox Valley Presbyterian Church, St. John the Divine Anglican. It was well attended and was a wonderful experience to share with the other church members.

Blue Christmas: This was a combined effort of Comox Valley Hospice and

(continued .../)

(*Worship & Sacraments continued...*)

Rev. Karen. The logistics were somewhat last-minute due to recent personnel changes at Hospice but turned out to be a positive experience for about 90 people who attended. The theme was Beach Glass – Washing Away Sharp Edges. The Threshold Choir and Cal Kelly provided special music. Hospice gave positive feedback to Comox United: specifically, the use of the sanctuary and that a church is a comfortable place for most people dealing with grief.

Christmas Eve: We welcomed over 200 people to our Christmas Eve service at 8 p.m. It was thrilling to have every pew filled.

Queer Vespers: Due to a lack of volunteer leadership, Queer Vespers did not happen in 2023; there are plans for the future.

Taizé: Rev. Karen conducted two Taizé services during Advent that were attended by small groups of people.

Sanctuary:

Care: Heather Flint took over leadership of the “Church Mice” and added a few new members to this group. See their report appended to this one.

Liturgical Decorations: Barb Craig faithfully changed banners, cloths, plants, etc. for the first 8 months of the year to reflect the church seasons. She then went on an extended RV trip and Marni Fisher has been learning the meaning of colours and symbols for the seasons. A couple of altar cloths were made for the small table on the platform. We are unable to hang the long banners at the front since that is where the Power Point is projected.

Greeters: Carol Jennerman continues to make sure we have greeters for every service. She has cheerfully worked with the Worship group and Rev. Karen as we worked out how to collect offering and how many printed bulletins to provide. The greeters and ushers always have a smiling face – a positive reflection of our congregation.

Order of Service: The format of the Order of Service has been altered a few times this year. We are glad for the flexibility of the congregation to adapt.

(continued .../)

(Worship & Sacraments continued...)

Budget: In line with the narrative budget being presented: 40% of budget costs are related to worship and sacraments (for example: the amount of time the minister spends on services; the cost of heating the sanctuary for the services; cost of decorative elements; and time spent by the music team for worship.)

Respectfully submitted,
Marni Fisher

Groups Associated with Worship & Sacraments

Church Mice

We, the “Mighty Mice”, have been keeping the sanctuary tidy with our quiet service for the last year. Taking turns in a six-week rotation, we tidy the candles, trim wicks, refill the prayer stone bowls with water, check that the linens at the front are straight, the hymn books are in their place and that the seat cushions are replaced in the cupboards. On Sunday we open the piano, ensure the minister has a glass of water and turn on the lights. Occasionally we tidy or replace the flower arrangements and change the fly traps on the front windows.

We have decided not to have meetings as our communication is quite manageable by email, however we did enjoy an afternoon of conversation in my garden during the summer, getting to know each other a bit better.

If you think you might be interested in joining this small service, please contact me at celtic-heron@telus.net

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Flint

Sunday Service Greeters

Comox United has a dedicated dozen whose main role is to welcome congregants as they arrive for Sunday worship. Each week, two greeters arrive by 9:30 a.m. and set up the lobby table with helpful items such as hearing assists, a guest book, a prayer sheet, an offering basket, reading glasses, and copies of the order of service and newsletter. After that, our greeters offer a personal and inviting presence which aims to make the transition from outside a comfortable one.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Jennermann, Greeter Coordinator

Other Groups

Technology Committee (Tech Team)

In 2023 the Tech Team focused on sound quality and operating the live-streaming of our Sunday morning worship services. You can watch past services by clicking on “Virtual Services” on our website

www.comoxunitedchurch.com or by going to our own YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/@comoxunitedchurch3917/streams>

An average of 45 homes watched our worship services via the live-stream on Sunday mornings or at various times during the week. Many of our recent newcomers watched our on-line services before walking through the door.

The Tech Team also live-streamed memorial services for 5 members of our faith community. These were well received by family and friends who were unable to attend the memorials in person.

The projector and sound system in the Gathering Hall are well-used by rental groups. Additional renters have been attracted by these capabilities. The lower-level room, L1, also has a projector and screen that can be used by renters.

Our website and Facebook page continue to be important parts of our communication with the community. Thank you to Joyce Wagland and her team for their work in keeping the information current and informative.

In the spring a “Hearing Task Force” surveyed people who were experiencing sound issues during Sunday worship services. Recommendations were made and some were implemented in 2023. We plan to implement other recommendations in 2024, including a teaching session about how to use the available hearing assist devices.

In the fall, Ross and team installed a large screen monitor in the sanctuary which enables the choir to see the PowerPoint slides on Sunday morning. Thanks to Bev Sparks and Dave Talbot for arranging the donation of this screen.

Our team has seen several personnel changes this year. Our live-streaming team currently consists of Julie Whitman, Ken Newman, Ross Griffith-Cochrane, and Joanne Wiens. Occasionally Ken Vaux also helps out. Gary MacDougall assisted us on sound until mid-November. Our sound team currently consists of Ross, Joanne and Dale Erhart.

Volunteers welcome! If you are remotely interested in what we are doing in the Media Booth on Sunday mornings, please come by and have a look. We

could really use two or three more people on our team. Training on the live-streaming system and sound is provided. Team members are scheduled for those Sundays that work best for them.

We continue to look for ways of using technology to support the spiritual nurturing of our community. Your suggestions are welcome.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Wiens

United Church Women (UCW)

2023 was a very successful year for the Louisa Catchpole Unit of Comox United Church. Although few in number, the members remain high in enthusiasm and energy and provide an opportunity for women of common interests to meet, work, worship and socialize with one another. We welcomed new members Heather Dalley and Leslie Fraser. President Noreen introduced the idea of a member giving their background information at each meeting which has certainly proved to be very interesting.

We held 8 meetings during the year and had potluck luncheons in June and December which were both well attended. In February we held a "Meet the Minister" coffee party with about 60 people attending. In March we hosted the World Day of Prayer with members of other churches in attendance. In May and November we held bazaars that offered baking, canning, books, knitting, odds & end, jewellery, Christmas wreaths and decorations and as a result were able to contribute to ten different charities. Harpist Donna Crozier provided several musical presentations and Gloria Herauf provided piano music for everyone's enjoyment.

We embraced Stepping Stones, a women's addiction recovery centre in Courtenay and had two of their executive explain their program to us and attend two of our gatherings. Additionally the Christmas luncheon donates to the Women's Transition Society.

The members provided tea for numerous memorial gatherings.

Special thanks to Isobel for providing the tea essence for all our catering events, memorial teas and potlucks. Additional thanks to President Noreen who assumed so many hats including presiding over meetings, publicizing our events, purchasing meat for potlucks and ensuring the congregation and the public are aware of our many endeavours. Ruth Giles does a fine job administering our finances.

WE ARE TRULY BLESSED.

Respectfully submitted,
Reta Walls, Secretary

Appendix

Congregational Statistics, 2023

“Members” are those who have been entered on the Roll of Comox United Church, either through confirmation, adult baptism, transfer of membership from another community of faith, or reaffirmation of faith. “Non-resident members” are those who have moved far enough away that they cannot attend regularly but who have not transferred their membership to another congregation.

Recent years

Year	Resident members	Non-resident members	Total
2019	198	23	221
2020	199	23	222
2021	197	23	220
2022	200	24	224

2023

Total Roll Membership, 31 December 2022

Resident Members	200
Non-Resident Members	24
Total Roll Members	224

Received by Transfer	0
Received by Reaffirmation of Faith	3
<i>Total Received</i>	+3

Removed by Transfer	0
Removed by Death	7
Removed by Council	30
Removed by Request	2
<i>Total Removed</i>	(-39)

Total Roll Membership, 31 December 2023

Resident Members	179
Non-Resident Members	9
Total Roll Members	188

(continued.../)

(Congregational Statistics continued ...)

Received by re-affirmation of faith

Gisèle Plouffe, Arlene Bell, Mike Bell

"Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart."

"I, the Lord of Sea and Sky"

Dan Schutte, 1981

During 2023

Baptisms.....	0
Weddings	3
Funerals.....	10

Weddings

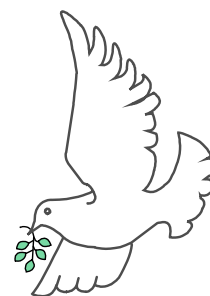
Rebecca Bell to Rob Neves

Meghan Richey to Jeffrey Miller

Tiffany McNaughton to David Bradford

Funerals

Adrian Franck*, Margaret Crites*, Phyliss Giovannetti,
Wendy McDougall, Alex Lyle*, Rosemary Lyle*, Clint Burnell*,
Colleen Black*, William (Bill) Ellis*, Denis Bell



"Saints by the power of God are kept 'till their salvation comes:

We walk by faith as strangers here; but Christ shall call us home."

"Blest Be the Everlasting God"

Isaac Watt, 1707

*Member of Comox United

Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 26 February 2023

1. Welcome and Call to order by Joanne Wiens at 11:00 am
2. Opening Prayer – Mike Stewart
3. Establish Quorum (20 full members): Over 30 in attendance
4. Election of Officers for the AGM
Motion: That Joanne Wiens, Chair of Council, preside over this meeting and that Jane Wilson be the recording secretary for this meeting.
*Moved by Ken Newman; seconded by Barbara Craig. **CARRIED.***
5. Voting Privileges
Motion: That members and adherents present at this meeting be allowed to vote as provided for in section B3.7.2 of the United Church Manual.
*Moved by Carolyn Halcrow; seconded by Bruce Curtis. **1 opposed. CARRIED.***
6. Voting Method
Motion: That voting at this meeting will be done by a show of hands.
*Moved by Joyce Wagland; seconded by Patty Forbes-King. **CARRIED.***
7. Agenda
Motion: To accept the Agenda for this meeting
*Moved by Susan Fabrizio; seconded by Amy Yakimyshyn. **CARRIED.***
8. Previous AGM Minutes
Motion: To approve the minutes of the February 13, 2022 Annual General Meeting.
*Moved by Elaine Brown; seconded by Sue Newman. 1 abstention. **CARRIED.***
9. Annual Report
Questions welcomed.
Motion: To accept the Annual Report of January 2022 – December 2022 as distributed to the congregation via email on February 8, 2023.
*Moved by Sue Sutherland-Justice; seconded by Andrew Black. **CARRIED.***

(continued .../)

(continued... Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 26 Feb 2023)

10. Treasurer's Report – Robin Giles

- a) Financial Report for 2022, including Envelope Secretary's Report.

Motion: To accept the Financial Report for 2022, including the Envelope Secretary's Report, as published in the Annual Report.

*Moved by Robin Giles; seconded by Marni Fisher. **CARRIED.***

- b) Budget for 2023

Robin mentioned that there is no way to balance the budget. He suggested everyone could help by increasing their givings by 5%.

Motion: To accept the Budget for 2023 as published in the Annual Report.

*Moved by Robin Giles; seconded by Caroline Hoon. **CARRIED.***

Ken Newman thanked Robin for his dedication as treasurer for seven years. A token of thanks was given to Robin by Joanne Wiens on behalf of the congregation.

11. Alcohol Use Policy – Merrilee Cameron, Cameron Cairncross

Whereas there has been a long-standing practice to not allow alcohol to be served at events at Comox United, and

Whereas this practice has limited the number of private rentals thus reducing the associated revenue, as well as the social discourse opportunities in today's society, and

Whereas the serving of alcohol at events is highly regulated through the provincial permitting process,

There was a discussion about allowing alcohol in our church. Church Council will finalize the wording of the policy and distribute the final policy.

The following motion is proposed:

Motion: That the Church Council approve a policy that permits alcohol to be served at events.

*Moved by Cameron Cairncross; seconded by Bruce Curtis. **5 opposed. 6 abstentions. CARRIED.***

(continued .../)

(continued... Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 26 Feb 2023)

12. Election of Council – Howard Robertson

Joanne Wiens explained that in the past there have been two AGMs. Now there will only be one in late winter where new leaders will be voted on. The term of office will be from July 1- June 30, allowing for a good transition period.

Motion: To elect the following people on the indicated committees to the Church Council:

Chair – Joanne Wiens

Vice-Chair – Merrilee Cameron

Secretary – Jane Wilson

Treasurer – Gisèle Plouffe

Ministry & Personnel – Mike Stewart

Trustees – Andrew Black

Worship – Joyce Wagland

Property – Margaret Griffith-Cochrane and Margaret Morin

Pastoral Care – Noreen Robertson

Congregational Life – Fiona Curry

Congregational Education – Wayne Wilson

Becoming – Bev Agur

Social Justice – (vacant)

*Moved by Howard Robertson; seconded by Laurel Erhart. **CARRIED.***

Motion: To allow Council to appoint volunteers to Council and its committees during the next year, except where National or Regional rules require a congregational vote.

*Moved by Howard Robertson; seconded by Andrew Black. **CARRIED.***

13. Council Chair Remarks – Joanne Wiens

Joanne rejoiced in all that has been accomplished in 2022. The goal of a church is to help individuals to grow in their faith. Each of us grows in faith in different ways whether it is singing, working on property, doing Bible study etc.; there is lots of opportunity to participate. No difficulties are insolvable; we are not alone. Let's make this a year of renewal and exploration of our faith and love.

14. Closing Prayer – Joanne Wiens

15. Adjournment

Motion by Ken Newman at 11:27 am: To adjourn this Annual General Meeting.