



Annual Report 2024

**James Bay United Church
511 Michigan Street, Victoria BC V8V 1S1**

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Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are occupying unceded land of the Coast Salish, Lekwungen speaking people who have been sustained in body, mind and spirit through their relationship with this land for thousands of years. I am grateful to be part of a congregation that is hearing the call to continue learning of our colonial history and the ongoing impacts of our privilege, and taking up the challenging and healing work toward reconciliation.

Life of the Church

Memberships: *None*

Baptisms: *None*

Marriages: *None*

Deaths:

Paul Barker

Isobel Clemson

Norma Hill

Billy Page

Kris Unger



Meeting at James Bay United Church Sanctuary

7-9:15 PM

Present: Colleen Adair, Char Anderson, Hazel Blennerhaust, Christine Bodnerchuk, Joe Bradley, Gary Brandstadt, Cheryl Caldwell, John Carroll, Linda Clegg, Charlotte Caron, Deborah Davis, André Fontaine, Carol Garceau, Karen Halliday, Aleksa Harkness, Sarah Hovey, Jerry Hoult, Ryon Johnston, Joanne Keelan, Kim Keinath, Judy Krzesowski, Maureen Le Roy, Marg Lunam, Pauline MacKenzie, Cheryl Macpherson, D'Arcy McPherson, Gwenna Moss, Colleen Nichol, Steve Nichol, Greg Powell, Franklyn Roy, Joan Ryan, Hilde Seal, Elvira Sentes, Kim Tadei, Alan Thurston, Beverley Tracey, Brian Troutman, James Troutman, Heinz Unger, Marilyn Unger, Richard Wey, Barbara Whitney, Linda Wreggit, Raymond Yee, Mark Zeigler.

Opening Reflection was offered by the Reverend Hilde Seal.

Chairperson Deborah Davis offered a welcome to the gathered community.

Everyone joined in the Land Acknowledgement: We acknowledge that we are occupying unceded land of the Coast Salish, Lekwungen speaking people who have been sustained in body, mind and spirit through their relationship with this land for thousands of years. I am grateful to be part of a congregation that is hearing the call to continue learning of our colonial history and the ongoing impacts of our privilege, and taking up the challenging and healing work toward reconciliation.

Deborah explained that the Board always shares this Meeting Covenant at its meetings and invited the congregation to join in:

We covenant together...to listen and speak with respect...to express our views...to be aware of each other and ourselves...to be mindful of time, making room for each person to contribute...to consider prayerfully...to care about the life of the congregation, the community and the world... to ask for help as needed...to meet our commitments...

Deborah introduced the current Board Members: Kim Tadei (Past Chair), Charlotte Caron (Secretary), Colleen Nichol (Worship), André Fontaine (Ministry and Personnel), Franklyn Roy & Alan Thurston & Hazel Blennerhaust (Interim Financial Team), and Hilde Seal (Minister)

Kim Tadei led through the procedural motions:

m/s Sarah Hovey/Marg Lunam – that adherents be given voting privileges for all motions at this meeting. Carried (members only voting)

m/s Linda Clegg/Jerry Hoult – that the agenda as circulated be accepted. Carried.

m/s Linda Wreggit/Cheryl Caldwell – that Charlotte Caron be elected as recorder for this meeting. Carried.

m/s Pauline MacKenzie/Linda Wreggit that the minutes of the Congregational Meeting held on February 19, 2023 regarding the Congregational Profile be adopted as circulated. Carried.

m/s Linda Clegg/Aleksa Harkness that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of James Bay United Church held on April 13, 2023 be adopted as circulated. Carried.

Life and Work of 2023

Team Leaders and friends offered two highlights from their work in 2023.

Greeters (Colleen Nichol) Welcoming so many people to JBUC; People volunteering to be greeters. When someone moves away from the job someone steps up.

Worship Team (Colleen Nichol) The great number of people who are stepping up to give leadership in worship; the quality of our live-streamed services.

Pride Team (Colleen Adair) The energy for open doors to all at JBUC; the fun of taking to the streets for the Pride Parade.

Arts Ministry (Kelby McNair, presented by Hilde Seal) A year of planting new ideas; a congregation who believes in the transformative power of the Arts.

Financial Team (Hazel Blennerhaust) A team of dogs (sheepdog, bulldog and poodle) working together to bring the finances together.

Ministry and Personnel (Kim Keinath) A year of learning for the Team; personally being part of sacred space and progressive church. Kim included gratitude for the staff who left in 2023 –Karen Dickey, Sinan Demeril, Christine Chepyha, Anne Shaeffer, and Dylan Kelk.

Minister (Hilde Seal) People adding to growth and love; acceptance of how Hilde did things.

Search Team (D'Arcy McPherson) A serious and focused Team; that the Search Team was able to shift midstream to interview for the Transitional Supply Minister.

Thrift Shop (Marg Lunam) Having 50 volunteers; Weekly emails for the tenth year; stories from the buyers.

Property Team (Bev Tracey) The intimacy of the team working together; keeping the church property in good condition.

Thursday Lunch (Joanne Keelan) People, especially those who live alone feeling welcomed. A break from eating alone; Delicious food, especially those on limited pensions.

Gratitudes – Colleen Nichol thanked our elder members who have left their positions this year – Dorothy Linquist who resigned as a Trustee at 102 years old this year after many years of service, and Barb Whitney (95) who left as member-at-large on the Board after many years of service and offering of much wisdom.

Thank yous were also expressed to other 2023/24 Board members who left during the year or are leaving at the AGM – Doug Lunam, Chris Bodnerchuk, Kathleen MacDonald-Date, Colleen Adair, Deborah Davis, André Fontaine, Kim Tadei.

In Memorium – Charlotte Caron offered thanksgiving for the lives of 5 of our members who have died within the past year: Marion Handcock, Johan Heskes, Doug Lunam, Jeremy Williams, and Sally Wise.

Reflection – Colleen Nichol led the group in a time of conversation with a roving mike focused on the questions: “What do you think distinguishes James Bay United Church from other organizations in our neighbourhood? What of that might lead us forward?”

Various comments emerged: We are a church—we believe in God and live by Jesus’ standards –we are here to make a difference in the world. The church accepts everybody. Lots of churches are dying but JBUC is thriving. The snowbirds come back each winter. As someone new to the congregation we have received many graces—inclusiveness and community. We do not reflect the whole community. The life of the Spirit at JBUC. Love in action. We risk new ways to live with purpose and joy—everybody does a little bit and contributes something. We experienced love here. The music ministry is great.

Financial Review – Hazel Blennerhaust presented the Financial Report from 2023. The Interim Financial Team has revised the format of the financial statements so that it is clear what the congregation, the Arts Ministry and the Social Justice Work each bring in and spend so that people can understand the whole picture more clearly. She noted that it is unusual for a church of this size to have the resources that it has. The programs have fabulous support.

m/s Karen Halliday/Marg Lunam – that we approve the 2023 financial statements as printed on pp. 33-40 of the Annual Report. Carried.

m/s Pauline MacKenzie/Linda Wreggit that we approve the 2023 Annual Report as printed. Carried.

m/s Karen Halliday/D’Arcy McPherson – that we approve the 2024 budget as printed on pp. 41-42 of the Annual Report. Carried

m/s Brian Troutman/Raymond Yee – that James Bay United Church withdraw \$20,000 from its funds in the Victoria Foundation to cover expenses related to replacing the Thrift Shop roof. Carried unanimously.

m/s Pauline MacKenzie/Linda Clegg - that we accept the resignation of Dorothy Lindquist as JBUC Trustee, with gratitude for her long years of service. Carried.

Nominations

The slate of Members of the Board for 2024 was put forward. Names were put forward from the floor for some vacancies.

m/s Chris Bodnerchuk/Gary Brandstadt that the Board of JBUC for 2024 be as follows:

Board Chair – not filled

Secretary – Charlotte Caron

Interim Finance Team – Franklyn Roy (voting member), Alan Thurston, Hazel Blennerhassett, Brian Troutman

Representatives:

Worship Team – Colleen Nichol

1. Ministry and Personnel – Kim Keinath
2. Trustees – Martin Stewart
3. Thursday Lunch – John Carroll
4. Tuesday Night Jazz – not filled
5. Pastoral Care – not filled

Members at large –

1. Joanne Keelan
2. Karen Halliday
3. James Troutman

Congregational Rep to Pacific Regional Council – Carol Garceau **Carried.**

Farewell and Welcome – A farewell tribute was offered to the Reverend Hilde Seal for her good work among us, followed by an introduction of the Reverend Greg Powell who will serve as our Transitional Supply Minister. Greg offered a few words about his hopes to work with us toward creating a smooth pathway for when we call a permanent minister. He offered a benediction.

All joined in singing “Draw the Circle Wide”

Pauline MacKenzie moved that the meeting be adjourned.

Kim Tadei gave a gift and bouquet of flowers to Deborah Davis for her hard work as Board Chair for the last year.

James Bay Pastoral Charge
Congregational Meeting to Call a New Minister
July 28, 2024

Call to Order: meeting called to order at 11:25 AM

Chairperson: Martin Stewart; Recording Secretary: Charlotte Caron; Regional Liaison: Carol Martin

Attendance: Colleen Adair, Christine Bodnerchuk, Joe Bradley, Cheryl Caldwell, Patricia Callan, Linda Clegg, Derek Cooze, Eunice Davidson, Deborah Davis, Pamela Florent, André Fontaine, Carol Garceau, Karen Halliday, Vanessa Hammond, Aleksa Harkness, Norma Hill, Peggy Hodding, Sarah Hovey, Judy Kazesowski, Joanne Keelan, Kim Keinath, Margaret Lunam, Doug MacIntyre, Pauline MacKenzie, Cheryl Macpherson, Karen McKim, D'Arcy McPherson, Gordon Miller, Gwenna Moss, Colleen Nichol, Milt Papageorge, Sue Ross, Franklyn Roy, Joan Ryan, Kathleen Satchell, Elvira Sentas, Mahima Silvester, Kim Tadei, Alan Thurston, Beverley Tracey, Brian Troutman, James Troutman, Richard Wey, Linda Wreggit, Carol Yanish, Raymond Yee, Bonnie Zeigler, Mark Zeigler.

The Chair declared quorum was met.

Voting Privileges: Voting by members only.

m/s Kim Tadei/Colleen Adair that adherents be granted voting privileges on all matters at this meeting as per The Manual B.3.7.2. Carried.

Introduction of recommended applicant and terms of call/appointment. D'Arcy MacPherson read out information regarding the candidate, Greg Powell. (Appendix A) m/s Colleen Adair, D'Arcy MacPherson That James Bay Pastoral Charge concur with the recommendation of the search team that Rev. Greg Powell be called to the Pastoral Charge with the following terms:

Category (D); Cost of Living category (5)

Effective date of August 12, 2024

.75 FTE 30 hours per week, structured as 3 out of 4 Sundays. Presiding at worship service 3 of 4 Sundays each month, plus the 5th Sunday when there is one

Minimum annual salary of \$57,543 plus 15% for a total annual salary of \$66,174

Telephone/communication allowance of \$50 monthly / \$600 annually

Support for continuing education at \$1,230 annually

Minimum one month (5 Sundays) annual vacation

Three weeks' annual study leave (including Sundays)

Administrative assistance defined as 12 hours per week

Participation in the centralized payroll service; pension and group insurance payments as assessed

Mileage incurred for the work of the pastoral charge reimburse as logged based on minimum General Council rate \$.55/km according to the national pastoral relations salary schedule.

Plus any other items beyond this that were negotiated:

One additional week (inclusive of one Sunday) vacation

Use of a laptop supplied by the Pastoral Charge

For a total remuneration package of \$68,004.

and that this request be forwarded to Pacific Mountain Regional Council for

approval of the call."

Carried with one opposed.

As the stated business of the congregational meeting was completed, meeting declared closed at 11:55 AM. Martin Stewart, Acting Co-Chairperson Charlotte Caron, Secretary

James Bay Pastoral Charge

Congregational Meeting to Call a New Minister cont'd

Appendix A:

Report from the Search Team

Date: July 9, 2024

Introduction

The Search Team is pleased to provide a report on our recent activities, specifically focusing on our interview with Reverend Greg Powell, who has expressed a desire to transition from his current role as Transitional Supply Minister to become the permanent Ordered Minister for James Bay United Church.

Interview Details

- Date of Interview: Thursday, July 4

- Attendees: Members of the Search Team (Colleen Adair, D'Arcy McPherson [Co-Chairs], Colleen Nichol, Martin Stewart, Owen McCooey), and Reverend Greg Powell. Karen Halliday is also a member of the Search Team who was unable to attend the interview, but has been instrumental throughout the search process.

Interview Overview

The Search Team met with Reverend Greg Powell to conduct a thorough interview, aiming to delve deeper into his theological approach, long-term vision for the church, and how his competencies align with the needs of James Bay United Church.

Key Points from the Interview

Reverend Greg articulated a theological approach deeply rooted in the principles of the United Church of Canada. He emphasized a commitment to inclusivity, social justice, and the well-being of all members of the congregation and the wider community.

Reverend Greg shared his long-term vision for the future of James Bay United Church, highlighting the importance of strategic planning and visioning for the church's next chapter. He expressed a desire to foster a vibrant, engaged, and growing congregation, with a strong focus on community outreach and service.

Reverend Greg identified his strongest competencies as a sense of identity and security in ministry, capacity for future-looking initiatives, and the ability to analyze situations and offer creative visions for the congregation's well-being.

He acknowledged areas for growth, particularly in time management and creating aesthetically pleasing and hospitable environments. However, he expressed a willingness to improve in these areas and leverage the strengths of the congregation and church leadership to address these needs.

Throughout the interview, Reverend Greg conveyed his deep appreciation for the congregation and his calling to serve as the permanent Ordered Minister. He demonstrated enthusiasm and readiness to take on this leadership role, believing that his competencies and vision align well with the congregation's needs.

Conclusion

Based on the interview and Reverend Greg's performance as the Transitional Supply Minister over the past three-plus months, the Search Team is confident in recommending him for the position of permanent Ordered Minister at .75 FTE. His theological approach, vision for the future, and commitment to the church's mission make him an excellent candidate for this role.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Adair, Co-Chair; D'Arcy McPherson, Co-Chair; Colleen Nichol; Martin Stewart;
Owen McCooey; Karen Haliday

Minister's Report, Rev. Greg Powell

February 2025

We launched our annual theme, “Building Bridges”, in February and I am so excited for what that theme asks of us. Building bridges in this time of political polarization, economic uncertainty, and isolation is a powerful antidote to society’s greatest ailments. To build bridges is to embody abundance for those experiencing scarcity; it is to shine a ray of hope where despair rules; it is to resist hyper individualism and invite a form community that honours difference. These are our callings as followers of the Way of Jesus, and I believe the world needs these desperately.

My first experience with most of you was at last year’s annual meeting, and what a delight that was for me. I have reflected several times on the vitality I witnessed at that meeting, and I still sense that same level of lifeblood flowing through James Bay United Church. In fact, there may be even more now. During my first several months with you, my role was Transitional Supply Minister. I often described it as doing most of the things ministers do, but not Sunday mornings. (This surprises those who think a minister’s only duties occur on Sunday mornings.) The focus of that time was administrative – policies and procedures, staffing, terms of reference for ministry teams, etc. I confess that some of that administrative work remains incomplete, but it has not fallen off the radar. Once I answered the call to permanent ministry with you, other aspects took priority.

Worship constitutes the most significant focus of my role. Jennifer, our music minister, and I have developed a good flow and I value her insights deeply. Music is the backbone of worship here and we are in excellent shape in that regard. Our worship committee, Candis, our office administrator, the tech team (paid and unpaid), readers, candle-lighters, Communion servers, and others contribute every week and I regularly hear how meaningful people find our worship. There is always room for more creativity, even as we safeguard those aspects of the tradition that need safeguarding.

Our pastoral care is undergoing some transformation so we will see much more activity and coordination there. I am so impressed by the level of care this congregation expresses to those in our midst who are in need. I personally would like to do much more visiting because I find it such an enriching experience. I now have my traveling Communion set at the church, so I will gladly serve Communion during visits.

Our Christian education has some meaningful touchpoints and we have launched the latest version of a children’s Sunday morning music program. I hear requests for more study groups, including a regular Bible study group, and I hope to encourage or offer more Christian education in the coming year.

The financial uncertainty that was present when I arrived in April has largely dissipated, primarily because of the work of the bookkeeper, Jackie, and the Interim Finance Team. The work was heavy and caused burnout, and it undergirds our ability to thrive. The Fund Development Team, which took form this year, also lends a degree of confidence to the congregation.

I am so heartened by the devoted work that so many in our congregation offer: the thrift store, the community lunch, the refugee sponsorship, building maintenance, board work, the arts programs, and the important work of our community partners who use the building to offer ministry in their own ways. This is good stuff. Really good stuff! This is the work of building bridges so that all might be free to receive God’s love as made known in Jesus, and to reflect this love and light for all the world.

The year 2024 was a year of change for the Board. Changes in staff included Hilde Seal working from January to April when Greg Powell took over as Transitional Supply Minister and in September became called ordained minister. Gordon Miller filled the Communications position until Zunaira Mustaqueem started work. Vanya Smith resigned and the job was split with Candis Elliott in the office and Jackie Cox-Zeigler in finances. Jamie Waters also joined the team as audio tech. Fortunately Jennifer Turner (music), Kelby McNair (Arts) and Nathan McDiarmid (visual tech) continued in their roles. We are grateful that the Ministry and Personnel Team held a steady role assisting through the transitions.

Early in the year, the Pacific Regional Council suggested that a Transitional Supply Minister could help the church. The church programs and worship were strong but the infrastructure had not kept up with all the changes and growing activities of the church. Greg Powell was hired as TSM to help with the administration, policy and operations. His work, plus the enormous work of the Interim Finance Team who sorted out accounts, staff payments, church and government regulations, donations, grants and various other complexities, led us to a more stable situation.

The Board has oversight of all of the wide-ranging work of James Bay United Church from the new Thrift Shop roof to the use of the buildings for the many Arts and other programs and rentals, to the spiritual and financial well-being of the congregational. The many Teams who have written reports for this Annual Meeting report to the Board and do the day-to-day ministries of the church in this community. We are fortunate to have many gifted leaders among us. The Worship Team in particular has provided much spiritual nurture in this year of transition. And the Thrift Shop has provided money to keep things going.

The Board met 21 times during 2024. Normally it meets once a month but during the terms of the Transitional Supply Minister, it met bi-weekly and other times as needed for specific situations. Board Chair for the first months of year, Deborah Davis, left the Board at the last AGM. No Chair was elected so Martin Stewart and Colleen Nichol volunteered to be co-chairs. André Fontaine was replaced by Kim Keinath as M&P rep. The Board was greatly enriched by the election of three members-at-large (Karen Halliday, Joanne Keelan and James Troutman) and a representative from the Thursday Lunch (John Carroll) at the last AGM. Now new Board members are needed—a co-chair to work with Martin, a secretary to replace Charlotte Caron and a Treasurer to replace the Interim Finance Team with its Board rep Franklyn Roy.

The Board is grateful for the support of the congregation and do our best to serve you well.

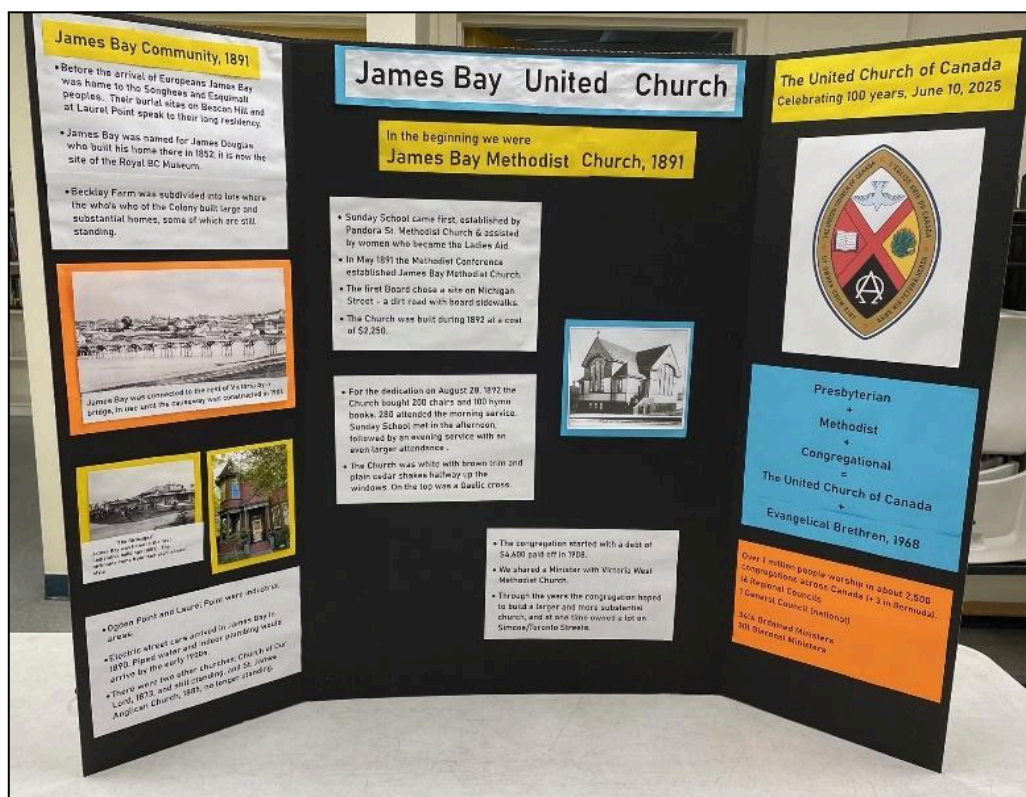
Submitted by: Charlotte Caron, Karen Halliday, Joanne Keelan, Kim Keinath, Colleen Nichol, Greg Powell, Franklyn Roy, Martin Stewart, and James Troutman.

Work on our church archives has two purposes. First, to bring our holdings in the Regional Archives up to date. It appears that we have not filed anything since 1996. The Regional Archives provides a guide as to which materials should be preserved, and a safe place for their storage. The second purpose is to prepare to mark the 100 the anniversary of the United Church of Canada which we will celebrate in June 2025. This involved making a series of displays to highlight the history of both the national church and our own James Bay Methodist/ United Church which began in 1891.

To accomplish these purposes we went through all the boxes in storage (and there were many!) looking for items which will update our holdings in the official archives, and, as well, selecting items for display which tell the story of our church and the national church.

In 2024 five displays were prepared and shown for one month each: the beginning of our church and the national church; early history of our church as a Methodist church; Sunday School and the role of the Moderator; women in the church and the history of the ordination of women; Christmas activities and choirs.

~ Submitted by Gwenna Moss



Hello Dear Friends!

It is my great pleasure to share a small summary of the amazing things we have been doing in the Arts Ministry here at JBUC!

Firstly, what does an Arts Ministry really mean? For us at JBUC, we suggest that an Arts Ministry would minister to the whole human being through the medium of the Arts. And not just the human being, but the whole community as well; an ever-growing community, building bridges, making points of connection, sharing inter-ationally, inter-regionally, everywhere, everyhow and every way, whether we experience art from the audience as a participant; observer; or from the stage as a performer; whether we are studying the art of Tai Chi and bring that Art form home with us for personal practice; or as a part of the Monday Night Guitar Jam - the Arts are something meaningful to our heart, mind, body and soul. We share that joy, that connection, that cultivation of inner and outer-being with our families and with our communities.

It has been a joy to be a part of this dynamic, inspiring and thriving community and its Arts Ministry! I have been continually inspired, thrilled and humbled in witnessing the power of the Arts to build community, nurture the spirit and support an increasingly interconnected, diverse and compassionate world.

The James Bay United Church Arts Ministry is dedicated to finding ways to improve the world through the Arts. Writ large, the Arts are anything that you can truly put your whole-self into, that serves as a medium for cultivation of the mind, body and spirit! We celebrate art forms that support practices and tradition, explore new ventures with open-mindedness, champion diversity, accessibility and inclusion, and help us build community, health, mental & spiritual well-being.

We have had a wonderful year in the Arts Ministry as we built upon the legacy of Arts Ministry founding director Gordon Miller and the Tuesday Night Jazz Program.

We have facilitated programs including:

- Monday night guitar jam with facilitator Aaron Watson. This program brings people together in community to celebrate sharing time and the joy of music making!
- Moving with Grace, a movement/ postural rebalancing program facilitated by renowned modern dancer Grace Mikagawa
- Tuesday Night Jazz continues to thrive seeking to bring people together through diversity of musical styles with a central focus on the soul and spirit of the art form.
- Wednesday morning Chi Gong class with facilitator Curtis Nagy offers a dynamic set of time-honoured movement and meditative practises for physical, mental and spiritual well-being
- Friday mornings we have expanded into offering two different traditions of tai chi classes presenting the original Chin form of Tai Chi and the more recent Yang form, both offered through an important lineage and offered by Curtis Nadj
- Sound Healing with Sara Marreiros offers a restorative, 30 minute meditative session with the sound of voice and prayer bowls by one of the countries most respected improvising vocalists

- Saturday Swing is back and re-imagined, bringing an opportunity for the musical community to learn and grow through workshops with guest artists and facilitated Jam Sessions as well as evening Swing Dance lessons and a Swing Dance Concert with a live band!
- World Unlimited (a re-imagining of the “Folk Fridays” so we aren’t limited to Fridays) brings together Folk Musicians from our region and beyond Voice Unlimited brings together some of our fabulous professional performing vocalists, coaches and directors to guide participants through the world of singing! Facilitators include artists such as Louise Rose to celebrate and share the songs and stories of their world of song and music-making.
- Plans for Spring 2025 include *Ukelele Explosion* offering participants the opportunity to learn the basics of this fabulous and fun instrument in an everyone-welcome group-settings.

The James Bay United Church Arts Ministry is grateful for the support from the Government of Canada through the New Horizons for Seniors Program! All Arts Ministry programs are operating in a financially sustainable and equitable manner, providing “low to no barrier” access to participants.

Thank you to the James Bay United Church Board, congregation and community at large for everything we have been able to accomplish and share in the world through Arts Ministry to date!

~ Submitted with thanks and joy, Kelby MacNayr, Director of Arts Ministry

Special Happenings:

- 26 free tickets to Victoria Symphony's Christmas Pops held on December 8 at the Royal Theatre given out to guests and volunteers
- 200 pairs of quality socks collected through Cool Aid's yearly campaign
- 100 beautiful quilted place mats donated by Victoria Quilters Guild
- members of the congregation signed Christmas cards for all the lunch guests
- 65 gift bags containing chocolates, nuts, socks and cards distributed to guests before and after Christmas

Victoria Foodshare was closed on Dec. 26 and we were concerned about not having food to give out. We talked with the Team Leader and Social Worker at the Urgent Care Centre next door and they conducted a Food Drive to fill the gap. We were thrilled that they responded so readily to our request. The Volunteer team decided to continue with our regular schedule over the holidays and guests were very appreciative that we were open on Boxing Day.

Volunteers:

We now have 24 volunteers, including 6 with the Foodshare delivery. John and two helpers come in every Wednesday 12:00- 3:30 pm to prepare the meal for an average of 63 guests. We had two volunteers who shared the third position but due to health they can no longer come. Jo Jensen, our second, very reliable helper who volunteers Wednesdays and Thursdays, now receives an honorarium. I am always on the lookout for another helper. We continue to attract new volunteers as needed- through other volunteers and social media. Some are guests who have decided that they'd like to help. A new couple who attend church are seasoned volunteers from Nanaimo and have been very helpful with the dishwasher and cleanup. Many volunteers go on vacation or have other activities and inform me ahead of time, which enables me to plan.

Our Volunteer Appreciation Party, in late November, was a dinner held at Hazel and Ryon's beautiful common room with a fireplace and lovely ambience. Food was paid for by our grant and organized by Hazel, Mark, Ryon, Marilyn and Heinz. We played some games and about 18 volunteers attended. There was lots of laughter, time to talk and delicious food and we are grateful for the work done by the "party team."

It is with heavy hearts that we say "Goodbye" to Kris Unger, who was a faithful volunteer since the family moved to Victoria. Kris passed away over the holidays and will be so missed. He started by organizing the Foodshare table and expanded his contribution to coming in early every week to set up tables and help with anything that was needed. He had a regular table of guests that he served. His calm and gentle presence added so much to the Lunch and his memory will live on for all who knew him.

Community Profile: We were featured in the *Spotlight* page of our MLA Grace Lore's newsletter, which is sent out to all her social media. Alan Thurston kindly did a photo shoot on two Thursdays and photos were sent to our contact at the Victoria Foundation. Zunaira has posted them in the church newsletter, on Facebook and other sites.

Plans for 2025

- To research and apply for future funding, as we are halfway through our current grant.
- To refine and adapt the program to fit the needs of guests and volunteers.

Joanne's Absence:

Due to surgery I will be absent from the Community Lunch from January 22 for about 5 weeks. Hazel, our "winter volunteer," has kindly agreed to take on the coordinator role. She continues to be a huge emotional and physical support for which I am very grateful.

Hazel will also have the help of Chef John Carroll, with his knowledge and invaluable experience, as well as that of our amazing volunteers.

~ Submitted by Joanne Keelan

Have you noticed how it feels to be warmly greeted when you step into a new — or even familiar — space? Being a Greeter at James Bay United gives us the opportunity to offer that warm welcome as folk arrive for worship. Think of the act of hosting — of preparing for the coming of family, friends, acquaintances or even a stranger. With a “gladsome heart” readying the space; and then opening the doors and greeting that one who has arrived, setting them at ease while letting them know it matters that they’ve come. This is the spirit behind the roles of a Greeter, extending a powerful welcome to all who enter.

Even before the doors open, the Greeters are on hand to create a welcoming environment by setting up the Sanctuary for worship: arranging the chairs, setting out the hymn books, turning on fans and lights, setting out the bulletins, the name-tags, the name-tag clipboard and the offering plates.

During the service, Greeters are the Ambassadors for James Bay United Church. Taking time to welcome and acknowledge each person is just as important as offering them a bulletin and encouraging them to sit wherever they feel comfortable. At the appropriate time, the Greeters take up the offering; and throughout the service they keep an eye out for any needs amongst the congregation. Since we share our space with many groups throughout the week, the Greeters return the sanctuary to a ready and welcoming state for others ~ replacing hymn books in the bookshelf, turning off fans and lights, removing any extras from the chancel area, and clearing the entry table of any greeting material.

Our goal is to have enough Greeters so that each person’s commitment is on a rotating basis with a two-person team greeting about once every six weeks. Through the generosity of many, we have been able to maintain that goal throughout the year. Immense gratitude go out to all who have been involved in this ministry this past year, — those who have had to step away, those who stepped in as valuable substitutes, and those who continue to be on the team moving forward: Hazel Blennerhasset, Chris Bodnarchuk, Cheryl Caldwell, Carol Garceau, Peggy Hodding, Ryon Johnston, Pauline Mackenzie, Sue Ross, Kim Tadei, James Troutman, Brian Troutman, Marilyn Unger, Heinz Unger, Richard Wey

As always, if the idea of “opening doors to God’s love” in this special capacity of becoming a Greeter calls out to you, please do let me know!

~ Submitted by Colleen Nichol, Greeters Coordinator

Good coffee and tasty goodies appear in the lower church hall each Sunday following worship. This comes together with the help of five teams of two who are on a rotating roster. Others sign up to provide goodies. Christine Bodnarchuk, Carol Garceau, Colleen Nichol, Elvira Sentes, Bev Tracey, Carol Yanisch, Deborah Davis, Mahima Sylvester and Raymond Yee were the crew who made it happen. It's a fun and satisfying way to make connections with friends and to engage with folks who are new or visiting James Bay United Church.

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was a huge success with over 100 people served pancakes, sausage, and blueberries alongside a great evening of Jazz. Easter Sunday morning breakfast was served in the lower church hall between the early morning outdoor service and the 10:15 celebration in the sanctuary.

During the summer we offer lemonade and cookies set out on the back patio. The picnic tables and umbrellas make for a festive summer gathering place. BBQ and corn on the cob welcomed all for lunch on a warm fall Sunday.

An Afghan dinner and silent auction was held in late November co-hosted by members of the James Bay United Church Refugee Team and folks from the hospitality team. That evening we raised \$40,000!

~ Submitted by Bev Tracey

We continue to be blessed by the opportunity to serve and offer at James Bay United Church. We will be celebrating our 2nd year Anniversary April 2025 as a Ministry.

Healing Pathway Practitioner

On the distribution list = 22; Attend monthly = 7 to 10;
Healing Pathway Practitioners with Criminal Ref Check to Offer HP to the Public = 12.

What's New

Offering to the Public since September 2024 monthly (not in Dec.) In 5 months, we offered to 16

Receivers. We have 1 pm and 2 pm time slots and are looking at increasing to 3 receivers for both times starting in March due to the interest. Gratitude to Sandy Gerbrecht who is our Coordinator extraordinaire.

Offering Distance Healing when requested which includes a Receiver in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

Soaking Prayer is being offered on the last Sunday monthly after service. We are grateful to have Jamie Waters play instrumental music on the piano during this time which supports the healing experience for the Receiver and HP Practitioner. We invite congregants to take this monthly moment of “pause” and receive. We will add an extra Soaking Prayer offering in April for Palm Sunday.

Our Ministry was featured in the Healing Pathway Society Newsletter, April 1, 2024 “A Joy in Accompaniment” by Jannice Foreman. Jannice has been instrumental in mentoring and supporting our many HP activities i.e. Workshops, Practice Group, Offering to the Public at James Bay United Church.

Monthly Practice Group: meets the 4 th Wednesday of the month having 7-10 HP Practitioners come together to learn and practice HP techniques building confidence and community in the Ministry.

Workshops 2024

Phase 1 - Intro to Healing Pathways - Offered at JBUC October 18-20, 2024 with 15 participants.

Phase 2 – When Two or More Gather - Offered at JBUC April 12-14, 2024 with 15 participants.

Sharon Moon and Howard Clark from Ottawa were our Heart-led instructors.

They generously co-led Worship service with Kam McKim and Jennifer Turner April 14, 2024 introducing the Healing Pathway energy work and the healing benefits.



Healing Pathway Report cont'd



Gratitude to the ongoing help from Candis, Jackie and Zunaira that help communicate our many activities. It was wonderful to have "E-transfer" as a payment option for our workshops and Jackie keeping a spreadsheet to make our financial piece run smoothly when I did reporting to HP Society as the Coordinator.

Heartfelt thank you to all the bakers and volunteers that help out at our Workshops. We appreciate you.

In Growth and Expansion,
Carol Garceau



Throughout 2024, the Ministry & Personnel (M&P) Board at James Bay United Church has continued in its commitment to supporting the church's staff and fostering a healthy working environment. Here is a summary of our activities, achievements, concerns, and plans for the upcoming year:

Activities & Achievements:

- Conducted regular check-ins with all staff and contractors to ensure their well-being and address any concerns.
- Edit an Onboarding Manual to streamline the orientation process for new staff members, Board members, and M&P Committee members.
- Collaborated with staff members on job performance evaluations and contract negotiations.
- Accepted the resignation of M&P Member, Mahima Sylvester in June 2024.
- Received resignation of employee and contractors in different positions: Interim Communications Coordinator, Gordon Miller; Interim Minister, Hilde Seal; Office Administration, Vanya Smith.
- Written new contracts and employment agreements with best practices outlined by the United Church of Canada and changed some contractors to employee status:
 - Jennifer Turner, Music Director (employee)
 - Kelby MacNayr, Arts Ministry (contractor)
 - Zunaira Mustaqeem, Communications Coordinator (contractor)
 - Candis Elliott, Office Administrator (employee)
 - Jackie Cox-Zeigler, Bookkeeper (employee)
 - Nathan McDormand, Worship Visual Tech Support (employee)
 - Jamie Waters, Worship Audio Tech Support (employee)
 - Dritan Pashaj, Janitorial Support (contractor)
 - Greg Powell, Interim Transitional Supply Minister (contract), permanent Minister (employee)

Concerns & Challenges:

- Identified a need for expertise in contract writing and financial management within the M&P team.

Plans & Objectives for the Future:

- Continue to update the Onboarding Manual for staff/contractors, Board Members and M&P and create an organizational chart.
- Creation of an Employee/Contractor Handbook.
- Seek additional M&P Committee member that may have Human Resources expertise to address contract and job description needs.
- Continue refining and updating M&P policies and procedures to meet the evolving needs of the church and community.

- Provide ongoing training and support for staff members to ensure their success and satisfaction in their roles.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration between the M&P Board, staff/contractors members, and the congregation to foster a sense of unity and shared purpose.
- Address workload concerns and streamline processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling our responsibilities.

As we reflect on the past year and look ahead to the future, we remain committed to serving James Bay United Church with dedication, integrity, and compassion. We appreciate the support and collaboration of the congregation and the Board as we continue our important work together.

Thank you for your ongoing trust and partnership.

~ Submitted by: Kim Keinath and André Fontaine

The Music Ministry at JBUC strives to create an atmosphere that is meaningful, beautiful, fun, and inclusive. Music facilitates meaningful worship and is an important way to express faith.

Early 2024 was a time of transition with Hilde departing in April, lay-led leadership through the Spring and an extended vacation that Jennifer took in the Spring and Summer with leadership provided by Gordon Miller and Christine Chepyha. With Greg's hiring in August, things at JBUC changed once again. However, Greg's presence has brought a wonderful sense of stability and Jennifer and Greg are learning together, trying out ideas, and settling into a rhythm.

In the Summer of 2024, Jennifer put in a proposal for an expansion of her role that would allow for increased choir participation, professional development hours, creative composition exploration, and engagement with the community beyond the Sunday Congregation. The Board agreed to a 7-month trial period beginning September 2024. In that time, the following initiatives have taken place:

1. Participation of the Sunday Worship Choir has increased with the ultimate aim for a monthly choir between September and June. The Sunday Worship Choir creates important opportunities for social connection, creativity, learning, and the giving and receiving of musical gifts.
2. There was a "Singing in Harmony Workshop" in November for the greater community that saw the entire downstairs filled with new and experienced singers who wanted to learn and try singing in harmony.
3. In December, Greg and Jennifer held a "Christmas in a minor key" service with the hope to expand on it in the future.
4. Jennifer and Gordon Miller organized and led the annual "Big Community Carol Sing" that had a full house in attendance. We wanted it to be family friendly and offered children crafts organized by Carol Garceau and a children's carol time. It was great fun!
5. Jennifer has been making time for professional development through reading, researching, and watching online talks (including all sessions of the 2024 Music Matters United Church Conference).
6. Jennifer has dabbled with composition having written Psalm and Communion responses for Sunday Services. She hopes to expand into hymn writing and choral composition.



Our Pastoral Care team was working this past year without a Chairperson, but the group did the best we could. We had a meeting in September to see who was interested in helping and we had seven people show up! Joan Ryan took on phoning parishioners on their birthdays, Kim Tadei and Pauline MacKenzie sent cards to members who needed a lift, Christmas cards and Valentines. We have tried to make visits to those in the hospital and also to those who are not able to make it to church. The rest of the team include Elvira Sentes, Gwenna Moss, KAM, and Marilyn Unger. In February we finally got a Chair to lead us into 2025. Colleen Nichol assumed the Chair and we have additional members to the team, Martin Stewart, and Bev Tracey. So if you feel that this is an area you could help please contact Colleen Nichol.

~ Submitted by Kim Tadei

Sunday Counting Team Report
2024

The Sunday counters have had a good year. We only missed one service! (Christmas Eve). We currently have eight counters so we have chosen one Sunday per month that we count. If the month has five Sundays we have each taken an additional Sunday to count. It has worked out beautifully but we can always use more people to count! If you are interested in helping out give your name to one of our financial people, Hazel Blennerhassett, Franklyn Roy, Alan Thurston, or Counters, Kim Tadei, Chris Bodnarchuk, Sarah Hovey, Janice Langley, Andre Fontaine, Brian Troutman, Cheryl Caldwell and Bonnie Ziegler. We would like to thank Colleen Adair for her service this past year. Sunday counters also participated in the Volunteer Fair in January. We will provide training for anyone wishing to join and we will pair you with an experienced counter.

We hope you will consider helping the church with this service.

~ Submitted by Kim Tadei

The 2024 Pride Parade was an unforgettable experience, filled with joy, creativity, and a deep commitment to living out JBUC's vision of a fully inclusive church.

Preparation and Community Involvement

Planning for this year's parade began in early May, when a dedicated team—Aleksa Harkness, Judy Krzesowski, Colleen Adair, Mahima Sylvester, and André Fontaine—came together to discuss themes, ideas, and logistics. Over the following weeks, excitement built as plans took shape. The congregation was invited to help refresh the Progress Pride Flag Doors created the previous year and to march alongside us on July 7th. The response was wonderful, with many stepping up to lend their support.

Marching with Pride

By 10:30 a.m., our group assembled. We proudly carried the multicolored Styrofoam doors, a horizontal banner mirroring the design, and our two signature blue JBUC flag banners. Some of our marchers also distributed bookmarks along the way, sharing messages of inclusion and welcome. A delayed parade start allowed a few more members to join us after attending a short church service, further strengthening our presence. Our placement in the parade was perfectly aligned—we marched alongside other United Church groups and directly behind the TD Bank float, which provided a lively soundtrack for our walk. The music added an extra layer of joy, inspiring those carrying the doors to dance, spin, and move with creative energy. Every bookmark found a home, every voice called out "Happy Pride!", and the crowd's enthusiasm was infectious. An unexpected pause – Midway through the parade, we encountered an unexpected moment of activism, as Palestine protesters staged a demonstration to protest TD Bank's financial involvement in the war in Gaza. This led to a 45-minute standoff, after which police carefully rerouted our section of the parade so we could continue marching. Despite the interruption, the energy of the day remained strong. As we resumed our journey, we continued to walk with joy and purpose, demonstrating our commitment to justice, inclusion, and love.

A Celebration to Remember

The parade lasted just over two hours, filled with laughter, dancing, and meaningful connections. Along the way, additional JBUC members joined us, adding to the sense of community and celebration. By the end, we may have been a little tired—but we were completely uplifted by the love, positivity, and powerful reminder of why events like this matter. What a day! What a celebration! What a witness to God's inclusive love.

~ Submitted by André Fontaine, Rainbow Committee Member

It has been a full and satisfying year for the property team. Here is a glimpse into the work we have been about.

- Martin Stewart arranged and managed the replacement of the thrift shop roof. The volunteers at the thrift shop now consider him a saint!
- Janice Edwards faithfully spent most Tuesday mornings cleaning, patching and touching up the paint so that the sanctuary, stairs wells, washrooms, and lower hall are always looking like they have had a fresh coat of paint.
- The gardens have been beautifully maintained by the whole team with a full spring cleanup, weeding and supporting plants in the garden beds throughout the summer and a fall clean up in preparation for winter.
- Dave Helms kept our lawns and boulevards trimmed and looking good, and he power washed the front patio and repainted the front bench.
- The back patio was made ready for parties with the concrete getting a power wash, the picnic tables set up in their summer places, and planters filled with beautiful flowers.
- Pacific Coast Fire did their annual inspection of our emergency fire equipment.

The maintenance of our sump pit and the pumps is an ongoing task. The property crew has kept a close eye on them, and regular treatment of the sump pit has reduced our plumber costs significantly this year. In the late summer sewer flies became a problem, and we have sorted out a system to control and eliminate them.

- In December rental agreements for 2025 were signed with our regular renters.
- The two gas stoves in the church kitchen were inspected and repaired as necessary.
- Our new venture this year was to begin to create a native plant garden as part of our commitment to decolonize the land the church sits on. The team removed a tree, mulched the area for several months and then after a trip to a native plant nursery we planted native shrubs and flowers on the south side of the ramp deck. Much to our surprise the non-native tree we had removed insisted on sending up a field of babies! So back to the digging and leaving it fallow until early 2025 when the plants that have been growing in a protected garden will be reintroduced.
- All of this, to say nothing of the endless stream of small maintenance items that needing ongoing attention!

We have a great team – faithful and practical people sharing our lives on Tuesday mornings over coffee, and then working well together!

Team members are: Janice Edwards, Carol Garceau, Martin Stewart, Bev Tracey, Mark Ziegler and Bonnie Ziegler.

~ Submitted by Bev Tracey

Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and the Land

The work of our team this year has deepened our appreciation of the essential relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the land and how the journey toward reconciliation involves “getting” that relationship. We have continued our work of the previous year, mobilizing awareness and opposition to a government proposal within the bounds of Goldstream Provincial Park that would violate WSA NEC rights outlined in the Douglas Treaty, and adversely affect the ecosystem and salmon spawning habitat in this location. Our efforts included: conversations with elder WSÁNEĆ elder, Carl Olsen; standing with him and a growing number of Indigenous youth, members of the Malahat Nation and others on Tuesday mornings out at Goldstream Park connecting with park visitors, and distributing the rack cards we created urging people to be part of the letter writing campaign (sample letter on our website) Denise wrote an article for the *Watershed Sentinel* <https://watershedsentinel.ca/articles/goldstream-solidarity/>

We made use of our network of connections (our email list of 100+ contacts) to promote an event, hosted by the Unitarian’s reconciliation group, about the work of RAVEN, a powerfully effective organization whose mission is to raise legal defense funds for Indigenous Peoples in Canada to defend Indigenous rights and the integrity of lands and cultures. <https://raventrust.com> Our team donated \$4000 in support of the Heiltsuk <https://raventrust.com/campaigns/heiltsuk/> and Wet’suwet’en <https://raventrust.com/campaigns/wetsuweten/> legal challenges.

Our connection with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre made us aware of their remarkable Urban Indigenous Language Hub through which 6 different Indigenous languages are being taught. <https://vnfc.ca/language-hub/>. We also came to be aware of the government funding cuts and offered a \$2000 donation toward helping to sustain the language program.

As one act of decolonization of the land where the church building now rests, we envisioned transforming the garden just beyond the ramp entrance into a native plant garden. In conjunction with the Property Team, that garden space was “excavated” and replanted with newly acquired Indigenous plants. It turns out the root system of the invasive species was more invasive than we understood, so out came the new plantings with more work yet to be done for the restoration we envision. (Quite the parable!)

In November we hosted an on-line conversation with Robert YELKÁTTE Clifford to learn about Indigenous law as one of the paths to decolonization and reconciliation. Rob is from Tsawout First Nation and is Co-Academic Director of Indigenous Legal Studies, Allard School of Law at the University of British Columbia. Through his storytelling we began to appreciate how spiritually centered Indigenous worldviews provide a completely different starting point for addressing issues of caring for the land. How does this learning about Indigenous law and worldviews affect how we do this work? This is a key question for our team as we move forward.

~ Submitted by: Ruby Berry, Karen Dickey, Kam McKim, Denise Nadeau, Gela Starch, Bev Tracey, Carol Yanisch

It began in September 2023 with a conversation between strangers on the Skytrain in Vancouver! Raymond, member of JBUC, simply connected with the young woman sitting next to him who shared her grief and her dearest hope about her family (parents and 4 siblings) in Pakistan at serious risk of being sent back to Afghanistan. (Her father, a headmaster of a school for girls, fled for his life with his wife and children in 2022. Since then they are registered with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.) Raymond returned home to us with her story, and was relentless with his encouragement that we could help bring this family to Canada. A team of 5 finally stepped forward, seeding the pot with a \$30,000 gift toward the \$70,000 needed to meet the financial commitment of the sponsorship.

A key initial piece of any refugee sponsorship process is fund-raising. On November 30th, one day AFTER the Federal Government's surprise announcement of a "pause" on all private sponsorships, we proceeded with the planned fundraising silent auction and dinner. There wasn't an empty seat in the house that night as people crowded into the lower hall for a traditional Afghan meal, surrounded by some 30 auction items donated by members of the congregation and neighbourhood businesses. We invited Sumaya, the young woman on the Skytrain, to come and speak so that we could hear something of her family's story in a more first-hand way. Indeed her plea was as impassioned as her gratitude. Her encounter with Raymond and finding herself amidst this loving community was profoundly moving ... nothing short of a miracle. That night \$40,000 was raised. The next morning, as we celebrated the first Sunday of Advent with the lighting of the Hope candle, Sumaya, accompanied by her young daughter and uncle, spoke to the congregation. It was then too that D'Arcy stood before the congregation and, speaking of the government's blind-siding "pause", boldly proclaimed "we will be undaunted!"

Our team met again mid-December. We began with an on-line face-to-face conversation with the family in Pakistan. Their fluency in English is such that we can communicate with remarkable ease and clarity. We discovered in this call that males in particular are at risk of being rounded up and brought to the border with Afghanistan, and that Pakistan is committed to the removal of Afghan refugees in the new year. Given the urgency of their situation, we wrote to 5 different embassies to see if we could apply on the family's behalf for visitors visas that would enable them to be sheltered in safety in some other country while they wait for the process to be completed for coming to Canada. None of the embassies were able to assist in this way. We also contacted the Inter-Cultural Association of Victoria to enquire if they would accept our refugee application within their allotted quota as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder. Largely because we have already reached our financial commitment and secured housing for the family, THIS turns out to be our way forward! We are given to hope the family could arrive in 12-15 months. Now we are focused on raising the funds to provide for the family's living expenses through this bridging time until they arrive in Canada. We will

continue to be in close touch with the family and communicate regularly with our growing list of supporters. Needless to say family members in Vancouver and Pakistan are at a loss to express the depth of their gratitude to our team and congregation.

~ Submitted by Marge Brown, Karen Dickey, André Fontaine, D'Arcy McPherson, Elvira Sentés, Beverley Tracey, Raymond Yee

Background

Reverend Karen Dickey announced her retirement to the congregation on October 16, 2022. Following the work of the Church Profile Committee, the Search Team was struck and began its work in March 2023. The team, composed of Colleen Adair (Chair), Colleen Nichol, Martin Stewart, Owen McCooey, Karen Halliday, met biweekly or monthly to review candidates through ChurchHub and other sources. D'Arcy McPherson joined the team in November 2023 and later became Co-Chair alongside Colleen Adair.

Search Process and Key Events in 2024

On September 1, 2023, Reverend Hilde Seal joined James Bay United Church as a six-month Supply Minister while the search process continued. Subsequently, Reverend Greg Powell was appointed as the Transitional Supply Minister and began his role in April 2024. A key milestone in the process was the in-depth interview for the permanent Minister with Reverend Greg Powell on July 4, 2024. The discussion focused on his theological approach, long-term vision, and alignment with the needs of James Bay United Church. Reverend Greg emphasized his commitment to inclusivity, social justice, strategic planning and community engagement. His vision for the future aligned with the congregation's goals of growth and outreach.

Following a period of discernment, the Search Team unanimously recommended Reverend Greg Powell for the position of permanent Ordered Minister at 0.75 FTE. This recommendation was presented to the congregation at a Congregational Meeting on July 28, 2024, where the motion to call Reverend Greg Powell as the permanent minister was heartily approved. Reverend Greg officially began his permanent role on August 12, 2024.

Conclusion and Disbanding of the Search Team

With the successful appointment of Reverend Greg Powell, the Search Team has now completed its work and is formally disbanded. The team extends sincere thanks to the Board, the Pacific Mountain Region, and the congregation for their trust, support, guidance and participation throughout this journey. Special appreciation is given to each member of the Search Team for their dedication and spirit-led discernment throughout the search process. It has been an honour to serve James Bay United Church in this way.

~ Submitted by: Colleen Adair, Co-Chair; D'Arcy McPherson, Co-Chair; Colleen Nichol; Martin Stewart; Owen McCooey; Karen Halliday.

The year 2024 ended, as always, with the shop closed for our 6-week Winter Break. As much as we love our work at the shop, we are grateful for the time off. The shop looked and smelled fresh when shoppers came flowing in on the first opening day of the year. It is gratifying to hear the cries of “We missed you!” The shoppers who exclaimed “Thank you for cleaning your shop for us!” had the hard work of the clean-up crews in January plus Bev’s arrangement for the carpets to be cleaned and the upstairs emergency water clean-up by Bev and Martin to thank for the way the shop looked and smelled.

Our weekly revenues continue to be robust, with a rewarding year-end total - one that continues to astound us even as we clearly grasp the hard work that goes into that total. We are grateful for the labour of 36 active volunteers including 2 brand new community volunteers and 2 volunteers from JBUC, Melanie who picks up for recycling any electronic donations our shop can’t sell. Martin faithfully delivers to Value Village anything that can’t be safely transported to Value Village by Big Brothers. We are enormously grateful to these two volunteers and all other volunteers who do one-of-a-kind jobs.

The beautiful spirit and energy of our volunteers is a huge factor in attracting and retaining both donors and customers. Donors often become customers and customers sometimes become volunteers. Because only a small (but mighty!) number of volunteers are members of the congregation and thus aware of the ways in which the church interacts with the community, it would be helpful to have information available to hand out to shoppers who are curious about what happens to the money earned by the shop.

Our relationship with the community is one of the most satisfying rewards of our time at the shop. We see the same people week after week; we sometimes know their stories, and they feel very much part of us. New shoppers often become regular shoppers.

The shop’s volunteers were very thankful for the end-of-year party organized by the church Board. We were in awe of the meal presented to us - delicious Mulligatawny soup prepared by two gifted cooks from JBUC and plates of delectable goodies baked by church members. An unexpected element of the gathering was what turned out to be a brief, beautiful memorial to Billy, a much-loved volunteer who died unexpectedly towards the end of the year. Volunteers were grateful to Greg for the comfort and celebration of Billy’s life he offered us. “Church” was very much more than the upstairs sanctuary that afternoon.

We continue to appreciate goodies offered by the church the first Friday and Saturday of each month.

~ Submitted by the JBUC Thrift Shop Steering Team: Judy Langford, Aleksa Harkness, Lenore Morrey.

In a very real sense, Trustees take care of the Church property in the same way they would take care of their own personal property:

- Keeping the property in good repair in coordination with the Property Team
- Keeping the property adequately insured
- Handling any property transactions – selling of assets, renovations
- Ensuring that Church funds are invested for the best benefit of the Church.

All of this is done in cooperation with the Property Team, Finance Team, and the Fund Development Team and approved at the direction of the Board.

1. Insurance

We discovered the Church building was last appraised in 2011. Our insurance company recommends an appraisal be undertaken every five years. Thus, the Trustees arranged for an appraisal to be done in early February 2025.

2. Maintenance and Repairs

John Dam's Buildings Appraisal Report from 2023 recommended repairs and maintenance to the buildings that would amount to over \$100,000 (in 2023 dollars). Greg will work with Karen Halliday (Fund Development Team) to begin investigating raising funds for maintenance and repairs in 2025.

3. Investment of Congregational Assets

a. Victoria Foundation

The 2024 Fund Activity from the Victoria Foundation is included in this report. The rules and formula used for withdrawing funds in 2024 (source: Natasha Benn, Director, Philanthropic Services, April 2024):

To calculate the amount that can be retracted from the original capital contribution from the Fund the formula is: \$125,600 x 25%. The Victoria Foundation charges a 1% retraction fee.

5. No distribution that encroaches upon the capital of the Fund shall be made by the Directors of the Foundation unless:
 - (a) the Donor requires the money to meet unusual and compelling needs;
 - (b) 80% of the Congregation present and voting at a congregational meeting pass a resolution authorizing the Donor to request such a distribution;
 - (c) at least one month prior to the distribution date, the Donor has delivered to the Directors of the Foundation a notice in writing setting out the unusual and compelling needs, requesting the distribution and attaching a certified copy of the congregational resolution; and
 - (d) the distribution is not greater than 25% of the capital of the Fund.

b. Bank Investments

This year the Finance Team greatly increased the number of GICs held in the Church's bank account from two to seventeen earning 3.5 to 4% each.

Sue Ross and Alan Thurston submitted letters of resignation effective at the end of March 2025.

Coming together as a faith community for inspiring and nourishing worship is such a vital part of building up this “body of Christ” that we know as James Bay United Church.

It is no small thing to be extending this worship experience beyond our physical walls to those who join us on-line. So our first word of gratitude goes out to our savvy Tech Team: Nathan McDormand and Jamie Waters supported by our volunteer Camera Operators of Kam McKim, Steve Nichol & Alan Thurston.

This past year the shape of our worship has indeed been varied! We started the year with Rev Hilde Seal still with us as our Supply Minister, and were very grateful that she extended her time with us to see us through to Easter. Then from April through August our worship each Sunday was led by an array of committed and gifted lay leaders. And finally, in mid-August in a spirit of full celebration, we welcomed into our midst Rev Greg Powell as our new permanent minister.

In order to facilitate our congregational commitment to supporting Greg’s 3/4 time position, the Worship Team continues to provide lay-leadership on the last Sunday of each month. At the risk of sounding like the beginning of Matthew’s Gospel with its seemingly endless account of names, I would like to acknowledge and uplift all who have joined me in offering so much of themselves in providing worship leadership. This occurs through the once-a-month roles of Presiding, offering the Reflection and leading us in the Prayers of the People, as well as the weekly roles of Lighting the Christ Candle and reading the Scripture passage. So our heart-felt gratitude goes out to Chris Bodnarchuk, Cliff Boldt, Charlotte Caron, André Fontaine, Karen Halliday, Sarah Hovey, Judy Krzesowski, Janice Langley, Marg Lunam, Cheryl Macpherson, Owen McCooley, Kam McKim, D’Arcy McPherson, Mahima Sylvester, Richard Wey, Carol Yanisch. Perhaps a moment to pause and recall some of the “extra specials” that the Worship Team crafted for our lay-led services during our “in-between-ministers” stretch of time: a Healing Pathways themed worship led by Sharon Moon and Howard Clark; the enrichment of guest preacher Rev Min-Goo Kang; worship in the style of Taizé; “July Light” with the Reflection taking the form of excerpts from “The Amen Effect— Ancient Wisdom to Mend Our Broken Hearts and World” by Rabbi Sharon Brous; Charlotte Caron launching our focus on the 100th Anniversary of the United Church; our ever-popular “Singing Our Faith” service; and the great celebration of Greg’s Covenanting Service on September 22nd with guest preacher Rev Rob Shearer.

As for the other on-going work of the Worship Team, we meet ahead of each liturgical season to help the minister plan for experiences that will bring the various themes to life. Highlights of each of those seasons include: Lent, Holy Week & Easter: The over-arching theme of “Wilderness — to be Embraced not Tamed” brought to life by a noon-hour Ash Wednesday meditative service; offering of an online webinar exploring the

“Historical Jesus” with Dr. John Dominic Crossan, and an online retreat created by Rev Janice MacLean on her ‘Prayer Bench’ site; a celebratory Palm Sunday service and a reflective Maundy Thursday seder with hand and foot washing; a powerful Good Friday service with guest musicians Robert Holliston and Martin Bonham joining Jennifer; Easter morning 7:30 ‘sunrise service’, breakfast and a joyous 10:15 Easter worship with communion. Season of Creation: “The Tree of Life” theme was brought especially to life thanks to Gary Brandstadt and Sarah Hovey’s drawing of a large bare tree to which we were invited to add a word or phrase on cut-out shapes reflecting the week’s sub-theme (roots, trunk, branches, leaves, blossoms, fruit & seeds).

Advent & Christmas: Emerging from a month of “Embracing the Dark”, Advent saw us exploring how LIGHT informs the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy & Love, supported by the SALT Project’s devotional “Starry Night — An Advent Devotional Full of Light & Wonder” as well as a weekly Advent “Waking Up” study from Rev Janice MacLean’s “Prayer Bench” led by Bev Tracey. Christmas Eve saw the return of a Christmas Pageant put on by a group of venturesome adults from our congregation for the neighbourhood families, followed by a beautiful 8pm service featuring special music, Communion and candlelight.

It has indeed been a multi-faceted and profound year in the worship life of our congregation!

~ Submitted by Colleen Nichol (Chair) on behalf of those participating in the 2024 Worship Team: Rev Hilde Seal, Rev Greg Powell, Gary Brandstadt, Sarah Hovey, Cheryl Macpherson, Owen McCooey, Kam McKim, Karla Weir

The Fund Development Team was formed in June 2024 in response to increasing costs without commensurate revenue. We explored all manner of generating revenue, whether new and creative or tried and true. The Team also considered campaigns and projects that enhance existing sources. Our attention focused in 5 key areas: tithing, social enterprises, investments, bequests, grants, and fundraising events and campaigns.

In late summer, a fundraiser to cover the purchase of 38 chairs in our sanctuary was very successful - more than twice over!

In October, the Team presented two draft 5-year Fund Development Plans to the James Bay United Church Board. Both Plans would be impacted by James Bay United Church's current (and future) vision and mission, and they remain in-progress for prayerful consideration of the possibilities that may arise. Also in October, the 3-week Thanksgiving Stewardship campaign launched through a dedicated Enews article and video. The second Sunday's Soup's On and Auction was a hit, with pledges surpassing the \$10,000 goal. The third Sunday wrapped up the campaign with a thank-you A-peel Celebration for everyone during coffee time.

A special thank you to Deborah Davis for her work on the campaign organizing team, as well as Gordon Miller, and Milt Papageorge for volunteering their talents. Zunaira, Jackie, and Candis were also very supportive in their respective roles. Additionally, numerous members of the congregation stepped up and volunteered when they saw a need, and the success of this campaign was truly a group effort. We surpassed our initial goal, and the campaign's final total was \$11,385.

As a team, we are so grateful for the many ways in which this community offers financial support. There is a real can-do, abundance attitude that grants our church the freedom to think and dream big.

While the Fund Development Team, the Board, and the congregation consider next steps, being a community that shares and cares about each other is something we should all keep in our minds and hearts.

~ Submitted by Karen Halliday, on behalf of the Fund Development Team

The year 2024 was a financially sound year for JBUC. After a shaky start paying off some unexpected expenses, the waters calmed mid-year, and we wound up experiencing strong revenues. Offerings rose. The Thrift Shop closed out the year with a stellar income total. Exciting grants were received for the Thursday Lunch Ministry, the Arts Ministry, Office Furniture Renewal, and the new Sunday Morning Kids program (early in 2025).

Over the course of the year we resolved *many* issues and accomplished a lot.

Issues resolved:

- Numerous CRA issues regarding CPP, EI, and GST
- Numerous ADP payroll issues including underpayment, incorrect assignment of employee to payroll package, and incorrect set-up of benefits

Accomplishments

- Investigated an insurance appraisal which led to reduction in insurance premium (early 2025)
- Moved contractors to employee status to properly reflect that they were doing work defined them as employees
- Streamlined our banking processes and brought our banking access and systems up to date
- Organized processes for payment, reimbursement, tracking, and filing
- Invested congregational and program funds in such a way as to earn interest while keeping the funds accessible
- Restructured the annual report to make it easier to understand which funds belong to the congregation and which funds belong to designated programs.
- Created a *Financial Team handbook, 2025* for future reference and guidance.

It must be noted that with the great growth of our Programs, the increase in employee numbers, and the work needed to update our systems, we have dramatically increased the requirement for financial administration. With the many changes in Board and staff this year the Finance Team had to do a lot of work to bring things back into sound financial management.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work and calm temperament of the new Bookkeeper, Jackie Cox-Ziegler, as we all learned and worked together to create smooth processes for financial operations of an increasingly complex organization.

~ Submitted by Franklyn Roy, Alan Thurston, Hazel Blennerhassett

JAMES BAY UNITED CHURCH FUND

FUND ACTIVITY

01 January 2024 – 31 December 2024

BEGINNING BALANCE, <i>market value</i>	\$237,235.55
Add: Contributions to Fund	0.00
Total Investment Returns	35,155.74
Less: Grants Paid	11,392.00
Capital Retraction	20,000.00
Fund Management Fees	1,197.79
ENDING BALANCE, <i>market value</i>	\$239,801.50

GRANTING ALLOCATION

AVAILABLE-TO-GRANT BALANCE AT	\$11,355.00
JANUARY 31, 2025 *	

(0.00)

* Any grants or rollbacks to capital processed in January 2025 have been deducted from this balance

INVESTMENT RETURNS

- Investment Returns on endowed funds for the January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024 period are 15.76% compared to our benchmark of 15.00%.
- The 10-year annualized investment returns on endowed funds to December 31, 2024 are 7.96% compared to our benchmark of 7.45%.

JBUC: Cash Reconciliation at Dec 31/2024			
1	Cash in the bank	153,429	
2	GICs	187,841	
3	Community Lunch cash in the bank	2,854	
4	Total Cash and GIC's	344,124	1
5			
6	Accounts Payable/Credit Card Payable	(5,351)	
7	GST Receivable	1,630	
8	Total Cash	340,403	
9			
10	Accumulated Surplus carried forward at Jan 1/24	79,338	
11	GST Recovered, Prior Years	2,131	2
12	Operating Surplus Jan - Dec 2024	54,113	
13	Program Funds carried forward at Dec 31 /24	126,786	
14	Designated Funds carried forward at Dec 31 /24	78,035	
15	TOTAL FUNDS	340,403	

Note:

1. Includes all cash and GICs in ALL bank accounts. This accounts for the jump in this figure from last year.
2. Not previously claimed. Able to recover last 4 years.

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

JBUC 2024 Statement				
1	REVENUE	2024 Budget	Actual 2024	Notes
2	Offerings	91,000	95,582	
3	Rentals	24,605	26,468	
4	Contribution from TN Jazz	3,000	4,500	
5	Contribution from Thursday Lunch		2,000	
6	Lifelong Learning/Library	300		
7	Broadview Subscriptions	250	270	
8	Mission & Service	6,000	5,820	
9	Thrift Shop	110,000	153,364	
10	Hospitality	1,000	605	
11	Victoria Foundation	11,800	11,392	
12	Music Donations	300	171	
13	Thanksgiving Appeal	3,000	11,385	
14	Live Stream Support	2,000	1,000	
15	Special Appeals, etc.	1,000	1,935	
16	Bank (GIC) Interest	800	676	
17	Benevolent Fund		100	
18	Office Furniture Grant		2,234	
19	Sale of Church Furniture and Equipment		800	
20	Safety Training		745	
21	Healing Pathway		200	
22				
23	TOTAL	255,055	319,247	
24				
25	EXPENDITURES	2024 Budget	Actual 2024	
26	Staff Payroll & Benefits	139,854	134,795	1,2
27	Janitor	8,200	7,995	
28	Communications Staff	12,000	12,016	
29	Arts Ministry Staff	12000	12000	
30	Board: Leadership Training	2,250	1,050	
31	Pastoral Care	700	279	
32	Worship			
33	Pulpit Supply	690	250	
34	Live Stream Equipment		965	
35	Technical Crew	8,277	8,807	
36	Supplies	340	798	
37	Music			
38	Piano Tuning	600		
39	Guest Performers	1,050	1,000	
40	Licensing New Music	327	690	

41	EXPENDITURES	2024 Budget	Actual 2024	Notes
42	Lifelong Learning	200		
43	Hospitality	1,500	1,711	
44	Web Hosting & Online Tools	1,500	965	
45	Advertising, Online & Print		394	3
46	Building Maintenance	12,150	6,887	
47	Thrift Shop Expenses	10,450	10,366	4
48	Utilities	16,500	15,082	
49	Office Supplies/Admin	3,000	4,263	
50	Office Equipment and Software		4,459	
51	Petty Cash	250		
52	Janitorial Supplies	1,800	1,004	
53	Regional Assessment	13,561	11,095	
54	Taxes & Insurance	19,500	10,992	
55	WCB Worksafe	250	234	
56	Mission & Service	6,000	6,105	
57	Safety Planning	250	59	
58	Broadview Subscriptions	250	270	
59	Minister's Benevolent Fund	500		
60	Special Appeals & Gifts	1,000	1,085	
61	Bank Visa Charges CanadaHelps Charges	350	837	
62	Healing Pathway	500		
63	Pride Parade	650	296	
64	Chair Purchase	950	950	
65	Legal Fees		1,643	
66	Communications		811	
67	CRA Outstanding Debts		4,594	
68	Roof Replacement Cost Overrun		367	
69	TOTAL	277,399	265,114	
70	Surplus (Deficit)	(22,344)	54,133	

NOTES

1. Included Hilde, Assumed TSM and New Minister at top rate
2. Included back pay
3. No budget was submitted for advertising in 2024
4. Includes Square charges

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

JBUC Program Funds 2024			
1	Arts Ministry		
2		Opening Balance	22,268.00
3	Income	TN Jazz	52,911.25
4		CanadaHelps	2,090.23
5		Grant (Province)	25,000.00
6		Total Income	80,001.48
7	Expenses	Jazz	48,020.30
8		Donation to Church for Use of Space	4,500.00
9		Seniors' Programs	28,256.63
10		Total Expenses	80,776.93
11		Income Minus Expenses	(775.45)
12		Closing Balance	21,492.55
13	Healing Pathway		
14		Opening Balance	647.00
15	Income	Fees Collected	6,569.50
16		Total Income	6,569.50
17	Expenses	Expenses	5,913.27
18		Donation to Church for Use of Space	200.00
19		Total Expenses	6,113.27
20		Income Minus Expenses	456.23
21		Closing Balance	1,103.23
22	Thursday Lunch		
23		Opening Balance	7,159.00
24	Income	Grant (Foundation)	30,000.00
25		Donations - Guests	3,875.18
26		Donations - Congregation	1,835.00
27		Total Income	35,710.18
28	Expenses	Hon. for Chefs, Helpers, and Coordinator	5,035.00
29		Cleaner	1,350.00
30		Purchased Food	7,412.23
31		Kitchen & Janitorial Supplies	316.11
32		Kitchen Equipment	584.14
33		Travel	1,038.24
34		Office Supplies & Advertising	120.92
35		Volunteer Appreciation	534.80
36		Special Events	623.13
37		CanadaHelps Fees	11.74
38		Defibrillator Purchase	2,000.00
39		Donation to Church for Use of Space	2,000.00
39		Total Expenses	21,026.31
40		Income Minus Expenses	14,683.87
41		Closing Balance	21,842.87

42	James Bay Community Chorus			
43		Opening Balance	0.00	
44	Income	Fees Collected	4,417.40	
45		Total Income	4,417.40	
46	Expenses	Choral Director	3,200.00	
47		Total Expenses	3,200.00	
48		Income Minus Expenses	1,217.40	
49		Closing Balance	1,217.40	
50	Embracing the Spirit Grant			1
51		Opening Balance	3,700.00	
52		Closing Balance	3,700.00	
53	Pro-Vision Children's Music Program Grant			
54		Opening Balance	0.00	
55		Grant Received in December	5,250.00	
56		Closing Balance	5,250.00	
57	JBUC Refugee Sponsorship Program			
58		Opening Balance	0.00	
59	Income	Fundraising	72,222.75	
60	Expenses	CanadaHelps Fees	42.76	
61		Closing Balance	72,179.99	
62	TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDS		126,786.04	

Notes

1. Gordon Miller's Music Grant
2. Includes subtracting CanadaHelps fees

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

	JBUC Designated Funds 2024		
1	Memorial Garden		
2	_Jan.1.24	3,008.62	
3	Garden Renovations and Annuals	1,513.40	
4	_Dec.31.24	1,495.22	
5	Memorial Historical		
6	_Jan.1.24	6,353.29	
7	_Dec.31.24	6,353.29	
8	Grace Priority Fund		
9	_Jan.1.24	22,891.53	
10	Transfer from New Minister Fund	9,591.00	
11	Memorium Donations	550.00	
12	_Interest	317.14	
13	_Dec.31.24	33,349.67	
14	Reconciliation Fund		
15	_Jan.1.24	30,000.00	
16	Grants to RAVEN	4,000.00	
17	Grant to Victoria Native Friendship Centre	2,000.00	
18	Misc. Expense	792.21	
19	_Dec.31.24	23,207.79	
20	Johan Heskes Social Justice Fund		
21	_Jan.1.24	10,000.00	
22	_Dec.31.24	10,000.00	
23	Christine Wilson Social Justice Fund		
24	_Jan.1.24	3,629.00	
25	_Dec.31.24	3,629.00	
26	New Minister Appeal		
27	_Jan.1.24	9,591.00	
28	Transfer to Grace Fund	9,591.00	
29	_Dec.31.24	0.00	1
30	TOTAL DESIGNATED FUNDS	78,034.97	

Notes

1. Transferred to Grace Fund

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

JBUC Capital Expenditures 2024		
1	Roof Replacement for Thrift Shop	20,367
2	Funds Withdrawn from Victoria Foundation	20,000
3	Contribution from Operating Funds	367
4	Balance Owing	0

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

JBUC 2025 Budget			
	Actual 2024	Proposed 2025	Notes
1 REVENUE			
2 Offerings	95,582	109,800	
3 Facility Use	26,468	25,000	
4 Contribution from TN Jazz	4,500	5,000	
5 Contribution from Thursday Lunch	2,000	2,000	
6 Lifelong Learning/Library			
7 Broadview Subscriptions	270	250	
8 Mission & Service	5,820	6,000	
9 Thrift Shop	153,364	130,000	
10 Hospitality	605	1,000	
11 Victoria Foundation	11,392	11,000	
12 Music Donations	171	300	
13 Thanksgiving Appeal	11,385	3,000	
14 Live Stream Support	1,000	2,000	
15 Special Appeals, etc.	1,935	1,000	
16 Bank (GIC) Interest	676	3,000	
17 Benevolent Fund	100	300	
18 Office Furniture Grant	2,234		
19 Sale of Church Furniture and Equipment	800		
20 Safety Training	745		
21 Healing Pathway	200	200	
22 Climate Action Team		500	
23 TOTAL	319,247	300,350	
24			
25 EXPENDITURES	Actual 2024	Proposed 2025	
26 Staff Payroll & Benefits	134,795	172,226	1,2,8,9
27 Janitor	7,995	8,200	
28 Communications Staff	12,016	13,569	2
29 Arts Ministry Staff	12,000	12,600	2
30 Board: Leadership Training	1,050	1,000	
31 Pastoral Care	279	700	
32 Worship			
33 Pulpit Supply	250	500	
34 Live Stream Equipment	965	2,000	
35 Technical Crew	8,807	12,298	3
36 Supplies	798	600.00	
37 Music			
38 Piano Tuning		600	
39 Guest Performers	1,000	1,050	
40 Licensing New Music	690	600	

41	EXPENDITURES	Actual 2024	Proposed 2025	
42	Lifelong Learning		200	
43	Hospitality	1,711	1,800	
44	Web Hosting and Online Tools	965	1,000	
45	Advertising, Online & Print	394	1,000	4
46	Building Maintenance	6,887	14,000	5
47	Thrift Shop Expenses	10,366	12,000	6
49	Utilities	15,082	16,000	
50	Office Supplies/Admin	4,263	5,000	
51	Office Equipment and Software	4,459	1,000	
52	Petty Cash		250	
53		1,004	1,800	
54	Regional Assessment	11,095	13,600	
55	Taxes & Insurance	10,992	12,000	
56	WCB Worksafe	234	300	
57	Mission & Service	6,105	6,000	
58	Safety Planning	59	745	
59	Broadview Subscriptions	270	250	
60	Minister's Benevolent Fund		500	
61	Special Appeals & Gifts	1,085	1,000	
62	Bank Visa Charges CanadaHelps Charges	837	1,000	
63	Healing Pathway	0		
64	Pride Parade	296	700	
65	Chair Purchase	950		
66	Fund Development Team		1,000	
67	Pro-Vision Grant Support		1,000	
68	Legal Fees	1,643		
69	Communications and Window Wanderland	811	1,500	7
70	CRA Outstanding Debts	4,594		
71	Roof Replacement Cost Overrun	367		
72	Climate Action Team		500	
73	TOTAL	265,114	320,088	
74	Surplus (Deficit)	54,133	(19,738)	

NOTES

1. BK and OA at 12 hours
2. Minister 3% increase. Other staff 5% increase.
3. Audio Tech at 5 hours per week
4. No budget was submitted for advertising in 2024
5. Includes \$3,000 for renovating Men's bathroom

6. Includes Square charges
7. Window Wanderland & Advertising
8. EI ER contribution@1.173 xEE contribution
9. MD@15 hrs (benefits), Admin@15 hrs-\$30/hr

Tuesday, March 25, 2025