



Sackville United Church Annual Report 2023



There is
Room
at the
Table
For
Everyone

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Sunday Seekers Group

Parents and Tots

Ministry & Personnel

Greeters & Hospitality

Choir and Musical Guests

Sabbatical Pulpit Supply

Justice and Outreach

Sock'em Sunday

Orange Shirt Day

Food Bank/Christmas Cheers

Carols and Cocktails

Gathering for Silent Prayer

Carols and Cocktails

Caregiver Support Group

Property and Maintenance

Services at the Drew

Affirming Ministry

A/V and Sound

Faith Formation for Youth

Scripture Readers

Online and In-Person Worship

Communications

Bake Sale

Trustees

Shared Space

Soul Sisters

Family Games Night

**We are companions
On a journey...**

Our Governance

Minister's Report

Greetings,

Eight days before the end of January and eleven days before the deadline for the submission of Annual Reports, I have finally set to the task of writing these words for the Annual Report: Minister's Report.

I dread doing this each year – dread it because there is so much to try and capture and in the end it all seems so insignificant in the grand scheme of things, what with conflicts raging in Ukraine/Russia and Israel/Palestine and the spectacle of another Trump bid for the Presidency of the United States of America! How could anything we do in this small corner of the world have any impact. And then I am reminded of my own words – or more likely the words of someone else that I have spoken: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”

So, with the wisdom attributed to John Wesley fresh in my mind, and an acknowledgement of my sphere of influence... here goes...

January began with the formal launch of the Harm Reduction Machine and the first steps in planning the second part of my sabbatical period. On the 14th of January we gathered in community to remember and give thanks for the life of John Houtsma. February brought with it preparation for the Annual Congregational Meeting and the formal evaluation of Seniors Sharing the Table.

Beginning the end of February and through the month of March a number of folk took part in the ProFuture Faith study that I offered and we were saddened later in the year when we learned of the death of Michael Dowd. The Mission & Ministry Task Group began its work in February and by that first full week of April, Holy Week, I was anxiously looking forward to my time of sabbath and vacation.

With Holy Week and Easter Celebrations complete, April was filled with completing projects and pastoral visits before sabbath and vacation started, and engaging in one new project, supporting a LGBTQ2S+ Group at Dorchester Penitentiary. Sunday April 30 finally arrived, and I offered leadership at our Sunday Gathering for the last time for ninety days.

My period of sabbath included a two week trip the United Kingdom, arriving in London just prior to the coronation of King Charles, and a ten-day cruise around the British Isles visiting Scotland and Ireland. This was a much needed time to unplug and reflect.

Upon my return to Canada, I took part in the Festival of Homiletics, followed by the Annual Meeting of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council. By June 1st the trailer was opened and I spent as much of June (sabbath) and July (vacation) as possible sitting on the deck reading and spending time with family and friends. At the end of July Jennifer and I embarked on a trip Alaska that included a cruise back to Vancouver – arriving home rested and renewed, ready to engage in our respective vocations again!

On August 9th I began my 58th year and spent the rest of the month trying to find my footing as I responded to one pastoral emergency after another. People close to my age and younger seemed to be dying at an alarming rate and I found is very disarming!

The end of August and September brought additional work for the Trustees, and this drew significantly on my time and energy (and continues to do so). As teachers and students returned to School, committees at the Church began to gather again and soon we were back into our fall pattern. Regrettably, weather resulted in some changes to the PRIDE Week Events but still we celebrated the anniversary of Sackville United Church being recognized as an Affirming Ministry and took part in the parade later in the month as we marked 30 Days of Gratitude in the days leading up to Thanksgiving Sunday.

As autumn leaves were blown around by the relentless wind that seems ever-present these days, Advent was upon us and we were on our way to Christmas and the end of another full, rich and eventful year of faithful living in the Way of Jesus.

I want to extend my deep appreciation to all who have served on various Committees and Task Groups, and especially to those Elders who make up the Executive. Together you have facilitated prayer and worship, nurtured community, comforted the grieving, offered care to those ill and isolated, and joined children and youth in exploring awe and wonder. It is a deep honour to share in this ministry with you and offer leadership among you. May 2024 be as full and rich!

Faithfully,
Lloyd

Our Governance

Activities of the Executive

Report of the Activities of the Executive of the Congregation of Sackville United Church in 2023

Members of the Executive for 2023: Sarah Poirier (Co-Chair), Linda MacDonald (Co-Chair), Rebecca Houtsma (Communicator), Chrystal Schipper-Everill (Treasurer), Janet Hammock (Elder), Edward Knuckles (Elder), Luc Poirier (Elder), Dianna Wright (Elder), Christian Watts (Elder).

The Minister, Rev. Lloyd Bruce, also participates in all meetings in an ex-officio capacity.

The Executive will be losing 5 members who have completed their term of office, following the AGM on March 3, 2024. The Executive will be seeking 3-4 new members for a 3-year term ending in 2027.

The Executive traditionally meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month for ten months of the year – September to June.

The first meeting is designated as a Grounding meeting. These meetings play an important role for members of the Executive, as they explore spiritual matters together and build a spirit of community within the group. Responsibility for leading each meeting circulates amongst the group.

The second meeting, commonly known as the Business meeting, is dedicated to dealing with business matters related to the general operation of Sackville United Church.

As the governing body of the congregation, the Executive is committed to keeping a close connection with the congregation through the various ministry groups: Worship and Sanctuary, Ministry and Personnel, and Property/Maintenance among others. The Executive may also invite the formation of Circles of Service (Task Groups) to meet other needs as identified. Several of these groups have evolved in 2023, including the Mission and Ministry Focus Group, the Prayer Circle, the Caregivers Circle, and the Pastoral Contact Team, to name a few. We are grateful to all the committees and groups for their contribution to the community of Sackville United Church. Many will be contributing details of their missions and work to date further in this report.

In an effort to keep the congregation further up to date on the activities of the Executive, an oral report is provided during the Sunday following each business meeting.

It seems appropriate to mention the purpose and work of the Mission and Ministry Focus Group as theirs was a time-limited task requested by the Executive.

This team of five individuals was assigned the task of engaging in conversations with the those members of the congregation who chose to participate over a six-week period, in an effort to discern the mission and ministry for Sackville United Church going forward into the future.

Questions were provided as a guide to facilitate the conversations. Team members would listen carefully to what they heard, synthesize the responses, and share their summaries with the congregation.

Following the six-week process the team would create a report for the Executive and the congregation, relaying what it had learned and provide recommendations for moving forward. The full report may be obtained from the church office upon request.

Other activities the Executive participated in and oversaw during 2023 included:

March 2023

- The AGM was held on March 19, 2023, following the service.
- Linda MacDonald and Sarah Poirier reorganized their responsibilities as Co-Chairs, with each of them assuming responsibility for the Business meetings for 5 consecutive months.

April

- The Living Faith Story to be updated (Sarah Poirier, Cathering Gaw, Kendall Harrison) following the final report of the Mission and Ministry Focus Group
- Pulpit Supply arrangements to cover Rev. Bruce's Sabbatical/Vacation leave are progressing well.
- Cost of living increase of 6.3 % will be given to the Office Administrative Position and Music Director retroactive to January 1, 2023.

May

- The search for persons to fill the positions of Treasurer and Property Management Coordinator continues.
- Organization of teams for people to call if they require pastoral care during Rev. Bruce's absence.
- A financial analysis presentation from the Mission and Ministry Focus Group

June

- An upcoming change of insurance carrier
- Review of current practices around background, security, and police checks on present and prospective employees and volunteers.
- Presentation of the invitation to explore the topic of collaborative ministry from Visions United in Moncton and a number of other churches in the region.
- Report from the Board of Trustees on a bequest to SUC from the estate of a former member.
- Congregational Meeting on June 25th to vote on the final report from the Mission and Ministry Focus Group.

September

- Treasurer's Position – remains unfilled. Current treasurer has agreed to stay on until the end of her term in February 2024.
- Application to the United Church Insurance has been completed and forwarded to the Board of Trustees.
- Rental of 2 office spaces on the second floor.
- Events taking place this month: Pride Week, SUC Affirming Ministry celebration, "Len and Cub" book launch, and World Wide Communion.

October

- Caretakers Charles and Sue Trenholme are willing to continue in their present position at Sackville United Church.
- Oct 29, 2023 , discussions involving Sackville United Church, Visions United and Central United to start talking about building a possible collaborative model.
- Funds transferred from investments to operating account.

November

- Creation of job description for the position of Property Convenor.
- Vote in agreement with the amendment proposed by the United Church of Canada to establish an autonomous national indigenous organization within the structure of the United Church of Canada.

December

- Property and liability insurance for Sackville United Church moved to UCC United Protect program, effective January 2024 at a considerable yearly saving to SUC.
- A new member is required for the Board of Trustees.

January 2024

- Approval of funds to obtain a professional appraisal of the value of the current building
- Approval for Worship and Sanctuary to houseclean some of the rooms in the basement and re-home items that are not being used.
- Collaborative Ministry – Conversations continue between Sackville United, Visions Unite and Central United regarding possibilities for collaborative ministry among the three congregations.

On behalf of the Executive, we wish to express our gratitude for the faith, trust and support placed in us by the congregation. The co-chairs are also very grateful for such a dedicated and collaborative team to work with as we progress through the year and address the multiple issues relating to Sackville United Church. We extend sincere thanks and appreciation to those who are leaving the Executive, for your wisdom and hard work over the years, and a warm welcome to those who are joining us. We move forward into the year ahead in faith.

*Respectfully submitted by
Sarah Poirier (Co-chair)
Linda MacDonald (Co-chair)
Executive Committee, Sackville United Church*

Minutes of Congregational Meetings

March 19, 2023:

Sackville United Church Annual Meeting

Minister in Attendance: Rev. Lloyd Bruce

Members in Attendance In-Person: Dawn Estabrooks, Dianne Oulton, Frank Oulton, Chrystal Schipper-Everill, Jennie Del Motte, Shirley Hopkins, Edward Knuckles, Janet Geier, Eric Tusz-King, Margaret Tusz-King, Geoffrey Patridge, Christy Watts, Gary MacDonald, Sarah Poirier, Luc Poirier, Rebecca Houtsma, Harris McSheffery, Sandra Sears, Brenda Allen, Bernie Convoy, Paula Sears, Wallie Sears, Bruce Moore, Stephen Poirier, Linda MacDonald.

Members/Adherents in Attendance via Zoom: Judith Colwell, Bob Campbell, Donna Campbell, Ruth Buckinger, Janet Hammock, Glenda Thornton, Rev. Catherine Gaw, Elsie MacDonald, Hannah Lane.

Adherents in Attendance In-Person: Rev. Ellie Hummel, Rev. Heather McClure, Robert Hicks.

Rev. Lloyd Bruce provided words of welcome and called the meeting to order. A moment of silence and gratitude was held for the lives of the church members who passed away in 2022.

Rev. Lloyd Bruce called for the election of a chair and secretary of the meeting.

MOTION: *That Linda MacDonald act as chair of the AGM and that Rebecca Houtsma act as secretary for the 2023 Sackville United Church AGM.*

Moved by Edward Knuckles, seconded by Margaret Tusz-King.

MOTION CARRIED.

Opening Motions

MOTION: That the meeting agenda as presented by the Executive for the 2023 AGM be adopted.

Moved by Edward Knuckles, seconded by Margaret Tusz-King.

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: That all present (in-person or online) be permitted to vote on all matters.

Moved by Eric Tusz-King, DM, seconded by Luc Poirier.

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: That the minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting of March 6, 2022 (Annual Report 2022, p. 10), be adopted.

Moved by Paula Sears, seconded by Chrystal Schipper-Everill.

MOTION CARRIED.

Non-Financial Annual Reports

MOTION: That all reports included in the 2022 Annual Report booklet with the exception of the Financial Report for 2022, the Budget for 2023, and the Nomination Report, be received for information.

Moved by Frank Oulton, seconded by Bruce Moore.

MOTION CARRIED.

Financial Annual Reports

Treasurer, Chrystal Schipper-Everill, gave a report of Sackville United Church's financial situation. Chrystal Schipper-Everill explained that the income statement on the balance sheet gives a picture of what comes in and out and in which categories. She reported that there are many positives to find in the numbers presented.

Our regular givings increased significantly again this year, in 2022. Miscellaneous income included Sackville United Church's successful Seniors Sharing the Table Grant of \$25 000, as well as other items. Another positive was that Sackville United Church did not withdraw money from our investments to cover operating costs in 2022. Typically Sackville United Church withdraws several thousand dollars to help with those costs.

MOTION: That the financial reports for 2022, including Income Statements, Balance Sheets, and notes on those reports for Sackville United Church be adopted.

Moved by Chrystal Schipper-Everill, seconded by Jennie Del Motte.

MOTION CARRIED.

The proposed budget for Sackville United Church for 2023 was presented by Treasurer, Chrystal Schipper-Everill. A budget is an idea of where we hope to be, and to hope to have, and what we hope to spend. Chrystal Schipper-Everill shared that we anticipate being above budget in 2023 with our givings.

MOTION: That the proposed budget for Sackville United Church for 2023 be adopted as presented.

Moved by Chrystal Schipper-Everill and seconded by Harris McSheffrey.

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: That the 2023 Mission & Service target goal for Sackville United Church be \$27 000.

Moved by Chrystal Schipper-Everill, seconded by Rev. Ellie Hummel.

MOTION CARRIED.

Nomination Report

On the Executive Committee, Janet Hammock, Chrystal Everill-Schipper, and Linda MacDonald, have all agreed to serve one more year.

MOTION: That the Nomination Report be approved, including the nomination of Bruce Moore and Dianna Wright to serve as Representative to the Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council, and with the retirement of Shirley Hopkins and Karen Bamford, that Edward Knuckles, Rev. Heather McClure, and Mora MacDonald serve as members of the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

Moved by Margaret Tusz-King, seconded by Chrystal Schipper-Everill.

MOTION CARRIED.

Election of Elders

MOTION: That nominations for the vacant positions of Elder (three) on the Executive of Sackville United Church be opened.

Moved by Janet Hammock and seconded by Chrystal Schipper-Everill.

MOTION CARRIED.

In congregational discussion, Bruce Moore nominated Stephen Poirier for the vacant position of elder and Stephen Poirier declined. Paula Sears nominated Sarah Harper who declined. Sarah Poirier nominated Dianna Wright who accepted the nomination. Rev. Lloyd Bruce nominated Glenda Thornton, who declined.

MOTION: To approve the nomination of Dianna Wright for the position of elder.

Moved by Sarah Poirier and seconded by Rev. Heather McClure.

MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: To empower the executive to accept two additional members.

Moved by Margaret Tusz-King and seconded by Rev. Heather McClure.

MOTION CARRIED.

Other Business

Janet Hammock thanked Lois Hicks for her work and many years of service to the Executive Committee.

Closing Comments

Linda thanked the congregation for their support. Rev. Ellie Hummel thanked the congregation for the extensive ministry that is happening at Sackville United Church, as attested to in the budget. Rev. Ellie Hummel also thanked Rev. Lloyd Bruce and Jennie Del Motte and all Sackville United Church's many volunteers for all their work and care.

Adjournment

MOTION: That the meeting be adjourned.

Moved by Paula Sears, seconded by Eric Tusz-King, DM.

MOTION CARRIED.

Closing Prayer

Rev. Lloyd Bruce concluded in prayer, “might love be made manifest among us”.

(NOTE: See following page for 2023 Nomination Report)

2023 Nomination Report

Executive

	Term End		Term End
Janet Hammock *	2024	Rebecca Houtsma	2025
Chrystal Schipper-Everill *	2024	Edward Knuckles	2025
Linda MacDonald	2024	Christy Watts	2025
Luc Poirer	2024	_____	2026
Sarah Poirer	2024	_____	2026
		_____	2026

* These persons have agreed, with the support of the congregation in adopting this report, to serve for an additional year with the term ending as noted.

Task Groups/Teams and Committees

** denotes Convenor

Ministry & Personnel Committee

Edward Knuckles
Mora MacDonald **
Heather McClure

Worship & Sanctuary Committee

Dawn Estabrooks
Linda MacDonald **
Paula Sears

Property & Maintenance

Catherine Gaw **
Jonathan Harper
Charles Trenholm

Trustees

Shelley Beaver
Bruce Moore
Ron Sutherland **

Stewardship Convenor

Frank Oulton **

Pastoral Contact Team

Brenda Allen
Janet Hammock
Marilyn Lerch
Elsie MacDonald**
Linda MacDonald
Anne Pirie

Mission & Ministry Discernment

Fiona Brett
Kate Cogswell
Julien Desrochers
Rebecca Houtsma
Stephen Poirer
Eric Tusz-King, DM

Regional Representative

Bruce Moore
Dianna Wright

June 25, 2023:

Sackville United Church Congregational Meeting – Mission and Ministry Group

Members in Attendance (in person): Stephen Poirier, Luc Poirier, Bruce Moore, Lindsay Murray, Sandra Sears, Diane Fullerton, David Fullerton, Dianne Oulton, Frank Oulton, Geoffrey Patridge, Elsie MacDonald, Janet Hammock, Shirley Hopkins, Dianna Wright, Christy Watts, Margaret Anderson, Edward Knuckles, Noah Throop, Judith Colwell, Jennie Del Motte

Members in Attendance (online): Charlie Scobie, Jean Scobie, Glenda Thornton, Bob Campbell, Donna Campbell, Ruth Buckinger, Anne Pirie

Adherents in Attendance (in person): Robert Hicks, Rev. Ellie Hummel, Rev. Heather McClure, Mary Shaw

Non-voting Members in Attendance: Catherine Gaw (supervising minister), Linda MacDonald (chair), Sarah Poirier (meeting secretary)

Words of welcome and the **opening prayer** were delivered by the Rev. Catherine Gaw, in an advisory and consultative role as a representative of the Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council (in place of the Rev. Lloyd Bruce, who is currently on sabbatical leave).

Chair/Secretary Nominations

Elsie MacDonald motioned to cease additional nominations from the floor, with the following willing to stand: for the Chair of the Meeting (**Linda MacDonald**); for Secretary of the Meeting (**Sarah Poirier**).

MOTION CARRIED

A quorum being present from members both onsite and online, the meeting continued.

Motion:

That the agenda be adopted as presented (**Ellie Hummel/Dianna Wright**)

MOTION CARRIED

Motion:

That all present (in-person and online) be permitted to vote on all matters (**Janet Hammock/Judith Colwell**)

MOTION CARRIED

Final Report from the Mission and Ministry Focus Group

- **MOTION #1:** that the congregation of Sackville United Church receive the final report, dated May 4, 2023, from the Mission and Ministry Focus Group

(**Luc Poirier/Heather McClure**)

MOTION CARRIED

- **MOTION #2:** that the Executive of Sackville United Church now be entrusted to develop an action plan based upon the recommendations in the report

(**Janet Hammock/Heather McClure**)

MOTION CARRIED

Adjournment

(**Frank Oulton/Ellie Hummel**) 12:33pm

Closing Prayer was delivered by the Rev. Catherine Gaw

Our Membership: 2023

Members welcomed to Sackville UC:

By Transfer or Profession of Faith:

Conroy, Bernie	April 9, 2023
White-Murray, Lindsay	April 9, 2023
Poirier, Stephen	April 9, 2023



Members removed from Sackville UC:

Through Death:

Houstma, John	November 10, 2022
Crawford, John Alexander	March 14, 2023

Marriages Performed:

Matthew Rose and Alexandria Zoellner	August 15, 2023
Mackenzie O'Hanley and Heidi Dormiedy	August 5, 2023
Meaghan E. G. Cunningham and Madeleine L. Hanson	October 28, 2023

Funerals, Memorials, and Graveside Services Registered:

	Date of Death:	Funeral Date:
Houtsma, John	November 10, 2022	January 14, 2023
Pauley, Evelyn	April 5, 2023	April 14, 2023
Adams, Connie	November 16, 2022	May 20, 2023
Adams, Dale	November 29, 2019	May 20, 2023
Sparks, Aubrey	June 2, 2023	June 15, 2023
Estabrooks, Murray	June 28, 2023	July 4, 2023
Tucker, Barbara	July 7, 2023	July 10, 2023
Sears, William	August 19, 2023	August 25, 2023
Hicks, Austin	May 2, 2023	October 21, 2023
Hicks, Joan	July 25, 2023	October 21, 2023

Funerals, Memorials, and Graveside Services Registered (cont'd):

Fawcett, Frances	November 11, 2023	November 20, 2023
Duffy, Teresa	November 25, 2023	December 1, 2023
Scoggins, William	December 4, 2023	December 10, 2023
Hallett, Elisabeth	December 28, 2023	December 30, 2023

Our Statistics:

2023

Total Sackville UC Confirmed members:

312 (Resident-173; Non-resident-139)

Total Households under pastoral care:

165

Total number of financially supporting households:

65

Ministry Area Reports:

Worship and Faith Formation

Circle of Service:

Worship and Sanctuary Committee

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

WORSHIP AND SANCTUARY COMMITTEE

Members: Linda MacDonald, Paula Sears, Dawn Estabrooks, Jennie Del Motte (ex-officio), Rev. Lloyd Bruce (ex-officio)

1. Three meetings were held: Jan. 11, Sept. 6, Nov. 1.
2. Seven communions scheduled: Feb. 26, April 6, April 9, Aug. 13, Oct. 1, Nov. 26 (using intinction method), and Dec. 31.
3. The regular Sunday worship was held at 11 am both in person and online on the Sackville United Church Facebook page and from the church website www.sackvilleunitedchurch.org immediately following the service.
4. Mask wearing and distancing were encouraged, but not mandatory.
5. Summer services, July 2 – Sept. 3, commenced at 10 a.m., one hour earlier than the rest of the year.
6. Sunday service cancellations:
 - Jan. 15 (icy weather conditions)
 - April 7 (no power due to fire at Joey's Pizza, Pasta, Bar & Grill, across York Street)
 - Aug. 6 (replaced with Sappy Fest Pancakes and Prayers event)
7. (The United Church Home for Senior Citizens), Drew Nursing Home services were held the 1st Sunday of each month (except during July, Aug. Sept.) at 3 pm, sharing in worship and fellowship with the residents, and their families.

8. Pulpit suppliers:

- Jan. 29 – (the Rev.) Catherine Gaw
- March 26 – (the Rev.) Christine MacLeod
- May 7 – (the Rev.) Ellie Hummel
- May 14, May 28, June 25, July 16, July 30 – (the Rev.) Todd Nelson
- May 21 – Jennie DelMotte
- June 4, July 2 – Bruce Moore
- June 11, Nov. 12 – (the Rev.) Heather McClure
- June 18, July 9 – (the Rev.) Laura Hunter
- July 23 – (the Rev.) Catherine Smith

9. Guest Musicians:

- March 12, April 6, and Oct. 1 - Susanne Sevcik
- Nov. 5 – Harris McSheffery

10. Budget remains at \$400-\$500.

11. Our usual number of 75 palms branches were ordered from *Blooms Flowershop* of Sackville, the local flower shop. Any leftover palms are burned during the summer to be used for Ash Wednesday the following year.

12. Feb. 21 was Shrove Tuesday and many volunteers provided pancakes and waffles to those in attendance. Feb. 22 was Ash Wednesday, and the service was at 4 pm. Feb. 26 was the first Sunday of Lent and communion was shared.

13. The large wooden cross made by the Rev. Lloyd was placed outside between the two Main Street doors for the Easter season on April 2, Palm Sunday. April 6 was Maundy Thursday with foot washing, 6 pm supper, followed at 7 pm with a service and communion. The Good Friday service on April 7 was cancelled as there was no power due to a fire across the street. Easter Sunday, April 9 was celebrated with communion and the transferring in of membership of three persons: Stephen Poirier, Bernie Conroy, and Lindsey White-Murray.

14. A creative devotional resource, by *A Sanctified Art*, with the theme, seeking: *honest questions for deeper faith & mission in the world*, was used for Lent-Easter again this year.

15. Sept 14 started PRIDE week and the sanctuary was decorated the day before. Sept. 17 was the celebration of the Affirming *Ministry* of Sackville United Church, and on Sept 22, a book launch took place, *Len and Cub: A Queer History*, authored by Meredith Batt and Dusty Green.

16. Nov. 5 was celebrated in lieu of a traditional Remembrance Day service. There was a special lighting ceremony, using five pillar candles, to remember those who fought for our freedom. To not forget, those who served in two world wars, those who were waiting for loved ones to return home, those who died in concentration camps, those who survived the holocaust, those who are still victims of war and discrimination, displaced by war, victims of aggression, oppression, persecution, and racism.
17. Christmas decorations from the 2022 Advent season were removed on Jan. 11, with the help of the Open Sky folks.
18. Two sets of Advent candles were purchased at R. D. MacLean Company Ltd. in Moncton - 6 dark blue, 2 pink, 2 white.
19. Nov. 22 was the decorating of the sanctuary for the upcoming Christmas season with the assistance of some congregation as well as some Open Sky folk. A lunch of soup and biscuits were supplied to the workers/volunteers.
20. For Friday, Dec. 8, the sanctuary was transformed into the annual Cookie Sale, as part of Moonlight Madness, a Town of Sackville event.
21. The Advent theme was *How does a Weary World Rejoice?* The congregation was asked to participate on Sundays in a project called *Sharing Glimmers*. Nov. 26, HOPE, was the first Sunday of Advent, with communion; Dec. 3 was the celebration of PEACE; Dec. 10, JOY; and Dec. 17, the fourth Sunday of Advent, LOVE. Dec. 21 was the Blue Christmas evening gathering. There was no morning worship on Dec. 24, however, the Christmas Eve candlelight service was at 7 pm., with approximately 60 in attendance. New Years Eve, Sunday, Dec. 31, was celebrated with communion. The outdoor wooden manger scene was placed again this year between the two Main Street doors.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee by Dawn Estabrooks

Circle of Service: Creative Arts for Youth

<p style="text-align: center;">Sackville United Church Creative Arts for Youth Report for 2023</p>

In late summer, we received approval from the Executive to move out of the basement and to utilize the upstairs space for youth and young adult activities, including the Queer Space for Adults (QS4A) and a Sunday morning Creative Arts Program for youth.

A pool table and ping pong table were moved into the upstairs space. A removable table top was created for the pool table so that it might serve a dual function for playing pool for older youth and adults and as a community work table on which the youth create projects in the Creative Arts Program.

Bean bag chairs, a large coffee table and other comfortable chairs were moved upstairs as well, and arranged to form a gathering and conversational area in the space. A cabinet was moved into the space to house art supplies and ongoing art projects.

Toys and games for both younger children and older youth and adults were also brought into the space for use during Family Games night, Creative Arts Program, and QS4A.

The space is light and bright and cozy and contains an intimate and nurturing atmosphere that is supportive of the ministry of connection and creativity that is being cultivated in the space.

Children and youth meet on alternate Sunday mornings to engage in artistic projects designed to offer opportunities for creativity as well as allowing time for participants to be together in a social setting.

The space is designed so that children and youth may spend some time in specific activities of their own choosing.

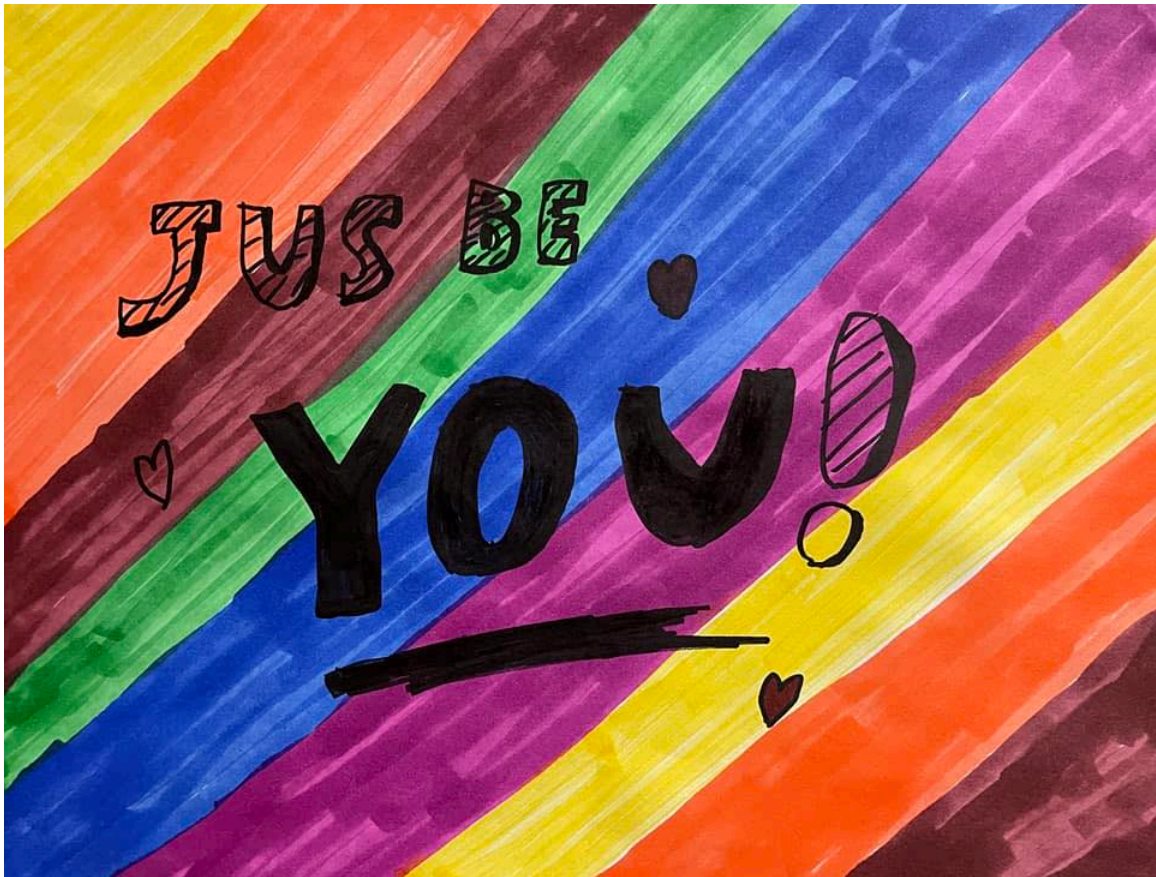
At times all children and youth need not be engaged in the same activity. It is important that time be given for children and youth to sense that what happens in their Sunday morning space can be of their own design.

As well, activities have been created so that youth and children may bring what they have learned into the active worship of regular Sunday morning services. We are

particularly thankful to Janet Hammock who introduced the children and youth to various musical instruments which lead to participation in a morning service of worship.

Rather than using a specific religious framework we believe that the spiritual development of children and youth may be developed through a process which allows children and youth some control of the process. Children are born with an innate spirituality and sense of wonder. It is important that this be nourished in an environment which allows exploration, imagination and a means of expression.

Respectfully submitted by Rebecca Houtsma and Gary MacDonald



Former Circle of Service: Godly Play Update

Where did the Godly play shelves go?



“The times they are a changing” and our ministries with children and youth are being reshaped for a new time. Throughout its history, The United Church of Canada has developed a variety of faith formation curriculums.

The Godly Play stories served us well at SUC and supported our engagement with children and youth for 15 years. Many were loaned to us from the Regional Office. Some were made or donated by members of this congregation. Now these resources are in a new setting. All are on permanent loan in the Fundy, St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Office. They are tended by the Rev. Catherine Stuart, Regional Minister for Children, Youth Young Adults and are available for pastoral charges to borrow.

This move is a visible and outward sign of our journey in reshaping ministries with children and youth.

In gratitude for leaders, past and present, who nurture the spirituality of children and youth,

*Respectfully submitted by
Anne Pirie, Godly Play Trainer*

Group: Ministry of Music/Choir

In 2023 we continued to enjoy the deep satisfaction of making music and making music together at Sackville United. The choir has continued to meet and sing weekly since the start of our “season” in September 2022, with a brief break from June-September 2023 for summer pause. The installation of a dedicated choir microphone and channel has allowed us to more effectively share our anthems both online and in-person. Many thanks to Chris Meaney for his assistance in procuring and installing the needed equipment.

We welcomed many special musical guests this year. Owing to the illness and passing of Jennie’s grandfather this past year, Susanne Sevcik generously provided musical leadership while Jennie was away for both family leave and bereavement leave. Other musical supply was provided by Harris McSheffery.

Our congregation continues to be blessed with gifted musicians who freely share their talents with us – from our dedicated choir whose time spent with me is filled with as much laughter and comfort as it is with song, to Rev. Lloyd planning a service of “oldie goldie” hymns when my parents were visiting, to the creative musical offerings of our young people this advent, to the voices in Ducky’s singing carols and raising funds for Christmas Cheer during moonlight madness, to the voices of the over 30 people who showed up on the morning of Christmas Eve at the Drew to sing together and for the residents.

Special thanks to Ed Knuckles and Mary Shaw with whom Jennie performed several Sundays worth of special music over the course of the summer, as well as Ed and Jennie’s traditional Christmas Eve rendition of O Holy Night. Thanks as well to Rev. Ellie Hummel for her spontaneous drumming that enlivens our hymns as the spirit moves her!

I wish to end this year’s report in the same vein as I have for several years now, by thanking Rev. Lloyd for his dedication, thoughtfulness, hard work and collaborative partnership. Thanks also to Rowan White for assisting in running sound while I am away.

I trust that everyone is continuing to “make a joyful noise” wherever and whenever it is possible and am grateful – whatever the number of buttons and faders and microphones and software updates needed – that we are able to offer a weekly service that can be shared not just with those in sanctuary chairs, but rather allows us to build inclusive and accessible bridges across our community and world.

Respectfully submitted by Jennie Del Motte

Group: Sunday Seekers Book Study Group

“Our images of God matter. Just as how we conceptualize God affects what we think the Christian life is about, so do our images of God.” -Marcus Borg

One of the key elements of the Christian journey, to me at least, is to look at our beliefs and ask questions. The Seekers is a group willing to dive into those questions.

2023 saw a very abbreviated schedule. In early 2023 we wanted to expand our world view by engaging speakers who were not like us: young, multi-cultural or non-binary. A wonderful collection of videos produced by **Church Anew** titled: **Old & New A look at Genesis**. Seekers watched the video independently and we gathered on Sunday mornings around 9:00 am in January and February for discussion. It was a varied presentation, and it engaged the group.

Life intervened and the Seekers needed to go on hiatus until an attempt in Advent to engage *The Cosmic Christ: Advent and The Coming of God*. Whether we started too late, or the December schedule bumped us out, this discussion quickly befuddled us and it was set aside for a few to continue at their own pace. A brief alternative was followed for two weeks with a reduced number.

Our group averages 8-10 members. If you have questions and would like to explore issues of faith and don't mind a Sunday morning meeting time, you would be most welcome. We have continued to meet on ZOOM.

Although it was an abbreviated number of meetings, they continue to nourish our spirits.

Respectfully submitted by Catherine Gaw



Circle of Service: Collaborative Ministry Exploration Group

Following up on the recommendations of the Mission and Ministry group that were drawn from the exploration process the SUC conducted in the summer-fall of 2023, a small group volunteered to explore the Collaborative Ministry recommendation. That small group attended some meetings hosted by Visions United in Moncton and were joined by over 13 other UCC congregations to discuss possible collaboration opportunities. After much discussion the SUC delegation agreed that the many congregations in attendance were at different stages of consideration.

As these discussions were taking place, the SUC delegation was presented a draft proposal involving sharing 2 ministers across 3 churches, utilizing technology to ensure all 3 locations would have a service to gather for each week. In order to best understand this proposal and work out whether it works for SUC, 2 people volunteered to join folks Visions United and Central United in a workgroup.

This workgroup met on Jan 25th and Jan 31st to start working out details of a possible Collaborative Ministry Model specific to our needs. This will not be a quick process, and regular updates will be presented to the SUC Executive. Before any agreement can be reached, there will be open discussion with the congregation of SUC as well as the other congregations involved.

We are confident that this process will be valuable to the future of the SUC as well as the UCC as a whole.

Respectfully submitted by Luc Poirier

Circle of Service: Mission & Ministry Focus Group

Mission and Ministry Focus Group Annual Report (2023)

Six weeks of community conversations grounded in the questions: What? So What? Now What? These conversations took place in Spring, 2023, on Sunday Mornings and Monday evening via Zoom and opportunity was offered for contribution via webforms and emails.

The Mission and Ministry Task Group, together with the Executive Committee, considered all of the information gathered and offered the following recommendations, and action items, most of which have been completed or are in progress as described below:

1. Consult with other congregations regarding possible partnerships.

Immediate Action: A Task Group including Rev. Lloyd Bruce, Luc Poirier, Chrystal Schipper- Everill and others are exploring possible partnerships and different models of ministry delivery.

Near Term Action: Members of the congregation have been talking with the members of the task group about ideas for collaboration or different models of ministry.

2. Reimagine and revitalize dedicated spaces and opportunities for youth within the Tantramar community.

Immediate Action: Gary MacDonald, Rebecca Houtsma, and Stephen Poirier moved the youth spaces from the lower to upper level of the building and Gary MacDonald and Rebecca Houtsma are offering a creative arts program for youth on Sunday mornings

Near Term Action: Members of the congregation held the initiative in prayer, and those interested in leading and developing programming and potential community partnerships for youth were encouraged to talk to the leadership team.

3. Stewardship campaign and regular financial updates

With the cessation of the Lafford payments this coming year, the Focus Group believes that designing and carrying out a Stewardship campaign is a financial priority for our congregation at this time.

Immediate Action: Frank Oulton, Stewardship convener, and others, promoted the church's increased need for financial support.

Immediate Action: Short updates, as well as quarterly communications (Executive and Stewardship convener in consultation with Treasurer) were provided to the congregation.

Near Term Action: Members of the congregation were asked to consider increasing their regular financial contributions to meet our financial obligations.

4. Vision and Ministry statement

Immediate Action: In progress. Luc Poirier and Stephen Poirier are working together to revise the Vision and Ministry statement.

Medium Term Action: The Executive will share and communicate the revised Vision and Ministry Statement.

5. Affirming Ministry

Immediate Action: The Affirming Committee together with Tidewater Bookstore held a book launch of *Len & Cub* by Meredith J. Batt and Dusty Green on September 22, 2023. The committee is also hosting a PI Day Celebration on March 14, 2024.

Medium Term Action: Members of the congregation were encouraged to continue delivering ongoing programs and partnerships along with developing new ideas and opportunities to affirm the diversity we seek in our congregation and the community of Tantramar.

6. The building

Immediate Action: None needed

Near Term Action: The actual year end financial data may be found in a separate document. Other steps taken include a Commercial Appraisal, and the search for a Property Convenor.

Conclusion:

Our recommendations prioritized our affirming ministry, working with youth and families, exploring partnerships with like minded congregations, and developing a stewardship drive. We recommended these actions as a way of growing our ministry and believe that they are faithful responses to the way of life God has shown us through Jesus' life.

Respectfully submitted by Rebecca Houtsma

Ministry Area Reports:

Pastoral Care and In-Reach

Circle of Service:

Ministry and Personnel

The current leadership team for Ministry and Personnel took on this work on May 1, 2023. We are Edward Knuckles, Mora MacDonald and Heather McClure. In our inaugural year we have been finding our legs as a committee and working to make sure we are covering all of our responsibilities for this area of work.

Initially, we met with Rev. Lloyd Bruce before he left on his sabbatical/vacation time this past summer, encouraging him to take the time for some sabbath rest. We were delighted with his reflections shared as he wound down that time and shared with both the committee and the community of faith in his Musings email. Heather McClure is the liaison with Lloyd and communicates with him regularly regarding any questions or issues that arise. We have also responded to vacationing study leave requests, as well as dealt with any adjustments resulting from illness.

We also met with Jennie Del Motte to better understand her work in her dual positions as our Music Director and Office Administrator. This year we worked through some of the details of her new contract and made recommendations regarding wage and clarifications to the Executive regarding some aspects of her contract. Edward Knuckles works with Jennie and communicates with her regularly regarding any questions or issues that arise. We have also responded to vacationing study leave requests, as well as dealt with any adjustments resulting from illness.

We continue to marvel at the blessing we have in the ministry offered by Lloyd and Jennie at Sackville United Church and thank them for their ongoing commitment to ensuring excellence in their respective areas of responsibility. We also offer the congregations thanks to Charles and Sue Trenholm for their ministry in keeping things clean and cared for as janitors.

Respectfully submitted by
Heather McClure, Chair
Edward Knuckles
Mora MacDonald

Circle of Service: Gathering for Silent Prayer

The Prayer Circle, a short time of silent prayer for persons of all ages, began in the summer while Rev. Lloyd Bruce was away as a natural outgrowth of the Pastoral Contact Team. It was our intention to shape a space in community where we could support one another in holding prayers of concern and love for others.

Prayer gatherings were held once a month on Thursday evenings and took various forms from contemplative prayers to centering prayers. Each included a significant period of silence. Holding silence in community is a powerful grounding experience and attunes our hearts to the needs and concerns of persons near and far in our world.

Two persons hosted each prayer session, a doorperson and a facilitator. As the Christ candle was lighted, participants were welcomed with words something like these: “We gather in the light that is always with us as people on the way of Love”. A short prayer, poem, or reading moved us gently into a breath prayer, chant or guided reflection followed by an invitation to silence. Silence was held for about twenty minutes. A chime and prayer closed the session. A Guided Prayer Sheet prepared by Rev. Lloyd Bruce was available to all as a helpful support.

In the fall it was decided to continue these gatherings, and in the new year they will be extended to twice monthly, once at 9:00 am and once at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Janet Hammock

Group: Senior's Lunch Fellowship

The seniors lunch fellowship group gathers on the third Tuesday of the month for shared meals and conversations. All are welcome to bring a bag lunch and join in the fun! Special events included a trip to Patterson's in June prior to summer pause, and again in December to celebrate Christmas early!

Respectfully submitted by Brenda Allen

*ETA: Many thanks to Brenda Allen for spearheading and continuing to run this group!
~ Jennie Del Motte*

Group: Soul Sisters

“Soul Sisters” – Contemplative Pathways 2023 Annual Report

We are a small group of women who meet monthly to share and listen and reflect upon each other's life journeys. We follow a process established by the Contemplative Pathways program to encourage and support the contemplative in everyday life. Each time we meet we follow a simple rhythm of alternating periods of meditative silence, sharing, silence, and response.

We have been meeting in this way since 2019, whether in person or via Zoom. Our group began because two of us heard of other such groups within our church congregation and we were instantly attracted to the model of small groups of deep spiritual friendship. (I believe my personal response was, “What? Why didn't I know these groups were happening in our congregation? Why didn't anybody tell us?”) In reaching out to others in our congregation who we thought might be interested, two interested people quickly became five. Finally, we had our group and were ready to begin. We first met with a member of one of the other contemplative journeying groups to ask questions and receive some guidance on process. The five of us did not know each other well before committing to this group, but each of us was interested in the contemplative model and the opportunity to be in a circle of attentiveness, support, and trust.

Five years on, this group continues to offer a holy time apart in which we can express and explore what is happening in our lives and spirits. The group has been a blessing of insight, growth, and deepening friendship.

If you are interested in forming a contemplative journeying group, 4 to 5 people is optimal, and written guidance of the process is available. And, of course, those of us already involved in a group would be happy to meet with you to answer your questions. We want to make sure you know that these groups are happening and are easy to initiate, so that no one has to say, “Why didn't anybody tell us!”

“To live a contemplative life means to consciously put aside the thousand demands of the world and offer ourselves the gift of being in the present moment, alert to the signs of the sacred that are breaking through everywhere, always.” -- Mirabai Starr

*Respectfully submitted by
Ruth Buckinger*

*for the SUC “Soul Sisters”: Janet Hammock, Marilyn Lerch, Jennifer Bruce,
Ruth Buckinger, and in memory of our fifth, and brightly shining, Soul Sister, Karen Sears*

Circle of Service:

Greeters

First of all, we would like to thank all who have served as greeters in 2023, a year that although had some challenges was more back to normal!

We welcomed Sandra Sears, Robert Hicks and Gary MacDonald to our regular greeters list this year! Those regular greeters this year were Eric and Margaret Tusz-King, Stephen Poirier, Paula Sears, Luc and Sarah Poirier, Christy Watts, Edward Knuckles, Dawn Estabrooks, Ron Sutherland and Jane Braedley, as well as myself and Dianne.

Other members who are still on the on call list include Catherine Gaw, Elsie MacDonald, Linda MacDonald and Janet Geier. It has been great to be back with live services as well as the online. Much thanks must go to Reverend Lloyd Bruce and Organist Jennie Del Motte as well as Rowan White in navigating the online/virtual services and now back to live services.

I have received further volunteers available to take on this morning role, but there is always room for any who are interested in greeting for a Sunday or more.

Thanks goes to so many!

Respectfully submitted by Frank Oulton, Usher Coordinator

Circle of Service:

Pastoral Care Contact Team

In order to facilitate some pastoral contact, while Lloyd was on Sabbatical, it was decided that a group should be available to be the liaison between members of the congregation, who were in need, and those who had agreed to do Emergency Pastoral Care.

Our Community of Faith responded generously and compassionately with support in a variety of ways to folks who were struggling.

The Contact Team included Brenda Allen, Janet Hammock, Elsie MacDonald, Linda MacDonald, Anne Pirie.

Respectfully submitted by Elsie MacDonald

Event:**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**

Waffles, pancakes, coffee/tea/juice and a variety of fixings were available once again this year on Shrove Tuesday as we gathered for a supper together to mark the day before the beginning of the season of Lent. Many thanks to Rev. Lloyd, Gary MacDonald and many, many others who offered time preparing, cooking, serving, cleaning, and (most importantly) eating! This annual opportunity for fellowship, which was followed by an opportunity for family games, is always a hit!

Respectfully submitted by Jennie Del Motte

Ministry Area Reports:

Justice and Outreach

Circle of Service:

Coffee and Conversation with Open Sky

Each Wednesday morning, barring holidays or storm days, the tables at SUC are surrounded by seniors from our community who are joined by Open Sky participants and mentors. Coffee, tea and sweets are offered up, and conversation flows from person to person, subject to subject. We have shared the joy of a new baby and the sadness of the passing of a loved one. We have worked side by side decorating the sanctuary for Christmas, and we have sung Happy Birthday countless times. We have been guided in craft making, and have shared recipes. Together we are building an understanding and supportive community that focuses on acceptance, inclusion and compassion.

There is always one more chair available at the table. Please consider joining us.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Sears



Circle of Service: Caregivers Support Group

Those who are going through the daily task of care of their loved ones who suffer from dementia, Alzheimer's or other mental or physical disabilities, are welcome to join us with our caregiver support group which meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 1:30 pm at our church.

The purpose of the gathering is to give support and encouragement to the attendees at these difficult times in their lives. We encourage attendees to share their challenges and concerns with their fellow care-givers, who can certainly relate to and empathise with their struggles. It helps to know they are not alone.

We are also hoping to have the opportunity to invite guest speakers to give insights on the services of their various organisations and programs, such as Nursing Homes Without Walls, Extra-Mural Services, and Alzheimer's Society, to name a few.

Please feel free to contact Diane Fullerton at 506 536 3749, or Sheina Grant at 506 536 0662, if you would like more information.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Fullerton

Circle of Service: Parents and Tots

Parents and Tots continues to meet Thursdays from 9:30-11am at St. Andrew's Presbyterian under the direction of Nicole Keeling. For this program "there is no charge, and volunteers are present to assist with childcare. Bring your young ones for a time of community, play and fellowship (and a chance to chat with other grownups!)."

Respectfully submitted by Brenda Allen

Circle of Service: Healthcare Box (Harm Reduction Machine)

Sackville Healthcare Box 2023 Annual Report

The Interactive Dispensing Service is a low-barrier system that allows persons to access harm reduction supplies and other resources. Working with REACH Nexus, the Health Boxes that ENSEMBLE maintains are part of a larger network developing across the country to bring these resources to rural communities where harm reduction services are limited.

The Sackville Health Box has been one of the first Health Boxes not only in New Brunswick but in all of Canada. There were two hundred and eighty-five unique IDs created at the Sackville Health Box in 2023. Thanks to the partnership with Sackville United Church we have been able to reach these two hundred and eighty-five individuals in your community.

Here are the statistics of what was dispensed in the year 2023 in the Sackville Health Box:

Items	Quantity dispensed
Meth pipes	658
Crack pipes	840
Short syringes	6220
Long syringes	2060
HIV self test	23
COVID test	61
Tooth brush and tooth paste	24

Respectfully submitted by Chantale Bourque

ETA: Each one of these items represents the choice of a vulnerable member of our community to seek safety and health amidst personal crisis. As a regular donor to Ensemble Moncton earmarked for the Sackville Healthcare Box, I am grateful to Rev. Lloyd and the SUC Executive for making this a part of our justice and outreach, and to Ashleigh and Chantale for the dignity and kindness they show to the people in our community who are some of the most in need of those things.

~ Jennie Del Motte

Circle of Service: Queer Space for Adults

QS4A 2023 Annual Report

Christy and another young adult from the community of Tantramar were interested in starting a group because there wasn't much in the community for adults identifying as LGBTQIA2S+, neurodiverse, and allies. The idea came up during games night, where some of the members of the group initially met. QS4A now has an attendance of between six and twelve adults. It meets every second Wednesday evening from 6:30 – 8:30 pm.

Participants enjoy hanging out together, playing board games, card games, video games, pool, and table tennis and enjoy having conversations. Members of the group report feeling more connected, and enjoy having a safe, comfortable, and attractive space in the community to hang out and talk.

Respectfully submitted by Christy Watts

Circle of Service: Worship at the Drew

Rev. Lloyd and Jennie continued to provide monthly services at the Drew Nursing home this year – health restrictions permitting. Harris McSheffery provided musical supply for the Oct 1 service (with our thanks), and Jennie provided both musical and liturgical leadership for the May service while Rev. Lloyd was on sabbatical prior to the Drew's summer pause. We are hopeful, heading into 2024, that health and weather will permit a more regular schedule in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted by Jennie Del Motte

Group: Family Games Night at SUC

Family Games Night is an all-ages monthly gathering at SUC where everyone is welcome to join in playing a variety of games, including tabletop, board, and roleplay. As Christy Watts, faithful organizer of this event writes: "I hope everyone is having a good week so far. This is a friendly reminder that Family Games Night meets on the third Thursday of each month from 6-8pm. This games night will be for anyone that is interested in attending. Remember you can bring a friend along and snacks for yourself or to share, all ages are welcome."

*Respectfully submitted on behalf of Christy Watts
By Jennie Del Motte*



Photo submitted by Christy Watts

Circle of Service: Affirming Committee

Affirming Committee 2023 Annual Report

As part of our commitment as an Affirming Congregation we are required to educate ourselves so we may continue to educate our Faith Community. The Affirming Committee, a small group formed in 2022 to undertake this work, continued this outreach in 2023.

The book launch planned for the fall of 2022, which was postponed due to a hurricane, took place at SUC with tremendous success in the fall of 2023 as part of Pride Week in Sackville. Sackville United Church, Tidewater Books, and Goose Lane Editions partnered to host a special author presentation of *Len & Cub: A Queer History* by Meredith J. Batt (archivist at the Provincial Archives in Fredericton, president of the Queer Heritage Initiative of New Brunswick) and Dusty Green (founder of the Queer Heritage Initiative of New Brunswick). They delivered an engaging talk and PowerPoint presentation about their adventures researching this beautiful story, followed by a Q&A and discussion.

Bruce Moore, a member of the Affirming Committee, received funds from SUC to support his taking a two-part course: “LGBTQ and Scriptural Interpretations” followed by “LGBTQ Issues in Pastoral Care” with Dr. Teresa Hornsby. Bruce shared some of what he had learned with the congregation in a public presentation.

Of special importance in November was the establishment of The Sackville United Church Affirming Fund. With terms of reference similar to those of the Benevolent Fund, it is available to assist those in need in the local community, and intended for the benefit of individuals or families who are experiencing financial difficulty in connection with specific, urgent 2SLGBTQIA issues.

*Respectfully submitted by Janet Hammock
January 22, 2024*

Event:**Sappyfest Pancakes and Prayers**

For the first year in many, Sackville United opened its doors on the first Sunday of August not for our usual Sunday gathering, but for a free pancake breakfast for both the Sackville community and also Sappyfest guests. This labour of love intended to offer hospitality and foster fellowship was attended by well over 100 people. Sappyfest, whose headquarters was at the church this summer, promoted the event, as well as sending volunteers to help serve, wash dishes, and tear down/set up.

The "prayers" portion of the event this year took the form of a rainbow-coloured array of blank squares of paper on which guests were invited to share either something for which they were thankful or a concern they held in their heart.

Messages shared included:

"Mom and pancakes" (presumably gratitude 😊)

"Grateful for this time to share music and fellowship together"

"For those who are ill and dying"

"I felt very alone. Thank you for welcoming me here. You made me feel like I belonged."

Thank you to the many hands that made this event as enjoyable, light, and full as the pancakes and stomachs involved.

Respectfully submitted by Jennie Del Motte

Event:

Christmas Bake Sale

Another successful Bake Sale was held on December 8th to coincide with the second Moonlight Madness in Sackville. Many people baked cookies, cakes, squares, crisps, bread, etc.

Most of the fellowship and visiting occurs on the Thursday as we receive the baking and wrap it for display. Sharing and laughter occur on Friday evening as well.

Over \$1,000 was raised with \$200.00 shared with the Sackville Food Bank. Thank you to all.

Committee: Shirley Hopkins and Elsie MacDonald

Respectfully submitted by Elsie MacDonald

Outreach Project:

International Women's Day

Again, in 2023, Sackville United Church Community of Faith generously shared with women of the Tantramar, Amherst and Moncton to acknowledge International Women's Day, March 8th. The theme was Embrace Equity.

Articles like shampoo, conditioners, feminine hygiene products, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorants, scarves, mitts, chocolate bars, etc. were gathered.

These articles were shared with Autumn House, Amherst, Ensemble Moncton, Sackville Food Bank, Tantramar Regional High School Pantry and Mount Allison Food Bank.

Committee: Catherine Gaw, Elsie MacDonald, Anne Pirie

Respectfully submitted by Elsie MacDonald

Circle of Service: Sharing Space

God's Doors are Open Wide at Sackville United Shared Space Annual Report 2023

We continue to explore more and varied use of our space at Sackville United for community, non-profit, and charitable purposes, as well as expanding our sharing of our space to commercial businesses and groups whose mandate fits within our mission and ministry.

In November we were pleased to welcome new regular tenant Cassie Cole, whose business "The Therapy Loft" is located in our upstairs office space.

Here are some of the many groups that have made use of our space this past year:

- A.A. (weekly)
- Girl Guides of Canada (weekly)
- Sunday Night Music Jam Session (bi-weekly)
- Sackville Meditation Group (weekly)
- Sackville Memorial Hospital Auxiliary
- Sackville Food Bank (monthly)
- Sackville Quakers Silent Meditation Group (weekly until June)
- Live Bait Theatre (summer camps)
- All Ages Rock Concerts with Chris Meaney
- Beausejour Eco-Energy Group
- Lectio in Lent with Rev. Catherine Smith
- Sackville Commons Board
- Sappyfest headquarters (full-time late July/early August)
- Sappyfest Creative Music Exploration for Youth Camp
- Chignecto Naturalists Club (monthly)
- Struts LGBTQ Trans Bodies Painting Workshop
- Memorial Gatherings for community members in need of a space to share memories in comfort and safety

Thank you to everyone who extends this hand of friendship outside of our walls and into our town and our world!

*Respectfully submitted by
Jennie Del Motte*

Ministry Area Reports:

Communication

Circle of Service: Regional Representatives

Sackville United Church 2023 Annual Report

Bruce Moore and Dianna Wright have continued to serve as our two representatives to the region in 2023. This role involves:

- attending regional meetings (for which Dianna took excellent notes shared with the Executive, minister, and office)
- serving on committees (Bruce was selected to serve on the Regional Property Committee, which makes decisions on building renovations and sales as well as cemeteries within the region)
- attending and participating in the annual general meeting for the region

This year the annual meeting was held in Charlottetown, so it was time for a road trip! Dianna bravely conquered her fear of bridges and not only crossed the Confederation bridge, but drove herself and Bruce across it! Much discussion, debating/voting on motions, and continuing to iron out how the new region functions were key elements of the AGM weekend. One concern was the, in our opinion, overly conservative theology of the music chosen for the weekend, especially for the youth, as well as the disappointing use of patriarchal language used by the outgoing chair. Next year's conference will be held at UPEI once again.

Unfortunately Dianna had to resign from this position in December due to health reasons. We wish her all the best in her continued journey of health and healing, and thank her for her years of service in this role.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Moore

Circle of Service: Communications

As online/hybrid worship has been established as a more permanent part of our regular worship, we continue to work toward the stated mandate of communications at SUC of “facilitating good communication both within the congregation and from the congregation to the larger community”. Sunday services are regularly joined live and/or watched after the fact by people within our church community who would not otherwise be able to participate in regular in-person worship, as well as by people across Canada; many of these people have personal connections to congregation members, but others have simply discovered our worship online and are now regular attendees or one-time special guests. For example, one of our services this year was attended by the United Church of Canada General Secretary Michael Blair.

Some new and continuing initiatives in the past year include:

- Continued “Monday Musings” and weekly announcement emails and website posts (monthly in the summer) to keep the congregation informed on upcoming events
- Continued presence of a dedication person at the A/V console to change slides, change camera/slide formatting for online streaming, and monitor the online Facebook feed to foster fuller participation for online attendees
- Installation and mixing of a microphone for the choir for both in-person and online sound
- Hyperlinks on the frontpage of the website to make accessing pages more simplified

Rev. Lloyd is invaluable in generating colourful and effective posters/pictures for church events and is our main source for operation and troubleshooting of our livestream technology barring sound. Jennie continues to run the sound board from the remote iPad near the piano, with occasional consultation by Chris Meaney for setup, installation, and troubleshooting. Two major instances of sound issues occurred this year, both of which resulted from software incompatibility between the sound board, laptop, and our video streaming software. Chris Meaney has indicated that eventually we will need a new soundboard and/or laptop, and suggested a slightly more simplified setup.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to this part of our ministry and community.

Respectfully submitted by Jennie Del Motte

Ministry Area Reports:

Property and Finance

Circle of Service:

Property & Maintenance

Report to the Annual Meeting 2023

In the absence of a Property Convenor, as one who in the building on a regular basis, the responsibility for coordinating repairs fell to me - thankfully the emergencies were few and far between and caused minimal interruption to our daily operations.

The incoming Property Convenor will need to work with the Executive to identify maintenance priorities for the coming year, including an assessment of the integrity of roof and the need for painting of the exterior trim on the building.

Thank you to Charlie and Susan Trenholm for their continued attention to the cleanliness of the building.

Respectfully submitted by Rev. Lloyd Bruce

Circle of Service:

Cemetery Committee

Sackville United Church Cemetery Committee

Annual Report 2023

The cemetery committee did not meet in 2023, so there is nothing new to report.

*Respectfully submitted by Jennie Del Motte
in consultation with and on behalf of Phyllis Stopps*

NOTE: Concerns raised in the 2021 report (snowplows potentially damaging stones, cemetery sign in need of re-installation) are still ongoing.

~ Jennie Del Motte

Circle of Service: Trustees

Trustees 2023 Annual Report

Members: Shelley Beaver (Secretary), Rev. Lloyd Bruce, Bruce Moore (Acting Chair), Ron Sutherland

The Trustees met six times during the year. Four of these meetings were regular meeting and two were special meetings.

The Trustees continued to communicate with John Lafford about repair and relocation of the cemetery sign and the painting/signing of handicap parking spaces. Unfortunately, there is no progress to report on either of these items.

The Trustees met with Adam Dempsey of Scotia Wealth Management in February to review the performance of the investment fund. Though the fund decreased in value in the previous year, it still outperformed the performance benchmark for the fund. The fund has averaged a net return of 5.7% since inception in 2013.

At the request of the Executive, \$15000 was transferred from the investment fund (unconstrained account) to the operating account of the Church.

In late 2022, The United Church of Canada launched a new insurance program called UCC United Protect aimed at providing United Church ministries with more affordable and accessible property and liability insurance coverage. The Trustees spent considerable time reviewing the program and made application for a quotation in September. As a result of this work, the Trustees recommended to the Executive in December, 2023 that the property and liability insurance for Sackville United Church be moved to the UCC United Protect program effective January 31, 2024. It is expected that this change will provide annual savings in excess of \$2,000.

The Trustees also spent considerable time during the year reviewing and responding to a proposal by the Trustee of the Catherine Smith trust/estate to possibly wind up the trust early and disbursing the proceeds of the trust/estate to the beneficiaries. This is a complicated matter and the Trustees continue to work on behalf of the congregation to ensure that any such wind up is done responsibly and that all legal considerations have been met.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Moore (Acting Chair)

Circle of Service: Stewardship Convenor's Report

Sackville United Church Stewardship Convenor Annual Report 2023

Our congregation shows stewardship in many ways – our time, our talents, our presence, and our (financial and other) gifts!

Every member of our church family is a part of creating the community we share – from those who decorate the sanctuary, flip pancakes, move chairs, raise their voices in song, bake treats, organize fundraisers, send birthday cards, sing at the Drew, and more! All of this alongside the offerings that help keep our church running through PAR, e-transfer, and more.

I was particularly delighted by the generous response to our Thanksgiving stewardship campaign, with contributions from both regular givers and also those who generously made one-time donations towards the life and work of our church. In Advent, we celebrate the efforts of all those who contributed to the Moonlight Madness bake sale, and we welcomed the return of the large wooden nativity set to the front of our building. Much thanks should go to Red Wade and Ron Sutherland in the setup of the Nativity as well as the help of Noah Throop on taking it down after January 6 (the official end of the Christmas celebrations).

I end my report the same way I did last year, because the same feeling is true. To each of you, in all the ways you are part of our church family, I want to say thanks for all you do.

Respectfully submitted by Frank Oulton

Report:

Rockport United Church

Rockport United Church 2023 Annual Report

This is the first time since Covid started that the church has been able to have its three church services and an annual meeting. Services were held in April, October and December with the annual meeting in June.

Nancy Read had been given permission to purchase a portable toilet to replace the one which was on loan from the Rockport Community Association. That was ordered after the March service but has never arrived. It would probably be good idea to re-order this item.

The church was broken into in the spring. The couple spent at least one night there. The door latches to both the church and outbuilding were destroyed and the locks removed. After burning the wood available in the church, they burned hymn books and other loose materials available.

The quilt that covered the organ is missing and one of the artificial flower arrangements was destroyed. There were never any fingerprints taken, and although the people were caught, we were informed by the RCMP that charges for this would not be laid as they had no convicting evidence that they were the people in the church. New door latches and locks have been purchased and installed. Melbourne Read cleaned the church after this happened.

Edna MacDonald has found the original collection plates from the church in materials that she had of Alice Suthern's. She brought these to the April service.

The church has lost one of the Trustees with the passing of Alberta Harris in 2019. There are now six Trustees - the four remaining and two additional people appointed at the annual meeting.

Ken Tower has kept the lawn mowed for the past year.

A copy of the financial report for the 2023 year is attached to this report.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Read, Trustee

Report:

Rockport United Church Financial Report

Rockport United Church 2023 Annual Financial Report

Balance on Hand January 1, 2023 **\$7051.86**

REVENUE:

Collection – church services	\$333.75	
Donations & memorials	\$20.00	
Fundraising		
Miscell. (bank interest)	\$0.67	
		\$354.42

EXPENSES:

Minister/Lay Preacher		
Minister's Travel Expense	\$120.00	
Worship supplies/expenses	\$47.91	
Insurance	\$236.00	
Building/Property Maintenance	\$63.28	
Miscell. (bank charges/advertising)	\$27.00	
		(\$494.19)

YEAR-END BALANCE **\$6912.09**

Net Loss (\$139.83)

RBC Account	\$6751.17
Cash on Hand	\$161.00
Surplus in Petty Cash	(\$0.08)
Grand Total	\$6912.09

All balances as of January 31, 2024

Submitted by Nancy J. Read, Trustee

Report: Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report to the Annual Meeting of Sackville United Congregation 2023 Annual Report

2023 saw a slight increase in regular givings of 1.7%. This is certainly cause for celebration! Each year the regular givings continue to increase, and this is not the case for many congregations. This year also was one of the highest recorded totals for SUC in supporting charitable projects in our wider community.

Unfortunately, the increase in givings is not covering the total increases expenses. Total salaries saw an increase of 5% over last year, with annual raises. Our occupancy costs were also up 5% over last year.

2023 was the last year with a Lafford payment. The \$25,000 Lafford payment and \$15,000 transferred from the investments both helped cover operating costs. We have continued our partnership with Visions United Church to undertake a mutual review of books. This partnership is enormously beneficial, and I have learned a lot during these meetings with Visions United.

The executive and congregation continue to look at ways to continue to thrive as a community and how to best bridge the gap between income and expenses. This is my final report as treasurer. I want to thank the entire congregation for your support and kindness while I served as treasurer.

I would also like to thank every member of the executives that I have served with. The friendships, learning, caring and support that we shared over the years is extraordinary. The Sackville United Church Executive is certainly an amazing group! I have grown as a person and in my faith by sitting at the table with them.

Respectfully submitted by Chrystal Schipper-Everill

NOTE: I would like to thank Chrystal for her faithful service, gentle leadership, and friendly collaboration over her term as treasurer. I trust you will all join me in wishing her success and joy in her continuing education!

~Jennie Del Motte