

**Aurora United Church Annual Report 2023**

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## IN MEMORIAM

*Those hearts that we have treasured, those lives that we have shared, those loves that walked beside us, those friends for whom we've cared, their blessings rests upon us, their life is memory, their spirits are set free. (Sylvia Dunstan)*

Joseph Russell Phillips

Suzanne (Forrester) Bristol

David Conboy Brownlow

Ivan Dwayne Lougheed

Delio Sanz

George Leslie Easey

Frances Margaret Hilliard

Barbara Margaret (Walker) Beatty

Irene May Thompson

Margaret Beatrice Eveleigh

William 'Bill' Price Dies



## ***MINISTERS MESSAGE***

Dear AUC Friends,

As we anticipate the tenth anniversary of our church fire, we marvel again at how far we have come in so many ways in this time.

Having recently launched the 'Rising From the Ashes' capital campaign in January 2024, we are seeing, with increasing clarity now, the view to our completed new church building.

Over this past year our return to in-person worship, as well as ministries and groups evolved as the year wore on. We are now mostly back to how we gathered in the past, but with changes and improvements to ensure that we are as inclusive as possible.

A highlight for the congregation in this year was most certainly our official certification as an Affirming Congregation by Affirm United. In October, after five years of preparation (inclusive of the pandemic) we were able to celebrate with friends and neighbours, including representation from the Shining Waters Regional Council (Rev. Dr. Todd McDonald) the Rev. Dan Graves (Trinity Anglican) and Aurora Town Mayor, Tom Mrakas; an event to remember and a ministry to support and encourage.

We were pleased to welcome Nancy Kerswill to the role of Chair of AUC Council-officially elected to that position in April. Nancy brings a depth of knowledge of United Church polity and a natural leadership style that is engaging and collegial.

Our AUC Council continues to address the needs of the congregation, filling the gaps where needed and offering their many impressive gifts and skills to guide the congregation. We can be sure that our interests are well considered by this very capable group!

We offer thanks and blessings to Peter Drost as he has stepped down from the role of Ministry and Personnel Chair, and we welcome Laurie Torno who brings a wealth of experience from her professional life in Human Resources with the University of Toronto. As ever, we commend the M&P Committee as they navigate the needs of our AUC staff and Ministry Team.

Suzanne Whitehurst keeps our AUC Church Office on track and running smoothly; we have appreciated her warm and welcoming presence and her ability to keep things in order!

We extend to Trevor Gibbs, our heartfelt appreciation for his year of service as Treasurer and offer our very best wishes to him as he retires from this position; happily we will continue our friendship as a member of the congregation.

Music holds an important place in the context of our life at AUC and we are blessed to have Margaret Heney as our very capable and creative Music Coordinator. Our Chancel Choir has grown in this year, continuing to offer leadership in worship and special music offerings throughout the year. We have also enjoyed many musical guests, offering a wonderful variety of gifts.

Lisa Kyriakides continues to lead the three handbell ensembles, sharing her obvious love of music and enthusiasm for conducting. We thank both Margaret and Lisa for our extensive music programming.

Brian North commits a great deal of his time and energy on our behalf to overseeing the development and rebuilding of our church, connecting with our partners to ensure our return to 15186 Yonge St. Saying 'thank you' feels inadequate at times, but it is a true expression of our appreciation, and this appreciation extends to the whole of the EDGE Committee.

It could be argued that AUC has been steadily rising from the ashes since that very difficult day ten years ago when our beloved church burned to the ground. With a commitment to honour our history and to revision our future, the members of the congregation have remained focussed on that renewed vision coming well into focus in this time.

Walking the Lenten path in these days of reflection will help us to renew our connections with one another and with God who is in and through all things...these pages, representing our lives in faith lived out across worship, groups, and ministries, and reaching into the community around us will help to deepen our shared experience of faith in a changing world.

As Easter approaches, we remember that new life in the Risen Christ has the power to renew our hopes in every time and in every challenge.

Love & Blessings,  
Rev. Lorraine & Rev. Andy

## ***CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT***

### ***2023 AUC Council***

During 2023, Council continued to meet on the second Monday of each month to discuss topics pertaining to the life and work of Aurora United Church ... much of that conversation being around our new build. We welcomed new member Louise Procter-Maio and bid farewell to Helena Barkla. After the 2023 Annual General Meeting, Nancy Kerswill was elected to the position of Council Chair. The remaining members of Council - many of whom have served since the fire - have stayed in place to continue the work required to get us back to our home on Yonge Street. Following are the decisions Council made in 2023:

**January 9, 2023**

Operating Budget:

Approval of the 2023 Financial Budget and recommendation to the Annual General Meeting.

**February 13, 2023**

Finance, Edge and Trustee Updates:

Approval to make Stephen Crawley, members of the EDGE Property Committee, and Trustees Corresponding Members of the Court.

AND

Approval that Council directs the EDGE Property Committee to continue its tendering process for the above ground portion of the church build.

Return to in-person worship and meetings:

Approval that the masking mandate be adjusted to make masking optional as of Sunday February 19, 2023.

Aurora Street Festival June 4, 2023:

Approval that two areas for booths, in front of the church site, be purchased from the Aurora Chamber of Commerce at a cost of \$75 each.

**March 6, 2023**

AGM Format:

Approval that the 2023 AGM be changed from Zoom to a hybrid meeting to be held after church on Sunday, March 26, 2023.

**April 3, 2023**

Chair of Council:

Approval that Nancy Kerswill be elected as Chair of Council.

**June 6, 2023**

Search Process for new Ministry Personnel:

Approval that AUC moves forward with the Regular Change in Pastoral Relations Process - defined as the completion of the Community of Faith Profile and the Search and Selection Process.

Affirming Celebration:

Approval that funding for the Affirming Congregation Celebration Luncheon be provided out of the Council budget.

**September 11, 2023**

Legal Update:

Approval that the Board of Trustees be made corresponding members of Council.

AND

Approval that Council recommends to the Board of Trustees that \$2 million be the ceiling that Aurora United Church offers to AVIVA to settle the legal claim.

Trinity Lease:

Council approved the proposed Trinity Rate Table for the period of November 2023 to October 2024 which includes an increase of 5%.

**November 13, 2023**

Welcoming Arms application to the Trillium Fund:  
Approval that AUC Council supports the use of Trillium Funds.

**December 11, 2023**

Email Decisions read into the minutes:

Approval that Council accept the Capital Campaign Fundraising Plan and Letter of Agreement submitted by Laurie E. Irwin Consulting Inc. and Mary Lynne Stewart & Associates and engage them to manage our Capital Fundraising Campaign to launch in January 2024. Disposal: carried Nov.20/23.

AND

Approval that Council accept Peter Drost's resignation as M&P chair and from the M&P Committee. Disposal: carried Nov.27/23.

**Aurora United Church  
Annual General Meeting  
Sunday, March 26, 2023  
12:40 pm  
Hybrid (in-person & Zoom video Conference)**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Rev. Andrew Comar, Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar, 63 members and 15 adherents attended (See attached attendance Sheet).

**Welcome and Call to Order:** Rev. Andrew Comar

**Lighting of the Christ Candle:** Rev. Andrew Comar

**Acknowledgment of Territory:** Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar

**Prayer:** Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar

**Motion: that Adherents of AUC may vote.**

**Moved by: Joyce Hagarty**

**Seconded by: Nancy Kerswill**

**Disposition: carried**

**Omnibus Motion #1**

**MOTION: that the AUC congregation take the following actions:**

- a. That the agenda be accepted as circulated.
- b. That Bill Newman be appointed as chair for this AGM.
- c. That Paula Hanna be appointed as secretary for this AGM.
- d. That the minutes of the AGM of March 29, 2022, be approved as circulated.

e. That the printed/online 2022 Annual Report be accepted as circulated and amended. (Excluding 2022 Income/Expense statement and 2023 Budget).

**Moved by: Martha Bailkowski**

**Seconded by: Laurie Bentolila**

**Disposition: carried**

**Meeting Protocols:** Bill Newman

We are happy to be back in person for our AGM with a choice of attending on a Zoom video conference.

Use of the microphone for all questions is necessary so that people on Zoom can hear.

**In Memoriam:** Paula Hanna – Chair of Pastoral Care Committee

**Finance Committee Presentation:** Stephen Crawley

Overview:

- 2022 saw increased expenses versus 2021 due to ‘back to church’ costs such as rent and staffing.
- Insurance interest remained a crucial revenue source in 2022.
- Total Offerings and other 2022 revenue held up well, and because of that we balanced our budget with less insurance interest required than budgeted.
- 5-year cash flow projections done in 2022/23 have identified possible funding gaps in future years.
- Looking forward into 2023, we anticipate modest increases in both spending and revenue requirements.

### **2022 Review-Revenue**

- Total revenue from all sources in 2022 was \$476.4K, -7.4% vs 2021, reflecting an intentionally reduced draw on the insurance interest vs budget (we only required \$175K versus budget of \$283K).
- Total Offerings of \$241.1K were \$8K (3.4%) above 2021 and \$8.8K (3.8%) above our 2022 budget.
- The interest we received from Trustees on the Endowment was \$49.1K, more than double the budget and +~\$3.5K 2021.
- CERS/CEWS revenue of \$56K in 2021 was not repeated in 2022.
- In total, AUC ran an operating deficit of approx. \$172K in 2022, \$110K less than budget forecast. All of this operating deficit was covered by the interest on the insurance payout.

### **2022 Review-Expenses**

- Total Operating Expenses in 2022 were \$473.7K, \$47.2K (11.1%) more than 2021 and \$72.3K (13.2%) below budget due to savings in M& P, lower than expected taxes and other savings.
- The majority of Committee expenses were also below budget in 2022, contributing to the reduced overall spend in 2022.



- Our saving in 2022 versus budget for our property taxes was \$10,953 for taxes expected but not invoiced to us by MPAC. It is not clear when or if we will receive this assessment in the future.
- All programs such as M & S, Welcoming Arms, Rise & Shine, etc continued to be fully funded to budgeted levels.

### **2022 Year End Balances**

- AUC Future Fund \$8.6K (invested) (previous balance now included in building fund).
- Earmarked donations \$27.5K (invested)
- Insurance claim account \$28.1K (invested)
- Bank Balance Dec 31,2022 \$65.8K

### **2023 Budget-Revenue**

- We are budgeting a decline in (non-insurance) revenue in 2023 of ~\$54K or -18%, driven by an anticipated decline in Endowment interest (-\$44K) and a small decline in Total Offerings in 2023 (-\$8K).
- This, plus increased Expense spending, will result in our Operating Deficit in 2023 being \$262K versus \$172K in 2022.
- This deficit is budgeted to be fully funded by the interest from the insurance payout. As building expenses will continue to be incurred in 2023, this may be the last year that the rebuild will not impact insurance interest availability.
- Insurance interest is expected to comprise about half our total revenue in 2023, versus an actual of 37% in 2022 and budget in 2022 of 52%.

### **2023 Budget-Expenses**

- Total Operating Expenses are projected to increase +7.4% in 2023 to \$509.0 from \$473.7K in 2022.
- With the physical return to worship and offices, main spending increases are on rent and M&P in 2023.
- Rental at Trinity (plus storage) is our largest non-staff cost at \$84.8K in 2023 (up from \$77.3K in 2022).
- Now that we are back in person and more programs are running in 2023 than in 2022, many Committees have small increases in their 2023 budgets.
- All 2022 AUC programs continue to be fully supported in 2023: M&S, Welcoming Arms, Music, Worship, Rise & Shine, UCC Assessment, and Youth events are among the many programs our AUC congregation continues to generously support.

### **Summary**

- 2022 was a relatively stable year for AUC. We came through it in good financial shape.
- Thanks to our amazing congregation, our revenue from Offerings has held up remarkably well.
- We will balance our budget again in 2023, and work to reduce our overall reliance on the insurance interest to fill our Operating Deficit.
- As capital spending on the new building increases, this reduces the amount of insurance interest available. We will continue to update our 5-year financial forecast and work with Council to ensure AUC's ongoing operational needs are met.

**MOTION: that Omnibus Motion #2 be split into three separate votes.**

**Moved by: Hank Gosar**  
**Seconded by: Brian Elliot**  
**Disposition: defeated**

**Omnibus Motion #2**

**MOTION: that the AUC congregation take the following actions:**

- a. That the 2022 Income/Expense statement be accepted as presented.
- b. That the 2023 Budget be accepted as presented.
- c. That Roberts & Company Professional Corporation provide our accounting services for 2023.

**Moved by: Lloyd Kerswill**  
**Seconded by: Susan Sue-Ling**  
**Disposition: carried**

**Affirming Committee:** Mary Munro

Three years ago, we were ready to take the vote to become an Affirming Congregation at our AGM. However, when the AGM had to be postponed and eventually took place on Zoom, it was decided to defer the vote until we could meet in person.

The contributions to the Affirming Committee by Noah Comar, Victoria Kyriakides, Mary Munro, Ivor Roberts, Debby Schieck, Brian Walter, and Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar were acknowledged.

**MOTION: that the Congregation of Aurora United Church become an Affirming Congregation in the United Church of Canada.**

**Moved by: Mary Munro**  
**Seconded by: Brian Walter**  
**Disposition: carried**

AUC will notify AFFIRM United that we have passed the motion to become an Affirming Congregation

Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar advised that there would be a celebration of this decision in the Fall/23

**Nominating Committee Report:**

**Omnibus Motion #3**

**MOTION: that the AUC congregation take the following actions:**

- a. That the Congregation elect the following individual to the incoming Council of Aurora United Church:  
Louise Procter Maio – Elder at Large
- b. That the Congregation re-elect the following individuals to the incoming Council of Aurora United Church:  
Laurie Bentolila – Elder at Large  
Nancy Kerswill – Ministry Advocate, Proclamation
- c. That the Congregation authorizes Council to appoint further members to Council Committees in-year as warranted.
- d. That the Congregation authorizes Council to elect members to the Nominating Committee, which will report to the 2024 Annual General Meeting.

e. That the Congregation receives the report of the Nominating Committee (including appendices A & B).

**Moved by: Jackie Catto**

**Seconded by: Martha Bailkowski**

**Disposition: carried**

**EDGE Property Committee: Brian North**

Brian showed slides of the lower level of the construction which is currently underway, and concept photos of the upper levels as they are approximately expected to look when the church is completed.

Brian introduced and thanked the members of the EDGE Property Committee for their dedication and work over nine years:

Brian North (chair)

Doug Gilpin

Crawford Heritage

Pat Innes

Scott Sinclair

Dave Snelgrove

Holly Todd-Williamson

Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar

Rev. Andrew Comar

We have overcome many challenges as we moved toward building a new church:

- moving the Bell lines

- taken to the OMB by neighbours of the church and through many meetings with the community, town council and lawyers, we were successful in the outcome.

- demolishing the five houses on the property

- removing over 180 remains found on the property

- a three-year pandemic

- increases in building costs over 50%

With that, we understand the challenges before us, and imagine we will be faced with many more unexpected obstacles before we are finished. We will continue to deal with them as they arise.

We are at a point where there is no turning back, and we will complete the task at hand, with altered expectations.

At a Feb. 13/23 joint meeting of Trustees, AUC Council, and the EDGE Property Committee it was decided to move ahead and put out a Tender Package for the upper-level construction.

The Tender Package is currently being completed.

The retirement home hopes to be fully operational by April/25.

We may need to ask for help from the community and the United Church of Canada at various levels.

There were concerns expressed by members of the congregation:

- Explain the \$1M and \$7M discussed as a settlement with Aviva.

- There is a large differential between the money we have available and the expected cost of the new church. How can we manage this debt? Is it worthwhile?

- Can we make adjustments to the interior of the church to reflect the changing needs of the Congregation and the community?

**Board of Trustees: Rev. Andy Comar**

Rev. Andy addressed the concerns expressed.

-We received a \$7M settlement from the roofing companies for the destruction caused by the fire. Aviva wants to claw back all of that money, saying we can build a church for the original settlement made nine years ago. We have offered \$1M to settle this out of court and receive the money which is currently being held in trust. Aviva has not replied to our offer. If it goes to court, we will have to get a court date in Newmarket which is currently backlogged. Even if we win the court case, Aviva can appeal. The appeal could take up to a year.

Rev. Andy has contacted the following people at various levels of the United Church, and has been assured of assistance if necessary:

**Jody Maltby:** Jody is the Regional Staff lead and Communities of Faith minister, staff support to the Communities of Faith Commission.

**Kris Tavella:** Kris is the director of real estate development for Kindred Works, the new name for the United Church Property Resource Corporation.

**Katja Brittain:** Katja works for Toronto United Church Council – TUCC. TUCC works with church communities to connect them with resources for ministry. They offer access to professional advice, financial support, and leadership development.

Rev. Andy noted that the Trustees will be suggesting to AUC Council that fund-raising should be started.

**MOTION: that the Congregation direct AUC Council to undertake an assessment and devise a proposal to complete a minimum viable church and community space for \$9m.**

**Moved by: Steve Falk**

**Seconded by: David Pilkey**

**Disposition: defeated**

Nancy Kerswill spoke on behalf of AUC Council. She explained that Council had spent a very long time discussing all the points that were brought up today and had passed a motion to move forward with sending out tenders for the building of the church as it has been designed.

Brian North reiterated that the tenders were being created in layers so that we can make adjustments when and if necessary.

**Staff Appreciation:** M&P Committee – Peter Drost

Peter thanked the staff for their hard work and dedication:

Lisa Kyriakides-Handbell Choir Director

Margaret Heney- Music Coordinator

Carmen Harany-Treasurer

Suzanne Whitehurst-Secretary

Rev. Andrew Comar and Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar were thanked for their commitment through a church burning down, a pandemic, and following the theme of today's sermon-bones found on the church property.

They have held us together as a Congregation.

Bill Newman thanked Peter Drost for stepping in as Interim chair of the M&P Committee.

**Message from Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar & Rev. Andrew Comar**

**Rev. Lorraine:** Today is a celebration of the community of church, moving forward toward the rebuild, and voting to become an Affirming Congregation. We are journeying on, uniting hearts and hands.

**Rev. Andy:** Appreciation was expressed for the continuing support of the Congregation and the contributions of the following:

AUC Council

Audio-visual Team for their help with the hybrid AGM and streaming of services.

Frank Pulumbarit for his leadership of AUC Council over the past year.

Paula Hanna for taking the AGM minutes.

Stephen Crawley for his presentation and work on the Finance Committee.

Brian North for his presentation and work on the EDGE Property Committee.

Suzanne Whitehurst for her work preparing the Annual Report.

Bill Newman, Nancy Kerswill & Joyce Haggarty for their help running the AGM.

Peter Drost for acting as Interim Chair of M & P.

**Rev. Lorraine and Rev. Andy** announced that they would be retiring at the end of June 2025. They are willing to help with the transition of the new ministry team.

**Closing prayer:** Rev. Andy Comar

**Adjournment: 2:59 pm**

\_\_\_\_\_ Bill Newman (Chair)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Paula Hanna (Secretary)

**Aurora United Church**  
2022 AGM  
March 26, 2023

Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar

Rev. Andrew Comar

***Adherents:***

Mila Buset, Trevor Gibbs, Hank Gosar, David Hanna, Margaret Heney, Myles Heney, Dawn Horstead, Tonja Kilpatrick, Bruce Miller, Charlotte Munro, Mary Munro, Nancy Newman, David Pilkey, Peter Zsebik, Marilyn Zsebik,

***Members:***

Colleen Abbot, Anne Ella-Arnold, Craig Arnold, Alison Backer, Martha Bailkowski, Helena Barkla, John Barkla, Laurie Bentolila, Kathie Blackman, David Brownlow, Joan Brownlow, Sally Carter, Jackie Catto, Sharon Corbett, Stephen Crawley, Andrea Drost, Peter Drost, Veronica Drost, Susan Eaton, Brian Elliot, Penny Elliot, Steve Falk, Laurie Graham, Damien V. Hanna, Jennifer Hanna, Paula Hanna, Joyce Hagarty, Alison Heffer, Crawford Heritage, Doreen Hiltz, Debra Hilliard, Vic Hodgins, Linda Hodgins, Pat Innes, Lloyd Kerswill, Nancy Kerswill, Joan Kuropatwa, John Kuropatwa, Bob Kyriakides, Lisa Kyriakides, Victoria Kyriakides, Louise Procter Maio, Bob McRoberts, Allyson Mitchell, Bill Newman, Janice Nolan, Elizabeth Ramsell, Helen Roberts, Debby Schieck, Denyse Slack, Ken Smith, Mary Smith, Yvonne Speck,

Don Stevenson, Joan Stevenson, Susan Sue-Ling, Doreen Sutton, Alvan Sutton, Laurie Torno, Charles Truax, Myrtle Truax, Brian Walter, Holly Williamson.

## **CHURCH COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

<h3 style="margin: 0;"><b>AUC CHURCH COUNCIL</b></h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry Advocates (5)</li> <li>• UCW Rep (1)</li> <li>• Ministry Personnel (2)</li> <li>• Elders at Large (6)</li> <li>• M &amp; P Rep (1)</li> <li>• Trustee Rep (1)</li> </ul>	
<h3 style="margin: 0;"><b>SERVING MINISTRY</b></h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastoral Care</li> <li>• Outreach</li> <li>• Mission &amp; Service Fund</li> </ul>	<h3 style="margin: 0;"><b>CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCES MINISTRY</b></h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Property</li> <li>• Archives</li> <li>• I.T.</li> </ul>
<h3 style="margin: 0;"><b>PROCLAMATION MINISTRY</b></h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worship</li> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Audiovisual &amp; Livestreaming</li> <li>• Sanctuary Decorating</li> </ul>	<h3 style="margin: 0;"><b>CHURCH COMMUNITY MINISTRY</b></h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership</li> <li>• Stewardship</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul>
<h3 style="margin: 0; text-align: center;"><b>FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY</b></h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacation Bible Camp</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scouts</li> <li>• Children &amp; Youth Programs</li> <li>• Adult Faith Formation</li> </ul>	

## COUNCIL STATISTICS 2023

Baptisms	5
Weddings	1
Funeral/Memorial Services	11
New Members by Transfer	3
New Members by Profession of Faith	5
Members Removed by Death	4
Members Removed by Transfer	nil
Members Removed by Personal Request	nil
Members Moved to Non-Resident List	nil
Resident Members 12/31/2022	540
Resident Members 12/31/2023	
Households under Pastoral Care	245

## ***AFFIRMING CONGREGATION COMMITTEE***

October 15<sup>th</sup> marked a wonderful day of celebration when AUC received its official certification from Affirm United acknowledging our status as an Affirming Congregation. (note 'Ministers Message' for details).

With that milestone accomplished, the work of the Affirming Congregation Committee is completed, and now we move to an established identified ministry within the broader ministries of the congregation.

It has been an honour to work with the members of the Affirming Committee -Brian Walter, Victoria Kyriakides, Noah Comar, Mary Munro, and Debby Schieck; they have upheld the flag of inclusion and acceptance with such love and compassion and will continue to do so.

We remember our friend, Ivor Roberts who died in January of 2020; he was a much-loved and valued member of our committee – his commitment to the process of Affirming never wavered.

We thank our good friend Brian Walter who is stepping away from the group as he takes up his new responsibilities with the newly formed Community Profile Committee, beginning the search process for a new ministry team. Thank you, Brian for your unfailing dedication and commitment to Affirming!

We will welcome new committee members, Lisa Kyriakides and Joyce Hagarty in this year and look forward to keeping 'Affirming' at the forefront of our church community.

Respectfully submitted by Rev. Lorraine

## ***EDGE PROPERTY COMMITTEE***

2023 was again a year of challenges for the EDGE Property Committee (EPC) with our biggest concern being the increase in costs due to Covid. We started by meeting with the Council and Trustees to discuss our concerns over the financial challenges we face and to get some direction on moving forward. The EPC committee was created to fulfill the dreams of our congregation under the direction and recommendations of Council. We strive to meet their mandate regardless of the many hurdles we have faced over the years. After many stressful discussions, it was decided that we are to continue moving forward with the understanding of our cost restrictions. We had legal contracts already in place and we were too far along to suspend the project. Our plan to move forward is to continue with our building in stages. We would concentrate on the structure and may need to leave some of the finishes for future work. Our main focus is to get the building up with the sanctuary and main floor being the priority to worship and work in our new building.

In order to prepare and search for a contractor for the above grade portion of our build, we engaged with Pearson Consulting to prepare a Bid Document to include Supplementary Conditions of Contract and Division 1 of the specification in order to protect the church from



risk emanating from the adjoining third party construction. We also engaged a safety company to prepare safety documents (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems).

Throughout the spring, we concentrated on value engineering and to search for the right partner to manage the trades for us. We also continued with our lawsuits while finishing the below grade portion of our building. We welcomed Bill Newman, past chair of Council to our committee. Bill was chair of Council and attended EPC through the most crucial part of our planning. He brings with him insight and expertise.

Early in the summer, the below grade portion of our building was completed to a point where it was turned over to us to continue with the above grade portion. We engaged the services of The Dalton Company to act as our project management team and contractor for the remainder of our building. By this time, we were thrilled that the settlement with Aviva had been completed by the Board of Trustees and Council.

We are presently meeting weekly with the Dalton team and our architect, Bob Murphy, to keep things moving forward. As sections of our build are costed, they are given to the Board of Trustees for their approval. By the end of 2023, all concrete was completed, and the steel structure was ordered. The steel was scheduled to be erected by years end, but due to delays, we now hope to see it completed this spring.

Respectfully submitted

Brian North (Chair of EDGE Property Committee)

Committee Members: Brian North (Chair), Rev. Andy Comar, Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar, Holly Todd-Williamson, Pat Innes, Scott Sinclair, David Snelgrove, Crawford Heritage, Doug Gilpin, and Bill Newman

## ***OAKWIL SENIOR NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORPORATION***

### **AUC 2023 Annual Report Oakwil Non-Profit Homes Corporation**

#### **Background**

Oakwil Non-Profit Homes Corporation, a non-profit Ontario corporation and an incorporated ministry of Aurora United Church, is an extension of AUC's community outreach and partnership programmes. Operating as Oakwil Seniors Homes, the non-profit owns and operates a twenty-eight unit townhouse complex in Oakridges with a mandate to provide rent geared-to-income housing for seniors. Originally founded in 1988 by the members of St. Paul's United Church, oversight responsibility for Oakwil was assumed by AUC when the two church congregations amalgamated in 2008.

#### **Governance**

By the provisions of Oakwil's corporate bylaws, the members of AUC Council constitute the "membership" of the corporation. Council appoints a Board of Directors to exercise direction and fiduciary responsibility over the operations of the corporation. The Board of Directors in turn

contracts with a professional property management firm, currently Richmond Community Management Services (RCMS), to manage and maintain the complex on a day-to-day basis, including tenant relations.

The current members of the Oakwil Board of Directors are:

- President – Bill Newman
- Vice President – Christine Zarebski
- Secretary – David Hanna
- Treasurer – Position vacant
- Director – Heather Collins
- Director – Suzanne Whitehurst
- Director – Susan Sue-Ling
- Resident Representative – Bernie Meagher

### **Financial Structure**

Oakwil is financed through a housing services agreement with York Region under which Oakwil receives an annual operating subsidy and capital funding to maintain and improve the complex. The rents charged to Oakwil tenants are based on a rent geared-to-income formula determined by York Region. The income from rents, combined with the funding received from York Region, is applied to the ongoing maintenance of the complex, the undertaking of capital improvements, the repayment of debt and the building of a capital reserve fund. Oakwil paid off the remaining balance of its mortgage in June, 2023. The Corporation also has a non-interest bearing loan from York Region with an outstanding balance of \$171,573.00 which is being repaid on a graduated basis. The Board is grateful to York Region for its continued funding support.

### **2023 Financial Results**

**Operating & Maintenance** – The Oakwil Board is required to submit an annual budget to York Region covering the operation and maintenance of the complex. The 2023 budget was based on total forecasted income of \$340,469.00 and total forecasted expenses of \$339,731.00 resulting in a forecasted operating surplus of \$738.00. Actual year-end income totaled \$340,565.00 and expenses equaled \$402,715.00 producing a deficit of \$62,150.00. The unanticipated operating deficit was caused by unplanned expenditures for repair and cleaning costs resulting from a basement flood in one of the townhouse units, higher than anticipated water consumption costs and an accounting transfer to move York Region’s continued reimbursement of mortgage costs into capital reserves pending the negotiation of a new housing services agreement.

**Capital** – Through its community housing Innovation Fund, York Region approved funding totaling \$42,896.00 for several capital projects relating to accessibility and recreation and leisure space:

- Modification of the bathrooms in 3 units to accessible standards
- Restoration of the complex’s garden shed
- Purchase of metal picnic tables for outdoor events
- Procurement of a new television and stand for the community centre
- Conversion of the community centre washroom to accessible standards

With York Region’s support, Oakwil was awarded special funding in the amount of \$75,000.00 for the replacement of the front entrance doors on all townhouse units through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) and Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI),

a joint provincial/federal programme to fund housing priorities. The replacement of the entrance doors will occur in 2024.

## **2023 Highlights**

- **Board Meetings** – The Board met on January 26, April 27, July 27, September 28, and November 27. The meetings were a combination of in-person and via Zoom.
- **Annual General Meeting** – The Oakwil Annual General Meeting was held on June 12 at Trinity Anglican with several members attending by Zoom. The members approved the appointment of Suzanne Whitehurst to the Board of Directors along with the 2022 audited financial statements. The Board was also authorized to invite competitive proposals for the provision of audit services to Oakwil for the 2023 fiscal year.
- **New Director** – In July, the Board welcomed Susan Sue-Ling to the Oakwil Board of Directors. Susan is actively involved as a member of the AUC congregation. Her background in finance will enhance the Board’s skill set. Susan’s appointment will be officially confirmed at the 2024 Annual General Meeting.
- **Summer Event** – On September 8, the Board sponsored a barbeque for the residents which provided an ideal opportunity to enjoy food and conversation in a social setting.
- **Audit Services** – Following the receipt of proposals from three firms, the Board accepted the proposal of Andrew T. Vahrmeyer Professional Corporation of Richmond Hill to prepare the annual audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2023.
- **End of Mortgage** – Coincidental with the full discharge of Oakwil’s mortgage indebtedness in June, the current housing services agreement between York Region and Oakwil came to an end. Discussions commenced in October on the terms and conditions of a new housing services agreement, including the continued provision of an operating subsidy and capital funding based on a multi-year financial plan. Until a new agreement has been finalized, York Region has agreed to maintain the current level of operating subsidy. It has also agreed to continue reimbursing the equivalent of the mortgage subsidy payment which Oakwil must deposit to its capital reserves.
- **Christmas Luncheon** – On December 2, a Christmas luncheon was held for the residents to celebrate the holiday season.

## **Looking Ahead to 2024**

The Board’s prime focus for 2024 will be the completion of a new housing services agreement with York Region to ensure Oakwil’s longer term viability as a desirable and affordable place for seniors to live.

As part of ongoing succession planning, the Board will be looking to recruit an additional director to complete the full complement of board members. If you have experience in property management, finance, social housing or the non-profit sector and an interest in supporting seniors housing, we would welcome your expression of interest in joining the Board.

The Board is deeply appreciative to AUC for its continuing sponsorship of Oakwil. We also thank RCMS for its capable management of the complex, and particularly Maninder Kalirai, Senior Property Manager, and Sandra Izurieta, Junior Administration Manager, for managing day-to-day functions at the site and building effective and respectful relations with the residents.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Newman, on behalf of the Oakwil Board of Directors



Summer BBQ



## MINISTRY REPORTS

### *Faith Formation*

Our Faith Formation Ministry group meets every second month with Rev. Andy to review the activities of the groups under the Ministry and to plan the schedule for Funday Sunday; including its volunteers who help each week.

In 2023 Funday Sunday resumed each week in person. At Easter the youth participated in a Palm Sunday parade and celebrated afterwards with an Easter party. In June the youth helped make the grounds of Trinity beautiful by planting flowers around the church which concluded with an ice cream sundaes. In the fall, Funday Sunday started back after Labour Day. There were a variety of themes, and we had several families attending each week. Many youth participated in a wonderful virtual Christmas pageant once again; and the youth celebrated Christmas with a party which their parents also participated in.

Several children and their families participated in the Lenten and Advent candle liturgies during the worship service.

On behalf of the Faith Formation Ministry, I would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all our volunteers who faithfully continue to share their time and energy with our youth and to Rev. Andy for his dedication and leadership to this ministry. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Backer  
Ministry Advocate

## ***Adult Faith Formation***

AUC Movie Night returned in the fall of 2023 and meets on the second Tuesday of the month at Trinity. Thank you to Rev. Lorraine, Brian, and Penny Elliot for their leadership in this group. In 2023 we screened: *CODA*, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* and *Meet Me In St. Louis*.

Woman Spirit is a monthly group that Rev. Lorraine leads for women. Please see their report on page 20.

The United Church of Canada's Lenten book, *Good Courage: Daily Reflections on Hope*, provided the guide for an online journey through Lent. This weekly Zoom study group was led by Rev. Andy.

We are thankful for these opportunities that offer theological and faith-filled reflections and discussions. Please continue to watch the weekly email, website, and announcement sheet to see if there is an adult faith formation group you might be interested in joining.

*Submitted by: Rev. Andy*

## ***Book Club***

Book Club has returned to in person meetings for the most part, using the Zoom platform now only for winter months.

Book Club meets the third Tuesday of the month (September to June) at 7pm, in the Ministers office (lower level). The book roster is created by the group for the year and individuals present their choice for discussion, often sharing audio or video interviews. There is always an eclectic selection of titles, including best-sellers and old favourites.

Book Club is an open group, which means that all are welcome to participate; it is a great way to connect with others and to discuss interesting and challenging books.

We remember our good friend, Norm Zapata who died in November of 2023, far too young. He was an enthusiastic participant, encouraging us at times to risk reading something we might not otherwise have chosen. We miss him.

Blessings in books,  
Rev. Lorraine

## ***Woman Spirit***

Woman Spirit has been meeting online for the winter months and will be returning to in-person gathering soon.

Woman Spirit invites women of the congregation to gather to share our lives with one another - to discuss relevant current topics (at times with audio or video presentations) as they relate to our sense of spirituality; to share creatively and to pray together.

Sharing in the Quaker practice of holding persons 'in the light' before God has added richly to our monthly gatherings - ending our meetings by simply offering silent prayer for each other, for others and for the world.

Woman Spirit meets the third Monday of the month (September to June) at 7pm in the Ministers office. (lower level)

*'Come for sharing. Come for friendship. Come for community.'*

Respectfully Submitted by Rev. Lorraine

## ***3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scouting Report***

2023 was a year that saw 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora continue to grow with new and exciting opportunities and experiences for our youth membership, a continued increase in number of youth and Scouter participants and a return to hosting a Scouting Troop Section.

### **2022/2023 Scouting Year**

Scouts Canada continues to operate member registration on a January to December calendar year (2023). Operation wise, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scout Group chooses to continue to maintain the traditional "school year" programming schedule of September (2022) to May (2023), with children who age out of Beavers in the Spring of the year they turn 8, being provided the opportunity to join Cubs that Fall. Active youth members of 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora who had been registered for 2022 were provided an extended 4-week "early bird" window to re-register during August of 2022 to retain their place in the Group. The registration window for the 2023 calendar year opened in September 2022 for new members, on a first come first serve basis. Those children who did not register for 2023 retained their place with the Group until the end of December 2022. Those children who registered to start with the Group in January 2023 were provided the opportunity to start early in the Fall where space availability permitted.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scout Group continues to report directly to the Shinning Waters Council, following Scouts Canada dissolution of the South Lake Simcoe Area level of administration.

### **Programming**

Starting in the Fall of 2022, schools were again available for community rentals and 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora was able to secure the use of the gymnasium St. Joseph's Catholic Elementary School in Aurora on Thursday nights for back-to-back Beavers and Cubs meetings through From October 2022 to mid-May 2023.

In January 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Cubs hosted a winter camp at Camp Samac in Oshawa, staying in a cabin with

scouting friends from Groups in Newmarket, Orangeville, and Innisfil. In April 2023 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora hosted 2 separate area events at the Aurora Legion, a badge trading Day and an Area Rally for Beaver Buggy, Cub Car, Scout Trucks and Adult Racers that had approximately 130 participants.

In June 2023 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Beavers and Cubs joined the Newmarket Scout Group for an all sections “2-Kingdoms” themed camp, tenting at Woodland Trails Scout Camp in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora did offer not programming between June and mid-September 2023, but a small number of Group members participated in the annual South Lake Simcoe week-long Cub Camp in Algonquin Park in August and the Fort George Brigade Camp reenactment the War of 1812 in Niagara-on-the-lake with Scouting youth from across Canada and New York State.

The 2023/2024 Scouting program started saw 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora re-opening our Scout Troop Section with 6 youth moving up from our Cub Pack. On the last weekend of September 2023 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora’s annual “kick off” event took place at the Richmond Hill Live Steamers scale railway. In October 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora participated in the Annual Apple Day fundraiser at the Aurora Farmer’s Market and November 2023 saw members of all sections participate in the Aurora Remembrance Day and Aurora Santa Under the Stars Parades.

Starting October 2023 through mid-May 2024, 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora holds Beaver meetings (Mondays) and Scout meetings (Wednesdays) in the gymnasium at Regency Acres Public School, and Cub meetings (Thursday) in the gymnasium at St. Joseph’s Catholic Elementary School.

2023 ended with 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora’s group population increasing to 8 youths in the Beaver Section (boys, aged 5 to 7, including 6 new members) and 13 Cubs, (boys and girls, aged 8 to 10, including 1 new member and 6 “moved up” member from 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Beavers) and 6 Scouts (boys aged 11, all “moved” up from 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Cubs).

In 2023 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora had two youth receive top section awards, with Beaver Mason Blassnig, completing the requirements for his North Star Award and Cub Henry Munro completing the requirements for his Seonee Award. Congratulations to both these young men for their efforts!

### **Volunteers**

3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scouters in 2023 included Scouters: Ken Kosowan (Beavers), Kevin Krille (Beavers), Janice Chong (switched from Beavers to Cubs mid-year), Dan Johnson (Beavers ending June 2023), Liz Layton (Cubs), Krista Miller (Cubs), Kyle Munro (Cubs and Scouts), Greg Scott (Cubs and Scouts), Dan Vink (Cubs ended June 2023) and Tiffany Zhu (Beavers Started October 2023)

Kyle Munro continued to act in the roles of Group Commissioner/Contact Scouter Cubs and Scouts/Registrar, Ken Kosowan took over as Contact Scouter Beavers mid-2023 and Kelsie Vink continues as the Group’s Treasurer.

Any adults wishing to join the group are invited to contact Scouter Kyle Munro to discuss their interests. While the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts sections are currently closed to new member enrollment at this time, new Scouters are guaranteed spaces for their youth family members to join immediately as a result of the adult completing Scouts Canada Training and joining the Group. We are forecasting a particular need for new Scouters to join the Beavers Section before the Fall of 2024 to ensure that the Section will be able to continue operating.

It remains a goal of the group to recruit additional Scouters and Group Committee representatives in order to move forward with expanding the size and programming capabilities of 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scout Group for years to come. The continuing physical, financial and spiritual support of Aurora United Church for 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scouting Group remains very much appreciated.

### **Program Highlights for January to December 2022 include:**

- Participation in the 2023 Scout Seeds fundraiser (February – March 2023).
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora hosting the 2023 South Lake Simcoe Beaver Buggy, Cub Car, and Scout Truck Rally and Badgefest Badge trading event (April 2023), with the assistance of Alumni Scouter Trevor Stevens and the Aurora Legion
- Group Scout Camp (June 2023)
- SLS Algonquin Cub Camp (August 2023)
- Fort George Scout Camp (September 2023)
- Re-establishment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scout Troop
- All Sections attending a train day at Richmond Hill Live Steamers outdoor scale model railway (September 2023)
- Remembrance Day Parade (November 2023)
- Aurora Santa Claus Parade (November 2023)

We look forward to exploring more opportunities to strengthen our relationship with the Aurora United Church congregation. 3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scout Group looks forward to taking part in opportunities to “do a good turn” for members of our community. Due to the group size, the age of participants and their physical abilities, single-day, weekend-based volunteer opportunities appear best suited for our youth members at this time.

We look forward to the opportunity to return “home” to the New Aurora United Church building when the opportunity allows for it.

Yours in Scouting,



Kyle Munro  
Scouter and Commissioner,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Aurora Scouting Group

## **MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCES**

### ***Finance Committee***

In 2023, the AUC Finance Committee consisted of Stephen Crawley (Chair), Brian Walters (Ministry Advocate), Lloyd Kerswill, Susan Sue-Ling, and Rev. Andy Comar. Nancy Kerswill, Chair of Council, was also a valuable regular attendee at the Finance team meetings. Our key role of Treasurer/Bookkeeper was occupied by Carmen Harany for the first few months of 2023, at which time she departed the role and was replaced by Trevor Gibbs.

The Finance Committee meets every month (except July & August) to ensure that AUC’s finances are being managed and monitored in the most effective way possible, and the team does significant work outside of these monthly meetings to ensure the smooth management and



planning of AUC's resources. This includes the Annual Operating Budget process as well as updating our 5-year projections to identify any issues for the Operating budget due to spending on the rebuild of our church.

Our congregation was fully meeting in person at the start of 2023, with regular collection taking place at our Sunday services. This was a positive event not only for our congregation, but also for our financial performance. While our **Total Revenue in 2023** was up 5.9% versus 2022, that reflected our increased requirement to draw on funds from the interest on our insurance payout from Trustees. In 2022 we required \$175,000 from insurance interest, and in 2023 we required \$250,000. If you remove this variable revenue source of insurance interest, our Total Revenue was actually down -15.5% versus 2022 (approx. \$46K). This is the second consecutive year of a similar revenue decline when not including the insurance interest. In 2023, this was due exclusively because revenue from the interest on the Endowment fund from Trustees was only about \$1,100. In 2022, Endowment funding to the Operating budget was \$49,100 (approx. \$48K decline). But the important story on the revenue side came from our amazing congregation, which continued its tradition of remarkable generosity throughout the year. Despite the challenges that we face as a congregation, **Total Offerings** from the congregation (including online donations) finished 2023 roughly flat versus 2022 (which was up versus 2021!) with a decline of only 0.9% or approx. \$2.1K and just slightly above our budget. We should all be proud of the financial commitment our congregation continues to make to the ongoing operation of AUC. Our AUC congregation is making a difference!

**Total Expenses** in 2023 rose as expected versus 2022 and was slightly higher than budget (\$516.8 versus budget of \$509.0). Spending in 2023 was up 9.1% versus 2022, driven by increased staff costs and also by increased costs in rent with Trinity. The first monthly investment in the external fundraising cost also appeared in 2023. Payroll, benefits, and pension payments historically account for approximately 60% of our annual operating budget, and 2023 was consistent with that. See the full budget in this Annual Report for detailed information.

AUC's General Operating Fund continues to rely on interest from the insurance capital to balance our budget. In 2023 the net funding requirement from insurance interest was \$250,000, \$12,000 less than the budgeted amount of \$262,000. Insurance interest continues to be a significant percentage of our overall revenue. In 2021, 22.6% of our Total Revenue was insurance interest, in 2022 it was 36.8% and in 2023 49% of our revenue came from there. Aside from this 49% interest revenue in 2023, 44% came from Total (congregational) Offerings, and 7% from all other sources. We are blessed to have the insurance interest at our disposal to cover our short-term requirements as we go through this period of transition in our history. We have never used any of the principal capital Trustees have received from the insurance payout to fund our operating deficits. We only draw from the investment income generated by the principal to cover our operating revenue shortfalls. As we are now well into drawing on the principal to pay for construction costs, we will need to be vigilant in ensuring no short-term funding gaps appear that could impact our Operating Fund. The AUC Finance committee will continue to watch revenue requirements carefully, project out 5 years, and pre-emptively work with Council and the Board of Trustees to ensure no financial issues arise in 2024 and all the way through the rebuilding of our church.

All of AUC's financial obligations were met in 2023, including United Church of Canada assessment dues, Mission & Service, Welcoming Arms, Rise & Shine, and many others. Other than our M&P expenses, our required rent with Trinity (plus external storage) is still our biggest

expense, at \$88,420 in 2023. Expense management is a key area of responsibility and emphasis for Finance, and we successfully achieved that goal in 2023 with the support of the many ministries and committees at AUC. Our thanks go out everyone who helped with the careful cost management at AUC!

Donations for the rebuild have largely been reinvested by Trustees until the time comes that we require them. We currently have separate accounts for this purpose:

- first, our Future Fund, which on December 31, 2023, held \$44,380 in the account
- our Earmarked donations account (donations made for specifically designated purchases) has \$29,138 in the bank

The Finance Committee is also charged with creating the Annual Operating Budget of AUC for input and approval from AUC Church Council, as well as input from the many committees that run programs at AUC. This year we have again been able to complete the task and approval process in time for the 2024 Budget to be included in this Annual Report, subject to the congregation's approval at the Annual General Meeting. Trevor Gibbs and Carmen Harany worked closely with Finance in 2023 to provide the necessary reports for informed decision making. They both deserve our gratitude for their considerable work and support of AUC's financial health. Carmen departed the Treasurer role at AUC in 2023, and our sincere thanks go out to her for 15 years of unwavering, professional management of the day-to-day financial affairs of the church.

The Finance team monitors the revenue and spending of the General Operating Fund on an ongoing basis. Our goal is to ensure that the financial continuity and strong financial foundation of the church be maintained during this unique period in AUC's history. This will allow us to do our best in fulfilling our Ministry and Mission statement and build a strong future for AUC.

Submitted on behalf of the Finance Committee,

Stephen Crawley, Chair

### ***Bookkeeper's Report***

I started as Bookkeeper on April 19 after Carmen Harany left the position, the effects of COVID had settled down and we were back to in-person worship. Trends in 2023 were increasing expenses for payroll of \$40,929 over 2022; rent increase in our contract with Trinity, and a slight decline in PAR remittances. Towards the end of the year, our monthly fee of \$4,746 began for the new *Rising From The Ashes* Capital Campaign that will continue throughout 2024.

Gross income for the year excluding Insurance transfers was \$261,001 with income from offering envelopes/e-transfers and PAR remittances each accounting for about 50% of the total donations. Expenses were \$514,516.29 necessitating the need for more funding from the interest on the Insurance funds from Trustees for a transfer of \$ 250,000 versus \$175,000 the previous year.

Looking forward to 2024, we expect income to be stable, but expenses will likely increase with the Capital Campaign investment and increasing operating costs.

During the year Ed Griffith left his important position helping with counting and tracking of our donations and he was replaced by Bill Newman. Thanks Bill!

I would like to thank Stephen Crawley and members of the Finance Committee for their support during the year, particularly Susan Sue -Ling and Lloyd Kerswill for providing signatures on cheques, and the various church elders particularly Denyse Slack, Anne Ella-Arnold, Rev. Andy Comar, and Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar. Of course, I can't forget Suzanne for her support during the year and being a reliable sounding board for many of my queries.

I will be leaving my position on March 31 as bookkeeper, but I will continue to see you at church.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Trevor L. Gibbs

### ***Bequests & Memorials***

We are thankful that people continue to support the work of our church through their bequests and memorials.

This past year we have received donations in memory of:

David Brownlow  
William Dies  
Paul Gratias  
Carole Hant  
Margaret Keroff  
Dwayne Lougheed  
Roger Mattson  
Dorothy McCallion  
Beau Newman  
Elizabeth Solti  
Gordon Stephenson

**2023 Financials & 2024 Budget**

**GENERAL FUND BUDGET**

**REVENUES**

	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actuals</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>
Identifiable Givers	215000	227767	223000
Loose	2500		2500
Initial Offering	50		50
M&S Givings over and above	3300	825	3300
Online Donations (incl in 2023 actuals)	1500		1500
Other Givings (United Way etc)	500	3350	500
Appeals	10000	6303	10000

Total Offering 232850      238245      240850

**Fundraising**

Musical Special Events Revenue	2000	2607	2000
AVGEN	1200	1800	1500

Total Fundraising 3200      4407      3500

**Program Revenue**

Poinsettias (2023 estimated)	600	450	600
Faith formation (2023 estimated)	450	400	450
Broadview Subscriptions	600	350	600
Other program revenue	0	2696	0

Total Program Revenue 1650      3896      1650

**Investments**

Interest/Capital Gains from Endowment & Flower Fund	5000	1327	20675
Interest on Insurance Capital	262000	250000	319000

Total Investments 267000      251327      339675

**Other**

UCW Donation		2000	500
HST Rebate	3500	4188	3500
Memorials, Bequests & Planned giving	250	75	250
Rise & Shine Donations	1000	731	500

Total Other Revenue 4750      6994      4750

**TOTAL ALL REVENUE** **509450      504869      590425**

**EXPENSES**

**CHURCH COMMUNITY MINISTRY**

Communications	0	374	0
Website	534	486	600

Total Communications 534      860      600

<b>Membership</b>			
Soup Lunches	100		100
Coffee & Juice	50		50
	<b>Total</b>		
	<b>Membership</b>		<b>150</b>
<b>CHURCH COUNCIL</b>			
External Fund Raising fees		4637	56914
Committee Expense Joint Service	1000	1613	1000
Affirming Committee	500	395	500
Shining Waters AGM expenses	700		700
Rental Expenses includes Trinity Storage YRDSB	84846	88420	87391
	<b>Total Church Council</b>		<b>146505</b>
<b>CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCES MINISTRY/FINANCE</b>			
Archives	100	24	100
Committee Expense			
Envelopes	380	353	600
Banking Service fees	1200	973	1200
Insurance	6165	4640	3108
Church Land Taxes			
Accountant service & support	5000	9098	5000
UCC Assessment	11857	11857	10986
	<b>Total Finance</b>	<b>26945</b>	<b>20994</b>
<b>Property Committee</b>			
Office Expense	3700	3618	3200
Contracts	9000	5217	2000
Utilities	3900	4294	3900
Maintenance & Repairs	500	0	500
IT- Computer Hardware/AUC File Share	5000	4257	5000
	<b>Total Property</b>	<b>17386</b>	<b>14600</b>
<b>Church Property</b>			
Property Taxes	7708	7603	8093
Utilities(Storm Sewage)	568	456	600
	<b>Total Church Property</b>	<b>8059</b>	<b>8693</b>
<b>Faith Formation Ministry</b>			
Adult Education		133	150
Committee Expense	100	217	100
Broadview subscription	600	450	600
Teen confirmation	400	0	400
Youth Events(Camp. Meetings)	500	0	500

Vacation Bible Camp	600	0	600
Sunday School + Childrens Education	400	32	400
Total Faith Formation	2600	832	2750
<b>M&amp;P(Ministry &amp; personnel)</b>			
Committee Expense-ADP costs	1715	836	1800
Salaries(Fulltime & Casual)	240417	195912	275000
Benefits(WSIB)	62154	71568	64018
Travel	3000	2225	3000
Continuing education	3600	1223	3600
Staff Development(All-Recognition)			
Other: payroll taxes		44404	0
Total M&P	310886	316168	347418
<b>PROCLAMATION MINISTRY</b>			
Audiovisual	1000	60	1000
Music	2500	2731	2500
Music-Handbells	1050	3202	1050
Sanctuary Decorating-Poinsettias	750		750
Worship Committee	2000	1576	2000
Online Services	5000	1450	0
Total Proclamation	12300	9019	7300
<b>SERVING MINISTRY</b>			
M&S Remittances Church	15000	15000	15000
M&S Over & Above-PAR	3300	3300	3300
Total M&S	18300	18300	18300
<b>Outreach</b>			
Special Appeal		1430	
Welcoming Arms	13200	13200	13200
Rise & Shine Breakfast	7000	7948	7000
Total Outreach	20200	22578	20200
<b>Pastoral Care</b>			
Seniors Lunch/Advent Service	150		150
Committee Expense	100	185	100
Poinsettias	600	405	600
Correspondence postage & Cards	250		250
Prayer Shawl	800	990	800

Total Pastoral  
Care

1900	1580	1900
<b>508994</b>	<b>516792</b>	<b>589410</b>

**TOTAL OPERATING  
EXPENSES**

### *Cash Cards*

When you purchase gift cards for everyday items you are buying anyway - like groceries, gas, coffee, etc. - the church benefits because the vendor offers the cards to us at a discount. For example, if you purchase a \$100 Loblaw's gift card, Aurora United Church makes \$4.00.

The Cash Card program at AUC raised \$1,800 for the General Operating Fund in 2023 against a budget of \$1,500. Our partnership with Welcoming Arms, and their use of the program as part of their community outreach, assisted us in surpassing our goal while sharing in the savings from the vendor.

Typically, cash card orders are taken on the second Sunday of each month, for delivery the following Sunday. A core group of regulars continued to order cards every month - some providing us with standing monthly orders and postdated cheques for their card purchases.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this effective way to raise funds to assist the life and work of AUC. It is our hope that you will consider doing so again in 2024.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Lloyd and Nancy Kerswill  
Cash Cards Committee*

### **2023 Cash Card Financials**

collected	100452.50
paid to vendor	-98616.35
balance	<b>1836.15</b>
bank fees	-31.50
opening balance	32.81
total	<b>1837.46</b>
transfer out	-1800.00
closing balance	<b>37.46</b>

## ***Archives***

The AUC Archives contains a wide variety of items and articles which can be divided into several categories. The document section contains much of the printed (now often digital) record of the church's yearly functions. Annual Reports, financial records, Council & Trustee minutes plus reports & minutes from standing committees make up the bulk of these records.

There is also a large collection of historical documents such as Sunday bulletins, newspaper articles, plans & details of the various construction projects undertaken by AUC, information about the stained-glass windows, the organ, and other furnishings. There are articles about ministers, past & present, missionaries & the history of the construction of the 1878 building. There is a large collection from the music department – bulletins of past performances, posters, photographs and even some tapes & videos.

And we have photographs although not as many as previously –most of the albums were destroyed in the fire and, unfortunately, some that remain are not dated or identified.

And finally, the historic artifacts. Some of these were also lost in the fire but we still have many items preserved from the past such as an assortment of pins, buttons, charms, and spoons celebrating various anniversaries and events; CGIT memorabilia; the choir gown recovered from the fire and the Trustees 1878 Account book.

All the above (and much more) is currently in safe storage awaiting its home in the new Aurora United Church building.

Respectfully submitted,  
Helen Roberts, Chair Archives Committee

## ***Property Committee***

### **Members:**

Alvan Sutton	Dave Snelgrove	Brian Walter (Min. Advocate)
Lloyd Kerswill	Bob Kyriakides (IT)	Joyce Hagarty (Secretary)
Debra Hilliard	Roy Eveleigh	Crawford Heritage (Chair)
Mark Nolan	Rev. Andy Comar	

The following outlines each AUC Property budget line for 2023.

### **Utilities:**

Bell Canada

### **Maintenance/Repair:**

### **Office Supplies:**

Postage  
Photocopier machine copies  
Miscellaneous

### **Contracts:**

### **Information Technology (IT):**

Computers and related equipment

Many thanks once again to Dave Hanna for storing AUC grass equipment/ladders.

Bob Kyriakides, our outstanding IT expert, continued his strong support for AUC in 2023 as follows:



- The physical phone PBX was reviewed, and it was determined that it's time to migrate to a fully-cloud based VOIP system. The original PBX was created just after the fire and has been operating for the past 10 years but is now at the point major updates would be required to maintain it. That's just not cost-effective given the choices available for a fully cloud based VOIP system. The actual migration to the new phone system will take place in early 2024 and will be a system that will follow us to the new build.
- The big project in 2023 was the migration of the data from the physical server in the church office to the Microsoft 365 cloud. This included migrating each user's data to their respective OneDrive cloud accounts and training them on the changes on how to access their AUC data. The migration took several days to complete.
- Various AUC staff were successfully supported through a number of IT support issues. This included the ability to remotely access their AUC computers.
- With the departure of Carmen, Trevor was onboarded to the Bookkeeper role. Training was provided on Microsoft 365, Barracuda, and security.
- The HDMI cable for Camera 1, used in live streaming, had to be replaced after troubleshooting identified it as the issue behind Camera 1 and the Yololiv not communicating.
- The new Epson printer / copier was installed onto the AUC private network so staff could access it. This replaced the Xerox we used to have.
- Margaret's laptop was replaced.
- Two factor authentication was activated on all AUC emails addresses.
- Onboarded Bill Newman with using the Givings computer and the software needed for that role following Ed Griffith's departure.
- Onboarded Laurie Torno with using Microsoft 365 as she replaced Peter Drost as the M&P Chair.

Bob provided his professional IT services for this extensive list, free of charge to AUC. Many, many thanks Bob for your valuable time and effort for AUC!

The following is a review of AUC Property items, related to the fire, presently in a storage facility on Industry St. in Aurora. Replacement costs and the location of same before the fire are indicated for easier recognition. All are found, as well as all contents totally destroyed, to the best of our knowledge, in the Missing Contents Report from the Ejuster dated December 8th, 2014. The total value of this report is \$1.5 million.

Line 258 Boardroom table \$18,000 (boardroom)  
 Line 1685 Red velvet chairs 2 \$2180 (offices)  
 Line 1271 Plant stand marble/granite top \$225 (narthex)  
 Line 1278 Baptismal Font \$500 (narthex)  
 \*Line 1686 Rocking chair \$480  
 Line 1690 "Sign In" stand with light \$660 (narthex)

Line 1684 Tub chair red velvet \$1325 (office)  
Line. 1692 Table - heavy oak \$1500 (narthex)  
\*Line 384 Rack for shawls \$78 (narthex)  
Line 383 Tall corner display cabinets (Yonge St. entrances) 2 \$3200 total  
\*Line 1689 Table (maybe narthex stairwell) \$229

All of the above items need to be refinished/repaired except those marked with \* if needed for continued use.

Additional info:

Lectern stand for Bible in hall 2nd floor \$200 in Nolan home.

Six pews/five single exterior doors at Elliot home.

Approximately 800 AUC postfire bricks on three skids stored inside Priestly Demolition Co. building.

All of the above items are the responsibility of AUC Board of Trustees and AUC Property Committee.

As well : Line 1326 St. Paul's framed stained glass with LED display lights \$3,000 partially repaired.

Five stained glass windows from AUC Narthex presently being repaired in Barrie, ON.

Respectfully submitted,  
Crawford Heritage (Property Committee Chair)

## MINISTRY OF PROCLAMATION

### *Worship Committee*

Aurora United Church continued to worship as a hybrid congregation throughout 2023, with services held weekly both in person AND recorded and live streamed for viewing by our members at home.

I would like to express heartfelt thanks to the AV folks for making this possible - - Noah Comar, Bob Kyriakides, Brian Elliott, Vic Metcalfe, Grant Hilliard, and Bill Newman. Without you, our committee would not be able to offer an enriched worship experience year after year.

Also working hard behind the scenes - and in front of the camera - are our Music Director Margaret Heeney, our Handbell Director Lisa Kyriakides, and our Church Secretary Suzanne Whitehurst.

And, of course, where would we be without the wonderful leadership of Reverends Lorraine and Andy!

As has been our long-standing practice, the members of the Worship Committee met on the last Monday of every month; working to ensure that the congregation is provided with worship that is inspiring, uplifting, and inclusive. Those members were:

- representing **Worship** - - Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar, Holly Williamson and Nancy Kerswill; and
- representing **Decorating** - - Debra Hilliard and Lori North

Throughout Lent 2023, the congregation was invited to walk the Lenten pathway observing the theme: 'Like a Rock- Becoming Living Stones' a reflection of the scripture from First Peter... 'come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house.' To that end, stones of various sizes and textures were available at the welcome table, with the invitation to carry a stone for the season of Lent, or placing it somewhere where you can see or feel it ... and using it as a prayer or meditational focus - a reminder of our foundations. On Good Friday, we will return our stones as part of the liturgy of the Passion, creating a cairn as offering.

For Advent in 2023, our theme was 'A Thrill of Hope - The Weary World Rejoices' taken from the beloved carol, 'O Holy Night'. Jesus was born into a weary world. King Herod ruled the land with a legacy of ruthlessness. The Romans treated the people of Israel with contempt, imposing harsh taxes and land seizures that forced many into subsistence farming. Poverty and destitution were pervasive. And yet, Christ was born, bringing good news of great joy for all people. As Advent came again to a weary world, we asked 'how does a weary world rejoice?' From the opening chapters of Luke's gospel, we can find a few answers: we acknowledge our weariness, we find joy in connection, we allow ourselves to be amazed, we sing stories of hope, we make room, we root ourselves in ritual, and most importantly, we trust our belovedness.

And - *with great joy* - we were able to be in the sanctuary for Christmas Eve services for the first time since the fire! These services, as you can image, were very well attended.

As we embark on a new year, I leave you with the prayer we say together at the close of our meetings ...

*May we feel God's love like a gentle breeze when we need inspiration ... may our faith remain strong through all of life's challenges ... and may hope be the light that guides our way.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Kerswill  
Advocate Elder for Proclamation

### ***Chancel Choir***

2023 was a great year for the AUC choir. It was our first full year of singing since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. The choir grew in both size and confidence and continued to sing a variety of new and favourite anthems weekly during worship services. We were a test congregation for the upcoming United Church Then Let Us Sing compilation and spent much of the Fall season featuring these pieces as Introits.

Our Good Friday service was in the Trinity Anglican Historic Chapel for the first time. The choir performed selections from John Rutter's Requiem and featured solos by oboist Christina Sewerin and Soprano/flautist Mackenzie Malarczyk. Easter Sunday brought the return of an AUC tradition - Handel's Hallelujah Chorus with the combined voices of the AUC choir and members of the congregation.

Collaborations with violinist Wesley Bells, the EmBellished Handbell Ensemble, and Peter Zsebik, electronic wind instrument added joy and delight to our anthems throughout the year.

The choir was fortunate to receive donations of music from the Ballantrae Choir (Lisa Kyriakides, conductor), and the recently decommissioned Holy Trinity United in Elliot Lake, Ontario. We also received 23 copies of the More Voices hymnal from Keswick United Church, which also closed in 2023. Thank you to Anne Ella-Arnold and Craig Arnold for arranging this. The choir has begun to joyfully bring this music to a new home!

One of our biggest musical highlights of the year is our annual Carols by Candlelight. This year we returned to two concerts followed by receptions in the Historic Chapel ably coordinated by Sally Carter. The Chancel Choir collaborated on anthems with special guests The Aldbury Gardens Brass Quintet and violinist Wesley Bells. AUC's three handbell ensembles directed by Lisa Kyriakides performed a selection each. Solos performed by Wesley Bells and trumpeter Tim Hendrickson were much appreciated. The Albury Brass Quintet returned after a four-year absence and added depth to congregational hymns and their own musical selections. All participants combined for the finale under the direction of Lisa Kyriakides. Thank you for making Carols by Candlelight a wonderful success – we look forward to 2024!

AUC is fortunate to have a wonderful handbell program led by the talented Lisa Kyriakides. Faith-a-Peal, Bellissimo, and the EmBellished Handbell Quartet play regularly throughout the year and add such beauty to our services while adding visual excitement of many different handbell techniques. Thank you to the members of the handbell ensembles for your gifts of time and talent!

We continue to have many singers and instrumentalists complement our services with their many gifts and dedication to music at AUC. Singers who performed solos, duets, trios, and quartets in 2023 included Bob McRoberts (with trumpeter Tim Birtch on the Trumpet Shall Sound), George Collins, David Pilkey, Steve Falk, Janice Nolan, Mackenzie Malarczyk, Lisa Kyriakides, Margaret Heney, Tracey Keffer-Lyon, Tim, and Leta Dayfoot, and Lorraine Newton-Comar. Instrumentalists included trumpeters Susan Guido, Tim Birtch, Tim Hendrickson and Jules Pastoor, violinists Wesley Bells and Mehraeen Safari, alto saxophonist Peter Zsebik, oboist Christina Sewerin, flautist Mackenzie Malarczyk, guitarist John Malarczyk, bagpiper Colin Johnstone, trombonist Myles Heney, and the pianistic stylings of David Pilkey and Brian Pastoor.

Thank you to Lisa Kyriakides and Rebecca Loo who led and accompanied wonderful music during my vacation, to John Clements for leading the music at the last minute due to my illness, and to the ongoing support from AUC staff Reverends Lorraine and Andy, Lisa, Suzanne and Trevor and the wonderful AUC choir family. A huge thank you to all who contribute to our music program at Aurora United Church – it is a joy to work with and support you all!

Respectfully submitted,  
Margaret Heney, AUC Music Coordinator

### ***Handbells***

2023 was another wonderful year for the ringers at Aurora United Church. Along with 18 other ringers, Joanne Banfill and Mackenzie Malarczyk returned to ringing and Elizabeth Kyriakides joined us in September. This has allowed us to perform using our full compliment of handbells

and handchimes. Both of our larger ensembles, Faith-A-Peal and Bellissimo spent weekly Wednesday nights preparing to present their musical talents at AUC Sunday services.

In the spring, 12 AUC ringers attended the biennial OGEHR (Ontario Guild of English Handbell Ringers) Festival in Kingston, Ontario with our own Lisa Kyriakides on the podium. Not long after, Joyce Hagarty, Pat Innes, Lisa Kyriakides, and Jennifer Schafer embarked on an 11-day ringing tour of Ireland with 50 other ringers from Canada and the USA.

The fall was busy with performances in church and preparing for the two Carols by Candlelight services. EmBellished, our handbell quartet, performed Christmas concerts at Eastern Gate Village in Stouffville and The Elden Retirement Home in Bradford.

We are grateful for the constant support of congregation and staff at AUC, and we look forward to many more seasons of ringing and friendship!

Musically Yours,  
Lisa Kyriakides, Handbell Director

## **MINISTRY OF SERVING**

### ***Pastoral Care Committee***

#### **Members:**

Paula Hanna, Chair  
Jackie Catto, Past chair  
Marilyn Patterson, Special Events Cards  
Mary Smith, Bereavement Cards  
Bruce Corbett, Transportation Coordinator (until April)  
Peter Drost, Ministry Advocate- Serving ministry.  
Rev. Andrew Comar  
Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar

**Lay Visitors:** Kathie Blackman, Jackie Catto, Paula Hanna, Marilyn Patterson, Nels Patterson, and Mary Smith.

**Committee Purpose:** To provide supportive and caring ministry to specified individuals and families of AUC.

#### **Summary 2023:**

The Pastoral Care Team visited/called about thirty-eight members of our AUC family on a regular basis. Many others were contacted when special needs arose.

Forty-one Easter cards were sent, and a small, stand-up card was available for the Congregation at church, and for visitors to drop off during visits.

The Team helped with Easter Communion services at Hollandview, Park Place, Sunrise, and Chartwell Aurora retirement residences.

At Thanksgiving, small, stand-up cards were again available.

Sixty-five poinsettias and Christmas cards were delivered to retirement homes, long-term care residences, private residences, and bereaved members of the Congregation. Ornaments were added to the cards for people in residences. An additional nine cards were sent to people too far away, or unable to receive a poinsettia delivery. We thank Karin Allan and Colleen Abbott for their help writing cards and Jennifer Kenwell for her help delivering poinsettias. We are grateful to the fifty-four members of the Congregation who donated a plant in honour or memory of a loved one.

The Pastoral Care Team also helped Rev. Andy with Christmas Communion services at the same four residences. The Sunrise service had to be delayed until January due to outbreak in December.

Seventy-seven cards were sent out for congratulations, celebration, get-well, thinking of you and bereavement events.

We are a small, but active group. We appreciate help from the Congregation to keep us informed of events and needs within our AUC community.

*Respectfully submitted:*  
*Paula Hanna,*  
*Chair Pastoral Care Committee*

## **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

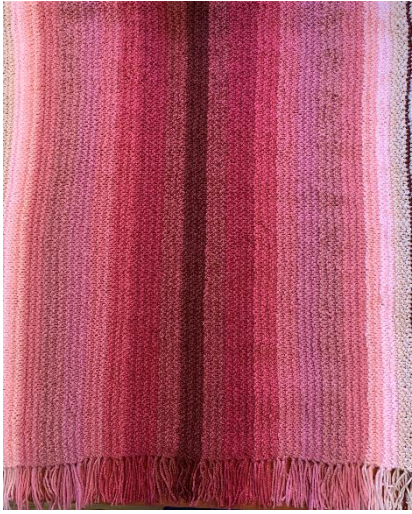


### **PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY—2006 to present**

**Ministry Coordinators:** Anne Ella-Arnold and Elizabeth Ramsell

This vital ministry, a subgroup of the Serving Ministry, has continued to thrive in 2023—the eighteenth year of our ministry.

The following are some points of note about our ministry in 2023.



This example of Three-Fold Blessing Pattern creatively demonstrates how small quantities of different yarns can be composed to produce a beautiful shawl.

- Number of shawls on hand on January 1, 2023, = 34
- Number of shawls on hand on December 31, 2023 = 46
- Number of shawls crafted and donated for distribution from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 = 98
- Number of shawls distributed from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 = 86
- Twelve of these shawls were donated to Southlake Regional Health Centre.
- Number of chemo caps crafted and donated to Southlake Regional Health Centre from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 = 2
- Number of toques for infants crafted and donated to Southlake Regional Health Centre from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 = 28

- Kits were moved back into the storage space at T.A.C. after being housed off-site since the beginning of COVID. Crafters were able to make their selections at the new location.
- We were able to resume distribution of shawls as we did pre-COVID. Distribution took place on most Sundays following worship. If shawls were needed during the week, requests were made at the church's office.



Gull Lace Stitch



- Our ongoing work continued to be very dependent on the support of A.U.C. and contributions from individuals. A generous budget was provided by A.U.C. So, we were able to make a sizeable yarn purchase from the Spinrite Factory in Listowel. And a limited number of donations of yarn, needles, bags, tissue, and funds were received from the congregation and others.



Ridged Chevron Pattern in two colours.



Woven Garter Stitch and Ribbed Basket  
Stitch

- **Crafters' Circle** continued to meet on the first Thursday afternoon of each month in the Historic Chapel at T.A.C.
- There were nine participants in the group during the year.
- Crafters' Circle gathered twelve times with the average number of attendees at each meeting being four to five.
- The two confirmands were presented with 2 shawls at the confirmation service in October.
- Our webpage was updated regularly.

Report submitted by Anne Ella-Arnold, Prayer Shawl Ministry Coordinator.

### ***Outreach Committee***

In 2023, Outreach supported four programs. Each of the programs continued to shift again as the church began to open to in-person events. I want to offer my gratitude to the coordinators and volunteers for three of these programs for their faithfulness, commitment, and care as they continued to maintain and provide these needed services to our community.

*Rise and Shine Breakfast Program:* Thank you Suzanne Whitehurst for your unwavering dedication to the Rise and Shine Breakfast program as our coordinator for this ministry which now completes its 14<sup>th</sup> year of service. Please see Suzanne's Rise & Shine Breakfast report below.



AUC is one of seven churches in Aurora that partners together as *Welcoming Arms*. Thank you to our Welcoming Arms volunteers, Heather Boorn, Linda Longhurst, Nellie Lopez, Kevah Safari, and Denyse Slack. Rev. Andy and Denyse Slack are members of the Welcoming Arms Executive Council. Throughout 2023 the three main programs provided by Welcoming Arms – Welcome Table (WT) on Wednesday evening, Martha’s Table (MT) on Thursday lunch and Bridging the Gap continued to serve the community. WT returned to Binions Hall at Trinity Anglican for their in-person meals in May with approximately 50-60 people attending. Each of the ministers of the seven churches is part of the WT schedule, providing the grace before meal and support to guests. Martha’s Table continued to serve in-person meals in 2023 at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church with about 30-40 people attending.

*The Aurora Community Café (ACC)* continued their program in 2023. The ACC meets every Wednesday from 10 am to 2 pm at St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. in the fall of 2022. The café is a social enterprise partnership, involving local churches and volunteers from non-profit coffee catering and community members. Our purpose is to offer work skill opportunity for adults with differing abilities. This community-based program offers a place for many to gather. We have several school and community groups that attend the café on a regular basis. We are still in need of volunteers for this program. Please speak to Rev. Andy if you are interested in serving at the café. We are glad that we are once again providing a welcoming place for all.

Thank you for your continued support, encouragement, and prayers for these ministries. Please check out the AUC website for details about all our outreach programs.

This year the Outreach Committee decided that the *Call to Awareness* for Advent 2023 would support the United Church of Canada’s, Gifts With Vision program – The Basics of Kindness, an outreach ministry program serving young mothers ages 13 to 24, with very low or no income, from the Abiona Centre (formerly Massey Centre and Humewood House) in Toronto. Together we raised \$1,335!

Throughout 2023 the Outreach Committee met on Zoom.

*Submitted by:*  
*Rev. Andy Comar*

### ***Rise & Shine Community Breakfast***

Our Rise & Shine Community Breakfast has continued faithfully throughout 2023, taking a break in July and August, mostly for lack of volunteers. The program was a “take-away” meal, handed out in the Trinity parking lot until October when it was moved back indoors. Throughout the take-away period the breakfast items were prepared by York Region Food Network, and included a protein breakfast, a vegetarian breakfast, and an addition protein element in the protein breakfast to replace the soup, for those that could not have the soup. There were on average 45 meals handed out including the 16 meals delivered again this year by a ROUTES volunteer. We benefitted greatly from our partnership with Kate Greavette and the York Region Food Network, and the arrangement with ROUTES.

When we moved back indoors to a sit in breakfast the teams cooked hot food, varying per team. The breakfasts always included a protein portion, potatoes, oatmeal, some bread items, juice, and coffee. On average there are 18 sit-in guests, and 16 deliveries to those that cannot make it in. ROUTES continues to make these deliveries to about 8 households.

The last breakfast before Christmas, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, Aurora United Church received two very large turkeys from Wimpy's Aurora, Pan the owner. We served the guest turkey, in a turkey succotash, and offered sliced turkey to take with them. The guest also received a gift package from the University Women's Association of York Region. The gifts were packed in little make-up bags and purses.

Thank you to our team leaders (Carmen Harany, Carol Lever, Rosanne Rose, Suzanne Whitehurst), and all the volunteers who make this outreach ministry a success.

*Respectfully submitted:  
Suzanne Whitehurst  
Rise & Shine Coordinator*

## ***MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL COMMITTEE***

### **Members:**

- Laurie Torno (Chair)
- Heather Collins (retired June 2023)
- Hank Gosar
- Warren McClure
- Carolyn Rusin (retired April 2023)
- Peter Drost (resigned November 2023)

The United Church of Canada mandates that every congregation will have a Ministry and Personnel Committee. This committee oversees relationships within the pastoral charge ministry, particularly the roles and functions of paid leaders and employees. Members of the committee are elected by the congregation at the annual meeting and are accountable to the congregation through the Church Council.

2023 remained a challenging year for our church, staff, and members of the M&P Committee. The committee held Zoom meetings in January, February, March, April, and June; and an in-person meeting in December. In-person and Zoom meetings will be held in 2024.

Laurie Torno was appointed as Chair of the Committee and replaced Peter Drost who was Interim Chair.

With the retirement of Carolyn, Heather, and Peter in 2023, the committee only has 3 members and there is an urgent need for new members.

Suzanne Whitehurst continues as part-time Office Secretary. She is a welcome and vital member of the Church team. Her position will be temporary until a new staffing model can be implemented in terms of the new church building.

Church services have returned to normal under the spiritual leadership of Lorraine and Andy. Their workloads include a variety of other tasks such as weddings, funerals, counseling, church Sunday school and committee meetings. Their work accomplishments are recognized and appreciated.

Margaret and Lisa continue to be invaluable members of the Church team. Their musical talents are highly regarded and bring much joy to the congregation throughout the year.

Trevor Gibbs who was appointed part-time Bookkeeper in April 2023 has submitted his resignation effective March 31, 2024. We are grateful for his service to the church over the past year. A search for his replacement is underway.

To contact the M&P Committee in order to ask a question, share a comment or express a concern or thanks about your experience with staff at Aurora United Church, you can do so at our confidential email address ([mp@auroraunitedchurch.ca](mailto:mp@auroraunitedchurch.ca)) or by writing to any member of our committee. For us to respond to your query, please include your name and contact information.

*Respectfully submitted*  
*Laurie Torno, Chair*  
 Ministry and Personnel Committee

## **UNITED CHURCH WOMEN (UCW)**



### **2023 Aurora United Church Women Annual Report**

#### **U.C.W. Purpose**

To unite women of the Community of Faith  
 for the total mission of the church

and to provide a means through which we may express our loyalty and devotion  
 to Jesus Christ

in Christian witness, study, fellowship, and service

### **2023 EXECUTIVE**

<p><b>President:</b> Rotational Leadership          Quarter 1: Paula Hanna          Quarters 2 &amp; 3: Jean Heys          Quarter 4: Helen Roberts  <b>Past President:</b> Anne Ella-Arnold  <b>Secretary:</b> Jean Heys  <b>Treasurer:</b> Leslie Stoangi</p>	<p><b>A.U.C. Council Representative:</b> Paula Hanna  <b>Grace Unit Representative:</b>          Helen Roberts  <b>The Seekers' Unit Representative:</b>          Doreen Hiltz  <b>Shining Waters Region U.C.W. Contact Person:</b>          Anne Ella-Arnold</p>
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<b>Assistant Treasurer:</b> Anne Ella-Arnold	
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Special thanks to Nancy Newman who keeps our [AUCW web page](#) updated.



## **2023 UNIT ORGANIZATION AND MEETINGS:**

**The Seekers' Unit:** 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm, first Monday, September to June (alternate date when there is a conflict with a statutory holiday)

- Leader: **Mary Smith**
- Treasurer: **Carolyn Stafford**
- Executive Representative: **Doreen Hiltz**
- 14 members

**Grace Unit:** 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm, fourth Monday each month except July, August, and December

- Leader: **Helen Roberts**
- Treasurer: **Nancy Newman**
- Secretary: **Jean Heys**
- Friendship: **Sharon Corbett**
- Executive Representative and Communications: **Helen Roberts**
- 24 members, including 4 new members between July and November
- January: virtual evening meeting:
- February: in-person afternoon meeting
- July and August evenings: Summer social get-togethers on Rectory Lawn

## **December Potluck:**



Photo: Paula Hanna

The Seekers and Grace Units, accompanied by numerous guests from our A.U.C. family, gathered in Binion's Hall for a memorable Potluck Dinner in December, orchestrated by **Susan Eaton, Linda Hodgins, Nancy Newman, and Mary Smith**. The evening was filled with joyous carols, engaging conversations, and delectable dishes, complemented by an inspiring address from our speaker, Rev. Evelyn McLaughlan. She vividly portrayed the wife of the innkeeper, who extended hospitality to the Holy Family, offering shelter in his stable.

### Unit meetings:

All women of the United Church of Canada are warmly invited to participate in any of our gatherings. Our meetings feature engaging worship, diverse programs, guest speakers, enriching outings, and vibrant fellowship, all cherished by our dedicated members. We thank all who contribute innovative program ideas, lead meetings, and offer inspiring openings, alongside profound and reflective worship each month. In June and December, we joyfully welcomed friends from the former Bradford UCW who joined us in our celebrations.

### 2023 Programmes:

- Old Kitchen Utensils Show and Tell.
- Are You Ready? What Would You Bring? We imagined ourselves as refugees, political or climate, having to leave home within minutes or hours, choosing what we would consider essential to bring in a small backpack.
- \*Pizza Dinner
- Travelogue with **Mary Cragg**
- Canadian Landmarks with **Laurie Graham**
- I was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me: a Malcolm Blackwell podcast about his family who sponsored Vietnamese refugees in 1979.
- **Doreen Hiltz** reviewed the book, "Peace by Chocolate, The Hadhad Family's Remarkable Journey from Syria to Canada" by Jon Tattrie.
- \*June Potluck Dinner and Loonie Auction.
- Sailing through the Northwest Passage with guest, **Irene Clement**.
- An evening historic walk in old Aurora, with a stop at the AUC building site.
- The Legacy of Nellie McClung with guest, **Rev. Carol Hancock**.
- Guest speaker **Ambika Opal** delivered a captivating presentation shedding light on the challenges faced by Inuit communities in Canada's far north in providing sustenance for themselves.
- Heart Health and Enhancing Your Lifestyle, with guest speaker, kinesiologist, **David Kiernan**

\*The \$50 surplus from the pizza dinner, combined with the \$270 raised at the Loonie Auction were donated to [The Healing Fund](#). This initiative, selected by the National U.C.W. as its 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Project, aims to enhance the well-being of Indigenous women and children across Canada.



Photo: Mary Smith



Camping items collected in May/June were delivered to the Shining Waters Camping Rep.

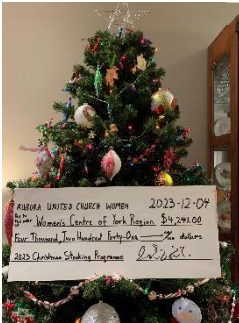


Photos: Leslie Stoangi



## Christmas Stocking Programme

Convenors: Anne Ella-Arnold, Karen Allen



Gratitude abounds for the incredible generosity shown by Aurora United Church members and friends, who rallied together to raise an astounding \$4241.00 for the women and children served by The Women's Centre of York Region. This donation, coupled with 90 hand-sewn Christmas stockings from our stock, empowered moms to personally select and purchase items for their children's Christmas stockings. Over the past four years, our congregation has raised a total of \$17,826 for this meaningful program. Heartfelt thanks to all who contributed.

Photo: Anne Ella-Arnold

## Book Sale:

Fundraising, both locally and internationally, has long been a cornerstone of U.C.W.'s mission. While the pandemic temporarily shifted our focus, on May 13, 2023, we revitalized our efforts with a book 'sale' in the Trinity narthex, operating on a donation basis. The event was a rousing success, raising \$1436.70, thanks to the dedicated efforts of **Sharon Corbett**, and **Susan Tutt**. Thanks to all who distributed flyers, donated books, stored inventory since our last sale in 2019, moved heavy cartons and, most importantly, generously supported our cause by purchasing from our impressive selection of titles.





photos: Jean Heys

In 2023, the remarkable generosity of our community enabled A.U.C.W. to make substantial contributions to 12 local charitable organizations, alongside donations to essential causes such as The Mission and Service Fund, The Healing Fund, and The Fellowship of the Least Coin. Additionally, we proudly allocated \$2000.00 to our own A.U.C. General Operating Fund, ensuring the ongoing support of our church’s vital activities.

### Recipients of Our Donations in 2023

Details may be found in the **UCW Financial Statement** elsewhere in this annual report.

#### 2023 A.U.C.W. Charitable Donations

Aurora United Church	M and S Fund: Healing Fund
Aurora Food Pantry	M and S Fund: United Church of Canada
Blue Door Shelters	Margaret Bahen Hospice
Camping Opportunities Fund	Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers
Hope House Community Hospice	Sandgate Women's Shelter
Inn from the Cold	Women’s Centre of York Region
L'Arche Daybreak	Women’s Interchurch Council: Fellowship of the Least Coin
LOFT Community Services	Yellow Brick House

### A.U.C.W. Reconstruction Fund:

The growth of this fund, fueled by both donations and investment interest, remains steady. As of December 2023, the balance stands at \$20,617.60. With the construction of the church building on the horizon, the time to unlock and utilize these funds draws near. The U.C.W. membership will deliberate on this matter, and we will ensure the congregation is kept well informed as we move forward.

We deeply value the contributions of every U.C.W. member to our meetings, projects, and programming. Their generosity, creativity and prayers enrich our endeavors. We are equally grateful for the steadfast support of A.U.C. ministers, office staff and congregation members, who actively engage in our fundraising and outreach initiatives. Thank you all for your unwavering dedication and partnership.

## Shining Waters Region United Church Women



- **Anne Ella-Arnold** serves as Treasurer on the S.W.R.U.C.W. Executive.
- **The 2022 Annual General Meeting**, “Moving Forward, Staying Strong”, May 2, 2023, at Burton St. United Church in Barrie, with guest speaker, Rev. Kirsty Hunter. The offering was evenly divided between The Healing Fund and the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Project.
- **Togetherness Day 2023**: October 5, in Barrie. The theme of the meeting was “Continuing in Faithful Service”, with speaker, Rev. Evelyn McLaughlan. 50 attendees, including 4 from A.U.C.W., also enjoyed entertainment by Sandycove Men’s Glee Club.

**Report presented by the 2023 A.U.C.W. Executive Members:**



**Anne Ella-Arnold, Paula Hanna, Jean Heys, Doreen Hiltz, Helen Roberts, Leslie Stoangi**

***United Church Women-Financial Reports.***

**AURORA UNITED CHURCH WOMEN  
2023 INCOME STATEMENT**

**BALANCE: JANUARY 01, 2023**

CHEQUABLE SAVINGS ACCOUNT	1,607.47	
*G.I.C. #45	9,382.74	
*G.I.C. #60	2,701.66	
*G.I.C. #61	3,469.01	
*G.I.C. #62	3,784.23	
<b>BALANCE</b>		<b>20,945.11</b>

**REVENUES: JANUARY 1, 2023 - DECEMBER 31, 2023**

OFFERINGS--IDENTIFIABLE GIVINGS	3,913.00	
OFFERINGS--FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN	26.66	
OFFERINGS--UNIDENTIFIABLE GIVINGS	32.00	
*A.U.C. RECONSTRUCTION FUND	100.00	
BOOK SALE	1,436.70	
WOMEN'S CENTRE OF YORK REGION - CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS	4,241.00	
FUNDRAISING	320.00	
INVESTMENT ACCOUNT INTEREST	617.93	
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>10,687.29</b>
<b>TOTAL BALANCE FORWARD</b>		<b>31,632.40</b>

**EXPENDITURES: JANUARY 1, 2023 - DECEMBER 31, 2023**

A.U.C. GENERAL OPERATING FUND	2,000.00
ADMINISTRATION	62.37
CHARITABLE DONATIONS	6,587.66



NATIONAL U.C.W. ASSESSMENT	31.00	
PROGRAMME	450.00	
REGIONAL U.C.W. ASSESSMENT	77.50	
SOCIAL	30.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>9,238.53</b>
<b>BALANCE: DECEMBER 31, 2023</b>		
CHEQUABLE SAVINGS ACCOUNT	1,876.27	
*G.I.C. #63	2,815.32	
*G.I.C. #64	9,636.07	
*G.I.C. #66	8,066.21	
<b>BALANCE</b>		<b>22,393.87</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES AND BANK BALANCE</b>		<b>31,632.40</b>

\*These funds are being withheld for an A.U.C. reconstruction project. \$20,617.60  
Prepared by Leslie Stoangi

**2023 CHARITABLE DONATIONS**

AURORA FOOD PANTRY	100.00
BLUE DOOR SHELTERS	100.00
HOPE HOUSE COMMUNITY HOSPICE	100.00
INN FROM THE COLD	100.00
L'ARCHE DAYBREAK	100.00
LOFT COMMUNITY SERVICES	100.00
MARGARET BAHEN HOSPICE	100.00
ROSE OF SHARON SERVICES FOR YOUNG MOTHERS	100.00
SANDGATE WOMEN'S SHELTER	100.00
TORONTO UNITED CHURCH COUNCIL- CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES FUND	100.00
UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA - THE HEALING FUND	320.00
UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MISSION AND SERVICE FUND	900.00
WOMEN'S CENTRE OF YORK REGION - CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS	4,241.00
WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL - FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN	26.66
YELLOW BRICK HOUSE	100.00
<b>TOTAL CHARITABLE DONATIONS</b>	<b>6,587.66</b>

## ***BOARD OF TRUSTEES***

The Trustees holds all property and investments in trust on behalf of the congregation and the United Church of Canada. Our assets include the church land, all items in storage retrieved after the fire including the five stained glass windows, insurance payments received for the building and contents, the Endowment Fund and Flower Fund. The AUC congregation elects members of the Board of Trustees. The 2023 Board of Trustees members included: Blair Boyd, Karen Boyd, Reverend Andrew Comar (chair), Bill Dies, Pat Innes (secretary), Denyse Slack (treasurer), Dave Snelgrove and Jamie Thompson.

### **Endowment Fund:**

Endowment Fund interest (less inflation) is returned to AUC for use in the General Fund. Interest earned in any year is forwarded to the church treasurer early in January of the following year. The Flower Fund generates interest income for the purchase of flowers for worship and special events. We know that this fund will have to be used for the rebuild. It is only the congregation that can decide on the use of the monies invested in the Endowment Fund. This motion will be presented to the AGM on March 17, 2024.

### **Insurance Funds:**

After the fire, the Board of Trustees received insurance payments of \$8,575,000. These funds have been invested for the preparation (including reports, architectural fees, consulting fees, legal fees etc.) and rebuilding of the new church. In 2023, \$250,000 from the interest on insurance investments was transferred to the General Fund to help offset losses due to the shortfall of income from not having a church building.

### **Legal:**

Following the fire, The Trustees engaged Thomas Gold Pettingill LLP (TGP) to work on our behalf in our litigation with those responsible for the fire. The mediation process happened on April 2, 2019. The final settlement of \$7,000,000.00 was reached at the end of 2019. These funds were transferred into an interest-bearing account with TGP in January 2020. They were held by TGP until the fall of 2023 when an out of court settlement was arrived at with Aviva. In September, the Board of Trustees on direction of Council, settled with Aviva. Aviva received a payment of \$1,800,000.00. AUC received the balance of \$5,506,598.91.

### **In 2023 the Board of Trustees...**

- a. signed lease with Trinity Anglican Church which extends from November 1, 2023, to October 31, 2024.
- b. signed a CCDC 5B contract with Dalton Company Limited on November 13, 2023. (*A CCDC-5B – Construction Management Contract – for Services and Construction is a standard contract used in Canada for the provision of construction management services by a construction manager to an owner.*)

We were all deeply saddened by the loss of our dear friend, and board member, Bill Dies. Bill's knowledge, wisdom and support of AUC and the rebuilding process in this last decade was unwavering. We will miss him around the Trustees circle.

Thank you to the members of the Board of Trustees for their support and dedication for everything that we had to do in 2023. We serve the congregation through the Church Council and in response to what is needed for our rebuilding project. It continued to be a challenging year, but with the assistance of the EDGE Property Committee and the Church Council we continue to move forward in realizing our new church building. We look forward to seeing our new building emerge in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Andrew Comar

## Aurora United Church Trustees Accounts 2023

Account	Dec 31/22	Additions	General Fund Withdrawals	Withdrawals	Investment Income	December 29/23
Endowment	\$930,863.01			\$1,100.99	\$53,920.21	\$983,682.23
In Trust -Earmarked Donations	\$27,540.99				\$1,597.20	\$29,138.19
Future Fund/Insurance	\$36,747.84	\$5,200.00			\$2,432.70	\$44,380.54
Proceeds for Rebuilding	\$8,484,490.20	\$5,586,973.82	\$250,000.00	\$2,075,510.51	\$418,354.49	\$12,164,308.00
Flower Fund	\$3,649.39			\$216.29	\$199.98	\$3,633.08
Change in Market Value	-\$276,158.30				\$175,825.28	-\$100,333.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,207,133.13</b>	<b>\$5,592,173.82</b>	<b>\$250,000.00</b>	<b>\$2,076,827.79</b>	<b>\$652,329.86</b>	<b>\$13,124,809.12</b>

### Account Balances

<b>BMO Chequing Account</b>	\$477,917.07	Endowment Fund Required Return	\$33,445.20	December annual inflation
<b>Trustees Endowment Fund</b>	\$1,256,940.94	Actual Return	\$53,920.21	is 3.4%
<b>Trustees Building Fund</b>	\$11,389,951.11	Excess of Actual over Required	\$20,475.01	To the General Fund
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13,124,809.12</b>	Cheques to General Fund		
		Endowment Fund	\$20,475.01	
		Flower Fund	\$199.98	

In 2023, the Endowment Fund, consisting of investments including the Future Fund , Earmarked Donations, Flower Fund as well as Endowment Fund account generated a return of 8.02%, a significant increase from 2022's return of -5.19%. Approximately 57% of investments are in mutual funds mostly based in Canada, with 42% in fixed income investments and holding funds with the balance in cash. The endowment fund requires that earnings be retained in the fund to cover the annual rate of inflation with any balance left over to be paid to the General Fund. This year \$20,475 will go to the general fund. The investment approach is unlikely to change this year.

In the building fund, we received a settlement of nearly \$5.6MM from the litigation with Aviva and also achieved a return of 5.3% versus a negative return of 6.55% in 2022. Although we can't say for sure, we anticipate that the Church will be completed by the end of 2025 and therefore our investment approach will remain quite conservative with 50% equity mainly in Canada and 48% fixed income. We are reviewing proposals for construction with the building committee to ensure that we do not exceed our available financial capacity. It is expected that fundraising activities will generate additional resources to fully complete the new church construction over time. We also provided \$250K in revenues for the Church compared to \$175,000 in 2022.

