

C E L E B R A T E **75**
Honouring the past. Building the future.
YEARS

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Presented at Highlands United Church

AGM March 10, 2024

HIGHLANDSUNITED.ORG





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Welcome to Highland's United Church 2023 Message – Rev. Will Sparks



Welcome to this compilation of words and images from a year in the life of Highland's United Church. In this report we try to cover all bases, try not to miss any significant event or activity, but we know a document cannot capture the fullness of our life together. Our life is eclectic, rich, active, and blessed by God. So, this document is a series of snapshots and overviews.

Hopefully, taken together, any reader will sense what God has been up to in our life in 2023.

For me, 2023 was a year of restoration, reconnection, and discovery. It began with almost four months of sabbatical filled with all the "r"s. Rest. Reflection. Reading. Retreat. Reconnection.

2023 was also the first full year free from COVID restrictions after three years of disruption. We embraced the task of building the program life of the church in sometimes familiar and sometimes new ways.

For the staff team, the year was eclectic. Allie was back to her full position for the whole year after a couple of difficult years. Julie stepped ably into core leadership roles during my sabbatical in her first full year at Highlands. Though my sabbatical ended in late April, Colleen began her sabbatical in early May and returned in mid-October during which ministry continued with her amazing team of volunteers. In the fall of 2023 Ken stepped away from his formal role as Licensed Lay Worship Leader while still offering an important presence and active leadership in many aspects of Highland's life. Wendy McNaughton finished her year long contract as our Intercultural Animator. In all the comings and goings our wonderful music team and administration staff have offered exemplary leadership and service to the work God is doing among us. We are so very blessed.

As I see it, with the church fully engaged without restrictions, and a full staff team, we have begun to tackle some goals we have had for years, largely stated in our Five-Year Ministry Plan-goals that we were unable to address due to COVID restrictions and staffing challenges. In 2023, Bridging Gaps emerged re-imagining local mission beyond our walls. The Truth and Reconciliation Circle has taken a new and steady look at the work of reconciliation in our midst, a work that is ongoing and potentially transformative. We completed the Affirm process and voted unanimously to become an Affirming Church. We completed the Feasibility Study and are well on the way through the transition from Flea Market to Thrift Store. We launched a year of celebration for our 75th Anniversary. And as the year came to a close, we began to take a good hard look at how we will financially sustain ministry here long into the future. All this made 2023 full and very satisfying.

I am so grateful for the staff team who are so deeply dedicated to a life of faith and this community of faith. God is richly alive in each one and their loving attention to the wellbeing and vision of Highland's and each person who connects with the church is stellar. Thank you so much for a great year.

Highland's United Church has challenges. Financially we have a generous and responsive community, but we have a structural deficit that needs to be addressed. We have a large physical plant that is a fine community resource and platform for ministry, but also draws heavily on resources. We have active, committed, faithful people but overall, we feel stretched for enough volunteers to do all we long to do.

Life has challenges, but God is faithful. God's love is powerful. God's joy is infectious. God's hope sustains and will sustain through the coming year and beyond.

Rev. Julie Lees Reflection for 2023

I'm not one to look back very often. I like forward momentum.

There is an African proverb that says you can either go faster alone or farther together. I like going faster.

However annual reports force a retrospective mindset. Thinking back over the last year there were ...

Things I got really excited about:

- Dancing to Abba in the sanctuary for Spring Fling
- The bonkers of Christmas eve when about 900 people came through the doors of HUC in one day!
- Confirmation weekend!!
- Visiting folks

Things I felt honoured to be a part of:

- Working with the Affirm team
- Spontaneous drop in visits in my fish bowl
- The Musical Revue

Things that felt unbelievably meaningful:

- Marrying, burying and baptizing members of this and the wider community
- Journeying with Local Connections and Bridging Gaps
- Initiating Soaking prayer during communion
- The fall Info Fair that highlighted the expansive life of this community

In all of these moments there was learning, laughing, crying, appreciating, and the presence of God. Must be church. I guess a part of me likes going farther together.

Gratefully,
Julie Lees.



Highland's United Church—Staff and Lay Leaders

Staff

Lead Minister, Rev. Will Sparks
 Congregational Minister, Julie Lees
 Minister for Seniors and Hospitality, Colleen Blair
 Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Allie Keir
 Administrator, Melissa Wilkin
 Administrative Assistant, Tatina Lee
 Lay Worship Leader, Ken Irwin -Retired August 2023
 Tech Team Coordinator, Elliot Best
 Ed Hunt, Accounting Assistance
 Carol Smith, Facilities Coordinator

Music Ministry

Music Coordinator	Geordie Roberts
Choir Directors	Gillian Irwin, Spirit Singers Geordie Roberts, Genesis II Rosalind Hollett, God's Free Spirits Rosalind Hollett, Hand Bell Choir Heather Soderling, Re:Sound Chamber
Choir Accompanists	Geordie Roberts and Roz Hollett

Board of Trustees

Bill Denault, Chair until December 2023
 Judy Anderson, John Haley until December 2023, Al Lill, Joan Kosick until December 2023
 Peter Ackhurst and Will Sparks

Leadership Board

Ardis Nelson and Sandra Soderling, Co Chairs
 David Boal, Julie Lees, Craig Madill, Wendie Reinhardt
 Carol Nelson, Oleh Ilnyckyj, Jessica Keefe until June 2023.
 Corey Hollett, Wendy McNaughton- until June 2023, Chris Bochon, Lyndsay Irwin, Frances Roberts, and Will Sparks

Standing Committees

Finance	David Boal - to December 2023
Treasurer	Doug McKay, Cameron Forde, Scott Hughes, Will Sparks on rotation, ex-officio
Ministry and Personnel	Craig Madill- Chair, Diana Bomford, Betty Chapin, Ardis Nelson, Kathleen Whyte, Will Sparks, ex-officio
Worship	Gillian Irwin, Chair, Heather Soderling Colleen Blair, Eva Mathieson, Joy Dancey, Ken Irwin, Chris Madill, Geordie Roberts, Janet Warren and Will Sparks

Pacific Mountain Region Representatives

Simone Carrodus, Ardis Nelson, and Kelly Pollock

HUC 75^h Annual Meeting Agenda and Order of Service

March 10, 2024

Quotation: "Holding on is believing that there's only a past; letting go is knowing that there's a future." – Daphne Rose Kingma

Question to Ponder: What do you need to let go of in order to embrace a future of God's making?

Gathering Music Geordie Roberts

Opening Singing

Welcome

Territorial Acknowledgement, Prayer Bowl and Christ Candle –

Orientation to the service (present and online)

Prayer of Unburdening and Words of Assurance

Opening Hymn

Theme Time Allie Keir

Sung Refrain

Remembering 2023 in pictures – slide show

Nomination and Election of Meeting Chair and Secretary

Motion Regarding Temporal Matters:

That in addition to members of Highland's United Church, adherents (defined as someone who regularly attends, participates and contributes to the life and worship of Highland's United Church) and registered zoom participants be given the ability to participate in the meeting and vote on motions put forward. ("Regularly" is defined as at least three interactions per month with HUC, of which at least one is worship).

Motion regarding the agenda:

That the order of worship be the agenda for this, the 75th annual congregational meeting.

Motion regarding voting Methodology:

That Calls for the Vote will be made via the moderator using a show of hands, and a tally of zoom screen votes typed in the chat box and declared by zoom host.

Motion regarding adjournment:

That the congregational meeting be adjourned immediately following the closing hymn, no further motion necessary.

Motion regarding Minutes of Congregational Meeting:

That the minutes of the congregational meetings of April 2nd, 2023 and November 9th, 2023 be approved as presented.

Spirit Singers

In Memoriam

We remember those of our community of faith who died this past year.

New Members and Transfer of Membership

We recognize those who have chosen to live their faith with this community of faith.

Comments and Questions from the Congregation (on the Annual Report)

Motion regarding the Annual Report

That we receive the 2023 annual report except the Financial Reports.

Motion regarding the Annual Report

That we receive the 2023 Financial Reports.

Staff Report Craig Madill

New Business

Thrift Store Development Update

Scripture: John 3: 1-20

Reflectionette Will and Julie

Hymn VU 581 verses 1, 2

2024 Budget Doug MacKay

Comments and Questions from the Congregation (on the Budget)

Presentation, questions, clarifications, motion

Motion: *That the budget for 2024 for Highland's United Church be adopted as presented.*

Nominations

Leadership board, treasurer, trustees, heritage fund committee, ministry and personnel, regional representatives; nominations from the floor

Motion:

Thanksgivings and Appreciations (for people stepping down from roles)

Community Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

Announcements and Participating in the Life and Work of the Community

(include invitation to High Tea)

Hymn

Commissioning and Benediction – Will Sparks and Julie Lees

Blessing Song

Minutes of 74th Annual Meeting

Highland's United Church 74th Annual Meeting April 2, 2023

Minutes

Opening – Call to Order

Called to order at 11:35am- quorum has been attained.

Opening Prayer: *Led by Julie Lees Review of Zoom features and test vote We Remember/Memorials*

Alan Gadsby, Antonio Ciccone, Blair Edward Mercer, Eleanor O'Neil, Sandra Robertson, Florence Jean Wallace, Leota Jean Drake, Eric Cella, Peter Schaerer, Alan Hounslow, Betty Elizabeth Hudson, Margaret Ferguson, Kerry Karram, Denise Louise Robb, Wendy Grant, Irene Joyce Graham,

We Welcome/Baptisms, Weddings, and New Members

Hayden Laura Brown, Norah Lily Brown Liam Niall/Kyleigh Lynn Youngman, Procedural Motions

Approval of Agenda

Motion: *That the Agenda for the Highland's 74th Annual Meeting be approved Voting by adherents*

Moved by Judy Teows, seconded by Michelle. Passed.

Motion: *That all persons deemed to be present at this meeting (via conference call or zoom) be given the right to vote on all matters arising at this meeting.*

Moved by Simone Carrodus, Seconded by Heather Soderling. Passed. Confirmation of Voting Methodology

Motion: That calls for voting will be made via the moderator using a show of hands and options available, including Zoom video screen recognition and audio/conference call technology.

Moved by Susan Hogman, Seconded by Carol Nelson. Passed.

Approval of the Minutes of the 73rd AGM (April 3, 2022) and Congregational Meeting (July 3, 2022)

Motion: That the minutes for Highland's 73rd Annual General Meeting and Congregational Meeting of July 3rd, 2022, be approved.

July 3- mentions that search committee was introduced. 3 names involved should be added for their contributions. Nicole Byrom, Anna McGregor, Judith Walker.

Weddings on page 8 of the AGM – add Bernadette Woit's husband's name (Rod Maides)

On page 9; should be Jean Butterworth.

July 3rd notes: Kathleen Whyte's name is misspelled.

Janet Warren's name is missing from the Worship Committee list.

Motion: *That the Minutes for Highlands' 73rd Annual General Meeting and Congregational Meeting of July 3rd, 2022, as amended be approved. Moved by Chris Robertson, seconded Stephen Beaton. Passed.*

Annual Reports

Motion: *That the 2022 Annual Report be approved. Betty Chapin, Simone Carrodus. Passed.*

2022 Financial Report (Craig Madill - Finance Committee) **Motion:** *That the 2022 Financial Report be approved.*

Moved by Allie Kier, Seconded by Joy Dancey. Passed. (In aggregate)

Moved by David Boal, Seconded by Geordie Roberts.

David Boal (from item 9) speaks to the Operating Budget. We do have an account set aside for major repairs if they are needed, that some funds are paid into each year – we're a little under where we expected to be, but there is money in the bank in reserve in case.

Staff Report – Craig Madill

Nominations Committee Report (Janet Warren/Susan Hogman)

Leadership Board Confirmation of Nominees (Chris Bochon, Lyndsay Irwin, Frances Roberts)

Motion: *That the Nominations of Chris Bochon, Lyndsay Irwin, and Frances Roberts to the Leadership Board be approved*

Moved by Susan Hogman, seconded by Janet Warren. Passed.

New Business – Thrift Store Proposal

The goal is to provide a steady revenue stream and enhance community engagement. Organizing a Flea Market has become more complex as of late given the retirement of many longtime volunteers, and changes in congregational size over the last several years and with COVID. The hope is that a Thrift Store model may be more sustainable and manageable. We do still want to be mindful of maintaining the positive aspects that have come with the Flea Market model. We do have some funds from grants and ministry initiatives to put towards approaching this change in model. There are challenges and opportunities with both approaches; the Flea Market brings people from the community that we don't see outside of that event, and there is the excitement of the event of it. However, weather can be a large variable; sales can be drastically affected if the day turns out to be rainy. Also, the necessary prep time and use of space affects some of the programs and space rentals in the preceding weeks. A Thrift Store model requires somewhat less complex prep, and the frequency it allows can offset weather

variables, and opens flexibility for people to come by. It does sacrifice the 'event' nature of the occasion somewhat.

We have done some 'pop-up' markets over COVID to maintain connections with many flea market.

volunteers, and to maintain a revenue stream – these were relatively successful.

There are some Thrift Stores around the North Shore, but none in the Edgemont area – which would hopefully minimize any potential competition aspects.

Some other potential grants are being investigated, and a committee report will be submitted for the 23rd of May.

2022 Operating Budget Report (David Boal - Finance Committee)

Acknowledging Ed Hunt, Scott Hughes, Cameron Forde, Doug Mckay, Sandi Parker. Circles back to item 5 (Annual Financial Report).

We have some funds in reserve to draw from for repairs, and to cover some of this year's projected deficit. Increased room rentals have helped things bounce back since the peak of COVID. We did end with a surplus last year, which has helped us in making donations and setting some funds aside for various departments.

Coming off of a year with some changes, we're looking at some increased staffing costs. Not unexpected. The cancellation of the Flea Market, and moving to a Thrift Store model, means that we have lost a relatively predictable fundraiser that has been factored into the budget each year. Some segregated funds can be drawn from to cover the projected deficit, as can some of last year's surplus. This should cover much of the deficit, and things can be adjusted as we go based on how the Thrift Store goes.

Motion: *That the 2023 Operating Budget be approved. Moved by Melissa Wilkin, Seconded by Carol Nelson. Passed. Courtesies and Acknowledgements*

Thanks to the many people in the congregation who add their talents to the church. Including (but not limited to) Will Sparks, Julie Lees, Ken Irwin, Colleen, Geordie Roberts, Allie Keir, Sandi Parker, Heather Soderling, Roz Hollett, Gill Irwin, Doug Irwin, Elliott Best, Ed Hunt, Melissa Wilkins, Tatina Lee, Wendy McNaughton, to all the members of the Leadership Board, and to all the members of the congregation.

Adjournment

Motion: *That the Highland's United Church 74th Annual Meeting be adjourned. Moved by Janet Warren, Seconded by Diana Bomford. Passed.*

Minutes of Congregational Meeting

HIGHLAND'S UNITED CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
At Highland's United Church and on livestream

For online attendees, please stay on the livestream after worship is over. When the meeting starts, Rev. Will Sparks' email will be posted in the chat by the host. When voting opens you will have a set period of time to cast your vote by emailing Will

NOVEMBER 19, 2023, 11AM

In attendance: Approx 100+ people in person, some online. AGENDA

1. Call to order

Called to order at 11:19am.

2. Opening Prayer : Will/Julie

3. Procedural motions

a. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda – Moved by Mike Soderling, Seconded by Reen Burley. Passed.

b. Voting by Adherents: That all adherents deemed to be present at this meeting, in the sanctuary and online via livestream be given the right to vote on all matters arising at this meeting.

Moved by Ken, Seconded by Heather Soderling. Passed.

(Amendment for wording suggested to change “That all persons” be changed to “That all adherents” suggested by Simone Carrodus. Seconded by Geordie Roberts. Amendment made.)

c. Confirmation of Voting Methodology: That voting will be by show of hands, with online voters voting by email to Will Sparks.

Confirmed.

d. confirmation of quorum Confirmed.

4. Thank you to Wendy McNaughton...Sandra

5. Recognition of the Affirming team...Sandra

Brief overview of the Affirming process and its vision...Mechal McDonald and Melanie Rodgers

6. Presentation of Motion "that Highland's United Church will become an Affirming Congregation." Moved by Stephen Beaton, Seconded by Lisa Madill.

a. Video

b. Discussion, call for the vote.

No hands for discussion in person. No requests for discussion online.

c. voting will be open for 5 minutes online by sending an email to will.sparks@highlandsunited.org stating either: In Favour, Opposed, Abstain. Voting will close 5 minutes after the call for the vote. Once all votes have been recorded and the meeting is over, Will will delete all emails received.

Many hands in approval in person. None Opposed. None Abstaining. Online – 14 in approval, none opposed, none abstaining.

Unanimous approval.

MOTION CARRIED.

7. Thank yous

8. Closing prayer Will/ Julie

9. Adjournment - Adjourned at 11:50am.

Administration and leadership Reports

Leadership Board (LB)

Members: Corey Hollett, Chris Bochon, Lyndsay Irwin, Frances Roberts, Craig Madill, Wendie Reinhardt, Carol Nelson, Oleh Ilnyckyj, David Boal (to December 2023), Ardis Nelson, Sandra Soderling, Will Sparks, Julie Lees

Members serving to June 2023:

Jessica Keefe, Wendy McNaughton

Co-chairs: Ardis Nelson and Sandra Soderling

Secretary: Corey Hollett

For governance and leadership, 2023 was a year to fully return to normal operations post Covid. Throughout the year, full programming came back to life and in the fall, Highland's returned to a full staff complement.

As Leadership Board Members, we are inspired and grateful for the grace, resourcefulness, generosity, energy, enthusiasm, and care by those who not only lead out front, but also, those who show thoughtful dedication behind the scenes at Highlands. As you peruse this annual report, you will read about all the excitement and life that is happening not only within the walls of Highlands, but also that which extends out into the community. We are so very blessed to have this community of saints, who inspire us to join in the worship, reflection and the work and play here at Highland's and beyond. Collectively, the dedicated work at Highland's helps us all to live out our calling and purpose.

Highlights of the Leadership Board in 2023:

- Three new members on the Leadership Board: Chris Bochon, Lyndsay Irwin, and Frances Roberts
- The five-year ministry plan was extended by two years to 2026 to compensate for time lost as a result of Covid.
- Focus on the Communication and Sustainability Goals of the Five-year Ministry Plan
- Celebrations included the fabulous Spring Fling and the launch of our 75th Anniversary plans.
- The absolutely overwhelming unanimous vote to become an Affirming congregation.
- New leadership coming forward in key areas of Finance, Affirming Ministry, Bridging Gaps and Stewardship
- Extended Leadership Board meetings in May and November
- Supporting the Thrift Store Steering Team through their planning process
- The Leadership Board team was working with Staff, Finance, Stewardship and Ministry and Personnel committees to address finance and staffing issues.
- Continuing to incorporate spiritual discernment practices at Leadership Board meetings to help board members make thoughtful decisions.
- Efforts were made to have in person leadership board meetings, reducing the frequency of zoom meetings that were the norm during Covid times.

Some of the challenges that are before the Leadership Board as we move into 2024 is the management of the resource needs of this busy and thriving congregation. The board will be looking to find ways to sustain Highland's financially, to nurture skills and to manage time resources. There will be a focus on funding for the upcoming Thrift Store renovations and the launch of this exciting project.

We invite you to offer your own gratitude to all those whose dedicated work and participation created the vibrant community that is Highlands. We also hope you will be inspired to offer your gifts of time and talent to this community. We give thanks to the Leadership Board Members who give generously of their time and wisdom, finding grace, patience, and wisdom, as we move along the path ahead. Minutes of the Leadership Board meetings are available to the congregation, and we encourage you to be in touch with any of the members if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
Ardis Nelson and Sandra Soderling
Co-chairs of the Leadership Board

Ministry and Personnel (MandP)

2023 saw a return to more regular activities and in person worship; Livestream remains a popular option for people to attend when they are not able or comfortable to attend in person.

The ministry team – Will Sparks – Lead Minister, Julie Lees - Congregational Minister, Colleen Blair – Minister for Seniors and Hospitality, Allie Keir – Minister for Children, Youth and Families, along with Ken Irwin – Lay Worship Leader, Geordie Roberts – Music Director and Director of Genesis Too choir, Gill Irwin – Director of the Spirit Singers choir, Roz Hollett – Director of God's Free Spirits and the Bell choirs, Heather Soderling - Director of Resound Chamber Choir, has worked hard along with the worship committee to deliver engaging and moving worship each week both in person and on-line.

After much careful prayer and deliberation, Ken Irwin has decided not to renew his contract position as a Lay Worship Leader in order to enjoy his retirement and engage as a devoted member of the congregation rather than being on staff. Ken's regular leadership and participation in worship will be missed, but he is still around and will jump in as needed.

Melissa Wilkin is the Church Administrator, providing a professional and positive presence in the office; Tatina Lee is the Office Assistant, providing additional in person support; Ed Hunt works on a contract basis as the bookkeeper.

Elliott Best leads the tech team on Sunday mornings to deliver a seamless experience for the online congregation.

There are so many who contribute to the running of Highlands, and we are grateful to all of them for the many ways in which they do so.

Per the United Church of Canada guidelines and policies, Ministry, Admin, and Music staff received a 3.4% cost of living increase effective Jan 1, 2023. The increase for Jan 1, 2024, is 6.3% based on the calculation used by the National Church.

As the Human Resources overseers of our staff, MandP is aware that we ask our staff to do big jobs; we need to be mindful of all that we ask of them as well as the resources required to continue to offer the ministries and programming that Highland's wants.

Work of MandP in 2023 included –

- Working to support the staff during Will's sabbatical in the Jan - Mar timeframe as well as Colleen's sabbatical during the May to Sept timeframe.
- Both sabbaticals were postponed due to the pandemic and recent circumstances. Ministers earn and are entitled to a sabbatical every 5 years and use the time to bolster their capacities through study and for deep reflection; restoring their reserves to meet the needs of the congregation and the ministries they serve.
- Developing the motion and proposal regarding pay for the hourly staff and administration; approved by the Leadership Board
- Ongoing review of staffing needs due to limited volunteerism in certain areas.
- Reviewing the positive impacts of carving out facilities rentals from the Church Administrator role and extending Carol Smith on contract (Jun 2024) to manage the facilities rentals portfolio – there has been a significant improvement in outstanding receivables (e.g. payments for rentals are being collected more quickly than before) as well as helping to balance the workload for the Church Administrator (Melissa).



Respectfully submitted by Craig Madill, Chair

Committee Members: Diana Bomford, Betty Chapin, Ardis Nelson, Kathleen Whyte

Building Management Team

The Building Management Team (BMT) exists to respond to the need for overseeing the planned (and not-so-planned) capital and repair work needed to keep our building in good condition for the continued work of the Highland's congregation and community. We are deeply grateful for the work done by Alex Wood (capital replacement schedule) and John Haley (Chair of the BMT for the past several years), as well as Finance committee members, who are advising us on a regular basis.

Caring for an aging building is new for the two of us, and we are learning as we are presented with new tasks. Both of us have long histories with Highland's and feel compelled to safeguard the integrity of this place. We look forward to being able to take some pressure off Melissa Wilkin, who is the point person at Highland's for receiving and dealing with building issues.



We are learning about the several funds available to our Team, and how each is appropriately used. The Repairs and Maintenance line in the budget has been increased this year to accurately reflect what was needed last year, and to affirm the necessity to keep on top of the repairs that are needed as soon as they emerge. There will be surprises; this is the reality of our aging building--and this year, for example, we unexpectedly needed to repair the front patio and ramp. There will be more of these unplanned expenses.

The capital asset replacement schedule is only a guideline based on life expectancy calculations, so certain assets may have a shorter or longer life than expected. The BMT will review the available information each year and prepare an annual capital expense list of priorities accordingly.

Highland's congregation members are encouraged to consider our building as donations and bequests are being planned, to ensure our ability to meet the future capital replacement needs of Highland's United Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Warren and Doug Irwin

For BMT members: Doug Margerm, Chris Bochon, Dave Wilson, Melissa Wilkin, and Will Sparks

Pacific Mountain Region

The Pacific Mountain Region (PMR) Council is the governing body of the United Church in B.C.; through it we relate to the wider United Church. Ministerial staff and three lay delegates from Highland's are members of the Council: Kelly Pollock, Ardis Nelson, and Simone Carrodus are our lay delegates. Also, Treena Duncan is the CEO ("Executive Minister") of the Region.

The AGM of the Region was held in Abbotsford in June; Will, and Treena of course, and Simone were there; others zoomed. Most of the meetings of various councils through the year are on zoom.

Some members have specific tasks within the Region: Kelly has been busy with commitments outside of the church for a few months but hopes to dive back soon into Truth and Reconciliation work. Ardis continues to co-chair Highlands' board, which is a job in itself. Simone continues on two regional committees: the Communities of Faith /Pastoral Relations Council and the Approvals Working Group. Will supports the CEO.

Submitted by Simone Carrodus



Membership Statistics

Member Statistics	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Members	443	451	451	452	445	443	419	409	425
Members removed by Transfer of Membership			2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members removed by Death	6	8	4	9	9	4	14	10	7
Members added by Confirmation	6	4	0	9	0	0	0	0	13
Members added by Transfer of Membership	17	12	6	1	2	2	0	0	10
Weddings	5	3	2	4	4	1	3	4	6
Baptisms	6	6	6	8	4	1	1	2	2
Memorials, Interment of Ashes, and Passing's	18	21	14	31	16	8	8	19	13

Average Attendance

Average Sunday Morning Attendance	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Yearly Average Jan-Dec	271	255	244	236	233		81	115	192*

*Includes an average of 39 online attendees.

Christmas Services Attendance

	24 December Eve 4:00 pm	24 December Eve 7:00 pm	24 December Eve 10:00 pm	25 December Day 10:00 am	Total
2017 Christmas Season	301	358	149	265*	1071
2018 Christmas Season	362	464	115		941
2019 Christmas Season	366	443	110		919
2020 Christmas Season	50 on Zoom	585 online	389 online		1023
2021 Christmas Season		452	259		711
2022 Christmas Season	255	263	79	23	620
2023 Christmas Season	289	264	110	149*	812

*2017 and 2023 Christmas Eve fell on Sunday.

Memorials and Passing's (12)

John Leonard Hammond passed October 22, 2023 – Memorial and Interment January 14, 2023

Elizabeth Summerson passed January 23, 2023– Memorial May 20, 2023

Joyce Irene Graham passed December 9, 2022 – Memorial February 11, 2023

Ann Elizabeth Kenway passed February 6, 2023 – Memorial February 20, 2023*

Gloria Frances Strong passed December 28,2022 – Memorial March 10, 2023*

Dallas Audrey Langlois Passed January 13, 2023 – Memorial and Interment April 15, 2023*

Donald Jarvis passed March 15, 2023 - Memorial and Interment May 7, 2023*

Margot Edith Thomson passed April 8, 2023 - Memorial and Interment May 18, 2023*

Audrey Bernice Cecilia Sumpton passed January 27,2023 – Memorial May 20, 2023

Ardith Shane passed 2022 – Memorial and Interment August 11, 2023

Bruce Tennant passed April 14, 2023 - Memorial and Interment October 29, 2023*

Fred Chernoff passed June 19, 2023 – Memorial December 23, 2023

Baptisms (2)

Gillian Forde

Brooklyn Nadia Florence Siemens

Weddings (6)

Calvin Kenneth Lo and Ann Mackenzie Covert February 2023

Colin Madill and Billie Baird July 2023

Garth Albright and Leanne Lionello July 2023

Liam Niall O'Brian and Kyleigh Lynn Youngman July 2022

Benjamin Parker and Sabine Gervais August 2023

Jack Frances Thorpe and Siobhan Smith October 2023

Interments Only (2)

*Peter Schaerer**

Calvin Stead

New Members by Confirmation (13)

Gillian Forde

Max Keir

Lachlan Keir

George Owens

Emma Byrom

Major Cordeau

Reen Burley

Patrick Ciccone

Ann Strickland

Roy Strickland

Melanie Thomas

Ross Lyle

Derek Baskerville

New Members by Transfer of Membership (10)

Pat and Barbara Munroe

Ian and Deb Kent

Frances Larter (Frances)

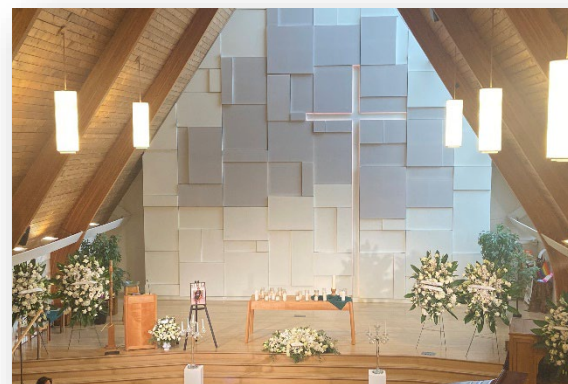
Barbara James

Allan Cuzen

Allan Huston

Pat Stuart

Cathy Molinski (Vassiliadis)



Worship and Music

Worship



The Worship Ministry Team is responsible for preparing worship services that provide opportunities to be inspired, to feel included, to be challenged and to celebrate God's presence in our lives. Every year has its challenges, transitions, opportunities, and joys. Fortunately, 2023 seemed to be filled with opportunities and joy.

We began January with Will on his well-deserved sabbatical and were blessed when he returned in April, and we once again had a full leadership team working together. Thanks go to this team of 2023: Will Sparks, Julie Lees, Allie Keir, Colleen Blair, Ken Irwin (until the end of August) and Geordie Roberts.

However, that team alone could not have provided the worship experiences that our congregation now wants and expects without the support of many other faithful people.

Thanks also go to those who "hosted" the online services and engaged in the chat box: Eva Mathiesen, Robin Rivers, Jacqueline Scott, and Kathleen Shenfield.

Thanks go to the choirs and their directors who faithfully provided music in many different ways: SpiritSingers (Gillian Irwin), Re:Sound Chamber Choir (Heather Soderling), Genesis Too (Geordie Roberts), and God's Free Spirits (Rosalind Hollett).

Thanks go to those who "set the stage" for our worship: Colleen Blair, Joy Dancey, Linda Davidson, and Tanis van Drimmelen and to Melissa Wilkin and Tatina Lee who prepared the orders of service and the PowerPoint presentations.

We are also extremely grateful to the many people who, through their technical expertise and faithful offering of their time have made it possible for us to continue to worship "together," as both an online and in-person community: Elliott Best (Tech Crew Lead), Liam Roberts, Corey Hollett, Talen Bentley-Michaud, Tristan Bentley-Michaud, and Andrew Yetman.

A major part of who we are as a faith community is being able to celebrate communion together. Over the years our practices around communion have changed. We have continued to experiment with many ways of sharing in this sacrament to create a feeling of safety and security for those involved. Thanks go to those who plan and implement this process: Diana Bomford, Betty Chapin, Mechel MacDonald, Lisa Madill and Oleh Ilnyckyj.

Respectfully submitted,

Gillian Irwin on behalf of the Worship Ministry Team

Joy Dancey, Chris Madill, Eva Mathieson, Heather Soderling, Janet Warren, and staff: Colleen Blair, Ken Irwin, Allie Keir, Julie Lees, Geordie Roberts, Will Sparks

Music

Music Ministry at Highland's continues to involve a faithful core group of singers, choir directors, bell ringers and other musicians along with sound technicians, videographers, film editors, script writers and someone on the tri-caster to push 'play' every Sunday. In 2023, numbers of people participating in music ensembles of all sorts continued to rebound and is approaching pre-COVID levels. The Spirit Singers continued to take a cautious and measured approach to both rehearsal and worship arrangements, providing as safe a space as was reasonable while COVID continued to rise and fall in the community. God's Free Spirits and Genesis Too with 10 and 14 members respectively (depending on the week) continues to bring their musical message to worship once or twice each month and provide both a musical and a social outlet for their members on Thursday evenings during the school year.



Re:Sound has returned with a vigour that energizes worship on a regular basis. The Handbell Choir contributed to worship in both Advent and Easter and the Family Band made its triumphant return in December. Summer Choir was very well attended in 2023 and will be offered again in 2024. We owe a debt of gratitude to all our music leaders for their tenacity and willingness to try new things in new ways again and again, pandemic or no pandemic, and a steady stream of appreciative messages from members of the congregation throughout the year has been both energizing and affirming for all of us involved in music-making here at the church. Thank you all very much.

In anticipation of an even MORE "normal" 2024, please reach out to any people in your lives who might be interested in getting involved in music-making at the church. The coming months will continue to be a rebuilding time, a great time for new faces and new ideas to find their place among us. There are opportunities here for enthusiastic people from age 5 to 95 to share their musical gifts.

Respectfully submitted,
Geordie Roberts



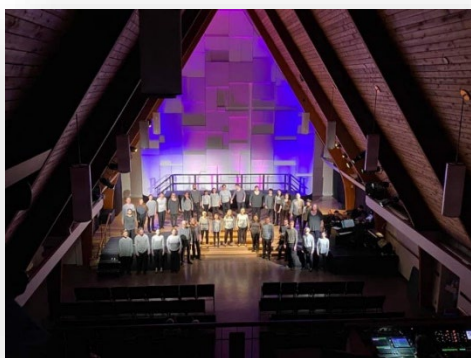
2023 Musical Lights Up



Highland’s United Productions returned to the “stage” in March of 2023 with a musical revue entitled “LIGHTS UP!” Having to cancel our previous musical, the tap-dancing favourite “ANYTHING GOES” five days before opening because of the pandemic was heart-wrenching for all involved. Since COVID was not completely behind us, we chose the “revue” concept to allow us the flexibility to adapt the program which is not possible with a regular Broadway musical.

LIGHTS UP! played to full houses for each of the four nights and was very enthusiastically received. Around half of our performers were from the wider community which meant that many non-Highland’s folks were in the audience and enjoyed our building, our community, and our welcome – as well as our performances. As with all our previous productions, the support and involvement of our congregation was staggering – almost 100 people gave of their time and talents over a three-month period to create an outstanding musical presentation. We also have several cast members who are now new members of our congregation!

Special thanks go to our incredible musical director, Geordie Roberts. Geordie was present from auditions through all rehearsals and performances, guiding the company and offering his knowledge of music freely to an appreciative cast. Sometimes, I think the performers don’t know how lucky they are to have such a professional working with them! Also, a huge thank you to Carolyn Bergstrand, our choreographer, for her innate ability to blend experienced dancers and “two-left feet” singers into a fine-tuned performance. Carolyn knows our priorities when working with members of our congregation and supports our decisions every time. Her performance with Julie Lees and Allie Kier was 1 of the very special moments of this production.



LIGHTS UP! was certainly an artistic success and was a financial success as well. The production netted over \$16,000 for Highland’s United Church.

Respectfully submitted by Doug and Gillian Irwin

Seniors Ministry

The ministry with and for seniors was full and rich and saw a myriad of joys and sorrows as the tapestry of our lives together was woven and unravelled.... over and over throughout the cycle of our days and the seasons of our lives.



We gathered often, whether to enjoy the beautiful music of Higher Ground or to tackle the difficult questions of where will I live as I age and what will happen to my body when I die? We heard the powerful experiences and insights of a volunteer in the prison system



and a local GP with Doctors Without Borders. We welcomed back military historian Tom Van Walleggham and met author and professional guitarist, Paul Lucas, living on the Yukon border.

It's always fun to get out of the building so we enjoyed lunch amidst the activity of float planes on the Fraser River, a tour of the Richmond Oval's



Olympic Museum and a festive lunch at the Shaughnessy Restaurant.

We gather around our tables, not only for companionship and to combat the inevitable losses and loneliness of advancing years, but also to be inspired by one another and by the people we meet. We gather around tables to be engaged and find new purpose and meaning in our own lives and to build new and deeper relationships with one

another and with life itself. We gather around the table to be the people of God together. Caring....uplifting...and loving.



Submitted with deep gratitude,
Colleen Blair
Minister for Seniors and Hospitality

Welcoming Ministry

It will come as no surprise to many that the welcome space is the heart of Sunday morning hospitality at Highlands. It is, for members and visitors alike, the place of invitation, first impressions, connection and on many occasions, it is a place to engage in the shared activity of ministry. With coffee, conversation, and warm greetings, it is a place of belonging and offers that deep sense of coming home. I am very grateful to the welcome hosts and greeters for the work they do to facilitate this ministry! Working together as a team of about 6 people each week, the greeters and welcome hosts help to facilitate the Sunday morning experience and embody the welcome that the whole congregation extends. They prepare for your arrival, welcome people as they come through the doors and pay special attention to those who are new and visiting.

The hospitality ministry wouldn't be complete though, without the team of hosts that welcome and support the online community which is a vital and vibrant part of the Highland's worshipping community. The hosts monitor the chat box and bring a warm and generous personalized welcome to those joining worship online.

Particular thanks to Jon Carrodus for coordinating the welcome hosts and reaching out to newcomers and to Simone Carrodus for her weekly attention to the information/action table!

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Blair, Minister for Seniors and Hospitality

Children, Youth and Families

Children, Youth and Families Minister's Report



If you have been around Highland's in the last year, you would have noticed a buzz when it comes to worship on Sundays and even Thursday choir night. Our programs are growing post covid, and we couldn't be more thrilled. On any given Sunday, we have upwards of 20 kids that join us in Sunday school. We are getting so big that we will now start to move to a dedicated 2 Sunday school classes every Sunday, with the potential of a 3rd class for senior youth on G2 Sundays. We continue to use a variety of curriculums depending on what the theme/scripture reading is on Sunday. Our time together consists of scripture, stories, thematic videos, crafts and when time

permits – active time in the gym. Our wonderful Sunday school teachers consist of Emma Byrom, Gillian Forde, Georgia Keir and Avery Shmidt. We hope to add a few new faces to the teaching crew this year. Laila Kassim-Parkinson is our wonderful nursery care provider.





Thursdays are another time we get to spend time together in community with God's Free Spirits and Genesis Too choirs' rehearsal time. I love Thursdays!! This is when I really get to spend time with our kids and check in on what's new in their lives. I can't tell you how much joy these kids give me. Their curiosity of faith and generosity of love and affection for one another is truly a delight to witness.

After meeting with several families to get to the heart of their desires of how to be in community with each other (without overwhelming the family schedules) we have agreed that quality is better than quantity when it comes to Highland's family events. A few well-timed events throughout the year seems to be what is desired – so we ran with that. Some of the events that we had throughout the year include:

- Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras
- Spring Fling Dance and Youth Fundraiser
- Pancakes and PJ's
- Easter Vigil
- Advent Festival
- Live Nativity

All events were well attended and will be on the roster for 2024.

Youth Group

We are so lucky to have a vibrant and active youth group – led by Grace Owens, Chris Bochon, Jewel Epp and Ethan Sauer. We have between 20-25 dedicated youth that enjoy spending time together. We meet twice a month, most months during the school year. Enjoy some pictures for our various events!



Summer Program

Camp Highland's 2023 had another successful year under the leadership of Grace Owens and Jewel Epp, with help from Gillian Forde, Andrew Yetman, Sandi Parker, Bochon, Carol Smith, Gill Irwin, Roz Hollett, and many many more Highland's Angels! We offered four – one week long day camps: Wildlife Vacation Bible Camp, Raiders of the Lost Arts, A Taste of the Arts and Difference Makers with a total of 62 campers registered.

Our VBC camp followed our tried and tested formula which included our successful Leader's in Training program, sanctuary time, small group activities, crafts, music,





outings and delicious lunch and snacks provided by Sandi Parker and her summer kitchen team. All in all, we had 18 young people in leadership positions sharing faith, fun and fellowship.

A Taste of the Arts was a week-long sampling of fine arts such as painting, singing, cupcake decorating, guitar, boom whackers, film acting and dancing. Campers got to experience each art discipline with a little informal performance/show and tell of all they experienced throughout the week.

Raiders of the Lost Arts was a new concept for camp that was very well received by both campers and their parents as well as our beloved elders. The concept was to teach life skills that are lost with this generation that is

so used to 'googling it' to find out how to do various things. We had our Elders pass on their knowledge of knitting, sewing, bread baking, gardening, jam making, woodworking, card making, and how to change a bike tire to mention a few skills. The campers prepared their own lunches every day with easy 'must know' recipes – with the final lunch being a high

tea to thank our Elders for sharing their wealth of knowledge. It was a lot of work in prep time as well as a material heavy camp, but the intergenerational connections that were made were invaluable!

While the Difference Makers weeklong camp was cancelled, two fantastic days were offered -one full day at First United in the Downtown East side working from the Food Truck and one at the Sikh Gurdwara in Surrey working alongside Sikhs and Church of the Latter-Day

Saints packing food hampers and serving lunch. Spending time at the Gurdwara and participating for a day in their huge commitment to food security and hospitality was inspiring. The rich interfaith conversation between Sikhs, United Church and Mormons, following that day was an opportunity not soon to be forgotten.

Respectfully submitted by Allie Keir



Adult Education and Faith Formation

Study and Reflection, Adult Education Groups



Faith formation and education happen in so many ways. We learn something new during a Sunday reflection, or something clicks when we hear a hymn in a new way. Perhaps the quiet time of lectio divina allows offers new insight to scripture. Certainly, learning happens through HUCs ELL classes and Senior's connection events. Every interaction is a learning opportunity.

There was one program in 2023 that reminded us in a big way how exciting theological education can be, and that was the Theological Banquet study series. For seven weeks a group of about 16 folks gathered in the Fireside

Room to go deep into Janet Gear's theological banquet work. Complementing the Sunday series, we explored who we are as a people of God, gained new insights and language with which to define and understand ourselves, and learned about each other – what brings us joy and what frustrates us about our faith. The biggest take away from all that learning? That it takes all of us to be the body of Christ.

We are evangelical, ecclesial, ecumenical, missional, and spiritual. Thanks be to God.

Respectfully submitted by Julie Lees, congregational minister.

Book Circle

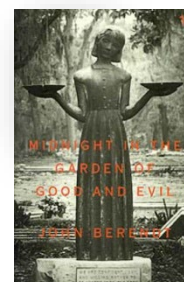
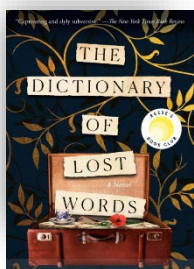
The Highland's United Book Circle, founded in 2004, is now approaching twenty years since its first meeting. So many connections and conversations as we shared our reactions to a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction. In 2023 we met ten times with an average attendance of eight people.

The books we read by Canadian authors were:

- Lori Lansens's *This Little Light*
- Bev Sellars's *They Called Me Number One*
- Souvankham Thammavongsa's *How To Pronounce Knife*.
- We travelled to Cyprus with Turkish author, Elif Shafak, and her novel, *The Island of Missing Trees*.
- In addition, we zipped through time courtesy of *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams, *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks and *Cloud Cuckoo Land* by Anthony Doerr.
- John Berendt's enthralling *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* was one of our two non-fiction books.
- We also discussed Elizabeth Strout's *My Name is Lucy Barton* and Bonnie Garmus's *Lessons in Chemistry*

Overall, a varied and stimulating year!

Anyone is welcome to join us whenever a particular title captures their interest and/or their schedule permits. This Small Group activity is an excellent way to get to know fellow members of our congregation at a deeper level.



Library

All are welcome at Highland's Church Library whether you are new or have been coming for years. The library continues to support the ministry of outreach of the church by providing resources that encourage spiritual exploration and growth. The library offers materials for leaders of children, youth, and adult groups as well as individuals. The library offers a varied selection of books and DVDs. Betty creates displays at the entrance to the library which support worship, festivals, and church seasons. We continue to acquire new books including many by Indigenous authors. We are always interested in hearing about titles that you would like to see at the library.



Submitted by Betty Chapin and Robin Rivers

Social Action and Community

Affirming Ministry

Throughout 2023, the Affirm Working Group made significant progress on the Affirming process. The Affirm working group, consisting of about nine diverse individuals, met via Zoom throughout 2023.



The Affirm Working Group was committed to providing educational information to engage congregants in the Affirming process. We shared information through slides posted in the Friday Highlights and displays in the Welcome Space on Sunday mornings. The displays included documents we produced in the form of flyers/leaflets on the Affirm process, gender identity, sexuality, expression, pronouns, and scripture. These efforts helped to raise awareness and promote inclusivity in our community.

During the spring season, the Affirm Working Group organized a series of Souper Sundays which were a huge success. These events included videos, discussions, and soup to nourish conversations. The turnout was great, and we were able to raise funds through these monthly events.

In August, a group of church members attended Pride at the Pier in North Vancouver. We had a wonderful time enjoying the performances of drag queens, dancers, and live bands while trying out some delicious food truck fare.

The church community has made a great effort to provide a more lasting and welcoming display to the LGBTQ+ community. They have achieved this by mounting a more durable Progressive Pride banner on the bell tower.

In the Summer we produced a short film to promote the upcoming vote, with expert guidance and skills from Talen Bentley-Michaud. We asked members of our congregation who identify as

LGBTQIA2S+ or are allies of the community, to participate in the interview-style video. one of the questions posed was ‘What has been your story at Highlands?’

Additionally, an informative web page has been added to the Highland’s website to share relevant information.



After having the three documents required by Affirm United approved, we were ready to take the decision to the congregation for a vote. Those documents were: 1) an Affirming Vision Statement, approved by the Leadership Board, 2) an Action Plan that outlines our ongoing commitment to Affirm United, the Highland’s United congregation and community, and 3) a Marriage Policy which states that couples of all gender combinations are treated equally. On November 19, 2023, we had a congregational vote to join Affirm United. The motion to join Affirm United was overwhelmingly passed with great enthusiasm. This shows our intention to be a congregation that

publicly, intentionally, and explicitly welcomes a diversity of people, including those from the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

Respectfully submitted,
Melanie Thomas, Chair
Affirm Working Group

Truth and Reconciliation Circle

Seen as one of the Highland’s small group ministries the circle came into effect early in the spring to animate a five-year mission goal of “Beyond ourselves.”

Since then, the members including Kelly Pollock, Lisa Madill, Carl Steffens, Wendie Reinhardt, Pat Munro, Tanis van Drimmelen, and Ross White have worked to put together learning and listening moments and actions for the congregation. There has been a focus to this point on field trips like the Takaya Canoe Tours and on worship events like national Aboriginal day and orange shirt day. We were delighted that during this time there was a search for an Intercultural minister to help us in our work and we are pleased to report that Wendy McNaughton has been a tremendous asset and we look forward to many more events and opportunities to help us confess our collective ignorance, Live the apologies that have been made and celebrate the future of better relations with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Respectfully submitted,
Ross White, chair



Highland's United Growing Greener (HUGG) Group

HUGG's primary purpose is to educate and motivate the congregation and the wider community around environmental and climate change issues.

The HUGG core group meets monthly by zoom.

The group includes Simone Carrodus (chair), Jon Carrodus, Ev Leskiw, Dave Lovely, Doug MacKay, Caroline Mahoney, Jean McTavish (of Pacific Spirit United), Wendie Reinhardt, Will Sparks, and Pam Tattersfield (of Squamish United).

Tasks: Simone chairs; Jon does the weekly HUGG notice for Highlights; Wendie is board liaison; Doug does recycle stuff. And Ev sews cloth bags for veggies and keeps the piggy bank, mostly to buy books for the church.

We have been doing "Litter Pickup" around Edgemont Village, inviting others in the congregation to join us. The prime objective, after saving the oceans from plastic and stuff, is to show that Highland's cares about the environment. Caroline deals with disposal: that's her special task, and we're all grateful! Turnout hasn't been that great, so we are considering other ways of doing it.

We celebrated Earth Day by more or less forcing people as they left the service to take a piece of refuse and dispose of it properly before they got coffee. That was fun and worth it!

Jon is leading a "Green Audit" team which is working on deciding what we can do in the church building to save energy and reduce our footprint, with financial support from the national church.

submitted by Simone Carrodus



Advent Festival



Our annual Advent Festival has grown in popularity and size since it's birth about 16 years ago. Usually held on the weekend before Advent, the event runs from Friday evening through Saturday afternoon. There are many moving parts to this church-wide event including:

1. **A Nativity Exhibit** with 200+ nativity scenes on display in the Lower Hall. Donated scenes are documented and held in secure storage until the event. Our volunteers show up faithfully each year to assemble the exhibit and to host the event. Many people come to see the exhibit and this year, we heard many lovely comments about the beautiful exhibit and our visitors were so appreciative of the time and care put into the display. Thank you to Geordie Roberts who entertained the exhibit visitors with his soft music over the weekend and to Carol Rushworth who worked diligently to register each set. Contact Chris Robertson if you'd like to help with the Nativity Exhibit this year.
2. **Kids Only Market:** Coordinated by Gill Irwin and members of the Spirit Singers, the group gather gently loved giftable items and create a "store" where children from 4 to 14 can purchase gifts for family and friends. Located in the Gym, the store is supported by caring adults who assist the children with gift selection, wrapping and cards. The Kids Only store is truly a gift for children, parents, and the community. If you would like to be part of the fun, please contact Gill Irwin.
3. **In the Gym:** The Gym space also includes a bake sale table, kid's cookie decorating and artisan craft tables. This is a bustling place to shop or sit in the lovely Café to enjoy lunch or coffee and a donut. Contact Carol Smith if you are interested in a craft table at this year's event.
4. **Labyrinth and Spiritual Practices Space:** On Thursday evening before the event, all the chairs are removed from the Sanctuary to make way for our Labyrinth floor and Spiritual Practices. The space is lit with candles, soft music plays and folks are invited to walk the

labyrinth in contemplation. To our surprise, many children and youth walked the labyrinth this year and were keenly interested in learning about this calming practice. Thanks to Sharon Yetman and the Healing Hands team for sharing their gifts with us.

5. **Christmas Café:** The event is never quite the same without the aroma of homemade chili on Friday night and the fragrance of Harmony donuts on Saturday morning. Thanks to Marie Rice and team for never failing to keep us fed and happy!
6. **Children’s Quiet Space:** The Fireside Room is transformed into a quiet space for small children to explore children-size nativity scenes, puzzles, books and to play dress-up in the “manger.” Thanks to Wendy McNaughton and friends for this lovely teaching space for little ones (and parents.)
7. **Thrift and Gift Sale:** This year, the event included a thrift sale with Christmas decorations, new giftable items, seasonal tableware, and party frocks. The sale was well attended by the community and added a new dimension to the Advent Festival. Contact Carol Smith if you are interested in our thrift sales or the festival.

There are dozens of folks not mentioned in this report, but we are so very grateful to all the volunteers who help to make this event a huge success!

Respectfully submitted by Carol Smith, Coordinator

Global Connections

The Global Connections committee:

- Maintains Highlands’ partnership, with Artesana Collective in Guatemala by phone and zoom calls with Andréa Barrios
- Encourages donations to Artesana Collective through Co-development Canada. Congregation members continue this financial support.
- Offers suggestions for “Gifts that Give Twice” during Advent, including selling Multifaith Calendars
- Sets up the Action Table in the Welcome Space each Sunday.

Members Jon and Simone Carrodus and Sharon Yetman (chair) meet as needed by phone and zoom.

Bridging Gaps – Formally known as Local Connections

History: In 2023 the longstanding and dedicated Local Connections group discerned that it was time to pass the torch to a new group of people. Part of the work they did for the new group forming was to survey the congregation to determine what they knew and wanted from this group. Results of that survey suggested the community felt food and housing were important, along with more congregational involvement in activity and relationship building with the groups the church serves.

Over the summer of 2023 the new group met with various community agencies, including the partners that Local Connections worked with over the years to see where partnership could continue and where new needs were emerging (all with a desire not to duplicate what the wider community already offers).



Committee: In late September the group now known as Bridging Gaps was formed. Building on the experience of the past and looking to the future our mandate is:

To discover the emerging and ongoing needs of the community surrounding Highland's United Church; and to support those needs through the church's operating budget and congregational involvement.

Action: Over the past 4 months the group has been involved in several projects.

- **Mapping the Congregation** (Particularly the Edgemont area) More details on this coming in 2024.
- **Community:** Attended the North Shore Homeless Task Force (NSHTF) Connect day which is an outreach day to support the homeless. Staffed the Highland's United Church table in conjunction with Saturday Lunch and Shelter to Home.
- **Advocacy:** Wrote a letter to the District in support of the housing initiative at Keith Rd and Mountain Hwy.
- **First United:** Organized the underwear and poncho collection.
- **Hampers:** Organized, and delivered 18 hampers to families at Christmas

We look forward to continuing this work in 2024. Thanks to the committee for their hard work over these past few months.

Susan Hogman (Chair)

Cathy Vassiliadis, Deb Kent and Julie Lees



Thrift Sales 2023

Highland's receives donations of household goods throughout the year and a team of dedicated volunteers meet to sort and price the treasures. Items are then sold at pop-up Thrift Sales. In 2023 we held three successful sale events and raised over \$30k. The sale of donated goods helps to support Highland's United Church and our outreach programs.



Volunteers enjoy a variety of tasks including receiving and pre-sorting donations at the regular Saturday morning Drop-Off. Teams of four sign up to help out each week and they find that it is a great social time as they work together. This is a short 2-hour commitment – no special skills needed other than offering a smile to those dropping off donations.

On Tuesday mornings, 30+ people gather in the Lower Hall to sort and price donations and enjoy a lively coffee and social time mid-morning. This is such a valuable part of our time as members of this community at Highlands. A group of “handy” people form an essential part of this group and help with storage and the flow of goods in the receiving, sorting, and selling process.

Our amazing volunteers' step into action when we offer thrift sales. We gather the day before the sale to set-up tables and display household goods. Sale events are very well attended, and the day goes by swiftly with hundreds of people shopping and enjoying our Highland's hospitality. In November, we joined the Advent Festival folks to offer a Thrift and Gift Sale with displays of Christmas décor, new giftable items, toys, festive table wear and party frocks. Set-up in the Welcome Space, the community embraced this new addition to our beloved festival.

If you are interested in joining our band of merry volunteers, don't hesitate to speak to Chris Robertson or Carol Smith or just drop by on Tuesday mornings in the Lower Hall.

In 2024 we will offer four Thrift Sale events: March 23, June 1, August 31. The Christmas Thrift and Gift Sale will be part of the Advent Festival on November 29 and 30.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Robertson and Carol Smith
The Thrift Sales team members include Jonathan Maillie, Nita Anderson, and Paula Bentley



Thrift Store Update

In November 2022, the Leadership Board gave approval in principle to launch the Thrift Store project. A Thrift Store Steering Committee was formed, and we started the journey to transition from our yearly Flea Market to a permanent Thrift Store in the church's lower floor. The team received feedback from the congregation, from the "sorters," other United Church thrift stores and our Edgemont Village merchants. Applications for funding were prepared and we received initial funding from the United Church's ProVision fund. We are anticipating a positive response from the New Horizons grant to cover the accessibility portion of the project.

With guidance from the BC Centre for Social Enterprise, the team assembled a Feasibility Study (FS) documenting the challenges, benefits, and viability of this endeavour. The team met on a regular basis through the year and reported into the Extended Leadership Board on the project's progress. As the team looked at ways to fund the project, we received approval to apply to the Pacific Mountain Region Council for a loan. The team also approached Highland's Finance and Heritage Committees to explore the possibility of internal funding for a portion of the construction costs.

The team hired a professional consultant to prepare a Business Plan (BP) and was presented to the LB Co-Chairs, Trustees, Finance and Heritage Committees in late January 2024. All are welcome to explore the FS and BP documents under Key Documents on our website. Printed copies are available upon request to the Church Office staff.

To say that we are excited about this project is an understatement. The Leadership Board, staff and many congregation members fully support this project which will provide financial stability for the church and enhance our community. Fingers crossed that we will be able to launch the store in the Fall of 2024. Questions? – Please feel free to speak to any member of the Steering Committee.

Respectfully submitted by Carol Smith

Thrift Store Steering Committee members include Catherine Alkenbrack, Ardis Nelson, Sandi Parker, Will Sparks

Shelter to home

Shelter to Home Client Statistics for 2023

Client Statistics:	Number of Clients	% of total clientele
214 clients were served in 2023	64 Men	29.9%
	73 women	34.1%
	77 children	36%
	38 Families with Children	
	09 Seniors	4%
	35 refugees/immigrants	16%
District of North Vancouver	88clients	41.12%
City of North Vancouver	58 clients	27.1%
District of West Vancouver	09 clients	04.2%
Moved off North Shore	59 clients	27.6%



Referring Agencies

Sage House/North Shore Crisis Center	46	21%
Community (churches, Multicultural Society)	36	17%
Shelter to Home Web Site	26	12%
Harvest Project	21	10%
Hollyburn Seniors' and Family Services	20	09%
Lookout North Shore Homeless Shelter	15	07%
Vancouver Coastal Health	10	05%
North Shore Neighbourhood House	10	05%
Shelter to Home Web Site	26	12%
Foundry (VCH)	03	01%
Lu'ma Society	03	01%

Some facts about Shelter to Home

- Shelter to Home is a member of Furniture Banks of Canada
- Shelter to Home is a member of the North Shore Homelessness Task Force and took part Connect Day during Homelessness Action Week.
- Shelter to Home celebrated its 15th anniversary in September this year.
- Our storage space at 1067 Churchill Crescent, North Vancouver costs \$1900 per month
- From September 2008 to December 2023, we have served 2397 clients.
- Community referrals came from churches including Highland's United, former clients, community groups e.g. the Multicultural Society. Some repeat clients referred themselves.
- In 2023 funding was received from North Vancouver City, North Vancouver District and District of West Vancouver Community Grants, Beyond Hope singing group, Atlas Pots (our landlord) and individual donations from church and community members.
- 22 volunteers, (14 church members and 8 volunteers from the community), give over 4000 hours each year to this outreach program.
- Volunteer jobs include monitoring donation telephone line, assessing potential furniture donations, transporting, and sorting household items and linens, chairing meetings, tracking finances, attending conferences, and training events, maintaining the web site, social media, advertising our needs to the North Shore community, working with clients, working with referring agencies.
- In 2023 Shelter to Home received Staff assistance from Melissa Wilkin, Ed Hunt, and Tatina Lee (finances).
- Julie Lees is our ministerial staff liaison.



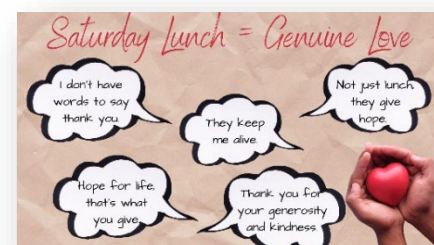
Financial information

S2H Statement receipts disbursements, 2023 proposed budget 2024	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024	notes
RECEIPTS				
Other Grants:	0	0	0	
CNV	7000	4000	8000	Application Jan 2024
DNV	6500	3502.35	3502.35	Year 2 2024
WV		2500	0	
Fundraisers	0	2814.50	0	
Donations: charitable	20,000	11925.83	20000	
Donations: moving		3939.98		
Total	33,500	28682.66	31502.35	
DISBURSEMENTS				
Rent	23,370	23370	23370	
Administration	0	0	0	Need to include a figure here
Pick ups/moving	7000	5233.15	7000	
Storage Mgr contract fees	3000	0	3000	
Phone	500	522.08	600	
Web	3000	105.87	3000	upgrade needed \$
Consulting fees	0	0	0	
Supplies/Misc	1500	555.86	1500	
Other utilities, promotion	1000	182.14	1000	
Total	39370	29969.10	39470	
Fund Balance December 31 unrestricted	16307.92	15691.97		

Saturday Lunch

The Saturday Lunch Feeding Ministry began in 2009 under the leadership of Ruth Kershaw, Jill Ashdown, Judy Thomas, and Wendy Grant. Initially we were feeding fewer than 25 people each Saturday at North Shore Neighbourhood House. Over the years our numbers have continued to grow. In early 2020, prior to the pandemic, we were serving 50-60 people each week.

With the onset of the pandemic, we shifted to preparing sandwiches and bagging lunches at the church to deliver down to North Shore Neighbourhood House. Up until June 2023 we distributed the bagged lunches from the lane behind NSNH. Due to construction of the new NSNH which necessitated the closure of the lane, we moved into the gym at NSNH where the Food Bank is housed.



Currently, we are preparing approximately 100 lunch bags each Saturday. The folks who come to pick up a lunch are those on low or fixed income. A few are homeless. There is a mix of individuals, couples, and parents with children. Many are seniors. They come from a variety of backgrounds and ethnicities. Several individuals will take an additional lunch for another family member or someone who lives in their building. We have come to know many of them by name and have developed a bit of a support community. When we can, we provide information regarding housing, other food programs and community and government resources.

Some Saturdays we run out of lunches before the hour is up and sometimes there are some extras. Any leftover lunches or food are taken either to the City of North Vancouver Library for their Open Door Community Hub program held each Sunday, or to the Lookout Shelter.

Respectfully submitted by Wendy McNaughton on behalf of The Saturday Lunch Team

Refugee Committee

Highland's Refugee Committee is a volunteer group which leads the congregation in opportunities to sponsor, assist and settle refugees to Canada. 2023 was our 44th year of global outreach refugee sponsorship work.

We marked this milestone with a wonderful Multi-Cultural Dinner and Celebration on June 17th, attended by approximately 150 individuals both from Highland's congregation and the wider community. Silent auction, live entertainment, festive food, and drinks from a variety of countries, and testimonials from previous newcomers including the very first family sponsored from Vietnam in 1979!

This event was also a fundraiser – part of our campaign to raise \$30,000 to sponsor a new refugee family. It was a great success!

In March we held two Refugee Committee Information Sessions (one each at Highland's United Church and St. Catherine's Church). Several new members joined the Committee as a result, and we could then move forward with sponsorship planning.

Securing accommodation was the greatest challenge for our team due to high rental rates and an unknown arrival date for the newcomers. In December, after several months of searching, we finally found a two-bedroom apartment to rent in Lynn Valley (thanks to a referral from a Highland's member!). We look forward to welcoming this family in early 2024.

Respectfully submitted, Highland's Refugee Committee:

Marilyn MacDonald (Chair), Peter Ackhurst, Catherine Alkenbrack, Lindsay Bottomer, Reen Burley, Simone Carrodus, Alixe Hale, Wendy McNaughton, Will Sparks, Buff Squire, Bill Walsh, Jeannie White, Julia Wilson, Brian Wyatt.

Ex Officio Member: Jean Gabrielse

The 15th Capilano Highlanders Scout Group

15th Capilano Scouts 15th Capilano Highlanders Scout Group - chartered in 1954.

Scouting's Mission: to help develop well-rounded youth, better prepared for success in the world.

The 15th Capilano Highlanders Scout Group continued to rebuild the group last year, as it provided learning and leadership opportunities for youth aged 5 through 26.

In 2023, there were 54 youth and 19 adults. That included 16 Beavers, 24 Cubs, 14 Scouts, 0 Venturers, 0 Rovers, 16 Leaders and 3 Group Committee members .

The sections met weekly, often outdoors. Each section enjoyed camping experiences and challenging programs.

The Scouts, on a day outing in December, found an evergreen tree which they harvested (with permit), and brought back to Highlands. They and the Cubs decorated it for the church outdoor display.

Leaders and the Group Committee at the 15th were volunteer parents and community Scouters. The committee members were Amber Akerberg (Group Commissioner), Aaron Oman (Treasurer), and Eleanor Oakley (Church Liaison).

Cub Leader Ross Borsoi continues to help with the Group Admin role. Secretary and Fundraiser roles remain vacant.

Submitted by Eleanor Oakley
Church Liaison, 15th Capilano Scout Group
Pacific Coast Council, Scouts Canada

Men's Breakfast

Our weekly breakfast meeting is a long-standing tradition, stretching back nearly 40 years. Three years ago, we purchased a Meeting Owl for Highlands' Zoom meetings and it gave us flexibility in how we choose to gather.

Now we meet in two places – the first and third Wednesdays at the Eighties Restaurant at Lonsdale and 14th, and the second and fourth Wednesdays at Highlands, in the Courtyard on fine days and the Choir Room on not so fine days with the Owl for those who want to join on Zoom.



In 2023 we were hosts for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner in our Lower Hall. Nearly 150 people enjoyed the traditional pancakes and sausages – all cooked and served by us, demonstrating that we can cook just as well as we can eat. We have been invited for an encore presentation in 2024.

So “Bless this food to our use and us to your understanding. In Jesus’ name we pray.”

We embrace this quote from Bill Hogman. He often used it as we all sat with our full plates in front of us, eager to dig into our breakfast feast. Traditionally a short blessing was offered by the first person to receive a plate. No one could match Bill’s pithy quote and anyone who used more than two sentences was considered verbose.

We invite you to join us for breakfast and friendly conversation, Wednesdays, 8:00am-9:00am at the Eighties or Highlands/Zoom.

English Language Learners (ELL)

Our ELL (English as a Learned Language) Program started to recover in 2023 from the effects of COVID. In January '23 we continued with our Intercultural Conversations (ICC) group meeting on Zoom once a week and adding an in-person gathering once a month. Sandi Parker and Janie Ackhurst took turns leading this group of about 8 participants, with Judy O'Neill as backup. When Sandi moved to Victoria, she continued on as a leader on Zoom which we very much appreciated.

In January we also added a Beginner level class, meeting in-person with seven or eight attending once a week. This lively group was led by Wendy McNaughton, Susan Sherwin, and Sunny Park. Susan decided to retire from this group in the fall. Cathy Vassiliadis joined as a teacher in the fall.

Meanwhile, The Speakers Group which met in person every Thursday morning, continued with its format of participants preparing speeches to present, off-the-cuff table topics and a weekly grammar point and 'thought for the week.' This group had about 6 participants plus leader, Diana Bomford.

Sadly, The Speakers Group had to be cancelled for the Fall term as Diana suffered several medical issues and needed convalescing time.

To complete the 2023 program, The Walk and Talk group started up in 2023, led by Wendy McNaughton. They meet at the church and enjoy conversation as they walk for an hour or so in the Edgemont Village area on Thursday afternoons.

We begin 2024 with optimism that we will continue to grow in numbers, hopefully meeting a need in the community by providing a safe, engaging place for newcomers to practise their English. We also take this opportunity to invite any native English speakers to join our group to boost the numbers of volunteer leaders.

Respectfully submitted by Judy O'Neill on behalf of Janie Ackhurst, Wendy McNaughton, Diana Bomford, Sunny Park, Cathy Vassiliadis, Sandi Parker



Caring Ministry

Caring Ministry Report

Pastoral care happened this past year in the form of telephone calls and cards, along with hospital, hospice and home visits provided by Tanis Van Drimmelen and Ministry Staff. The prayer team brought their prayers and attention to the names sent in by email and those written on the prayer list. And in addition to these, there was a group of volunteers that had

regular telephone visits with those who were particularly isolated checking in with one another and offering a listening ear and welcome contact with Highlands. For much of the year, Ann Echols delivered homemade soup, bringing comfort, care, and nourishment to those in need of a culinary hug. What precious gifts of love and connection!

Circles of Accompaniment were in place as needed to offer love, support, and encouragement in difficult circumstances. They are for anyone in the Highland's community going through a transition, a challenging time or coming to the end of life. They are an intentional, systematic, and timely way of accompanying people on their journey. If you or someone you know in the congregation might benefit from a circle of accompaniment, please be in touch with Will, Julie, Colleen or the circle of accompaniment coordinators, Cheryl Irwin, and Ann Echols.

The Visiting Ministry program that has been in place for so many years under the able leadership of Jacqueline Scott, was very much affected by the COVID pandemic. Rigid precautions remained in place at care facilities long past the time when the rest of us were feeling very much liberated from COVID restrictions. This together with many of the visitors having to step back from visiting means that this ministry of visiting congregation members in care homes is very much in need of more volunteers! If you are interested in finding out more, please be in touch with Colleen Blair!

To all who participated in the care of the Highland's community over this past year, we are truly grateful. And lastly, please remember that staff and volunteers rely on congregation members to let us know when they are struggling, or when you know someone who is. Thank you for helping to make this a caring community!

Blessings,
Colleen Blair

Circles of Accompaniment

Circles of accompaniment are set up for anyone in the Highland's community going through a transition or a challenging time and are meant to accompany individuals (and/or families) in intentional, systematic, and timely ways. The requesting person can suggest who they would like in their circle as well as identify what they feel they need. Each circle is composed of the requesting person, Circle members, and a Circle Coordinator, all of whom are supported by a Pastoral Care Leader and our Ministry Team.

This past year four Circles were set up connecting 32 different congregants to the needs of these 4 individuals.

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl Irwin and Ann Echols.

Healing Hands

This ministry has been a healing presence at Highland's Church since 1998 when it was officially recognized by the Official Board.

- The focus of the ministry is on community outreach and deepening the spiritual quality of life for all.
- There are currently 11 active practitioners trained by the Healing Pathway Society who gather monthly to practice techniques and receive renewal.
- Once a month practitioners offer healing sessions to members of the congregation and community. All are welcome to book an appointment.
- Soaking Prayer is offered monthly during Communion services and is well received.
- Soaking Prayer was offered and appreciated at the Advent Festival and the Loss and Light Service in December



Gratitude to Reverend Julie Lees for her particular efforts at raising the profile of Healing Hands ministry in the congregation this year.

Submitted: Sharon Yetman

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Knit and Knot Group – formerly the Prayer Shawl Knitting Group

Our group of knitters and crafters meet in the choir room every Monday from 1:00 until 2:30. Everyone is Welcome!

We have been happily meeting weekly for more than a decade and in that time, we have knitted many shawls to provide comfort for those needing to be wrapped in the sureness that they are loved and cared for.

During the colder months we also have provided hundreds of toques which were then given to The Shelter, Saturday Lunch participants, to Wish and the Downtown East side community.

Our door is always open to anyone wishing to come and sit for a while, to share comradeship, laughter, and good conversation, Come Join us, we would love to see You!

For more information, please contact Joy Dancey.

Respectfully submitted for the Knit and Knot Group.

Joy Dancey



Congregational Life

Small Groups Connection Ministry

The mandate for the Small Groups' Ministry is to offer opportunities for congregants to connect socially with an intention to get to know each other in deeper and more meaningful ways. Some initiatives were continued from previous years. Others began in 2023.

Small Group Activities active within the 2022 year:

Highland Huddles: Premise is that small groups of three-five folk gather to connect in-person or on Zoom. This past year we had eight Huddles with 32 members participating. Usually members meet every two- four weeks.

Seasons Greetings Card Campaign - A team, under the leadership and expertise of Pam Hollington prepared cards for both Easter and Christmas. Over 300 cards were prepared and sent out at Easter and over 200 at Christmas. At least a dozen congregants wrote, paid postage, and sent several cards each: a generous gift.



Highland's Garden Gang; Twelve folk actively weed, prune, and care for one of three areas of the gardens.

Pitch and Putt- Lead- Mechel MacDonald - A summer opportunity, several alternating days were set up to enjoy Pitch and Putt at Murdo-Fraser. Six folks signed up for a few gatherings.

Summer Tea Parties: this summer four congregants hosted six Tea Parties hosting 33 congregants. Most were held in back yards during the summer months.

Coffee Cluster Event- Following a Sunday Service, 65 folks gathered in the lower hall. In card table groupings of four the intention was to get to know one another. There were very engaged conversations.

Committee members: Betty Chapin, Mechel MacDonald, Ev Leskiw, Bonny Ball, Janine Lovely, Ann Echols

Submitted by Lead- Ann Echols

Birthday Celebrations



January 2023 marked the restart of our monthly birthday celebrations. Each month, folks came to celebrate their birthday with others from the same month. Initially we had individual cupcakes but returned to having cakes. We always have a gluten-free option, as well as fruit for those who prefer that to cake. It is a lovely way to get to know others in a friendly small group setting. A truly intergenerational gathering.

The party team: Wendy McNaughton, Phyllis, and Lindsay Bottomer, Janine Lovely, Ann Echols, Bonny Ball, Tenna and Mark Clarke

Financials

Heritage Fund

The Highland's Heritage Fund (HHF) was formed to provide a permanent endowment fund for Highland's United Church to which individuals can contribute. The operation of the fund according to the Terms of Reference ensures that the income from the money contributed will be available to support projects of an enduring and long-term nature for Highland's Church. Only income from the Heritage Fund can be spent, so the fund continues to generate money for the future.

The Fund is managed by a capable committee of 5 - 7 members appointed by the Congregation with responsibilities to manage the portfolio as set out in the HHF Terms of Reference. Committee members sit for staggered terms of 3 years and approval of this Annual Report will include the appointment for a further 3-year period for Committee members who have reached the end of their current 3-year term.

The money in the HHF is fully invested to maximize returns within acceptable risk parameters. The fund is managed by external investment managers, Connor Clark and Lunn Private Capital. During the year, the fund has rebuilt its base to the former year by the end. The HHF Committee is pleased with the management and performance of the fund on behalf of the congregation. The capital pool continues to grow for the long-term benefit of Highland's United Church.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their continued work over the year: Joan McKone and John Haley, who have left the committee. Judith Walker, Peter Bell and myself are now joined by Kevin McKernan, Kevin Woodman, Maureen Flynn, and Brian Gardiner to carry the work forward. We seek your guidance in welcoming them on board.

We encourage members of the Highland's Congregation to consider a living gift, inserting a donation clause in your will specifying the Highland's Heritage Fund, or making a bequest directed to Highland's Heritage Fund, to continue to grow the fund and to ensure its long-term success and availability for future generations.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,
Scott Hughes, Chair

Finance Committee Report

Operating Fund

2023 Year in Review

The 2023 Operating budget was approved at the April 2023 AGM. With a full complement of staff and the resumption of programming following the COVID years, the budget anticipated income of \$755,800 and expenses of \$822,800, resulting in an operating deficit of \$67,000.

Income was strong during the year. Offerings, despite a small drop in the number of contributors, were up 2.5% over budget before the special appeal in December. With the special appeal, this increased to almost 14% over budget. Building revenue was also up over budgeted levels as annual lease agreement rates increased, and efforts were made to increase building and room rentals to outside groups. In total, building revenues were 20% higher than budgeted. Despite the transition from a large annual Flea Market sale to smaller “pop-up” sales, over \$30k was raised. Income was also generated by the Musical in March 2023, Weddings and Memorials, English as a Second Language, and our Return-It and Tru-Earth affinity programs. With higher interest rates, bank interest income was also strong. The Finance Committee also reviewed the segregated accounts and transferred the balances as described in the 2022 Annual Report.

Offsetting this increased revenue were increases in expenses, mainly driven higher by cost-of-living increases and building maintenance requirements. Overall expenses were higher than budgeted by \$37,000 (4.6%).

The operating deficit persisted in 2023 until the last quarter, when a special appeal was launched to cover the projected shortfall. The congregation responded generously and, coupled with strong rental and other revenues mentioned above, Highland’s completed fiscal 2023 with a budget surplus of \$42,400. This surplus will be carried forward to cover part of the 2024 budget shortfall.

Segregated Funds

Legacy Funds:

Current Ministry Funds (Fund 10)

In addition to the Operating Fund, Highland's has a number of segregated funds that are established for specific purposes. Funds in these accounts can only be used as defined by the fund. These funds relate to areas of Highland's Ministry, Programming and Outreach. Year Ending December 31, 2023, Balances* in the Funds are:

Memorials and Celebrations	\$94,170
Ministry Initiatives	\$42,079
Refugees	\$29,391
Seniors Ministry	\$22,317
Music	\$16,204
Shelter to Home	\$15,692
Saturday Lunch	\$11,977
Summer Programs	\$4,826
Youth Fund	\$4,508
Tucker McKone Memorial Fund	\$4,574
Various smaller funds	\$30,075
Total Fund 10	\$275,813

2. Building and Equipment Fund (Fund 50)

2024 Budget

The financial situation for 2024 continues to be challenging as Highland attempts to balance relatively stable revenues against increasing expenses while supporting a full return to programming.

For 2024, we anticipate offerings to increase by 3% over 2023, excluding the one-time special appeal. We expect a further increase of 1% in building revenue as lease rates increase and we continue the priority on increasing the other room rentals. There are several pop-up sales planned during the year, and we will be looking at potential cost recovery where the operating budget is supporting other programs and activities. There is no musical planned for 2024 so other revenues are expected to be slightly lower than in 2023. Overall, we expect income of \$851,100, which is similar to the 2023 actual, excluding the one-time special appeal.

Expenses are expected to increase by 6.5% over 2023 due to cost of living adjustments and increased janitorial, building repair and maintenance and utilities costs. This includes a \$10,000 increase to the building reserve to help defray some of the upkeep costs associated with greater use of the building.

Overall, we are projecting a budget deficit of \$66,300, which will be partially offset by carry forward of surplus funds from 2023, resulting in a net deficit of \$23,900. With continued review and examination of revenue opportunities and expenses we expect that this deficit can be managed and will provide regular reporting to the congregation on our financial situation as we progress through 2024.

We are also looking to longer term funding strategies to sustain Highlands' operations into the future.

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements 2023 and Proposed Budget for 2024

2023 Statement of Receipts and Disbursements and Proposed 2024 Budget		2023		In \$
		Budget	Actual*	2024 Budget
INCOME				
OFFERINGS	Contributions	440,000	432,038	445,000
	Special Gifts	0	52,401	10,000
	Open/Sundry	11,500	7,438	10,000
	Other Agencies	0	20,863	15,000
	Subtotal Offerings	451,500	512,740	480,000
BUILDING REVENUE	Multi-Year Leases	221,500	240,990	244,600
	Other Room Rentals	40,000	74,612	75,000
	Subtotal Building Revenue	261,500	315,602	319,600
POP UP SALES/THRIFT STORE	Sales Revenue	10,000	31,189	30,000
FUNDRAISERS	Musicals	10,000	20,395	
	Other Fundraisers	5,000	627	1,000
	Subtotal Fundraisers	15,000	21,022	1,000
OTHER REVENUE	Weddings & Memorials	3,500	3,798	4,000
	ESL	1,000	1,531	1,500
	Bank & Investment Income	1,000	5,335	5,000
	Transfers from Funds	12,300	11,561	10,000
	Subtotal Other Revenue	17,800	22,225	20,500
TOTAL INCOME		755,800	902,779	851,100
EXPENSES				
MINISTERIAL	Staffing	309,836	316,267	340,500
	Other Expenses	4,500	2,296	4,500
	Subtotal Ministerial	314,336	318,563	345,000
WORSHIP & MUSIC	Payroll & Related Expenses	48,689	51,689	53,000
	Production Services			2,000
	Music & Choirs	2,000	2,000	4,000
	Music & Choirs Revenue			-2,000
	Worship Expenses	3,500	2,526	2,500
	Subtotal Worship & Music	54,189	56,215	59,500
LIVESTREAM	Payroll & Related Expenses	20,930	18,575	18,500
	Other Expenses	500	808	500
	Subtotal Livestream	21,430	19,383	19,000
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & HOSPITALITY	Payroll & Related Expenses	1,920	1,422	2,300
	Cong Life General Expenses	500	1,583	2,500
	Cong Life Events (Net)		116	250
	Caring & Senior Ministry (Net)	500	-869	500
	Subtotal Congregational Life	2,920	2,252	5,550
EDUCATION & FAITH FORMATION	Payroll & Related Expenses	20,070	18,131	25,500
	General Expenses Ed & Faith	2,875	3,040	3,500
	Adult Ed & Faith			
	Library	1,000	979	1,000

Expenses

2023 Statement of Receipts and Disbursements and Proposed 2024 Budget		In \$		
		2023		2024
		Budget	Actual*	Budget
	Cong Life Events (Net)		116	250
	Caring & Senior Ministry (Net)	500	(869)	500
	Subtotal Congregational Life	2,920	2,252	5,550
EDUCATION & FAITH FORMATION	Payroll & Related Expenses	20,070	18,131	25,500
	General Expenses Ed & Faith	2,875	3,040	3,500
	Adult Ed & Faith			
	Library	1,000	979	1,000
	Summer Program (Net)	125		
	Subtotal Education and Faith	24,070	22,149	30,000
OUTREACH	Mission & Service	25,000	25,000	25,000
	Bridging Gaps	17,500	17,000	17,500
	Community Connections	250	292	500
	Subtotal Outreach	42,750	42,292	43,000
ADMINISTRATION	Payroll & Related Expenses	79,804	77,938	83,200
	Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	9,000	12,038	10,700
	Bank & Payment Fees	6,000	7,714	8,000
	Stewardship	250		250
	Leadership Board	1,000	227	500
	Advertising & Communications	1,500	732	750
	Technical Services	1,000	974	1,000
	Technology Equipment		1,150	250
	Accounting & Facilities	30,750	36,106	34,100
	United Church of Canada levy	31,824	35,006	36,540
	Subtotal Administration	161,128	171,886	175,290
BUILDING & PROPERTY	Janitorial Services	75,000	97,267	95,000
	Utilities	48,500	45,155	50,440
	Repairs and Maintenance	25,000	36,693	35,000
	Building Reserve	30,000	30,000	40,000
	Insurance	23,500	18,524	19,586
	Subtotal Building & Property	202,000	227,640	240,026
	TOTAL EXPENSES	822,823	860,379	917,366
	INCOME LESS EXPENSES	(67,023)	42,400	(66,266)
	Carryover			42,400
	Net deficit			(23,866)

* As of Feb 14, 2024. Figures are subject to revision upon external review.

A Highland's Affirmation

A Highland's Affirmation

*"As followers of Jesus,
We want to be a community that gathers
and takes risks:
to receive and engage a diversity of people..."*

This means people of different ages,
genders or sexual orientations.

This means people of different abilities,
Ethnic backgrounds or economic circumstances.

This means that all people will have access to...

A safe, respectful and welcoming community.

The gifts and experiences of one another

Celebrations of life passages like baptism,
confirmation, marriage, blessings,
healing and care at the time of death and dying.

The opportunity to share in our whole vision.

Our Vision Statement

As followers of Jesus, we want to be a community.
that *gathers* and takes *risks*:

To receive and engage a diversity of people,

To celebrate life-giving worship,

To love and be loved,

To know and be known,

To serve and be served

To learn, pray and grow together.

Trusting in God, we want to be people who *scatter*:

To live out faith in action,

To seek peace, justice and healing,

To share time, ministries and money.

Led by the Spirit, we are continually *transformed*
on this journey.