



# Highlands United Church

Annual Report 2022

Presented at Highlands United Church  
Annual General Meeting  
April 2nd 2023

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## Welcome to Highlands United Church 2022 Annual Report



throughout the last year. There is always more going on than can be expressed on a page, so I invite you to listen for the way God has worked in the decisions, activities, struggles, questions, financial gifts, losses, discoveries, surprises and changes that are represented here. And then come to the Annual meeting in April to contemplate the coming year ahead and celebrate the gifts we have been given.

Blessings, Will Sparks, Lead Minister

### Welcome Message

Welcome to the 2022 Annual Report for Highlands United Church. For over 70 years, people have been gathering in the Upper Edgemont/Capilano neighborhoods in the name of the United Church of Canada under the banner of Highlands United, and what you hold in your hands is the official record of another year in the life of that community. There have been over 70 of these documents compiled. That's a lot of life.

As you read, some of you will be detail oriented. You will love the facts of life and history that is contained in this document- the details of our sacred life together. Others of you will read these reports and get a general sense of vibrancy, love in action, dedication, commitment, even sacrifice, and you will be warmed by the way God is at work. You may discover that not everything is going completely perfectly in the life of Highlands and worry for the long-term vitality that we love so much.

I encourage you to spend some time in this document. I encourage you to pray over the life to which it bears witness. God has been palpably present among us

## Ministers Reflections

### Will's Reflection

As I write this report I am approaching the half way point of my 4 month Sabbatical. That means that I am a little out of the loop of the day to day life of Highlands, while at the same time, getting a good sense of perspective as I look back on 2022. I hope the following reflections offer some of that perspective.

We cannot control how life will unfold. If I didn't know that going into 2022, I sure did by the end of the year.

The year began under the influence of another wave of COVID leading us to fall back into restricted face to face contact, online and then hybrid activities, and all the precautions to which we have grown accustomed. Andria Irwin had moved to Calgary at the end of 2021 and Allie Keir was on Medical Leave. We were blessed with the temporary return of Sandi Parker who, as usual, was able to support so many areas of ministry: children, youth and families, summer programs, worship, community programs, and that great category of ministry, other activities as needed. At the same time, there was a sense that it was time to plan for when COVID would wane and we could rebuild.

For some years retirements, medicals leaves, moves, struggles to find volunteers to cover all aspects of our ministry, and the instability of life under COVID all contributed to a constantly changing demand on staff. Thankfully, 2022 saw the stabilizing of the staffing at Highlands with the return of Allie, Minister of Children Youth and Families, and the arrival of Julie Lees, ¾ Time Congregational Minister. However, with the tragic death of my brother, I found it necessary to step away for a time and heal from accumulated losses in my family. Just when we think things are stabilizing, something else happens.

I was blessed with not only the grace to make room for healing, but also the capacity within the lay leadership and the staff to accommodate my absence. The ability of Julie Lees to begin in ministry under these challenging circumstances amazed me and I will always be deeply grateful for all these blessings.

For some years we have been hoping to re-create our church website which had served us well for 15 years. We were fortunate to receive a grant to hire a

communications specialist, KPU marketing student Anjali Johal. She, along with a team of writers, editors and advisers, and a huge contribution from Melissa Wilkin, we were able to launch the site in late August and early September. I hope that our new website will become a key tool for witnessing to God's work through Highlands and inviting people into the life and work of the church.

There continues to be a few challenges that persistently face us at Highlands. Managing the maintenance, repair and ongoing replacement requirements within the building, and finding ongoing financial sustainability are both hard to achieve. As much as these challenges are significant, as I step back from ministry during my sabbatical, I believe at Highlands we have what we need to face these challenges well. In fact I believe we have an opportunity to re-build after the disruptions of COVID (among other things) and re-shape ministry given what we have experienced and learned through these years of constant change.

It remains true: we cannot control how life will unfold. But we can live in trust. We can offer grace wherever possible. We can live with gratitude and generosity. These are the gifts God longs for us to exercise. And as I look back on 2022, that is what I see. These beautiful gifts, offered freely, give me great hope that whatever 2023 holds, God will bless abundantly.

Blessings, Will Sparks, Lead Minister





## Julie's Reflection

In the best, most possible of ways it feels like I've been at Highlands for years!

Thank you for welcoming me so whole-heartedly into this community, and into the call of congregational ministry at Highlands. Standing on the chancel my first Sunday with you all felt like coming home in a number of ways.

I've had the chance to meet and talk with lots of people, but not everyone ... yet! So, perhaps it is fitting to take a moment now to share a little of my experience and background. I graduated from Vancouver School of Theology (VST) and was ordained in 2011. Some of you may remember Rev. Rob Pollock – he was one of my most instrumental spiritual mentors and he guided me through the final stages of candidacy and into my first church call. He along with a few others have deeply shaped how I approach ministry.

After serving in congregational ministry for five years I returned to my alma mater, VST, to do recruitment for the school. I relished talking with people on discernment journeys; engaging with non-church folks about the value of a theological education; and trying to make VST a household name. This role has informed my ministry by removing any trepidation I may once have had about loudly and proudly talking church in a secular environment.

While at VST I engaged in A LOT of pulpit supply. It was a privilege to be exposed to so many congregations in the Lower Mainland and to share worship together. Those experiences broadened my notion of worship construction and how communities encounter the Holy in many different ways.

Also, during my time at VST I joined the military, serving as a Chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces reserves. I can't express the value this role has added to my idea of ministry and my identity as a minister. The military has invested so much time and effort into training me as a follower and a leader. The role of Chaplain has brought to my church ministry more thoughtfulness, discipline, confidence, pastoral abilities

and commitment to service than I ever could have developed in church ministry alone.

Now, beginning a journey with Highlands United Church feels like coming home to my original call. I've been struck by both the amount of activity and depth of pastoral care this community fosters; and I look forward to diving into workshops and studies and community engagement with all of you as we explore how God is at work among us and in the world.

With gratitude, Rev. Julie Lees, congregational minister



## Highlands United Church—Staff and Lay Leaders

<b>Staff</b>	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 Tech Team Coordinator, Elliot Best	
<b>Music Ministry</b>	Music Coordinator Choir Directors  Accompanists	Geordie Roberts Gillian Irwin, Spirit Singers Geordie Roberts, Genesis II Roz Hollett, God's Free Spirits Roz Hollett, Hand Bell Choir Heather Soderling, Re:Sound Chamber Choir Geordie Roberts and Roz Hollett
<b>Board of Trustees</b>		Bill Denault, Chair Judy Anderson, John Haley, Al Lill Joan Kosick, Peter Ackhurst and Will Sparks
<b>Leadership Board</b>		Ardis Nelson and Sandra Soderling, Co Chairs David Boal, Julie Lees, Craig Madill, Wendie Reinhardt Carole Nelson, Oleh Ilnyckyj, Jessica Keefe. Corey Hollett, Wendy McNaughton and Will Sparks
<b>Standing Committees</b>	Finance  Ministry and Personnel  Worship	David Boal Treasurer Doug McKay, Cameron Forde, Scott Hughes, Will Sparks on rotation, ex-officio  Craig Madill, Chair Diana Bomford, Betty Chapin, Ardis Nelson, Kathleen Whyte, Will Sparks, ex-officio  Gillian Irwin, Chair, Heather Soderling Colleen Blair, Eva Mathieson, Joy Dancey, Ken Irwin, Chris Madill, Geordie Roberts, Janet Warren & Will Sparks
<b>Pacific Mountain Region Representatives</b>		Simone Carrodus, Ardis Nelson and Kelly Pollock

**Highlands United Church**  
**74th Annual Meeting**  
**April 2nd, 2023**  
**Agenda**

**Opening – Call to Order**

*Opening Prayer: Led by Julie Lees*

*Review of Zoom features and test vote*

**2. We Remember / Memorials**

**3. We Welcome / Baptisms, Weddings and New Members**

**4. Procedural Motions**

Approval of Agenda

*Motion: That the Agenda for the Highlands 74th Annual Meeting be approved.*

Voting by Adherents

*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.*

*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.*

*Approval of the Minutes of the 73rd AGM, April 3 2022 and Congregational meeting July 3 2022*

*Motion: That the Minutes for Highlands 73rd Annual General Meeting and Congregational meeting of July 3 2022 be approved.*

**5. Annual Reports**

*Motion: that the 2022 Annual Report be approved.*

*2022 Financial Report (David Boal Finance Committee)*

*Motion: That the 2022 Financial Report be approved*

**6. Staff Report—Craig Madill**

*Motion:*

**7. Nominations Committee Report**

*Leadership Board Confirmation of Nominees xxxxxxxxxx*

*Motion: That the nominations of xxxxxxxx to the Leadership Board be approved*

*Motion*

**8. New Business—Thrift Store Proposal**

**9. 2022 Operating Budget Report (David Boal Finance Committee)**

*Motion: That the 2023 Operating Budget be approved*

**10. Courtesies and Acknowledgements**

**11. Adjournment**

*Motion: That the Highlands United Church 73rd Annual Meeting be adjourned*

**Highlands United Church**  
**73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting**  
**11:43 am – 1:40 pm, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022**  
**Minutes of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, AGM**

In attendance: 62+ screens, some with two people

**Opening** – Call to Order

Called to order at 11:43am.

**Opening Prayer:** Led by Will Sparks Review of

Zoom features and test vote

Zoom voting will be done via “Raise Hand” feature on Zoom, with two rounds done for the benefit of screens with two people.

**We Remember / Memorials**

Bernice Lill, Flo Cuthbert, Bob Shank, Joan Coutts, Janice Snee, Michael Bentley, Maude Soderling, Bud Soderling, Laurice Wright, Harry Cottle, John Pistawka, Irene Beveridge, Mary Prince, Brian G'froerer, Evelyn Heggie, Norma McQuarrie, Roberta Martin, John Glavin & Jean Butterworth

**We Welcome/Baptisms, Weddings, and New Members**

Baptism: Miriam Soderling

Weddings: Michelle Pickford and Michael M Carriera, Annette Goliath and John Blakeley, Bernadette Woit and Ron Maides .

**Procedural Motions**

Approval of Agenda

Motion: That the Agenda for the Highlands 73rd Annual Meeting be approved. Moved by Wendy Grant, Seconded by Simone Carrodus. Carried.

Voting by Adherents

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 Janet Warren. Carried.

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 Steve Beaton, Seconded by Doug Margerm. Carried



## Minutes of 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting continued...

Approval of the Minutes of the 72nd AGM, March 14 2021 and Congregational meeting June 27,

Motion: That the Minutes for Highlands 72nd Annual General Meeting be approved.

Moved by Jacqueline Scott, Seconded by Lisa Madill.

Note made to fix spelling of Jean Butterworth on last year's AGM minutes in Memoriams

Approval. With that adjustment, Moved by Simone Carrodus, Seconded by

Kerry Karram.

## Annual Reports

Motion: that the 2021 Annual Report (separate from Financial Report) be approved.

Addition note; one name left off (ELL Program – Diana Bomford)

Moved by Susan Hughes, Seconded by Wendie Reinhardt. Carried. 2021

Financial Report (Scott Hughes, Finance Committee)

Some finalizing will be being done over the next few weeks. The hacking incident Highlands had in mid December affected a lot of record keeping, but a lot of hard work has been put in to make sure things were ready for today's meeting.

Some grant revenue completed, so that has been a factor moving forward, but has been noted.

Budgeted for \$380000 for staffing, and only used \$373000. That said, looking forward to ease the need for multitasking from other staff, a new ministerial position has been created and is in the midst of being searched for.

Questions posed

Advertising and Communications budget vs actuals has a large discrepancy – the reply is that the tenfold increase was largely a one-time factor towards the new website. The hope is that going forward, it won't be so high.

Motion: That the 2021 Financial Report be approved Moved by Kerry

Karram, Seconded by Ken Irwin. Carried.

## Staff Report—Craig Madill

Thanks expressed to staff for all their hard work and support through another tough year with COVID, pivoting as needed, and supporting in-person and virtual worship.

Motion: that the appointment of Colleen Blair be renewed for 3 more years, July 1,2022-June 30,2025

Moved by Craig Madill, Seconded by Janet Warren. Carried.

## **Minutes of 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting** continued...

### **Nominations Committee Report**

Leadership Board Confirmation of Nominee Oleh Ilnyckyj to be approved (Susan Hogman) Motion: That the nominations of Oleh Ilnyckyj to the Leadership Board be approved Moved by Susan Hogman, Seconded by Kerry Karram.

One note is made that Leadership Board members typically need to be Highlands members; but discussion is had regarding making an exception in this case. His name can be presented to the region for exception consideration. A note is also made that we can ask for that rule to be changed by the General Council.

At this point, there is one person who says that they are in favour of the first two parts, but not necessarily the third, as it potentially opens the door for votes to be affected by voices from outside the community. So the question would then be whether the rule could be changed in a careful way as to preserve aspects of voting integrity.

But it seems even people apprehensive of the third part are clear that they are in support of Oleh's nomination in general.

Suggested amendment: That the nomination of Oleh Ilnyckyj to the Leadership Board be approved, in conjunction with a request to the region for an exception.

Bill Dyer moves. Seconded by Julie Hunt. Carried.

Nominating of lay representative to the Pacific Mount Regional Council (PMRC), Simone Carrodus  
Having a new lay representative has been in the works for some time. When Kelly was approached, she was actively enthusiastic. She is technically not a member, but has been involved in Highlands for a very long time. She is willing to become a member when the next opportunity arises.

Motion: Kelly Pollock be nominated and approved as lay representative to the PMRC for Highlands United Church

Moved by Simone Carrodus. Seconded by Julie Hunt. Carried.

### **New Business—Committee Leadership**

A lot of leadership positions are vacant at the moment, as many groups were disrupted by COVID. Also, a lot of long

## **Minutes of 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting** continued...

time volunteers and organizers have decided to retire from their roles. Having chairs for various departments goes a long way towards easing staff time. Looking for people to take on these roles will take some deliberate consideration and time. How can we attract people to those positions and draw their interest and commitment?

### **2022 Operating Budget Report (Scott Hughes, Finance Committee)**

We do have some extra room revenue hoped for this year compared to the last two, and there have been some annual room rate increases. Grant activity and fundraisers are hard to predict, but we're hopeful. We may be looking at a deficit of slightly under \$11000, but hopefully we can close that gap over the course of the year.

One question is raised as to the increase in the costs around LiveStream – the reply is that much of that has come from a three year grant that covered some of the costs coming to its end, as well as increased production costs stemming from doing much more work around virtual services and pre-prepared videos through COVID.

Motion: That the 2022 Operating Budget be approved

Moved by George Rushworth, Seconded by Carol Nelson. Carried.

### **Courtesies and Acknowledgements**

Thanks to those who contributed over the last year at Highlands. Sandra and Ardis express their thanks to the ministerial team who worked under challenging circumstances, and led and supported us. Thanks to Grace Owens and others working with Children and Youth. Thanks to the Admin staff as well, especially dealing with the aftermath of the hack. Thanks as well to the Music leadership, as well as the tech teams. Thanks to Local Connections, whose leader has just stepped down after 17 years. Thanks to Ed Hunt for being Treasurer as well.

A note is made to add thanks to Lay Supervision to the report if possible.

### **Adjournment**

Motion: That the Highlands United Church 73rd Annual Meeting be adjourned Moved by Melissa Wilkin, Seconded by Janet Warren. Carried.

A retrospective slideshow for last year is played. Adjourned at 1:40pm.

## Minutes of July Congregational Meeting

### HIGHLANDS UNITED CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

July 3 2022

#### In Highlands United Church Sanctuary and on ZOOM

In attendance: 32 screens on Zoom, ~55 attendees in person

**WELCOME** – Leadership Board co chairs

**OPENING PRAYER** - Will Sparks Called to order at 11:32am.

#### **Confirmation of quorum, review of processes for questions, voting**

Leadership Board co chairs

Motion that anyone in attendance can vote on the approval motion (including non -members and adherents). Moved by Simone Carrodus, Seconded by Michael Soderling. Carried.

Voting will be done by raised hands in person, and visually raised hands or the Raise Hand function on Zoom. A second round will be done for virtual attendees with two people on one screen.

#### **Recap of search committee process and introduction of members:**

Janet Warren, Search Committee

Bob Brown, Kerry Karram, Chris Madill, Kathleen Whyte, Ann McGregor, Judith Walker, Nicole Byrom & Will Sparks

First meeting was held on April 1st. A file was uploaded to ChurchHub to start the search.

#### **Presentation of candidate to fill .75FTE Congregational Minister vacancy**

VACANCY - Janet Warren Search Committee

Capt.Rev.Julie Lees is the candidate that has been selected. She holds a Masters of Divinity, as well as Degrees around writing. She holds a .25FTE position elsewhere already, so a .75FTE position is a good fit

MOTION: Moved by Janet Warren

#### **To approve the proposed candidate to fill the .75FTE Congregational Minister vacancy at the term negotiated and presented at this meeting.**

Seconded by Lisa Madill Discussion – none.

MOTION CARRIED

Thanks to the search committee members

Motion suggested to officially thank the Search Committee. Moved by Ross White, Seconded by Chris Robertson

#### **Adjournment**

**Adjourned at 11:46**

## Administration and Leadership

### Leadership Board (LB)

Secretary: Corey Hollett

Co-chairs: Sandra Soderling, Ardis Nelson

Members: Craig Madill, Jessica Keefe, Wendie Reinhardt, Carol Nelson, Oleh Ilnyckyj, David Boal, Wendy McNaughton, Will Sparks, Julie Lees

Member serving to June 2022: Julie Hunt

The year 2022 was a challenging one for LB with the loss of two of our cherished and outstanding members, Wendy Grant and Kerry Karam. We are grateful for their time committed to leadership at HUC, and for their unique and valued contributions to LB discussions and work. They will be missed.

Wendy McNaughton graciously agreed to step in for Kerry, fulfilling Kerry's position until the end of June. Wendy Grant's position remained unfilled. Writing this in early 2023, we are seeking 3 new members for the 2023/24 term.

For governance and leadership, 2022 was a year of hope and reopening. The beginning of the year found us in familiar territory with yet another COVID variant, Omicron, sending us back to restricted gatherings and small circles of contact. After 2 years of pandemic, staff and leadership were well equipped to make quick changes to plans and activities. By the summer months, we were planning for a full reopening of in-person worship and programs for September. Although we carried on with masking and other precautions, it was wonderful to be together, to have the choirs in the sanctuary, to have the children there, and to come back to some semblance of "new normal".

As Leadership Board members, we are awed and grateful for the grace, resourcefulness, generosity, energy, enthusiasm and care of those who lead in both out front and behind the scenes ways at Highlands. If you take the time to peruse this annual report, you will read about and see all the life happening within these walls and extending into the community. We are so very blessed

to have this community of saints who inspire us to join in the worship, reflection, work and play here at Highlands and beyond, that helps us to live out our calling and purpose.

Although we have high participation in leadership, going forward, we have need to fill several key vacancies on the Leadership Board and on other key committees. We invite you to offer your own gratitude to all those who participate. We also hope you will be inspired to offer your gifts of time and talent to this community.

As it was in March 2022, our world is still in a time of great tension and uncertainty. Our vision statement, the words of our preachers, our study of scripture, prayer, and reflection challenge us to respond. As we reflect on the past year and look ahead at the year to come, the Leadership Board at Highlands must plan and prepare for our community moving forward. Guided by our Five-Year Ministry Plan, we are excited and look forward to new opportunities, challenges and the gift of working together, making Highlands the wonderful community that it is.

We give thanks to LB members who give generously of their time and wisdom, finding grace, patience and wisdom as we move along the path ahead.

The work of the Leadership Board in 2022 included:

- Working with staff team, Finance, Stewardship, Ministry and Personnel committees to address finance and staffing issues
- Approving new Congregational Minister position and forming search committee
- Approving establishment of Rentals Coordinator and Intercultural Ministry positions
- Approving a musical production for 2023
- Targeting specific goals within the Five-Year Ministry Plan,



## Administration and Leadership continued...

- Supporting the return to in person worship
- Seeking nominations for LB and presenting our findings to the congregation for approval
- Conducting Extended LB meetings in May and November for check in with all Highlands groups, hearing a presentation from Refugee committee and receiving a proposal for change to a Thrift Store Model from an annual Flea Market
- Meeting with Local Connections as they worked through their discerning of the changes happening within their work and committee
- Supporting Stewardship campaign, sending personal handwritten thanks to all who pledged through Stewardship campaign and those who give on PAR
- With M&P, Finance Committees and staff we planned changes to staffing responsibilities and supported staff and leadership during Will's leaves of absence
- Formed a Sabbatical Committee to oversee the planning of Will Sparks' Sabbatical
- Supported Julie Lees during her first weeks at Highlands
- Will, Sandra and Ardis attended a year long online Spiritual Discernment Program with Susan Beaumont, and began to implement some of the learned practices at LB meetings
- Looked forward to meeting in person once again and saying adieu to Zoom!

Minutes of Leadership Board meetings are available to the congregation, and we encourage you to be in touch with any of the members if you have questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Soderling, Ardis Nelson Co-chairs, Leadership Board

### Ministry & Personnel (M&P)

2022 was another unusual year, although by September, we were able to resume in-person worship on a regular

basis and we have been well served by technology which allows us to include both in-person and on-line worshippers on a weekly basis.

The ministry team Will Sparks – Lead 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 Coordinator and Director of Genesis II Choir, Gill Irwin – Director of the Spirit Singers choir, Roz Hollett – Director of God's Free Spirits and the Bell Choirs, has worked hard along with the worship committee to deliver engaging and moving worship each week both in person and on-line. Sandi Parker remained on contract with Highlands to support the ministry team during Allie's leave and as the call was out for a congregational minister filled by Julie Lees in September, coinciding with Allie's return to work.

Julie Lees joined Highlands following her tenure as recruitment coordinator for the Vancouver School of Theology; her congregational minister position with Highlands is 0.75 FTE which is balanced by her Reserve A position as Brigade Chaplain, 39 Brigade Group in the Canadian Armed Forces. This call at Highlands helps to restore the ministerial staffing complement which has been short following the retirement of Sandi Parker and departure of Andria Irwin when she answered a call at Hillhurst United in Calgary, AB. Julie and Will work closely to serve the congregation in a complementary fashion.

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 on-line 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

## Administration and Leadership continued...

of Canada guidelines and policies, Ministry, Admin, and Music staff received a 1.3% cost of living increase effective Jan 1, 2022. The increase for Jan 1, 2023 is 3.4%.

As the Human Resources overseers of our staff, M&P 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 Highlands wants.

Work of M&P in 2022 included –

- Developing the motion and proposal for a 0.75 FTE congregational minister position along with supporting the call ultimately filled by Rev. Julie Lees
- Working to define an outline of contract work done by Sandi Parker following Andria Irwin's departure, as well as filling the needs of Allie Keir's absence, and other ministerial needs until the congregational minister could arrive
- Supporting Will and the staff during Will's leave in the early Fall
- M&P supported Julie as she joined Highlands while Will was off
- Supporting the return to work for Allie and Will following their leaves of absence
- Reviewing and supporting the plans for Will's sabbatical which started Dec 28, 2022 as well as Colleen's upcoming sabbatical in 2023.
- Reviewing staffing implications when we moved from on-line worship back to in person
- Working with Will and Melissa to carve out facilities rentals from the Office Administrator role and engaging Carol Smith on a short-term contract (Jun 2023) to manage the facilities rentals portfolio – the goal is to ensure that Highlands is getting the most

out of facilities rentals and timely billing for usage

Respectfully submitted by Craig Madill, Chair

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

## Stewardship

Stewardship at Highlands happens in a variety of ways. Along with congregation members' weekly commitment to give to the church, many of the committees are engaged in raising funds for causes and organizations; and raising awareness for folks in need. Thoughtful giving happens in all sorts of ways.

This Fall for the official stewardship campaign that ran from Thanksgiving Sunday to all Saints Sunday, Highlands decided to focus on four key words – one per Sunday: GRATEFUL, BLESSING, UNAFRAID, and DEVOTED. Using scripture and testimony from a variety of people and groups in the church, the congregation were invited to reflect on each of these words. How does giving to Highlands make you grateful? How does giving to Highlands offer you blessings? How does giving to Highlands make you unafraid in this world? How does giving to Highlands push you to be more actively devoted to God?

With the ever dedicated efforts of Tatina Lee and Melissa Wilkin in the office, letters went out to encourage all of us to re-examine our pledge promises; and then statements went out after the campaign was over. This year the efforts of the stewardship campaign resulted in 209 pledges and continued PAR commitments for the coming year totaling \$392,740.40.

As we journey through these days I pray that we all not only experience God's blessing in our lives, but that we are also able to offer God's blessing in the form of love and care to others.

## Property Committee Report

(This committee is in transition and we are looking for interested people to care for our property.)

## Administration and Leadership continued...

If you are interested, please email Will Sparks  
will.sparks@highlandsunited.org )

### Building Management Team

The Building and Equipment Fund (BEF) was established to safeguard the infrastructure and finance future projected capital asset replacements for Highlands United Church (HUC).

The BEF operates as a separate designated fund and receives an annual contribution from the operating resources of HUC which is approved annually at the AGM. In addition to the annual contribution received from the HUC budget there is a great opportunity for private tax-deductible donations to be directed to this fund to assist with its mission.

The BEF is a fund that is independent and thus separate from the operating funds of HUC and will accumulate over the years and be used to underwrite the projected major capital asset replacements.

The capital replacement schedule was created based on work initiated by Alex Wood and updated regularly by the Building Management Team (BMT). A spreadsheet lists the majority of the capital assets of HUC and their life expectancy. The Capital Asset schedule projects the orderly replacement of the assets over the next 40 years. The projections integrate the effects of inflation and are intended to provide guidance to the finance committee regarding the annual cash contributions required to meet the future replacement needs.

BMT reviews this schedule annually to determine what possible capital projects may be required for each operating year.

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

We encourage members of the Highlands Congregation

to consider making a donation to the Building and Equipment Fund via a living gift, inserting a donation clause in your will specifying the Highlands Building and Equipment Fund, or making a bequest directed to Highlands Building and Equipment Fund to ensure its long-term success and its ability to meet the future capital replacement needs of HUC.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Building and Equipment Fund

John B Haley

### Pacific Mountain Region Report

The Pacific Mountain Region (PMR) Council is the governing body of the United Church in B.C. Through the PMR we maintain a relationship with the wider United Church. Ministerial staff and 3 lay delegates from Highlands are members of the Council. In late spring, Kelly Pollock joined Ardis Nelson and Simone Carrodus as lay delegates. Also, Treena Duncan is the CEO ("Executive Minister") of the Region.

Most of the meetings continue to be zooming; it's cheaper, for sure, than plane travel and hotel accommodation! The AGM of the Region in June was in Prince George; Will, and Treena of course, were there; the rest of us zoomed. Two of the Councils of the region, Communities of Faith and Pastoral Relations, were amalgamated in the Fall.

Special tasks within the Region: Will supports the CEO. 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. Colleen was a member of the Mountain Candidacy Board, retiring from that task early in the year. And Kelly became a lay delegate because she is particularly engaged with Truth and Reconciliation work.

Submitted by Simone Carrodus



**Pacific Mountain Region  
United Church of Canada**

## Administration and Leadership continued...

<b>Membership Statistics</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Total Members	426	443	451	451	452	445	443	419	409
Members Removed by Transfer of Membership				2	0	0	0	0	
Members Removed by Death	4	6	8	4	9	9	4	14	10
Members Added by Confirmation	0	6	4	0	9	0	0	0	0
Members Added by Transfer of Membership	0	17	12	6	1	2	2	0	0
Weddings	3	5	3	2	4	4	1	3	4
Baptisms	11	6	6	6	8	4	1	1	2
Memorials, Interment of Ashes and Passing's	9	18	21	14	31	16	8	8	19

<b>Average Sunday Morning Attendance</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<i>(Yearly average Oct-Nov)</i>	263	271	255	244	236	233		83	115

### Christmas Season Attendees

	24-Dec	24-Dec	24-Dec	25-Dec	Total
<i>New Service Times 2015:</i>	<i>Eve 4:00 pm</i>	<i>Eve 7:00 pm</i>	<i>Eve 10:00 pm</i>	<i>Day:10:00 am</i>	
<b>2016 Christmas Season</b>	393	448	190	68	1099
<b>2017 Christmas Season</b>	301	358	147	265 * Pageant	1071
<b>2018 Christmas Season</b>	362	464	115		941
<b>2019 Christmas Season</b>	366	443	110		919
<b>2020 Christmas Season</b>	50 On zoom	584 online	389 online		1023
<b>2021 Christmas Season</b>		452	259		711
<b>2022 Christmas Season</b>	255	263	79	23	620

\* Christmas Eve fell on a Sunday in 2017—the 265 attendance is for the Christmas Pageant held on Sunday, Christmas Eve.

## Administration and Leadership continued...

### Memorials and Passing's (16)

*Alan Gadsby passed March 16 March 2020*

*Antonio Ciccone passed away May 7<sup>th</sup> 2021*

*Blair Edward Mercer passed away August 18 2021*

*Eleanor O'Neil passed away February 12 2022\**

*Sandra Robertson passed away February 17<sup>th</sup> 2022\**

*Florence Jean Wallace passed away March 5<sup>th</sup> 2022\**

*Leota Jean Drake passed away April 8<sup>d</sup> 2022\**

*Eric Cella passed away May 13<sup>th</sup> 2022*

*Peter Schaerer passed away May 19<sup>th</sup> 2022\**

*Alan Hounslow passed away May 27<sup>th</sup> 2022*

*Betty Elizabeth Hudson passed away June 10<sup>th</sup> 2022\**

*Margaret Ferguson passed away July 13<sup>th</sup> 2022\**

*Kerry Karram passed away July 29<sup>th</sup> 2022\**

*Denise Louise Robb passed away November 24<sup>th</sup> 2022*

*Wendy Grant passed away December 1<sup>st</sup> 2022\**

*Irene Joyce Graham passed away December 9<sup>th</sup> 2022*

*\* United Church Members Deceased: 9*

### New Members by Confirmation (0)

### New Members by Transfer of Membership (0)

### Baptisms (2)

*Hayden Laura Brown May 15th 2022*

*Norah Lily Brown May 15th 2022*

### Weddings (4)

*Liam Niall O'Brian and Kyleigh Lynn Youngman July 2022*

*Christopher Joseph Marshall Brentlinger-Grant and Phillipa Katherine Mary Reed July 2022*

*Shane Wendell Sanford and Stephanie Elizabeth Clark August 2022*

*Jerel Kenneth Brouwer and Shannon Leigh Dayton September 2022*

### Interments Only (4)

*Pearl Lois Hammond*

*John Leonard Hammond*

*Calvin Stead*

*Robert (Bob) Baxter\**





## 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. The year 2022 was a year marked by transition and change:

January found us still worshipping on-line only. We returned to worship in-person March 6 and continued our on-line worship.

Will went on bereavement leave early August which became medical leave September 2. He gradually returned to work starting November 1 and started his well-earned sabbatical that had been postponed by a year on Dec 28.

Julie Lees joined the ministerial staff on September 1 and worked full time during Will's absence. Julie was hired to work .75FTE

Allie began her gradual return to work in early September.

In mid September Sandi Parker was rehired as part of the worship staff during Will's absence and ended her contract when Will returned to work in November.

Thanks go to our worship staff of 2022, Will Sparks, Ken Irwin, Julie Lees, Allie Keir, Colleen Blair, Sandi Parker and Geordie Roberts, who continued to create meaningful worship throughout many changes and uncertainty, and to those volunteers who joined in the process and provided support.

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. Since our return to in person worship we have experimented with many ways of sharing in this sacrament to create a feeling of safety and security for those involved. Thanks to those who plan and implement this process:

Diana Bomford, Betty Chapin, Mechel MacDonald, Lisa Madill and Oleh Ilnyckij.

Thanks go to those who "hosted" the online services and engaged in the chat box. As a church we suffered a huge loss this year when Kerry Karram passed away. Kerry was a faithful and gracious online host for years and was a driving force behind creating online community. A special thanks goes to Eva Mathieson, Jacqueline Scott and Kathleen Shenfield for continuing this meaningful work.

Thanks go to the choirs and their directors who faithfully provided music in many different ways: SpiritSingers (Gillian Irwin), Re:sound (Heather Soderling), Genesis II (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.

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", although not, at times "in-person": Elliott Best (Tech Crew Lead), Liam Roberts, Corey Hollett, Noel Hollett, Aidan Roberts, Talen Bentley-Michaud, Tristan Bentley-Michaud and Andrew Yetman.

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, Julie  
Lees, Geordie Roberts, Will Sparks



### Music

Music Ministry at Highlands continues to involve a now somewhat larger faithful core group of singers, choir directors, bell ringers and other musicians along with sound technicians, videographers, film editors, script

## Worship and Music continued...



writers and someone on the tricaster to push 'play' every Sunday. This past year, something approaching normal has allowed us all to breathe a little more easily both literally and figuratively. The Spirit Singers return to in-person choir in worship in April 2022

after two full years of pre-recorded anthems in various formats brought a renewed energy and engagement to congregation and choir alike. God's Free Spirits and Genesis Too experienced the same starting in September We are grateful to Re:Sound for providing live choral music in worship in Spring 2022, and the return of the summer choir was also very welcome. 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 during the pandemic.

In anticipation of an even MORE "normal" September, 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 be a rebuilding time, a great time for new faces and new ideas to find their place among us. There are opportunities for enthusiastic people from age 5 to 95 to share their musical gifts.

Respectfully submitted,

Geordie Roberts

## Welcoming Ministry

The first part of 2022 saw us once again doing online worship exclusively. The silver lining in this was the continued flourishing of the online community and vibrancy of the chat box on Sunday mornings, thanks in large part to the efforts of Kerry Karram. With the return to in person worship, the online community is smaller but it remains a vital part of the Highlands

## Seniors Ministry

community as a whole. We have been blessed in the latter half of 2022 to have Eva Mathiesen, Jacqueline Scott and Kathleen Shenfield acting as chat box hosts. For those watching online, the weekly zoom coffee hour has transitioned to a less frequent gathering but with a guest host each time.

Sunday morning in person worship has a committed group of Greeters as well as a dedicated group of Welcome Hosts coordinated by Jon Carrodus, who offer thoughtful hospitality each and every Sunday to both long time members and newcomers alike. And beginning in 2022 when we resumed coffee hour, a wonderful group of volunteers take a turn monthly in providing coffee following worship. In addition, and as she has done for many years, Simone Carrodus sets up a table each Sunday with information on various initiatives and ministries, along with current sign up sheets.

To all who participate in this ministry of hospitality, our very deep thanks for the many and varied gifts you offer!

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Blair, Minister for Seniors and Hospitality





## Seniors Ministry continued...

### Seniors Ministry

The Seniors Programme in 2022 began in a subdued fashion, focussing on online postcards, telephone calls and cards as Covid once again curtailed in person activities. However, by spring we were gathering together once again and venturing out on bus trips, always balancing safety and risk with the social and emotional need to be together in person. Some of the highlights include:

- An exploration of Generative Aging, with Don Robertson
- A visit to the tulip festival and lunch, in Chilliwack
- A presentation on Truth and Reconciliation, with Kelly Pollock
- Lunch at the Sylvia Hotel
- Visiting the Museum of North Van
- Lunch out in Steveston
- A delightful Christmas celebration in the sanctuary with part of the Higher Ground Choir

Perhaps the most significant part of the programme in 2022 and which involved challenging topics and courageous conversations, was a 6 part series entitled "To Everything There is a Season: planning for a good death." This included the following presentations:

- An introduction to varying traditions and perspectives on death and dying, given by Colleen Blair
- A visit from Dr, Paul Sugar and conversation around end of life choices
- A presentation from Alex Muir of Dying With Dignity, on Medical Assistance in Dying
- Navigating the Health Care system, with Patient Advocate Connie Jorsvik
- A presentation on Advance Care Planning and the opportunity for seniors to work one on one with Connie Jorsvik to complete their ACP documents
- A session with Geordie Roberts and Colleen, on the role of ministry staff at the end of life and thoughts on how we will be remembered, including memorial service planning.

As always, it is a tremendous privilege and delight to be in

ministry with and for the Seniors at Highlands and to have the continued support, encouragement and friendship of the exceptional group of volunteers that help make this ministry possible!

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Blair, Minister for Seniors and Hospitality





## Children, Youth and Families



I can't express enough how thrilled I am to be back at Highlands and extremely happy to be back with my little ones – Wow, how the children have grown! I would like to thank all those that stepped in and stepped up to fulfill my duties while I was on leave to care for Lachlan. To know and trust that all our children, youth and families were so well cared for during my 2-

year absence brought much comfort. My family and I also received such incredible support from our church family ... with sincere gratitude, we thank you!

There was so much energy when I started back in September. Families and children were hungry and motivated to regain community that had been put on hold during Covid. Although our numbers in Sunday school and choirs are not yet back to pre-covid levels, there is a real sense of commitment and determination to reimagine, redevelop and revitalize our programming at Highlands. Covid has been a very difficult time for all of us. It's really shaken the foundation of so many things. So let me take this opportunity to extend an open invitation for families and children to come back to Highlands and see what's new! Please come as you are, you are always welcome, we would love to see you.

Thursday choir nights saw a return of 'Spirit Time' for our God's Free Spirits. In conjunction with Roz's leadership of singing practice for worship, our little group also participates in a mini bible lesson, story and craft time to compliment what will be taught on the following Sunday. This is such an eager bunch of

children, and I am super excited and blessed to witness their learning and to support the growth of their faith.

Sunday School consists of 1-2 classes depending on who shows up. All children are welcome! Our Sunday school teachers are Laila Kasim-Parkinson, Gillian Forde, Emma Byrom and Avery Shmidt. Though most of them are new to teaching Sunday School, they are quick learners and excellent at providing a safe and fun space for the children of Highlands to explore their faith.

We have used a variety of curriculums, but mostly lessons that I've prepared to compliment what the adults are learning and discussing in worship. We have a strong core of younger children in attendance on any given Sunday, ages ranging from 3-12, and occasionally some teenagers that Bochon teaches. In September we were thrilled to be able to offer Nursery care once again during worship, under the leadership of our beloved Alexa Villalpando





## Children, Youth and Families



### Events for all ages:

All Hallow’s Eve: We had an amazing turnout for this favourite HUC annual event. The evening included a potluck dinner, crafts, costume parade and our traditional ‘darkness to light’ walk followed by a candlelight gathering in the sanctuary. It was so awesome to see so many wonderful and creative costumes...and we had enough food this year to feed everyone without a last-minute trip across the street to Thriftys!

Pancakes & Pj’s: we held this event on Advent 2 Sunday before worship, and were please to serve up 150 pancakes with all the scrumptious toppings to 50 people!

Live Nativity was held once again in December. This was my first Live Nativity and it didn’t disappoint!! The goats, sheep, and miniature horse were so cute – but the donkey was my favourite! As spectacular as the animals were, they were certainly upstaged by our Mary and Joseph volunteers. Oh, my heart!! This event had great visibility and drew a lot of



attention to our Edgemont Village community, as we had a lot of non-church members spend some time with us at the stable. The gathering of community is part of what makes this event so special.

### Youth Group:

In my two-year absence, Grace Owens and Bochon have done tremendous work at building our youth group. We have blossomed to a keen group of 25-30 youths!! How amazing is that!! In the fall we held events every 2 weeks, which included:

- \*Games night
- \*Starburst & Aliens (a youth favourite!)
- \*Baking night
- \*80’s Prom Murder Mystery night (yes, the costumes were sensational)
- \*Christmas Lights at Capilano Suspension Bridge

Respectively submitted by Allie Keir





## Children, Youth and Families cont...

### Summer Program:

As always, 2022 was a busy and full summer at Highlands. A total of 4 camps on site at Highlands were offered, with 3 going forward. (One camp had insufficient registrations but will be offered again in 2023).

New this year was an experimental partnership with *Camp Spirit*, the Regional United Church Day Camp for children. Highlands had been encouraged by our funders to work with Camp Spirit in the past, and with Allie on leave and new staff with still developing skills, this seemed the summer to try this. There were several benefits to working with Camp Spirit, including participation in their leadership and staff training, opportunities to learn new songs and games, and a chance to explore and practice different ways of sharing faith and faith stories. Camp Spirit staff were skilled and dedicated. However we found it to be costly in terms of financial contribution and Highlands' staff time and resources, and a little different from our traditional camp 'culture' at Highlands. It was a good experiment and well worth doing, but at the end of the summer staff recommended that we continue with our own programming in the future.



Some of the highlights from the summer included:

- the hiring of all new summer staff and recruiting of many new volunteer leaders (youth crew). All the staff were younger and less experienced than in the past, and it was exciting to watch their growth through the summer as they gradually became more confident in their ability to lead small and large groups of children as well as manage the many administrative tasks of running camps.
- A new choir camp, *Earth Song*, was offered under the leadership of Gill Irwin and Geordie Roberts. A wonderful performance of the songs and dances for friends and family rounded out the week and the camp introduced some community children to the

excellent music program we have at Highlands.

- A brand new model for LIT's (Leaders in Training) for young people grade 6 - 8. With a program created by Grace Owens and led by Bochon, Grace and Kaysen, the LITS enthusiastically practiced their skills throughout the week of the camp, while forming their own unique community among the campers. We are looking forward to seeing these young people step up as youth crew and staff in future years.
- Because of the limited experience of our new staff, Carl Steffens came back to us for a week to serve as Camp Director. Staff expressed enthusiasm for Carl's leadership and that they felt more confident under his direction. It was great to see one of our summer staff 'alumni' back as a role model for younger staff.

Overall, approximately we had a diverse summer community of nearly 100 registrations in summer camps, 3 full time summer staff, 3 contract/short term staff and 5 youth crew. Although we once again received full Canada Summer Jobs funding to assist with wages, our registration fees were kept low to match the (regionally subsidized) Camp Spirit fees, and this, along with the cost of hosting camp spirit and increased costs for food, wages, supplies and out trips, meant that the Summer fund ended with a 0 balance. For 2023 we will need to find a variety of ways to rebuild the fund in order to continue to offer these programs for children and youth. As always, members of Highlands enthusiastically welcomed and supported the staff and the campers and provided support through donations of food and volunteer time, and for that we say a resounding 'thank you'!



Submitted by Sandi Parker

## Adult Ed and Faith Formation

### Book Circle

This small group activity, founded in 2004, continues to nurture connections through literature as we met ten times this past year to discuss a wide range of books. Five were by Canadian authors (*Mary Lawson, Beverley McLachlin, Catherine Hernandez, Lindsay Wong and Emma Hooper*) who took us coast to coast from Newfoundland to Scarborough to the lower mainland as well as to the Supreme Court of Canada. The others took place in countries as diverse as Korea, England and Iran so we travelled the world together (thanks to *Min Jin Lee, Penelope Lively, Marjan Kamali, Lisa Genova and Sue Monk Kidd*).

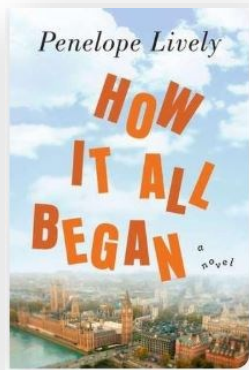
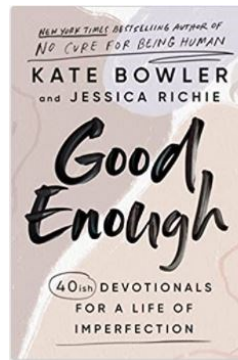
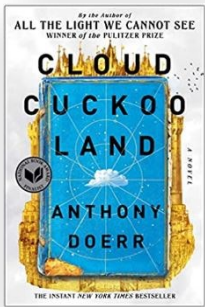
We are a circle not a club so all are welcome whenever their schedules and interest in a particular title permits.

Attendance ranges from 6-10 people so it provides an opportunity to get to know each other in a broader and deeper way than is possible during a quick chat at coffee time. Various congregational members have told us that, although they can't currently attend for logistical reasons, they often choose to read each month's book selection – we think of them as a secondary “halo” around us!

Respectfully submitted by  
Phyllis Ferguson Bottomer

### Library

All are welcome at Highlands 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,



## Social Action and Community

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 and are always interested in hearing about titles that you would like to see at the library.

Submitted by Betty Chapin and Robin Rivers

### Study and Reflection/Adult Ed Groups

Weekly scripture study ran from winter to summer in 2022, with people meeting every Tuesday to explore the upcoming Sunday service's scriptures. This practice stayed on hold after summer and was not offered in the fall. However, everyone in the church was invited to participate in Colleen Blair's programming of “planning a good death.” During Lent Will Sparks offered a book study exploring Kate Bowler's book “Good enough.”

### Moving toward becoming an Affirming Ministry

As part of our Five-Year Ministry Plan, we set the goal to “broaden and deepen our leadership and relationships with the wider community.” More specifically, we wanted to “explore how we could be a more inclusive and welcoming congregation to a more diverse population including members of the LGBTQ+ community.” In November, 2021 the Leadership Board gave approval to formally start the process to become an Affirming Community of Faith. A working group was formed and met on a monthly basis throughout 2022.



## Social Action and Community continued...

Through tidbits posted in the Friday Highlights and displays in the Welcome Space on Sunday mornings, we have provided information to engage and educate folks on the Affirming process. A survey was conducted in June, 2022 with many congregants responding. This gave the working group valuable information on how to proceed. Each week our welcoming message intentionally mentions a diversity of people including all gender identities and sexual orientations. For Pride Sunday we welcomed Keith Murray who reflected on the Affirming Ministry work being done at Hillhurst United in Calgary. To have a more visual welcome to the LGBTQ+ community, we displayed the Progressive Pride flag on the bell tower. Unfortunately, it was torn down and destroyed multiple times. A new Progressive Pride banner will be placed on the bell tower at different times throughout the year. We now have window decals at each of the entrances with the message "All are welcome here." Also, we added the option for folks to have their preferred pronouns included on their nametags. Welcoming bookmarks were designed to go in the chair pockets and in the Welcome Space to convey a more inclusive welcome message. The working group reached out to current Affirming churches in order to meet with them on Zoom and benefit from their varied experiences of becoming Affirming Communities of Faith. We are well on our way to becoming a congregation that publicly, intentionally and explicitly welcomes a diversity of people, including those from the LGBTQ+ community.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy McNaughton

On behalf of the Affirm Working Group

### Highlands United Growing Greener (HUGG) Group

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

The HUGG core group has still been meeting monthly, by zoom.



The group includes Simone Carrodus (chair), Jon Carrodus, Ev Leskiw, Doug MacKAY, Caroline Mahoney, Jean McTavish (of Pacific Spirit United), and Wendie Reinhardt. Will joined as he was able in terms of time. Tasks: Simone chairs; Jon does the weekly HUGG notice for

highlights; Jean is involved with Drawdown; Wendie is board liaison; Doug does recycling stuff, and Ev sews cloth bags for veggies; she sells them to raise money for books or whatever. She also sewed some cloth bags for use by the Saturday Lunch programme, so that they don't need to use plastic bags.

Ross White continues to be very involved with Kairos' "For the Love of Creation".

In late November, we did our first "Litter Pickup" around Edgemont Village, inviting others in the congregation to join us. The prime objective, after saving the oceans from plastics, of course, was showing folks that Highlands United Church cares about the environment. It was highly successful; a few joined us, and we had fun too. Caroline dealt with disposal: that's her special task, and we're all grateful! We plan to continue doing litter pickups.

Nothing's perfect: it's still a bit of a headache getting people to put recycling and garbage in the right bins.

submitted by Simone Carrodus

### Advent Festival

As life gradually returned to something more normal after all the restrictions of the last couple of years it was exciting to be able to hold our Nativity Exhibit once again. The traditions held strong and we set things up in the Lower Hall with the same core of volunteers who have helped each year and the welcome addition of a number of new helpers.

About 200 sets were on display, many familiar ones from



## Social Action and Community continued...

previous years but an unexpected number of new sets. It is always amazing that so few sets are identical. Many are traditional creches but we see such a great variety of ways to depict the setting of the first Christmas. Our thanks to all who loaned us their precious sets.

Many thanks go to Carol Rushworth who registered each set as it came in – a system that proved its worth this year when one stable was mislaid but we were able to track it down by following the record.



Special thanks to the faithful band of volunteers who decorated hallways, Christmas trees and the Welcome Space, made the entranceway welcoming with lights and greenery, set up the children's area and the labyrinth, set up tables and shelves, 'draped' the ceiling, placed lamps and arranged the display, as well as to those who acted as hosts during opening hours, the musicians and to Sandy and Colleen who served warm cider and made sure snacks were available for the volunteers.

Our annual welcome to the local community for the start of the Christmas season was a great success and we look forward to doing it all again in about 9 months time!



Chris Robertson

### Global Connections

- Continues to meet as needed by phone and zoom
- Maintains Highlands' partnership with Artesana Collective in Guatemala
- Celebrated Artesana's 16 years of service to women in jail and advocacy for legal changes at a worship service in September
- Donations to Artesana now made through Codevelop-

ment Canada. Congregation members continue this financial support

- We have re-established the Action Table in the Welcome Space.

Sharon Yetman (chair) , Jon Carrodus, Simone Carrodus

### Local Connections

Local Connections is a small committee of 5 members that reaches into the North Shore Community & the Downtown Eastside to support our partners with money for programs. Clothing & toiletries, Socks & Rain Ponchos are delivered regularly by our volunteers for the many people, at risk, that they serve. Our 3 main partners are FIRST UNITED MINISTRY, WISH DROPIN SOCIETY, and CAPILANO COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY. Our other partners that receive money from our budget are CAMP FIRCOM, North Shore LOOKOUT SHELTER and Highlands United CHRISTMAS HAMPER MINISTRY. SATURDAY LUNCH & SHELTER TO HOME are included in our partners but do not receive money from our budget. We thank DOREE PIERCY for her many long years of service to our committee offering her kindness & compassion as liaison to FIRST UNITED for over 50 years. Sheila Durward has resigned as chair, after 17 years but remains on the committee. There has been no replacement found yet.

We are struggling as a committee with aging members & less energy. We, as a committee are trying, after many hours deliberating in 2022, under the leadership of Will Sparks, to reimagine & reshape our vital work of social justice, improving lives of people at risk in our community and what form our

COMMUNITY OUTREACH should take.

Our budget of \$17,500 has been the same for many years. Our partners costs have greatly increased over COVID & the recession, feeding & providing programs, for the many vulnerable people, suffering from addiction, poverty, mental health issues, loneliness and lack of housing. Our budget was distributed: FIRST UNITED MINISTRY \$10,000., WISH \$4500, CCSS \$1600, Camp FIRCOM \$665, N.S.LOOKOUT SHELTER \$200, CHRISTMAS HAM-

## Social Action and Community continued...

PER MINISTRY \$535..... TOTAL \$17,500

Our Committee members: Ruth Kershaw, Sheila Stanway, Wendie Reinhardt, Ev Leskiw, Sheila Durward & Rev. Will Sparks

### Flea Market

2022 was a year when we gradually found a way to stay safe after the pandemic, while still running our church programmes including Flea Market donations, sorting and sales.



As we revived donation drop offs after the pandemic wave, we decided to end the “open” drop offs and we set up a designated time on Saturday mornings to receive donations. A new sign-up system was created so that folks could volunteer

when they were available. Having a designated time for donations provided time for some pre-sorting and time to engage and socialize with donors. We are delighted to welcome some new members of the congregation to both the Saturday drop off and the Tuesday morning sorting and happy to report both activities are running smoothly.

The social time enjoyed by the Saturday volunteers is enhanced by the time shared by some 40 – 50 people each Tuesday morning when we sort and store the donations and thrill to the buzz of conversation at our coffee time. This is such a valuable part of our time as members of this community at Highlands and we are so pleased that we have been able to continue it throughout most of the pandemic.

We held two sales in 2022, a Summer Sale was held in June focussing on summer items including jewelry fol-

lowed by the Gigantic Flea Market Sale in October when we were able to mingle more freely as restrictions were eased. Both sales were very successful, raising over \$46,000 for the work of Highlands United Church.

We are so very grateful for all the folks who volunteered at the sales and particularly to all those who show up to help on Saturdays and Tuesdays – we couldn’t do it without you! Thank you so much!

The yearly October sale event has been a staple of the church for over 30 years and attracts people from all over the mainland. Many of our volunteers have been with us since the beginning although some have now retired. When the market was established, the church had hundreds of volunteers and the proceeds of the sale were used to support special projects. In recent years, the church has come to depend on the sale proceeds to support the work of the church and outreach programs. The FM team have been considering ways to evolve our beloved FM sale while maintaining the strong community spirit that exists. After much consideration and plan-





## Social Action and Community continued...

ning, the FM team presented a proposal to the Leadership Board to approve in principle, moving from a yearly sale model to a Thrift Store model. A Steering Committee was created to work on a feasibility study, funding and community engagement. The committee will report on its progress and findings as we move through 2023.

Thank you everyone for your continued support of this vital and thriving program.

Submitted by Chris Robertson for the Flea Market Team.

### Antiques and Collectibles Sale

Thanks to the generous and thoughtful donations of treasures and curiosities alike, we had good inventory to present at the Flea Market. Our terrific team of Karen Larsen, Diane Pitcher, and Melanie Martin all contributed to the success of the day. Kerry was missed dearly, and her presence was truly felt. A fun time was had by our sales team and faithful customers in anticipation of special finds! Total take from our couple of tables was \$3,300.

Submitted by Susan Hughes



### Truth and Reconciliation Circle

Seen as one of the Highlands 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

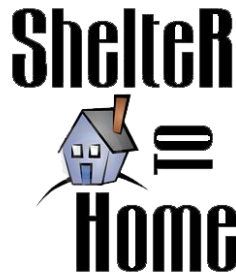


## Social Action and Community continued...

### Shelter to Home

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 in Force and took part Connect Day during Homelessness Action Week.
- Shelter to Home celebrated its 14th anniversary in September this year, and have served 2176 clients in that time
- There has been a 25% increase in clients over the number in 2021, due to an influx of Ukrainian refugees, and supplying furnishings for 22 victims of the Silver Lynn fire.



- 21 volunteers, (16 church members and 5 volunteers from the community), have given over 4000 hours to the running of this outreach program in 2021.
- 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, advertising our needs to the North Shore community, working with clients, working with referring agencies.
- In 2022 Shelter to Home received Staff assistance from Melissa Wilkin( finances) and Sandi Parker (grant applications).
- With grateful thanks to the Shelter to Home team for the hours and effort contributed, and to all those who have supported us with donations of goods and funds



- In October 2020 we moved to a storage space at 1067 Churchill Crescent, North Vancouver, and are now paying 5 times the amount of rent we paid from 2010 to 2020.

- Of the 213 clients served this year, 156 stayed on the North Shore. 73% or 51 clients were seniors, representing 24% of our clients.
- 60 of our clients were refugees/immigrants, or 30%, mostly from the Ukraine and Iran.
- Amongst our clients were 21 families with children or 10 %. Most were single parent families.
- Community referrals came from churches including Highlands United, former clients, community groups eg the Multicultural society. Some repeat clients referred themselves.
- In 2022 funding was received from North Vancouver City and District Community Grants, individual donations from church members, corporate donors, individuals and fundraising events.

### Shelter to Home Financials:

#### Revenue

Grants: (DNV)	3893
Other donations:	7204
<b>Total revenues:</b>	<b>11,097.00</b>

#### Disbursements

Rent:	3895
Damage Deposit:	1500
Phone:	274.80
Transportation of furniture:	3808.75
General Expenses:	936.42
Strategic Plan Consultant fee:	1845.00
Domain Fee:	26.47
Store Manager Fees:	2776.5
<b>Total disbursement</b>	<b>15,062.94</b>

## Social Action and Community continued...

### Shelter to Home Client Statistics for 2022

Client Statistics:	Number of Clients	% of total clientele
213 clients were served in 2022	66 men	31%
	101 women	47.7%
	46 children	21.6%

### Referring Agencies

Sage House/North Shore Crisis Center	30	14%
Hollyburn Seniors' and Family services	31	15%
Lookout North Shore Homeless Shelter	20	9%
West Coast Family Services	12	25%
Community (churches, Multicultural Society)	53	25%
Vancouver Coastal Health	17	8%
Canadian Mental Health Association	10	5%
North Shore Women's Center	04	02%
Silver Lynn Fire Victims	22	10%
Shelter to Home Web Site	26	12%

### S2H Statement receipts disbursements, 2022 proposed budget 2023

RECEIPTS	Proposed 2022	Actual 2022	Proposed budget 2023
ProVision (June)	0	0	0
CNV (Dec)	0	3000	7000
DNV (Aug)	3893	3893	6500
Embr Spirit(Dec)	0	0	0
Donations	12,000	11802.13	20000
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,893</b>	<b>18695.13</b>	<b>33500</b>
DISBURSEMENTS			
Rent	23,370	23370	23370
Damage Deposit	0	0	0
Pick ups	5000	6432.5	7000
Storage Mgr contract fees	4000	1500	3000
Phone	300	474.78	500
Web	2000	81.35	3000
Strategic Plan consulting fees	0	0	0
Supplies/Misc	1000	1326.98	1500
Other utilities, promotion	0	182.14	1000
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,670</b>	<b>33367.75</b>	<b>39370</b>
<b>Fund Balance December 31 unrestricted</b>	<b>20,600</b>	<b>15450.8</b>	



## Social Action and Community continued...



### Saturday Lunch

Saturday Lunch, also known now as Lunches in the Lane, is a Highlands United Church Outreach program. We provide a nourishing lunch year-round, to people who are

living on extremely limited incomes, including a few people who are homeless. Our guests include a variety of ethnicities and some families with children.

#### Some facts about Saturday Lunch

- Since April 2020, when we had to change our program due to the pandemic, we have been serving bagged lunches in the lane

behind North Shore Neighbourhood House (NSNH)

- The lunches consist of sandwiches, fruit, beverage and cookies or granola bar



- Our numbers vary over the year, but we ended 2022 preparing and distributing 100 lunches each week
- We have 3 volunteer teams: 4 people work at the church from 10:30 to 12:30, making the sandwiches and packing the lunches. At 12:30pm, 2 people transport the lunches to NSNH. 4 people greet our guests and hand out the lunches
- Columbus Market gets our weekly food order ready and provides a discount
- Cobs bread donates some bread or buns each week
- Queensdale Market made a donation of \$400 in gift cards which went towards bread. They continue to bake the required number of loaves to make sandwiches.

- We have continued to receive weekly fruit and/or other surplus items from the Vancouver Food Bank, located in NSNH.
- Several cookie bakers from Local Connections keep us supplied with treats to pop into the lunch bags each week.
- In December we handed out \$10 Tim Horton's gift cards tucked inside special Christmas cards created by HUC folks
- Thrifty Foods donated freshly sliced turkey breast to enable us to make special sandwiches
- Our guests continue to be grateful for the stability we inject into their often-precarious circumstances, by providing lunch every Saturday, year-round.
- We are grateful for these community partnerships.

The funding for this outreach ministry comes from generous individual donations from members of this congregation and community, as well as grants from the City and District of North Vancouver. The North Shore Tai Chi Spirit groups continue to be generous donors to our program. The cost of the food and sundries is about \$175.00 to \$200.00 weekly. Given the success and importance of this program, we are always welcoming new volunteers! Check the Volunteer Schedule on the Highlands United Website and join our dynamic team, volunteering as little as once a year, or as much as once a month or more. You can join the team by contacting Kumu Navaratnam, Volunteer Scheduling Coordinator.

Email her at:  
kumu@shaw.ca

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy McNaughton

on behalf of The Saturday Lunch Team





## Social Action and Community continued...

### Refugee Committee

Highlands Refugee Committee is a volunteer group which leads the congregation in opportunities to sponsor, assist & settle refugees to Canada. 2022 marked the 43rd year of Highlands' global outreach work in Refugee Sponsorship!

Our 12-month co-sponsorship of Mohammad's family of four (after fleeing religious persecution in Iran) continued throughout the year. We supported their settlement in North Vancouver including two apartment moves (assisted by Shelter to Home's furniture donations), employment search, English practice, orientation to the local community and services.

Mo is a barber at Gentleman Jack's; Sima excels in her language lessons and volunteer work with Saturday Lunch Program; Bahar is a Shell employee and Sina works in London Drugs computer department. In December, Committee members and the family celebrated their one-year anniversary in Canada & the completion of sponsorship with a special holiday dinner.



In May 2022, we learned of two young families (7 individuals) who had fled the bombings in Ukraine and arrived in North Vancouver via the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET). Highlands Congregation stepped up to raise sufficient funds to assist their settlement here and provide donations to two other Lower Mainland faith communities for outreach programs assisting Ukrainian newcomers seeking refuge from the conflict.

We are hoping to sponsor another refugee family in 2023 and welcome new members.

Respectfully submitted, Highlands Refugee Committee:

Marilyn MacDonald (Chair), Peter Ackhurst, Catherine Alkenbrack, Lindsay Bottomer, Bill Dyer, Phyllis Ferguson, Kelly Pollock, Wendy McNaughton, Will Sparks, Brian Wyatt

Ex Officio Member: Jean Gabrielse

### Mens Breakfast

Back to the future?

Our weekly breakfast meeting is a long standing tradition, stretching back nearly 40 years. Of course, COVID made in face gatherings impossible. Not to give up, we resorted to Zoom meetings to maintain the friendly conversation if not the sharing of food. Last year, we upped the game and purchased a meeting Owl for Highlands which allowed us (and other groups) to have a hybrid get together, virtual on Zoom and live in our Welcome Space. The Owl moderated the discussion quite successfully.

But we missed the real thing, so in the past few weeks we returned to the future, with breakfast back in the Eighties restaurant at Lonsdale and 14th. Looking ahead, we plan to meet at the Eighties on the first Monday of every month and in the Choir room and on Zoom on other Mondays.

Another marker of the return to normal was the recent 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.

So “Bless this food to our use and us to **your** understanding.”

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

## Social Action and Community continued...

### English as a Second Language (ESL) English Language Learners (ELL)

Our ELL (English as a Learned Language) Program continued through 2022 with changes to our format to try new ways of working within Covid recommendations, having fewer participants both as volunteer native English speakers and new English learners. We continued to only meet on Zoom, although we did have a couple of 'in person get-togethers', carefully managed with COVID guidelines.

We found we only had a few Beginner level participants so we had to cancel any programming at this level to maximize the teachers' time. All participants who wanted, could try our new program that we called Intercultural Conversations. Here we welcomed anyone who was interested and designed each week's Zoom gathering around whoever was present, taking advantage of Break Out rooms to group participants according to English level.

Under the guidance each week of Sandi Parker and with 4-5 native English speakers we had conversation groups for topics ranging from 'New Years celebrations in your culture' to 'Canadian Wildlife' to 'Experiences Making a new home – Ukrainian Refugees arrive'.

These sessions were attended by about 7 new English speakers and usually 5-6 native English speakers.

In the fall, we continued with this format of Intercultural Conversations (ICC) but we changed up from having Sandi as leader each week to several volunteers taking the lead. We continued to have about 5-7 new English learners.

Meanwhile, The Speakers Group which met every Thursday morning on



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Zoom, continued with its format of participants preparing speeches to present, off-the-cuff table topics and weekly grammar point and 'thought for the week'. This group had about 4 participants plus leader, Diana Bomford.

Respectfully submitted by Judy O'Neill on behalf of Sandi Parker, Janie Ackhurst, Wendy McNaughton, Susan Sherwin, Diana Bomford, Margaret Harrington

### 15<sup>th</sup> 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 provide learning and leadership opportunities for youth age 5 through 26. In 2022, there were 49 youth and 16 adults. That included 16 Beavers, 18 Cubs, 15 Scouts, 0 Venturers, 0 Rovers, 13 Leaders and 3 Group Committee members.

The sections met weekly, sometimes outdoors, but often by zoom. By April, more meetings were in person. Things were more normal by the fall and camps were allowed to happen.

Leaders and Group Committee at the 15th were volunteer parents and community Scouters. The committee members were Amber Akerberg (Group Commissioner), Chris Jones (Treasurer), and Eleanor Oakley (Church Liaison). The Cub Leader Ross Borsoi helped with the Group Admin role. Secretary and Fund-raiser roles were vacant.

Submitted by Eleanor Oakley Church Liaison, 15th Capilano Scout Group

Pacific Coast Council, Scouts Canada



## Caring Ministry

### Caring Ministry

Although challenging at times due to Covid restrictions, pastoral care happened this past year in the form of telephone calls and cards, along with hospital and home visits. 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. With thanks to Ann Echols and Kerry Karram, deliveries of homemade soup along with porch visits, also brought 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 and in an adapted format, to offer love, support and encouragement in difficult circumstances. They are for anyone in the Highlands 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.

To all who participated in the care of this 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

### Visiting Ministry

Where did this year go folks? COVID issues & Flu issues were still lingering in 2022 in our community. Our church came back slowly in-person with being on alert for safety within our walls. We kept the Hybrid model of In-person services plus using the Online Services for folks not

returning in person. We could hear the BUZZ of Joy in the community! Unfortunately, we could not return to our 'monthly personal visits' by volunteers for the many Seniors Facilities either for Assisted Living/Memory Care or Independent Living.

We worked with our Minister of Seniors, Colleen Blair with creating and sending "Thinking of You" cards to each member in the facilities to make up for the lack of our personal visits. Thank you volunteers who did this! We miss our folks we usually visit!! But, for safety for all, this is best!



The number of facilities we cared for in 2022 was 14. We had 29 Congregational Members we prayed for, cared for, & most of all kept each person in our hearts so no one was forgotten. Sadly, in 2022, with heavy hearts, we said our good-byes to 4 lovely members. Our Ministry Staff supported their families during the grieving of their loss.

We have always tried diligently to follow Highlands 5 Year Plan to 'Love, Know, Serve & Pray together from a distance'!!

The Visiting Ministry Team of volunteers have in the past been very dedicated to their visits on a 'monthly basis'. With our COVID issues, they still focus on praying for these folks along with them sending their "Thinking of You Cards". Thank you to (no particular order) Jeanie Vulliez, Estha Murenbeeld, Ann Echols, Barb Margerm, Margaret Harrington, Ron Watson, Judith Lee, Carol Beattie, & Ariel Creighton. The Visiting Ministry Team would like to 'thank' our dedicated Leadership Team for Pastoral Care, Rev. Will Sparks, Colleen Blair & our newly hired Congregational Minister, Rev. Julie Lees for their support.

Submitted by: Jacqueline Scott, Co-ordinator



## Caring Ministry continued...

### Healing Hands



This ministry resumed in September after a one-year sabbatical and discernment process by the members.

- The focus of the ministry is on community outreach and deepening the spiritual quality of life for all.
- There are a total of 17 trained practitioners from over six different faith communities and some who are not aligned with any particular faith community.
- Regular meetings twice a month.
- Appointments for sessions available for anyone.
- Congregant requests for sessions have been and continue to be at an all time low yet healing stations during communion and evening services are very well received.
- Lynn Valley UC has began a Healing Ministry stream with the support of the HUC group.



Gratitude to the Major Reverend Julie Lees and the Stewardship Team for their particular efforts at raising the profile of Healing Hands ministry in the congregation this year.

Submitted: Ross White, Sharon Yetman

### Prayer Shawl Ministry

Knit and Knot Group – Also Known as the Prayer Shawl Knitting Group

Since the last report The Prayer shawl Knitting Group has changed its name. We are now known as The Knit and Knot Craft group.

This change in name and nature accommodates all who craft with their hands and encourages more lovely people to join with us on Monday's.

Although our knitting focus is still mainly in providing Prayer Shawls for those who would benefit from being wrapped in a lovingly and prayerfully knitted shawl, we also now have Sewers, Crocheters, Quilters and even some doing Embroidery.

We are so lucky and blessed to have such a diverse group.

During this autumn and winter season we continue to knit Touques and Scarves which are then donated to The Outlook society as well as The Wish Foundation, The Downtown Eastside Community and the Saturday Lunch clients, and we have provided 100 items so far this year.

We meet each Monday at 1:00 in the Choir room. All are Welcome, the door is always open and we are always excited to welcome anyone who would enjoy an hour or two spent knitting, sewing or crocheting accompanied by good conversation and much laughter.

Please come and join us! Respectfully submitted by

Joy Dancey, On Behalf of the Prayer Shawl Knitting Group





## Congregational Life

From the warm and spirit filled energy of Sunday morning worship to the myriad of meaningful local and global outreach initiatives, and from annual events such as the Advent festival and flea market, to the weekly gathering of sorters, knitters and men's breakfasters, there is so much to be grateful for at Highlands. Add in bi-weekly seniors events, the occasional intergenerational meal together, education programs for all ages, an active book circle and the creative initiatives of the Small Group Connections team, and it's clear that the life of the Highlands Congregation is healthy and flourishing. This place is imbued with the Holy Spirit, and the energy, the passion and the spirit of generations past and present, and the 2022 annual report in it's entirety, is evidence of this! To all those who help to create and maintain this community of faith in whatever way that happens whether large or small, we are deeply grateful!

Respectfully submitted,  
Colleen Blair

### Small Groups Connection Ministry

Small Group Activities active within the 2022 year:

- Highland Huddles: Lead- Ann Echols. Premise is that small groups of 3-5 folk gather to connect in person or on Zoom. This past year we had 8 Huddles with 33 members participating.
- Photo Pursuit- Lead Wendy McNaughton - This was the second Photo pursuit held within the SM frame. In total, we had 5 teams with 32 participants.
- Seasons Greetings-Valentines Day Card Campaign Well over 200 cards were sent out to most of the congregants.
- Highlands Garden Gang -Lead: Ann Echols - This initiative was set up with the retirement of Peter Schaerer with a goal to maintain Highlands' gardens. 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. Twelve folk signed up to enjoy the fun.
- Summer Tea Parties and Coffee Clutches. Lead-Ann Echols - This summer 10 congregants hosted 18 either Tea Parties or Coffee Clutches involving 86 invitees. Most were held in back yards during the summer months. Very successful.
- Knit and Knot- Lead- Joy Dancey - A continuation of the Knitting Group and an extension of the Prayer Shawl Ministry, this year the 14 members met and among other projects, knit 100 toques that were distributed among the homeless.
- Christmas Card Construction and Christmas Card Campaign- Lead : Pam Holloington, Ann Echols. Pam Hollington donated and prepared materials, and coached 16 folk to create over 200 Christmas cards that were all posted.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Echols and Colleen Blair



## Financials

### Heritage Fund

The Highlands Heritage Fund (HHF) was formed to provide a permanent endowment fund for Highlands United Church, to which individuals may 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 Highlands United. Only the income from the Heritage Fund can be spent, not the principal, so the fund continues to generate money for the future.



vis-à-vis market expectations. A renewed investment mandate was established with our fund manager for the coming years.

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

The Committee membership for 2022 was Judith Walker, Joan McKone, Peter Bell, John Haley and Scott Hughes.

The Fund is managed by a capable committee of 5 - 7 members appointed by the Congregation, with responsibility to manage the portfolio as set out in the HHF Terms of Reference. Committee members sit for staggered terms of three years and approval of this Annual Report will include the appointment for a further three-year term for committee members who have reached the end of their current three-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 2022, the portfolio began the year at \$284,558 and ended the year at \$257,988. During the year, additional contributions were received in the amount of \$12,500, and are currently held by HUC. The Committee also undertook a close review of the investment parameters for the fund

*Heritage Fund Asset Allocation – Dec. 21, 2021*

## Financials continued...

### Finance Committee Report

During the COVID years of 2020 and 2021, HUC ran surpluses which eliminated an accumulated deficit in its operating account. The budget approved for 2022 anticipated only modest changes in income and expenditures compared to previous years, and this proved to be a correct assumption for most accounts. On the revenue side, income from the fall Flea Market was an impressive \$20K higher than 2021, and bequest income of almost \$17K found its way into the operating fund. In addition, we repaid the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) loan, of which \$20K was forgiven and consequently contributed to income. Increased rental revenue from our two primary tenants, as well as other room rentals, added an extra \$50K compared to 2021. Although some sources of income declined, the net rise in operating revenue was \$99K, from \$715K in 2021 to \$814K in 2022.

- On the expenditure side, most of the staffing costs were at, or below, projections. However, the cost of utilities, custodial services and repairs were notably higher than expected, a trend that will have to be reckoned with in 2023. Somewhat lower in magnitude than the increase in revenue, expenditures increased by \$80K from \$691K in 2021 to \$771K in 2022, including a one-time bump in HUC's contribution to Mission and Service from \$25K to \$35K.

- Overall, the manageable deficit of \$11K initially forecast for the operating account in 2022 became a very surprising \$43K surplus largely as a result of one-time items. Some of this surplus will be left in the operating account and \$20K will be used to reduce the 2023 operating deficit.



## Financials continued...

### Segregated Funds

The operating fund is the primary focus of the budget, but it is not the only component of Highlands' financial statement. More than a dozen segregated funds are separately tracked in the accounting system even though their monies may be held in HUC's general bank account. Three of the largest such funds are:

**Building-related funds.** A group of accounts is associated with the on-going renewal of our building and infrastructure, such as the roof, heating system, floors and siding. Their total balance in 2022 was \$236,565.

**Ministry Initiatives Fund.** Provides start-up funds for new programming, balance is \$37,995.

**Highlands Heritage Fund.** This is a long-term endowment fund with a balance of \$237,790.

Other segregated funds have generally smaller balances and are associated with specific programs that are not part of the core operations of the church. These funds are not always under HUC's control. Among them are:

Grants Fund	\$ 19,166
Memorials & Celebrations	\$ 84,521
Music Fund	\$ 16,204
Refugee Fund	\$ 3,952
Saturday Lunch Fund	\$ 10,014
Senior's Ministry	\$ 16,682
Shelter to Home Fund	\$ 16,308
Summer Programs Fund	\$ .....0
Tucker-McKone Memorial Fund	\$ 4,575
Youth Fund	\$ 4,933

These ten funds sum to \$176,354. In the above list, the Memorials and Celebrations Fund stands out because of

its \$84K balance. This fund accumulates donations that can be used for general purposes; it will be drawn upon to cover part of the projected 2023 deficit.

Lastly, a group of funds with generally smaller balances rounds out the segregated funds: Christmas Dinner, Faithfest, Flowers, First United, Godspace, Healing Touch, Highlands On-line, Intercultural Ministries, Lay Education, Livestream 2, Memorial Garden, Minister's Discretionary, Quilters, Robert Shank Fund and Special Outreach. In 2022, their balances summed to \$33,926. Three of these funds have outlived their purpose and their balances of \$11,500 will be transferred to the operating fund (Highlands On-line, Livestream 2 and Christmas Dinner). In aggregate, the segregated funds total \$722,630.

### 2023 Budget

Financially, HUC has survived the COVID years fairly well, and in the post-COVID environment, we look forward to expanding our program base and welcoming new talents to our staff complement. Sunday attendance is healthy, the choir has returned and some new faces have appeared in the congregation. And we're spending more money. At the same time, a decision has been made to replace the fall and spring sales this year, and establish a year-round thrift store. The Thrift Store format is thought to be more suitable to our volunteer base, and will provide a steadier income stream. However, income from the store will not likely replace income from the semi-annual sales for at least a year.

For 2023, we will close some dormant accounts and transfer their balances to operations, adding \$11K to operations; we will also lengthen the replacement lifetimes of our computers. Even with these modest measures, in the absence of bequests and Fall Flea



## Financials continued...

income, we expect 2023 income to fall by about \$60K with respect to 2022. At the same time, restoring and expanding the program base, along with general inflationary pressures, will increase expenditures by about \$50K. In total, the difference between income and expenditures for operations will swing by \$110K from a surplus of \$43K to a deficit of \$67K.

Fortunately, the operations budget is not the whole story. We propose that \$20K of the 2022 surplus be carried forward to 2023. Further, significant funds have been accumulating for several years in accounts that are separate from the operations account, and we propose that \$40K of these monies be used to cover the remaining part of the deficit. This is a one-time option: although the Memorials and Celebrations account accumulates donations on an on-going basis, it is often a cushion for funding budgetary overruns and could not sustain another large withdrawal in 2024.

## 2024 Outlook

All of the expenditures that appear in the 2023 budget will still be present in 2024. Until revenues improve, our best estimate for the deficit in 2024 and beyond is \$70K. On the revenue side, we hope that an expanding program base will lead to a growing congregation, and that the Thrift Store will be successful. In the absence of this, spending reductions in the range of several tens of thousands of dollars will be needed. By Fall of 2023 we will begin to have a clearer picture of how HUC's financial situation is evolving.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Melissa Wilkin, Tatina Lee and Ed Hunt for their careful work in keeping Highlands' financial house in order. We also thank our external accountant Ted MacCormac, who provides excellent guidance and year-end reviews of our finances. The current membership of the Finance Committee consists of Dave Boal (chair), Cameron Forde, Ed Hunt (treasurer), Scott Hughes, Doug Mackay, Sandi Parker and Julie Lees / Will Sparks (ex officio).



## Statement of Receipts and Disbursements 2022 and Proposed Budget for 2023

### Income

#### Offerings

	2021	2022	Budget 2023
Envelopes	421,746	433,600	440,000
Special pledges	2,700	5,302	-
Open collections	10,220	10,992	11,500
Other agencies	11,030	6,810	-
<b>Building revenue</b>			
Pre-school	73,849	83,472	83,500
Waldorf School	126,600	146,090	138,000
Other rooms	20,372	41,033	40,000
<b>Fundraising</b>			
Flea markets	21,432	42,632	5,000
Musicals	-	(84)	10,000
Other sources	5,277	4,387	5,000
On-line / marketplace	-	-	5,000
<b>Other revenues</b>			
Weddings / memorials	616	2,502	3,500
ESL	1380	680	1,000
Bank interest	347	383	1,000
Grants / bequests	2,167	36,667	-
Transfer from funds	17,533	- -	12,300
<b>Subtotal</b>	<u>715,272</u>	<u>814,467</u>	<u>755,800</u>

<b>Expenses</b>		Budget	Actual	Budget
		2021	2022	Budget 2023
<b>Ministerial</b>	Staffing	229,142	229,798	309,836
	Sabbatical	2,000	2,100	-
	Other	3,581	4,480	4,500
<b>Worship / Music</b>	Staffing	63,227	52,609	48,689
	Music / choirs	1,389	1,365	2,000
	Worship cttee expense	3,623	2,034	3,500
<b>Livestream</b>	Staffing	6,915	16,672	20,930
	Expenses	544	1,042	500
<b>Congregat. life</b>	Staffing	-	854	1,920
	Expenses	-	2,010	500
	Caring / seniors	147	403	500
<b>Education / Faith</b>	Staffing	3,913	11,777	20,070
	Resources	2,065	2,920	2,875
	Summer prog. (net)	-	3,942	125
	Library	221	847	1,000
<b>Outreach</b>	Mission & services	25,000	35,000	25,000
	Community connects	-	-	250
	Local connections	17,500	16,965	17,500
	Global connections	2,600	400	-
<b>Administration</b>	Staffing	69,753	73,932	79,804
	Office supplies	7,183	8,268	9,000
	Financial charges	5,442	5,653	6,000
	Stewardship	-	-	250
	Leadership Board	260	584	1,000
	Advertising / Comms	7,258	1,316	1,500
	Accounting service	21,032	25,550	30,750
	Technical service	1,552	1,534	1,000
	United Church	29,249	29,363	31,824
	HUGG	643	-	-
<b>Building / Prop</b>	Custodial service	74,691	85,238	75,000
	Utilities	40,013	49,184	48,500
	Building R&M	21,017	46,882	25,000
	Computer / AV R&M	4,006	4,061	-
	Insurance	<u>17,329</u>	<u>24,524</u>	<u>23,500</u>
	Building Reserve	<u>30,000</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>30,000</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>		<u>691,295</u>	<u>771,307</u>	<u>822,823</u>
<b>Income-Expenses</b>		<u>5,743</u>	<u>43,162</u>	<u>(67,023)</u>

Figures are subject to revision upon review.

## A Highlands 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.

***Whoever you are...***

***Wherever you are on your faith journey...***

***Whatever you want to ask...***

***...you are welcome and accepted.***

### **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.