

Caring & Connected

June, 2022

Coming Together Again!

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CHAIR OF CHURCH COUNCIL

Richard Cranston

We certainly live in interesting times and we have much to be grateful for! In the early waves of the pandemic, it was rare for any one of us to know someone who had COVID. After this latest Omicron wave, we all know a friend or family member who has tested positive. Through it all, we've topped up our vaccinations, worn our masks, practiced physical distancing and survived. Thanks to the Emergency Preparedness Committee for their advice and encouragement.

Council has continued to meet regularly via Zoom and under our three pillars to keep us spiritually engaged, community focused and connected with each other. Some committees have started to meet in person, others continue to use Zoom, but all continue working to fulfill their mandates. Thanks to all those committee chairs and committee members who work so hard for Christ First. And let's not forget the supporting office staff, music teams and those who care for our buildings.

We're also grateful for our new minister Reverend Heather. Right off the bat she has challenged us with her Questioning theme. Who are we and what do we want to be known for? How should we live? Where and when should we show our love? We're excited to have her with us. Rev. Scott continues his pastoral care duties and prepares to turn those duties over to Rev. Heather at the end of June. And Victoria! Every time I see her leading her group of youngsters the group seems to be larger by one or two. The strength of our ministry team bodes well for our future.

Since our last Semi-annual Congregational Meeting, we've seen some changes on our way "back to normal". The hymn "One More Step Along the Road I Go" comes to mind. One step at a time, we are adding things back to our routine from the pre-COVID days. Some things from those days may not come back and new things will take their place. We will continue working to make Christ First the Church that God would have us be.

May it be so.

Richard Cranston
Council Chair

**LEAD MINISTER****The Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz**

Dear Friends,

Composing, typing, even thinking about this message to you, comes exactly one month into our ministry together. It's been a busy month, as you know well, and yet that is as expected. It was anticipated, eagerly, and is held with fondness on this side of its unfolding. Slowing down and breathing deeply are also good – for body, mind, and spirit – but the present fullness of calendar and commitments speak to a living, intentional community. As your Council has heard me say recently, that's what I signed up for; it is what I said yes to, in saying yes to you.

By the time we gather for our Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting, I will have just celebrated 18 years since Ordination. It's a unique sort of anniversary, and yet not unlike others, where folks like me parade out old photos of grand days with gowns and richly coloured garb that may be mostly tucked away these days. Even less than 2 decades into my journey from that day, I see those photos and notice so many changes. Maybe it isn't physical differences I mark so much as the realization of how much has happened since then. There's been a level of learning and maturing I could never quantify, but I feel it in my being; I know it in how I choose my words now, make decisions, remember past mistakes. Hopefully it's all for the better, in what I say and do these days compared to then, but inevitably there are many future learnings, too.

Through it all, I marvel at the individuals and the communities that have nurtured and mentored me, all along the way. Joining with you now, in this marvelous place called Christ First, I know myself surrounded by people of all ages and stages, in life and faith, who make intentional choices to not just gather here, but to work, serve, and make a difference, from here. Together, you form a busy community, in the pursuit of saying yes to God. For all that has changed for you, in your families and this your church family, at home and within this church home, this past year, two years, and more, there is a beautiful constant that I see and feel clearly: you are committed to following Jesus. I know that should be a given for a church, but in you it is very real and named. I am very, very grateful for that. I am blessed to be along for the ride, and can't wait to see what we can learn and say about each other, in all the months and years to come.

Grace and peace, always,

Heather

*"Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire."*

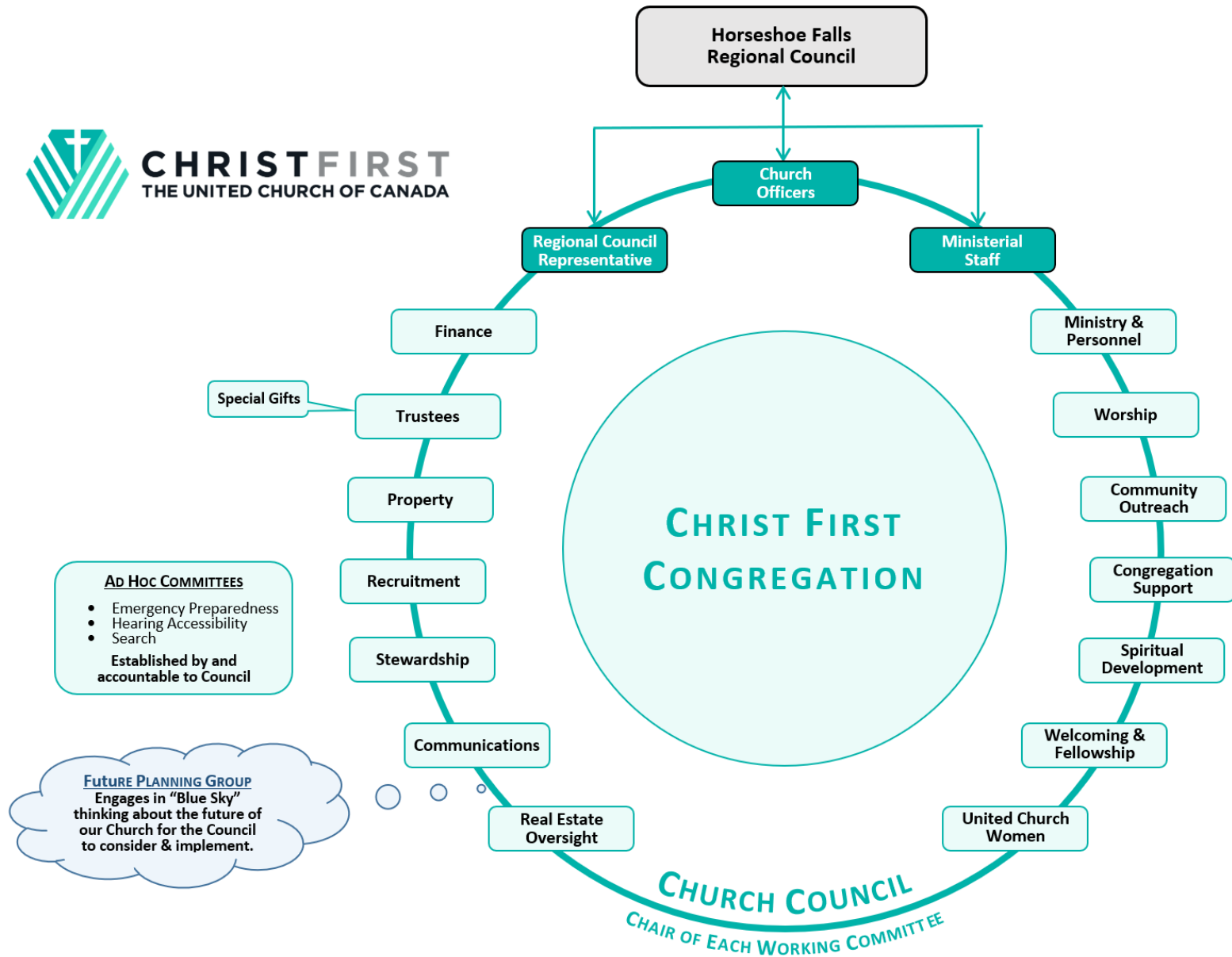
(John O'Donohue, 'For A New Beginning',
To Bless The Space Between Us: A Book of Blessings)



GOVERNANCE MODEL



CHRIST FIRST
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA



**CHRIST FIRST COUNCIL****2021-2022**

Ministerial Staff

Senior Minister *	The Rev. Dr. Morar Murray-Hayes (to April 30, 2022)
Lead Minister *	The Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz (from May 1, 2022)
Minister, Pastoral Care	The Rev. Scott Beckett
Youth Music Program Leader	Victoria Keane

Church Officers

Chair of Council	Richard Cranston
Vice Chair	
Past Chair	Steve Shaver
Secretary	Carol Wilson
Treasurer	Dana Bryant-Giguere

Regional Council Representative	Shawn Bausch
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Committee Chairs

Board of Trustees	Rick Donaldson
Finance	Clarke Grice
Ministry & Personnel	Sue Gittings & Heather McGillis
Property	David Wheeler
Worship	Andy Choles
Communications	Al Hubbard
Community Outreach	Kay Cranston & Christine Whiting
Congregational Support	Marg Shaver
Real Estate Oversight	Steve Shaver
Recruitment	
Spiritual Development	Teresa Madeira
Stewardship	Louise Sinclair
Welcoming & Fellowship	Joanne Quennell & Elisabeth Evans
United Church Women	Pat Skinner
Emergency Preparedness	Kay Cranston & Heather McGillis
Future Planning Group	Shawn Bausch
Call Process/Search	Mary Dowding-Paré
Hearing Accessibility	Carol Wilson

*Is Ex-Officio member for all committees except Ministry and Personnel

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS****January to June, 2022**

Committee	Chair/Co Chair (Sub Committee:)	Members	
Board of Trustees	Rick Donaldson	Barb Abrams Martti Ahonen Leslie Fagan Claude Lewis	John McGillis Donna Pounder Steve Shaver
	<i>First United Foundation:</i>	Barb Abrams Mike Pounder	Christing Whiting Merle Zoerb
	<i>Special Gifts:</i>	Leslie Fagan Janis Cowie Daphne Donaldson	Pat Skinner Christine Whiting
	<i>Archivists:</i>	Charlie Black	Kathie Black
Finance	Clarke Grice	Dana Bryant-Giguere (Treasurer)	Ian MacDonald Doug Mills Christine Whiting
Ministry & Personnel	Sue Gittings Heather McGillis	Sandi Ahonen Charlie Holtmann Holger Krutzelman	Jill Robinson Pat Skinner
Property	David Wheeler	Martti Ahonen John Dymond Paul Fagan	John McGillis Stephen White
Worship	Andy Choles	Rev. Morar Rev. Heather Victoria Keane Christine Barlow Janis Cowie Evan Hoffman Greg McCausland Leanne Piller Jane Wamsley	Sandy Garraway Mary Dowding-Paré Christina Gorgeious Sherri Holtmann Sandra Gittings-Keane Heather McGillis Karin Stangenberg Marilyn Young Ruth Collins
Communications	Al Hubbard	Sheryl Darlington Mary Dowding-Paré Christine Barlow	MaryEllen Hern Victoria Keane Robert Raymond
Congregation Support	Marg Shaver	Rev. Scott Susan Eggleton (Roll Clerk) John Fargey	Marion Grossman Marg Joyce Nancy Rudderham
	<i>Church Visitors:</i>	Martti Ahonen Jim Bright Liz Brown Rosalie Burnison Pat Butler Olive Dahlinger Edith Davidson Linda Donaldson Rick Donaldson Penny Ecclestone Cliff Elliott Paul Fagan John Fargey Erin Furlong Ed Gresham Heather Grinton Marion Grossman	Marg Joyce Wendy Hamilton-Smith Inge Kent Sylvia Mason Ken McCauley Jane Rodd Claudette Rowley-James Judy Scott Norm Smith Karin Stangenberg Wendy Stuart Grace Vandermale Marilyn Watters Claire Watts Janet Williams Peter Wood Merle Zoerb



Committee	Chair/Co Chair (Sub Committee:)	Members	
Community Outreach	Kay Cranston Christine Whiting	Lynda Bianchi Mike Giguere Barb Lewis Gail McDermid	Penny McKean Joanne Quennell Virginia Warren
Real Estate Oversight	Steve Shaver	Barb Abrams Rick Donaldson Dave Gittings Jeff Sinclair	Rev. Morar Rev. Heather Carol Wilson
Recruitment			
Spiritual Development	Teresa Madeira	Sandra Gittings-Keane Nancy Jessup	Victoria Keane David Heatley
Stewardship	Louise Sinclair	Dave Gittings	
Welcoming & Fellowship	Joanne Quennell Elisabeth Evans	Kathie Black Michael Giguere MaryEllen Hern Marg Joyce	John McGillis Debra Moy
United Church Women	Pat Skinner	Liz Brown Chris Kerr Marg Shaver	Tanya Swinbourne Marilyn Watters Christine Whiting
Future Planning Group	Shawn Bausch	Richard Cranston Teresa Madeira Heather McGillis	John McGillis Virginia Warren Rev. Heather
Emergency Preparedness	Heather McGillis Kay Cranston	Ruth Collins Mary Dowding-Paré	Nancy Hori
Hearing Accessibility	Carol Wilson	John Dymond David Gittings	Ed Mock
Search	Mary Dowding-Paré	Richard Cranston Barb Abrams Maia Choles Tong Liu	Shelley King Ron Kucharski John Williams



HORSESHOE FALLS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Shawn Bausch

While individual churches continue to struggle with financial and people issues, National and Regional initiatives are booming.

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council purpose is to “Support, Connect, and Empower Communities of Faith”. These words were chosen by Regional Council as a reminder of its commitment to be in partnership with communities of faith.

Regional Council is supporting and disseminating several programs to live out this purpose which give communities of faith access to direct support and/or money as well as opportunities to gather for the sharing of faith:

New Horizons for Seniors Program

<https://hfrucc.ca/new-horizons-for-seniors-program/>

UCW Tri-Regional Online Gathering

[UCW Gathering February 2022: VIDEO - Horseshoe Falls Regional Council \(hfrucc.ca\)](#)

Orange Shirt Day

[Orange Shirt Day Archives - Horseshoe Falls Regional Council \(hfrucc.ca\)](#)

Anti-hate Program Grants

[Call for Applications – Ontario Grant - Horseshoe Falls Regional Council \(hfrucc.ca\)](#)

Multi-faith Solidarity

[Multi-faith Statement of Solidarity - Horseshoe Falls Regional Council \(hfrucc.ca\)](#)

My Main Street Community Activator Program

<https://hfrucc.ca/applications-open-for-the-my-main-street-community-activator-program-year-two/>

Music Ministry Gathering Program

<https://hfrucc.ca/music-ministry-gathering-in-2022/>

National Church Initiatives

GC44 is underway! The first General Council (GC) to be held online and to run across multiple months rather than just several days. GC44 began on February 13 and will run through Sunday August 7, 2022. The format is virtual. The program was spread over six months in order to enable the broadest possible participation while organizers and attendees alike maintain their daily obligations.

All our welcome to connect with GC44 here:

<https://generalcouncil44.ca/about/connect-gc44.>

Please sign up for the GC44 newsletter for updates to your email for all of the initiatives and discussions as they happen. This is your church in action.



Continuing Funding Programs

Embracing The Spirit

The United Church is looking for new ways to engage with members. And, to provide opportunities and spur innovation across the church, nationwide. This program encourages ideas and provides supports for scoping ideas and piloting projects. Over 682 projects have been funded across Canada under this program. Examples include starting food banks, assisting with disaster relief, running PSW services, grief counselling, seniors' assistance, womens' shelters, and many, many more. Any member can contact the Edge directly. Or, take advantage of Christ First's Consultants by contacting the office to discuss an idea that you might have. Christ First and Edge want to hear from you.

<https://edge-ucc.ca/embracing-the-spirit/>

Curiosity Cohorts

This is for innovative and curious people and communities of faith, & those who wish to explore what might be possible.

Cohorts are groups of 6-8 congregational leaders that meet online using web video. An EDGE facilitator uses instruction, discernment, and reflection to create a "Ministry 101" course for creating new and renewing ministries. Cohorts are excellent places to connect with others across the country, to learn, share resources, and receive and offer support. You do not need to be a council member or project leader to attend – **all are welcome**.

Please check this website for updates:

<https://edge-ucc.ca/event/curiosity-cohort-week-1-2/>

For links to Regional and National initiatives and resources, visit the Community section of Christ First's website at: <https://christfirst.ca/community/>

A new UCC Manual released for 2022

The "Manual" is the document which sets out the governance procedures and policies for communities of faith of the United Church of Canada as a whole. This year, UCC has updated the Manual to include resolutions passed at previous General Councils.

<https://hfrucc.ca/the-manual-2022/>

Representative: Shawn Bausch

Mandate Of Representative:

Represent Christ First at the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council meetings. Report back to Council on new initiatives, areas of interest, and general news from Regional Council. Provide guidance for the responsibilities of Christ First as a member of the Region and opportunities for engagement with the Region.



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Heather McGillis

Mandate:

The Christ First Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) has continued to meet to date through 2022 with the mandate to assist Christ First with the on-going management of the COVID-19 Pandemic and guidance as to the timing, and how services and what activities can be reintroduced.

Achievements This Year:

- The EPC has continued to meet throughout the year, making recommendations and changes in real time in accordance to situation in the community and guidelines provided by Public Health.
- The Health & Safety Manual *Edition 2 – (February 2022)* has been approved by Council.
- Portable air purifiers are being used in classrooms in each level at the Clarkson Campus and in the Port Credit Campus basement area.
- Services have fully returned this spring to in-person however some congregants are still more comfortable to watch either the pre-recorded or live streamed services at home.
- Most of our community partners have returned to the buildings.
- All members and people entering are asked to still wear masks while at services or in the building.
- In-person singing during the services has commenced again as of June 1st.

Looking Ahead:

Gradually further restrictions will be lifted if there are no further recommendations from the Public Health Department or known outbreaks in our area.



SEARCH COMMITTEE

Mary Dowding-Paré

Mandate:

The Search Committee was approved by the congregation in spring, 2020 to conduct a search process for a new lead minister for Christ First.

Achievements This Year:

The search process ended in November, 2021 when we invited Heather Weaver-Orosz to be our new lead minister. We were delighted when she accepted the call to Christ First.

At a Special Congregational Meeting on January 23, 2022 the Christ First congregation unanimously approved the Search Committee's recommendation of Heather Weaver-Orosz to be our new lead minister.

Heather's first day at Christ First was on May 2, 2022 and her first Sunday of preaching was May 8. The Search Committee would like to thank Council, staff and members of Christ First for your support during the search process and for welcoming Heather so warmly to our church.

The Search Committee was disbanded at the June 5, 2022 Covenanting Service. As Chair, I would like to say how much I enjoyed working with my fellow committee members and thank them for their hard work on behalf of Christ First: Richard Cranston, Barb Abrams, Ron Kucharski, Shelley King, John Williams, Maia Choles and Tong Liu.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rick Donaldson

Mandate:

The Board of Trustees hold all real and personal property of Christ First in trust and safekeeping for the congregation. Trustees are responsible for all legal matters arising out of the holding and administration of such real and personal property. Trustees are also responsible for the disposition of the various endowment funds of the Church which are identified in the audited financial statements in the Annual Report.

Achievements This Year:

Trustees continued to be kept fully informed of the work of the Real Estate Oversight Committee, established in June, 2021, as it examines all options with respect to the property holdings of Christ First.

Early in the year, the Board of Trustees of the First United Foundation, established by the former First United Church, voted unanimously to dissolve the Foundation and move its assets into the endowment funds administered by the Board of Trustees of Christ First. This action is currently underway.

Looking Ahead:

Trustees will undertake the required annual inspection of the Christ First campuses this Fall together with representatives of the Property Committee. We will continue to receive briefings from the Real Estate Oversight Committee.

On a Personal Note:

I want to sincerely thank the members of the Board of Trustees for their generous contribution of time and talent to our Mandate and for their willingness to serve another term. I welcome two new members to the Board at the June 2022 congregational meeting who bring additional skills to our deliberations. I also want to express our condolences to the family of long time and former Trustee, John Smith, who was a wise and caring member. He brought great insight to our meeting deliberations.

**FINANCE****Clarke Grice****Mandate:**

Manages the financial affairs of Christ First and overseas the Treasurer.

Ensures appropriate control and recording of all financial transactions within established guidelines.

Prepares monthly and year end financials including annual budgets for approval by council and the congregation as necessary.

Achievements This Year:

Continued dealing with the increased financial demands of Christ First combined with the on going impact of the Covid 19 issues.

Looking Ahead:

Continued management of all aspects of the financial affairs of Christ First ensuring that all fiscal controls are in place and maintained.

Implement a process for the updating of all areas of the Policy Manual for Christ First.

Looking forward to the findings and recommendations of the Real Estate Oversight

Committee under their mission as to the viable options for our real estate holdings and keeping Christ First's Three Pillars prominently in mind in our decisions.

Financial Summary**As of April 30, 2022**

NB: All amounts are in thousands (000).

Receipts	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance	2022 Budget
Identified Givings:	145	149	(4)	401
Fund Raising:	0	0	0	10
M & S Givings:	4	4	0	13
Rent:	59	46	13	138
Other:	18	14	4	38
Totals:	226	213	13	600

Expenditures				
Outreach:	28	26	2	97
Personnel:	106	110	(4)	361
Ministry Programs:	2	5	(3)	21
Property:	65	59	6	161
Admin/Operating:	9	13	(4)	29
Totals:	210	213	(3)	669

Position				
Surplus/(Deficit):	16	0	16	(69)
Extra Ord. /inc/(exp):	0	0	0	0
Net Surplus/(Deficit):	16	0	16	(69)



MINISTRY & PERSONNEL

Heather McGillis & Sue Gittings

Mandate:

- To support the work of Christ First's staff team, facilitating communication between staff members, and the congregation.
- To continue to provide assistance and support to our ministry and staff team with changes to their roles as a result of pandemic guidelines, multiform worship and the transition into a post pandemic way of being.
- Network with United Church of Canada (OR Horseshoe Falls and other United Church Ministry and Personnel Committees to ensure high standards for budget, personnel support and best practices.

Achievements This Year:

- Provided M&P support for staff members with ongoing needs and questions.
- Supported our staff team to continue to adapt in innovative and flexible ways to changing roles and responsibilities throughout the pandemic.
- Established an Onboarding/Welcome package for both new lay and ministerial staff.
- Communicated with the Search Committee with information, questions and requests related to the Ministerial search process.
- Provided support to Rev. Heather Weaver - Orosz in her initial time at Christ First through meetings, an informal staff gathering, and information sharing
- Have been actively involved in the transition of ministerial staff
- Involved in the application process to support Rev. Dr. Morar Murray-Hayes to become a Voluntary Associate Minister with Christ First

Looking Ahead:

- Aid staff with changing roles as we return to in-person activities and services.
- Hire a new Administration and Program Support Manager
- Provide purposeful support for both Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz and our new Administration and Program Support Manager to aid them in their new roles at Christ First
- Assist the Christ First staffing team during the transition period with the new Lead Minister.
- Post Workplace and Health & Safety Standards within both Campuses.
- Continue to develop strong lines of communication with other committees and chairs
- Continue to develop ideas to support a positive climate at Christ First



PROPERTY

David Wheeler

Mandate:

- Ensure the structural and operational integrity of both Port Credit and Clarkson Campuses in the most cost effective way without compromising the health and safety of Congregation and Community Use Tenancies
- Oversee the daily management of Congregational and Community Tenant Use endeavouring to ensure accessibility, liability and security

Achievements for 2022 to date:

- Tenancy Agreements and Rental Rates for both Campus properties have been reviewed and updated to reflect current market conditions resulting in projected \$60,000 over Budget
- Capital Improvements have been contracted for stone work at Port Credit Campus with work to be completed by August
- Clarkson Campus apartment has been revitalized allowing occupation by our latest Family commencing May 28th
- Upgrade in internet service and telephone service for both buildings to one provider for cost efficiency and reliability
- Roof leak into Clarkson Sanctuary has been fixed permanently
- WiFi weakness in Clarkson Campus being corrected
- Cleaning and repair of Clarkson Campus Boilers
- General decluttering of Port Credit Campus and installation of portable screen in Sanctuary for video presentation

Looking Ahead:

- Quotes for elevator upgrade/replacement at Port Credit Campus to be funded by Accessibility Grants
- Replacement / upgrade of some HVAC equipment at Port Credit Campus
- Promotion of our Tenant Events/uses in both Campus Properties to emphasize our mission of Community Outreach and Congregation Growth ie. Options for office printing/shredding, concerts such as Handel's Messiah
- Defibrillator Training scheduled for September
- Increased Pool and retention of Hosts in order to continue increasing Community Outreach and use of our facilities
- Process improvement to relieve stress on Office Staff
- Shared Agendas by daily operational committees to ensure improved decision making and the affects of implementing to the efficient functioning of other parts of the Church



WORSHIP

Andy Choles

Mandate:

The Worship Committee enables people to follow a spiritual journey, growing in their knowledge and love of God in Jesus Christ through worship. The Committee works to facilitate meaningful worship experiences to ensure full involvement of the congregation in celebrative worship according to the liturgy of the United Church of Canada.

Achievements this year

- Slowly the disruptive effects of COVID started to dissipate and with great happiness we cautiously returned to in-person worship. While singing (with masks) has returned to the 9:02 service, we wait until the fall to reconvene the full choir singing live at the 10:30 service.
- We continue to offer a livestream broadcast of worship service online to allow members to watch/participate in the service from home or from abroad.
- We welcomed our new minister Rev Heather Weaver-Orosz to our church and helped acquaint her with our service while welcoming new ideas/developments that she might bring to enhance our worship experience.
- We said farewell to minister **Rev Morar Murray-Hayes** and office admin (and tech wiz) **Christine Barlow**. We appreciate the wonderfully creative contributions each made to our worship experience.

Looking Ahead:

- We look for ways to extend the livestream broadcast past our own local members and into the greater community and even across the province/country.
- With all the negatives of COVID, it has provided some positives and we hope to maintain some of the new ideas that emerged from the past two years.



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Teresa Madeira

Mandate:

To enable people to take a spiritual journey, growing in their knowledge, faith and love of God through learning and the expression of Christian values. It is a responsibility of the Spiritual Development Committee to enable and encourage people to grow and develop in their personal faith journey through involvement in and commitment to learning through programs appropriate at every life stage.

Achievements This Year:

- Sunday School Programing
- Sayings of Jesus Lenten Bible Study Seminar by Rev. Ted Lutz
- Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt
- Children's Lemonade Charity Stand at Trunk Sale

Looking Ahead:

- July Music Camp
- August VBS "The Promise of the Rainbow" camp
- Book Club
- Bible Study
- Children & family programs

Committee Members:

- Victoria Keane
- Sandra Gittings Keane
- Nancy Jessup



CONGREGATION SUPPORT

Marg Shaver

A call, a card, a visit, a letter, a delivery of soup ... The Congregation Support Committee members and Church Visitors learn of a need and try to act on it. It is usually through the church office that a concern is passed on to ministers, Church Visitors and/or committee members.

The Roll Clerk, Prayer Group, Grief Support Group (sponsored along with other churches) as well as Church Visitors come under the umbrella of this committee.

We hope to soon get back to meeting monthly in person over coffee, to share confidentially, what needs there are to be addressed.

There is a continued need for a few more members to take on a list (approximately 10 names) to keep in touch with by calling, emailing, visiting as a friendly connection from the church. This is a gratifying task as everyone appreciates someone thinking of them! And this small group would welcome additional members to join the Congregation Support Committee.

Committee members - this past year are: Marion Grossman, Marg Joyce, Nancy Rudderham, John Fargey, Rev. Scott Beckett, Rev. Morar Murray-Hayes.

Roll Clerk is Susan Eggleton, who does an exemplary job of keeping the church official roll up-to-date, with the help of Janis Cowie in the church office.

I thank each sincerely.

And I thank each Christ First Church Visitor also.

WELCOMING & FELLOWSHIP

Elisabeth Evans & Joanne Quennell

Mandate:

The purpose of this committee is to welcome all to the joy and fellowship of the congregation. The committee plans co-ordinates and hosts various fellowship events.

Achievements This Year:

As the congregation went back to holding live services again in February, after service coffee hour was re-introduced, but with the advent of the Omicron variant serving of food and beverages was put on hold once again.

April 24th - Welcoming and Fellowship was finally able to arrange a reception outside on the lawn as a farewell to Reverend Morar Murray-Hayes. Small cakes and strawberries with iced tea were enjoyed by all.

May 8th - a welcoming party for Reverend Heather Weaver-Orosz was organized after the service. Again we were lucky to have good weather and were able to enjoy refreshments outside. As this was also Mothers' Day, Carnations were presented to all the women of the congregation. We would like to thank Daphne and Rick Donaldson for their sponsorship of these flowers.

Looking Ahead:

Our next event will be a reception on the afternoon of June 5th for Rev. Heather's Covenanting.

This is followed on June 19th with a farewell event for Rev. Scott Beckett and on June 26th another farewell event for Christine Barlow.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Christine Whiting

Mandate:

Promotes knowledge of and support for the United Church Mission and Service Fund. Recommends involvement in and support for local outreach initiatives. Considers social justice issues of national church interest plus others of local interest and provides recommendations on those considered priorities for Christ First. Monitors those outreach programs where Christ First provides financial support.

Achievements This Year:

We have fulfilled our pledges to the Food Grains, Open Door and Compass for the year. The Community Hub, led by Victoria Keane, is well underway. A sub-committee has been set up to look into which particular areas to support helping the Indigenous peoples. This is a dynamic committee and is made up of members of the congregation, not only our committee members.

Looking Ahead:

We are concentrating our time and efforts on the Indigenous Project this year.

COMMUNICATIONS

Al Hubbard

Mandate:

- Support and advise the Church Council and its Committees on communications matters.
- Coordinate, plan, and produce effective, timely communications material, in partnership with all Committees, that will nurture and inform the Congregation and, when applicable, the community at large.
- Maintain digital media presence for Christ First.

Achievements This Year:

- Added Committee members with expertise in marketing, communications, writing, and social media.
- Created and explored social media accounts to further establish our presence in the electronic space.
- Continued to maintain our website as a repository of information for our members and the general community.
- Assisted, as required, to maintain and promote our branding and image across all communications emanating from Christ First.

Looking Ahead:

- Explore the creation of a photo directory for the new Christ First congregation.
- Continue to explore positive expansion of our social media presence.
- Continue helping committees to use a consistent look and feel in our messaging.



STEWARDSHIP

Louise Sinclair

Mandate:

The Stewardship Committee's mandate is to develop and implement a yearly stewardship program in the church. The program invites our congregation to renew and celebrate their spiritual and financial commitment to the church. Everyone on our mailing list is invited to submit their estimated givings for the next year which will form the basis for determining the annual church budget. The Committee also promotes the sharing of time & talents through occasional surveys of the congregation.

Achievements This Year:

The stewardship committee is planning to send out a Time & Talent survey to the congregation using a google form to collect information. Planning for the fall campaign will begin in the summer.

Looking Ahead:

This committee needs help! We welcome new committee members! We welcome anyone with ideas and energy to contribute to this important part of our church life.



REAL ESTATE OVERSIGHT

Steve Shaver

Mandate:

- REOC's mandate is to identify and evaluate all financially sound options for the use of Christ First's abundance of real estate. The ultimate determinations must be guided by our three pillars (Spiritually Engaged, Community Focussed, Caring and Connected) and be based upon financial feasibility and building sustainability and accessibility.

Achievements This Year:

- In keeping with its guiding principles REOC embarked on a plan to identify development opportunities at both our Lakeshore and Mazo campuses. In additions we explored the pros and cons of selling one or both of our properties.
- Discussions were held with local politicians to help us gauge the appetite for various types of development initiatives that provide necessary and needed services in our communities.
- Discussions were held with both private and public sector planners to better understand what type of projects we could pursue under the zoning currently in place.
- Government initiatives that might impact on our properties were closely monitored.
- Four international real estate brokers were requested to submit proposals that provided marketing strategies and Opinion of Value for each of our properties.

Looking ahead:

- When REOC was established, we agreed that the decision making process would be consultative in nature and would encourage input from the congregation. As such REOC will continue to follow two parallel tracks. The first is that we will continue to identify and analyze options regarding the future of our real estate portfolio and the second, is through the use of a visioning session we hope to learn from the congregation the type of positive legacy that is in keeping with our vision they would like to leave for our community.



FUTURE PLANNING GROUP

Shawn Bausch

We are called to be together to draw closer to God by serving others. We are called to work for justice and to live with respect. The activities of church are undertaken with the specific purpose of living God's mission. The Constitution of Christ First says that our purpose is:

- To celebrate God's presence,
- To live with respect in Creation,
- To love and serve others,
- To seek justice and resist evil,
- To proclaim Jesus, our judge and our hope

This year, the Future Planning Group (FPG) will be launching its first major initiative since the discernment of our three-pillars vision: the "Rural Connect" Hub & Spoke Ministry program.

Of the 143 pastoral charges in Horseshoe Falls Region, 84 of them cannot afford a full-time minister. More than a dozen communities of faith are in some form of shared ministry and there are churches in Ontario with no minister at all. This is a ministerial crisis right in our own region.

Christ First is very well positioned to help. With our strong organizational leadership, staff leadership, and technological resources of our church, we are capable of including others in our ministry with little to no cost to ourselves.

The Rural Connect program is an initiative of the United Church of Canada which was developed to provide ministry to communities who do not have it. The name "Rural Connect" is a legacy name referring to the years when the United Church of Canada thought rural churches would be most in need – however, it applies to any community in need, regardless of geographic location. The Rural Connect program provides the infrastructure to connect a "Hub" church, providing pulpit ministry, with "Spoke" churches in need of pulpit ministry. This exciting program connects up to five "spoke" churches and one "hub" church in a two-way shared service.

With the full support of our new minister, Rev. Heather, and unanimous approval at council, FPG has begun working with the committees of CF to implement this project. This summer, Christ First will install and test the Rural Connect technology and by this September, Christ First will likely be including one or more other communities in our worship services. The opportunities for shared connections, extended mission and service, and outreach to members of our own faith is extremely exciting.

If you would like to know more, please reach out to a member of the FPG directly.



Other initiatives:

In late 2021, FPG defined a process by which Christ First can better access grants and support programs. This was defined and has been subsequently implemented by the Christ First office. A Grants Database is now available through the Christ First office. Through this database, all committee chairs and project leaders can access our database of known grants and previous grant applications for use as templates. To compliment this, the Consultants System. If you have an idea, for a project or a way in which our community can live out the three pillars of our creed and don't know where to begin, contact the CF office and ask to speak with a Consultant. They will help you work through your idea. Spiritually Engaged, Community Focused.

Since March of 2020, the FPG has continued to work with Finance to secure access to government Covid subsidies. This has resulted in more than \$120,000 of much needed funds for the church. Those subsidies have enabled us to serve our community in many new ways. However, those subsidies will end as of May, 2022.

Get in touch with the Future Planning Group to hear more about plans to further develop Community, strengthen ties with Members, and enable Spiritual Development.

Members:

Heather McGillis
Virginia Warren
Teresa Madeira
John McGillis
Rick Cranston
Shawn Bausch
Ex-Officio: Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz

Mandate:

To perform "blue-sky", "out of the box" thinking about the future direction of the church. FPG does not implement anything. The FPG brain-storms, researches, and considers ideas. The FPG defines projects and develops concrete project implementation plans which it recommends to council. With council's approval, FPG hands off project plans to existing church committees or new groups of volunteers to be put into action.



UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

Pat Skinner

The UCW of Christ First have an executive President, Secretary, Treasurer, and one member at large. There are 3 Units with approximately 50 women. The unit leaders are Marilyn Watters, Pat Skinner, and Marg. Shaver. We have a Mission and Service Fund. We have an Annual Meeting at all levels of church life.

On Sept. 25th we will have Women's Sunday. Our guest speaker is Anne Bokma who is the author of *My Year of Living Spiritually*. There will be tea and coffee after the service and meet Anne Bokma.



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