



**CHRISTFIRST**  
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

*Sharing  
Our Faith*



*Sharing  
Our Resources*

Spiritually  
Engaged

Community  
Focused

Caring &  
Connected

***Annual Report***  
*June, 2024*

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## CHAIR OF CHURCH COUNCIL

**Carol Wilson**

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Dear Christ First Friends,

Spring is always a time at Christ First to reflect upon our programs of the past year, and to look forward to what is in store for our Council, our committees and our life and work together as a congregation. As I look back on my term as Council Chair, I recall that it began with a sense of cautious optimism just a few months after having left the worst days of the Covid pandemic. Our doors had newly reopened to the congregation and community, while the digital ministry presence established during the pandemic was beginning to flourish. Our new Lead Minister had been settled in for a full year, inspiring us spiritually and asking us challenging questions. There was a collective sense of energy and purpose around moving forward in the 'new normal'. And yes – we have started to do that!

As you read this Annual Report, you will find impressive updates from all the areas of life and work of Christ First. We have vibrant programs and connection with the community, and our people and physical spaces are well cared for. And amid all of this ongoing activity, there have been some defining moments for Christ First that speak to moving forward with intention based on our growing understanding of who we see ourselves to be as a community of faith.

- Last June, the Affirming Church study group was established by our Council to lead our congregational work in deciding whether Christ First should become an Affirming congregation. The undertaking of this journey as a faith and social justice issue speaks directly to our Three Pillars: Spiritually Engaged, Caring & Connected, and Community Focused.
- In November, Council voted 'yes' to a UCC remit to allow the development of a new, autonomous national Indigenous organization within the United Church of Canada, thereby acknowledging Indigenous people's rights to their own spiritual identities and to self-determination. In early April, we learned that our support for this remit was part of a resounding 'yes' from pastoral charges and regional councils across Canada.
- In October, Christ First revisited and refreshed its visioning process begun in November 2019, by engaging the congregation in conversations about who we now want to be to those in our congregation and in our community. This was followed by a series of strategic planning workshops by Council, and the work continues as the newly established Strategic Planning Steering Committee oversees next steps in refining strategies that will support us in achieving our goals over the next few years in a sustainable way.

It has been my privilege to lead the work of Council during a busy and, at times, challenging year. Christ First is fortunate to have such a strong team of dedicated and talented leaders and volunteers! I want to express my gratitude to all who carry out so much good work, and to the congregation for their trust in our efforts.

Wishing you all many blessings for the continuing journey in the coming year!

Carol Wilson  
2023-24 Council Chair



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

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Dear Friends,

By the time we gather for our June 2024 edition of the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting, I will have completed, just barely, my second week of residency in our Moderator's (RE)Generate Leadership Program. It is a privilege and a responsibility to be part of this first cohort in such a future-oriented program, and one that intentionally considers that intricate balance between personal development, congregational sustainability, and denominational impact.

When we gathered last June, the leadership program was not at all on my radar. Continuing Education is a mainstay of United Church ministerial support, for which I am very grateful, but the chance to be part of something so new and invigorating wasn't part of my vocabulary until much later that summer. It has become another living example of the surprising ways that God invites us into new spaces, with new people, and a new chapter of life.

To look across an Annual Report like this is to reflect on exactly the same kinds of unfolding, but on a collective level. To gather, to lead, to worship, to serve and support together is an extraordinary exercise in trust not only for what we know how to do, but in remaining open to what and whom we cannot see, yet. Year to year, our reports change, because we change. As much as we rest in proven methods and tested theology, so too are we forever transforming.

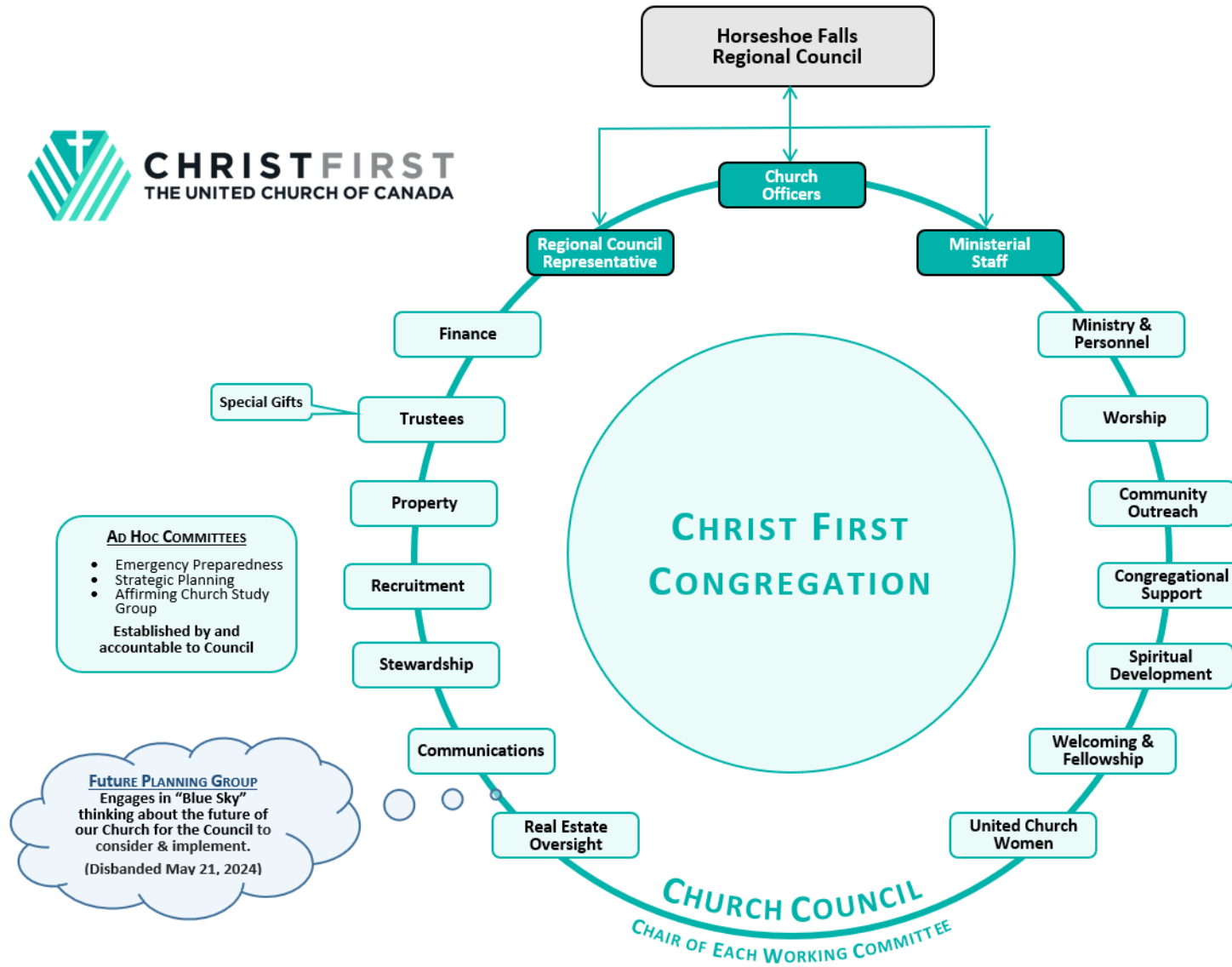
The work required to be a congregation in motion is unique and sometimes quite challenging. Church affiliation and participation are not social expectations as they once might have been. We are drawn and held here of our own volition, with expectations and responses as varied as our congregational makeup – and that, to me, is a very good thing. Your presence and passion for this church community, and the wider community that we serve, speak volumes on spiritual commitment, and on the particular bonds of a United Church faith family.

To live in this space of intricate balance, between the individual and the collective, requires a certain kind of bravery; and so, when I was asked recently what it is that keeps me going, part of my answer included you. You are a who, of course, but so much more than the imaginings of a long-ago children's book. You are the voice and the presence of a visible faith, lived with an understanding that your calling, our collective calling, is a powerful, multi-tense existence. Grounded with gratitude for our past, and carefully considering our present, this is simultaneously, and fundamentally, a future-oriented place, for a time and space we are reimagining, together. For all that and more, I am exceedingly grateful to God, for you.

Grace and peace, always,  
Heather



# GOVERNANCE MODEL







# CHRIST FIRST COUNCIL

2023 - 2024

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## Ministerial Staff

Lead Minister *	The Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz
Youth & Family Ministry & Community Engagement Coordinator	Victoria Keane

## Church Officers

Chair of Council	Carol Wilson
Vice Chair	Louise Sinclair
Past Chair	Richard Cranston
Secretary	Nancy Hori
Treasurer	Clarke Grice

<b>Regional Council Representative</b>	Shawn Bausch
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## Committee Chairs

Board of Trustees	Joan Cobbold
Finance	Clarke Grice
Ministry & Personnel	Jill Robinson & Mary Dowding-Paré
Property	David Wheeler
Worship	Andy Choles
Communications	Al Hubbard
Community Outreach	Christine Whiting
Congregational Support	John Anderson
Real Estate Oversight	Steve Shaver
Recruitment	Rick Donaldson
Spiritual Development	Teresa Madeira
Stewardship	Louise Sinclair
Welcoming & Fellowship	Heather & John McGillis
United Church Women	Pat Skinner
Future Planning Group	Shawn Bausch

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



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2023 - 2024

Committee	Chair/Co Chair (Sub Committee:)	Members	
Board of Trustees	Joan Cobbold	Barb Abrams Martti Ahonen Claude Lewis Ian MacDonald	John McGillis Joe Reid Steve Shaver
Finance	Clarke Grice	Clarke Grice (Temp. Treasurer) Ian MacDonald	Doug Mills Christine Whiting Dana Bryant-Giguere
Ministry & Personnel	Mary Dowding-Paré Jill Robinson	Ron Kucharski Barb Abrams Tanya Swinbourne	Alan Forde John Williams
Property	David Wheeler	Martti Ahonen Stephen White	John McGillis
Worship	Andy Choles	Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz Victoria Keane Greg McCausland Leanne Piller	Emily Adamson Janis Cowie Christina Gorgeous Karin Stangenberg Bob Middlemiss Ruth Collins
Communications	Al Hubbard	Jennifer D'Agostino Mary Dowding-Paré Ashley Fanourgiakis	MaryEllen Hern Victoria Keane Robert Raymond
Congregation Support	John Anderson	Susan Eggleton (Roll Clerk) Marg Shaver	Nancy Rudderham Ashley Fanourgiakis Marg Joyce
Community Outreach	Christine Whiting	Mike Giguere Dana Bryant Joanne Quennell Kay Cranston Gail McDiarmid	Penny McKean Linda King Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz Victoria Keane
Real Estate Oversight	Steve Shaver	Barb Abrams Rick Donaldson Dave Gittings	Jeff Sinclair David Wheeler Carol Wilson
Recruitment	Rick Donaldson	Sue Gittings Louise Sinclair	Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz





Committee	Chair/Co Chair (Sub Committee:)	Members	
Spiritual Development	Teresa Madeira	Sandra Gittings-Keane	Victoria Keane
Welcoming & Fellowship	John & Heather McGillis	Kathie Black Margie Joyce Jessie Kennedy Chris Kerr	Joanne Quennell Kathie Black Elisabeth Evans Victoria Keane
United Church Women	Pat Skinner	Marg Shaver Tanya Swinbourne Christine Whiting	Marilyn Watters Chris Kerr
Strategic Planning Steering Committee	Carol Wilson	Barb Abrams Ian MacDonald Louise Sinclair	Mary Dowding-Paré Susan Gittings Rev. Heather Weaver- Orosz.
Future Planning Group	Shawn Bausch	Richard Cranston Teresa Madeira Heather McGillis	John McGillis Virginia Warren
Emergency Preparedness	Heather McGillis Kay Cranston	Ruth Collins	Nancy Hori
Affirm Study Group	Kegan Lee-Guide	Rick Cranston Jennifer Brodie Rhianon Hoffman Duncan Wheeler	Staff – Rev. Heather Weaver- Orosz Victoria Keene Resource – Rev. Bob Johnstone



## HORSESHOE FALLS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Shawn Bausch

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“That we might learn not to live just With each other, but to live FOR each other.”

- *The Right Rev. Carmen Landsdowne, Moderator, the United Church of Canada*

While individual churches continue to struggle in our region and across the country, National and Regional initiatives continue to boom.

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council’s 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.

<https://hfrucc.ca/>

### **Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization**

Remit 1 was an activity at the national level and a key part of the Truth & Reconciliation process. This remit looked to correct a structural issue in the governance of the United Church by confirming the National Indigenous Council’s (“NIC”s) right to make changes to its own body politic without approval from the United Church of Canada. The NIC’s governing council expressed their desire for this change to the formal constitution of the UCC in the following way: “We wish to walk with you, not behind or in front of you”.

Remit 1 was passed in April 2024, with 1,482 pastoral charges voting in favour and 93 pastoral charges voting either “no” or not voting. In their response to the passage of Remit 1, the NIC notes that the work of Right Relations continues in a positive direction. The official response of the NIC can be read at the following link:

<https://united-church.ca/news/national-indigenous-council-responds-results-remit-1>

### **Spring Regional Council Gathering**

From May 24 to May 26, 2024, the Horseshoe Falls, Antler River Watershed, and Western Waterways regions held a tri-regional semi-annual gathering, at which the Moderator, the Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Landsdowne was a frequent speaker. For details, please see the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council website, Horseshoe Falls Region YouTube channel, or contact your Regional Reps, Richard Cranston and Shawn Bausch.

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBcwukBM7j-Ae4Cjl6Z3Qr2eHzDnxPjKf>

Shawn Bausch: [shawnbausch@hotmail.com](mailto:shawnbausch@hotmail.com)

Richard Cranston: [rick.cranston@gmail.com](mailto:rck.cranston@gmail.com)

### **The Call to Collaborate**

At the Vulnerable Congregational Discussion on March 5, the Region heard from members in dozens of congregations about their vulnerabilities. Across all congregations, there are common signs that indicate when a congregation is “vulnerable” (i.e., declining revenues, declining membership, people wearing too many hats). The Region would like communities to know that many of their best options to face these challenges lie in collaboration.



Collaboration brings us immediately into relationship with other people. People who may contribute to your goals, just as you can contribute to theirs.

As a wider church, we are one. No one is alone. No one needs to face decline alone. Across the Region and across the country, communities are partnering on activities, from worship, to community building, to space-sharing, to outreach – the types of activities in which communities are partnering is without limit.

### **The Day of Fellowship – Horseshoe Falls**

On Saturday, June 8, the first annual Horseshoe Falls “Day of Fellowship” was held at Wellington Square United Church in Burlington between 10:00am and 2:30pm.

The Day of Fellowship began with a church service featuring the Toronto Mass Choir. The morning service was followed by lunch. The afternoon session featured cultural expressions from around the regional council and greetings from the Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary of the United Church of Canada.

More Information can be found at the event website here:

[https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/day\\_of\\_fellowship](https://regionalcouncil789.formstack.com/forms/day_of_fellowship)

This event is intended to be held annually from 2024 onwards. The location is not fixed and open to any church to host future Days of Fellowship!

### **Preparations for 100**

June 10, 2025, will mark The United Church of Canada’s 100th anniversary - an opportunity to learn from our past to prepare for the future! The Centennial Commemoration year launches with worship on June 9, 2024, and the 100th Anniversary will be celebrated in worship on June 8, 2025.

### **Newsletters**

Past newsletters of the Horseshoe Falls Region can be accessed here:

<https://hfrucc.ca/newsletters/>



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Joan Cobbold

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### **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, by the vote of Council, took over the responsibility of the digital information possessed by Christ First. The movement of the Member Roster from the Church Watch system to the Sunergo System began in February 2024. The transferring of data is almost complete.

Endowment Funds as of April 30, 2024

- Capital Improvements Fund \$3,980
- E. Eddy Library Fund \$14,818
- Endowment Fund \$276,076
- First United Fund \$67,430
- Manse Trust Fund \$194,957

### **Looking Ahead:**

Trustees will undertake the required annual inspections of our two campuses in conjunction with the Property Committee. Trustees will also continue to examine all options presented by our Real Estate Oversight Committee (REOC).

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

- Manages the financial affairs of Christ First and oversees the Treasurer (currently vacant) and the part-time bookkeeper.
- Ensures appropriate control and recording of all financial transactions within established guidelines.
- Prepares financials, including annual budgets for approval by Church Council and the congregation as required.

**Achievements this year:**

Provided ongoing assistance in dealing with and managing the increased financial demands of Christ First, including a further forecasted deficit in the annual budget report, as well as an additional significant increase in unplanned capital expenditures.

With the great support of the Ministry and Personnel committee, engaged a qualified part-time bookkeeper, to assist with the accounting responsibilities following the departure of the previous treasurer.

**Looking ahead:**

There is a need to put a more complete financial accounting team in place including finding someone to assume the reduced responsibilities of the Treasurer's role.

Continued close management of all aspects of the financial affairs of Christ First is essential, ensuring all fiscal controls are in place and maintained. We also need to keep fully informed, of the findings of the Real Estate Oversight Committee's role in analyzing and planning a future real estate solution for our buildings with respect to our financial and community goals.

**Financial Summary as of April 30, 2024**

**NB:** All amounts are in thousands (000).

Receipts	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance	2024 Budget
Identified Givings:	140	137	3	375
Designated Givings - Compass	7	6	1	20
Designated Givings - M & S	4	4	0	18
Community Tenancies - Rent:	142	117	25	340
Fund Raising:	0	4	(4)	10
Other:	4	2	2	13
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>776</b>
Expenditures				
Outreach (including M & S):	33	36	(3)	110
Personnel:	134	139	(5)	416
Ministry Programs:	7	11	(4)	32
Property:	92	95	(3)	235
Admin/Operating:	7	10	(3)	39
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>(18)</b>	<b>832</b>
Position				
Surplus/(Deficit):	24	(21)	45	(56)
Extra Ord. /inc/(exp):	(19)	(24)	5	(14)
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit):</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>(70)</b>



## MINISTRY & PERSONNEL

## Mary Dowding-Paré & Jill Robinson

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### Mandate:

- To promote a modern, positive and safe working environment for Christ First staff
- To support the work and well-being of Christ First staff by facilitating the removal of barriers, encouraging annual goals, and facilitating healthy relationships with each other and the congregation
- To continue to provide assistance and support to our ministry and staff team with changes to their roles as Christ First grows and transitions
- To manage the complexity of the various staff contracts, roles and responsibilities

### Achievements This Year:

- Facilitated the design and implementation of a staff retreat for team building and personal well-being
- Hosted a Staff Appreciation Event to recognize the hard work of all our staff
- Hired a Bookkeeper to support the Acting Treasurer and the Office
- Hired and supported an Audio-Visual Production Assistant to provide AV back-up for Sunday services
- Encouraged regular interaction with M and P staff reps and staff
- Developed and distributed Ministry and Personnel Policy Guidelines to staff to assist in a consistent approach to the application of human resource policies
- Expanded the hours and role of the Youth and Family Ministry & Community Engagement Coordinator to become a full-time position and to reflect the full scope of responsibilities
- Reviewed and updated contracts as necessary
- Coordinated a group photo to raise the profile of staff
- Supported the Minister by coordinating pulpit supply with the Worship Committee

### Looking Ahead:

- Continue to review and update contracts to ensure they reflect current working conditions and church direction
- Monitor human resource impacts of new church initiatives, including the Christ First Strategic Plan



## PROPERTY

David Wheeler

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### **Mandate:**

Endeavor to attain accessibility, safety, and security for use of our 45,000 square feet of physical buildings for everyone, whether it be the General Public at large, our Congregant Members or our over 75 Community Tenancies. We are an all-inclusive Church. As one of our most treasured assets, protect and maintain the structures and operational integrity of both Christ First Campus Buildings, being Port Credit and Clarkson, in the most cost-effective manner without compromising the health and safety of all people using our facilities.

### **Achievements this year:**

- Pest control and mold detection (none) implemented to create healthy space.
- Clarkson eavestrough replacement to remediate foundation water seepage.
- 1 of 7 A/C units replaced at Port Credit Campus
- Port Credit roof repair preventing leakage into the chancel area.
- Clarkson all new interior directional signs and one exterior
- Portable “panic buttons” acquired for staff security.
- Port Credit narthex/kitchen repainted and wall/ceiling repair.
- Port Credit “In from the Cold” prep – wireless doorbell/camera + fridge + staff
- Trillium Foundation Grant Application for new elevator Port Credit
- Clarkson parking lot pavement repair
- Port Credit sewage pump replacement
- Rural Hub tech equipment replacement. Clarkson
- Upgrade of internet for Clarkson sanctuary on-line worship services
- New tractor lawn mower/ new roof garden shed Clarkson
- Service Master deep clean both Port Credit and Clarkson
- Clarkson Campus apartment occupancy has been extended for another year to continue to assist a Refugee Family from Angola, Africa

### **Looking ahead and concerns:**

- Positive result from Elevator Trillium Grant Application for Port Credit
- Eliminate fear of future unanticipated Capital Expenditures and their affordability by REOC/Council/Congregation decision on physical buildings future
- Exhaustion of both physical limited staff/volunteers and available monies to carry on proper maintenance without compromising health, safety, or security to the public.



## WORSHIP

Andy Choles

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### **Mandate:**

The Worship Committee works to enable 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. Our congregation is an inclusive faith community, welcoming all, regardless of their gender expressions or identities.

### **Achievements this year:**

- While we discontinued sending out our services via Rural Connect, we continue to have a livestream broadcast of our two services every week via YouTube. We have now completed the replacement of Rural Connect equipment. We wish Faith United all the best in their future faith journey.
- We were, once again, treated to live musicians performing during our services and special guest musicians playing for special services around the Christmas and Easter season this year.
- The Candlelight Service combined 50 voices from area United Churches to present a wonderful Christmas program. Plans to expand this concert are on the drawing board for this coming Christmas season.
- Emily Adamson continued to work her magic as our AV Technician "Guru". Nick Kursatte joined her on several occasions to deliver our multi-media service live and online.
- Worship has completed the updating of the Christ First Wedding Policy, Funeral Policy, and the Baptism Policy. All were accepted by the Christ First Church Council earlier this year.

### **Looking Ahead:**

- We look forward to a little relaxation this summer before embarking on another season of wonderful worship experiences planned for the fall.
- This summer, we will participate in joint worship with St. Stephen's-on-the Hill who will be saying goodbye to Debra McGill as she retires and welcoming a new minister sometime in the near future. We wish Debra all the best in her retirement.





## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Teresa Madeira

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### **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 - Tested "I Am a Changemaker: Teaching anti-Racism with Children" UCC curriculum in the fall before it was launched in the spring
- July Music Camp 2023
- Vacation Bible School Camp August 2023
- Established a new Youth Group in partnership with Applewood United Church for students in grades 7 – 12
- Two Messy Church Services – One for Orange Shirt Day and the other for Holy Week
- Participated in Clarkson Community Events – Halloween in the Village and Christmas in the Village
- 3 Advent Series Events – Children's Advent Day, Magic Show and Dinner & a Movie Night
- Noon Year's Eve Party
- Book and Bake: The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters
- Mississauga Steelheads hockey games
- Ted Lutz Bible Study
- Daily Advent Devotional emails
- Weekly Lenten Devotional emails

### **Looking Ahead:**

- Participating in Clarkson Village Live Community Event on June 8
- July Music Camp 2024
- August Vacation Bible School Camp 2024
- Children & family programs



## CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT

**John Anderson**

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The mission of the Congregational Support Group is to look after the welfare of all members of the church.

There are 24 members in Congregational Support who each have a list of church members to phone two or three times each year. A core group of four members meet regularly with Ashley from the church office, together with Rev. Heather. They review a “Keep in Touch” list (spearheaded by Nancy Rudderham) which documents those in the congregation who need support. This might entail a visit, or the delivery of flowers, or even just a card, dependent on the circumstances. Marg Shaver also makes and delivers soup to those members who welcome the service.

In the last year, the group has developed a list of volunteer drivers for anyone who needs a drive to church, and it is a well-used resource. For those members not able to access the internet, a monthly newsletter was started. It includes the last Sunday’s sermon and highlights upcoming activities for that month. The delivery of Easter flowers to “shut ins” and others in retirement homes was very successful and much appreciated this past year.

A newsletter is sent to all members of Congregational Support on a regular basis to keep them informed of related activities and events. An Appreciation Lunch for everyone is held each year, usually in the fall.



## WELCOMING & FELLOWSHIP

John & Heather McGillis

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### Mandate:

The purpose of this committee is to welcome members, adherents, visitors and friends to the joy and fellowship of the congregation of Christ First. The committee plans, coordinates and hosts various events, welcoming new ideas for creating friendship and times of fellowship.

### Achievements this year:

As always, the year started off with the **Chicken BBQ** on Sunday September 17 with 60+ attending. The auditorium was noisy with the sound of everyone catching up after the summer break. More protein-based salads were served supporting the increasing number of vegetarians in the congregation.

A new event this year was the recognition of **World Food Day** on October 15, 2023. Two types of soup were made by, and served by Options chefs and trainees and was delicious. With cheerful representatives from Options attending, a warm and positive feeling filled the room.

**The Advent supper**- a combined event with Spiritual Development for a supper (lasagnas and salad) for all congregants on Saturday, December 16 was held in the auditorium following the family movie showing in the sanctuary. Mainly the families who had viewed the movie attended the supper. Jane Wamsley played while Charlie Black led the singing of traditional carols and songs, and we all played Christmas trivia.

The **Pancake Supper** was a big success this year with almost 100 people there. Fourteen volunteers ensured everyone was fed, and extra pancakes, sausages and fruit were quickly made.

**Easter Sunday** Welcoming & Fellowship served breakfast for those attending the sunrise service in Port Credit. Working with Christian Outreach, we purchased flowers for distribution to shut-ins, and others in need in the community. The flowers were bright and welcoming in the sanctuary as a large group arrived, for the two services.

**Euchre** was another new event held on Saturday April 20 in the Merigold Room where 15 attended, much laughter accompanied the afternoon of games. The response since the event has suggested many more will come if it is held again. **Mother's Day** saw small bunches of flowers given to all women in the congregation at the service by men of the church.

### Looking ahead:

**Father's Day** men will receive cookies and a "Get out of (*an activity*) card" given by the women of the church.

Finally, the summer **Lunch on the Lawn** with a BBQ and a local musician will celebrate Pride and create a time of fun, food, games and activities.



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Christine Whiting

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### THE COMPASS

The Compass approved its 2024 budget reflecting \$2 million total expenditures. For context the operating budget of The Compass a few short years ago was in the \$350K range. This reflects a major increase of the need in our community.

A grant for a Client Services Manager, with a social work background has been approved for The Compass and the position was filled in early May. The addition of the position reflects a key aspect of the current strategic plan which is to enhance client support at the point of intake and improve The Compass's ability to advocate for specific clients on a case-by-case basis. Their existing Client Service Coordinator will report to the new position.

Regarding In From the Cold, Rick Penton, of Agape Place Peel Inc., relayed that the overwhelming response from the guests sheltered at the Port Credit Campus this winter was that, while they were dejectedly signed to their fate, were also extremely grateful to Christ First for providing the premises for the time that we were able, to give them shelter.

### COMMUNITY MINISTRY

We have welcomed approximately 80 individuals from over 30 different organizations across Mississauga and surrounding areas, including our Ward 1 and 2 councillors Stephen Dasko and Alvin Tedjo. We have established a social media following of almost 300 community members. So far this current period, we have held four breakfasts with requests for more. The Writers Collective of Canada held a writing workshop with breakfast (catered by Options) which was the highest attendance with 36 attendees. Four of the non-profit members of the Community Ministry had a presence at our Lawn Sale in May at the Mazo Campus. They were Options, Epilepsy South Central Ontario, Indwell, and the Girl Guides of Canada. In October, Victoria submitted the yearly report to EDGE. It was well received and our 2nd year of funding has been approved. As per the conditions of receiving this grant, we have been updating the congregation on the Ministry via joyful Noise and on Social media (both the church and NPN pages).

### OUTREACH

We continue with our annual collections of mittens and hats, toonies, Scarves for Chase the Chill and prayer shawls and baptismal shawls for the Prayer Shawl ministry. We also continue to support the Church Community Volunteers and the Indigenous Literary Program.



## COMMUNITY NETWORK MINISTRY

Victoria Keane

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### **Mandate:**

In 2022, Christ First was awarded a three year Seeds of Hope Grant from The United Church of Canada Foundation. With this, we have launched the local initiative called South Mississauga Non-profit Networking. Christ First continues to grow our community ministry, connecting intimately with local non-profit organizations, and providing physical and virtual support for staff and volunteers at these organizations. By promotion and networking, we are supporting and encouraging the outreach work that is being done in our community far beyond our church walls.

### **Achievements This Year:**

As we round the corner on our second year, we have hit significant and impressive milestones. To date, we have held 11 breakfast events, where we have featured various presentations from different local organizations, as well as personal wellness workshops such as “Relational Wellness for the Overworked Professional,” and “Resilience and Self Care.” We have developed personal relationships with over 25 organizations across Mississauga, with a much wider following on social media, and our largest event had 36 attendees. We have also captured the attention of some of our local politicians.

### **Looking Ahead:**

We have one more year of funding from the United Church of Canada Foundation, and hope to continue to grow this program beyond this three year timeframe with more community networking events! As everyone gets so busy during the summer, we will not be holding any more in-person events until the fall, but will continue our active presence online.



## COMMUNICATIONS

Al Hubbard

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### **Mandate:**

- Support 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 a digital media presence for Christ First.

### **Achievements This Year:**

- Started a photo directory to help keep our members and adherents in touch.
- Continued exploration of social media to further establish our presence in the electronic space.
- Maintained 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 better usage of all social media to communicate our presence.
- Continue helping committees to use a consistent look and feel in our messaging.



## STEWARDSHIP

Louise Sinclair

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### **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 and talents through occasional surveys of the congregation.

### **Achievements This Year:**

On "Stewardship Sundays" in 2023, we enjoyed personal reflections from a few of our members speaking to the impact and importance of Christ First in their lives. We celebrated the conclusion of the fall 2023 stewardship campaign with a luncheon on our anniversary Sunday.

### **Looking Ahead:**

The majority of regular church supporters contribute through the PAR program and we reach the majority of our donors through email, including those households that enjoy our services online. With these realities in mind, the nature of the stewardship campaign has changed in recent years. We have shifted our focus from household mailings and follow up telephone calls to communications via tailored email messages and videos or personal messages during services. We expect the stewardship campaign will continue to run in the fall as always, and that communications will continue to evolve as our email reach and our online world continues to grow.



## REAL ESTATE OVERSIGHT

Steve Shaver

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### **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 strategic plan and be based upon financial feasibility and building sustainability and accessibility.

### **Achievements This Year:**

- A lot of interesting and creative work was undertaken by REOC members Jeff Sinclair, Barb Abrams, Rick Donaldson, David Gittings, Carol Wilson, David Wheeler.
- We have continued to have conversations and build relationships with people in the community, including developers, to get better informed about issues that affect both our Clarkson/Lorne Park and Port Credit properties.
- We began developing a real estate strategy to support Christ First's financial and community outreach goals.
- We monitored the development of a Strategic Plan for Christ First to track how it might impact our real estate needs.

### **Looking Ahead:**

- We expect the work of REOC to substantially increase over the next six to twelve months to ensure that our real estate asset strategy reflects the bricks and mortar solution needed to best support the Christ First Strategic Plan.
- We will keep the congregation, Council and Trustees and the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council informed of our discussions and plans as we progress. We will gather all necessary approvals, including the congregation's, before moving forward with any decision about the use of our properties.
- REOC will coordinate with the Strategic Plan Steering Committee to ensure real estate needs are identified and assessed for feasibility as the Christ First Strategic Plan is developed.





## UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

Pat Skinner

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Christ First Women (UCW) presently meet regularly in three units for learning, fellowship and service opportunities.

DORCAS: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday afternoon of the month  
SEEKERS: 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday afternoon  
NOWW: 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday afternoon

The units have met together four times this past year for a Valentine's Tea, Colours Personality presentation, "Barbie Movie" afternoon showing and closing June lunch.

Unit gatherings have included Options speaker, Book Sharing, Christmas lunches, Joint Advent Service at Sheridan United, 'Christmas memories conversation', Breakfast out.

Thanks to Executive members Pat Skinner, Tanya Swinbourne, Christine Whiting, Chris Kerr, Marilyn Watters, Marg Shaver.

All Christ First women are welcome to attend any/all meetings and events.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Heather McGillis

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### **Mandate:**

The Christ First Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) assists Christ First in times of health care and safety emergencies.

### **Achievements This Year:**

The committee did not meet in the past year.

### **Looking Ahead:**

The EPC gives guidance, as required, for special health care emergencies and will continue to monitor for situations through Peel Public Health that might require a church wide health care response, addressing physical responses, activities of congregants and visitors and any required supplies or unusual equipment needed to meet the Emergency.

Meetings will only be held at the call of the Chair.



## STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE

Carol Wilson

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### **Mandate:**

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) was established by Council in March 2024 as an ad hoc committee, to formalize and carry forward the strategic planning work initially launched by an informal planning group in spring of 2023. The SPSC's mandate is to oversee the project management, development, communication and approval of the Christ First Strategic Plan, and to make recommendations for implementation of the Strategic Plan. It will ensure the Strategic Plan supports the continued financial viability of Christ First.

### **Achievements This Year:**

- Congregational Vision Workshop (October 1, with professional facilitator): received congregational input around goals and supporting strategies
- Council Retreat and Workshops (professionally facilitated): full-day Council retreat on November 4, followed by two additional Council workshops (December 6, January 31): furthered discussions about potential target groups (audiences) for strategic planning and insights about their needs; refined five goals and gathered further ideas about strategies
- Developed a formal framework for the next phase of strategic planning
- Reviewed and refined a draft Call, Vision & Values document drafted by Rev. Heather and Victoria Keane, for use as a working document to guide our strategic planning and eventual inclusion in the Strategic Plan.

### **Looking Ahead:**

- Launch and oversee the work of four work groups, each of which will develop and analyze potential strategies to support their assigned goal – summer 2024
- Maintain coordinated approach in project management and communications with the Real Estate Oversight Committee (REOC), who are actively exploring strategies to support the fifth (property-related) goal
- Ensure ongoing communication with Council and the congregation throughout process
- Develop Strategic Plan to bring to the congregation for approval by late fall 2024



## FUTURE PLANNING GROUP

Shawn Bausch

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### Final Report

“Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in **deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.**”

#### Formation of the Affirming Study Group

The Future Planning Group’s sole initiative in 2023/2024 has been the formation of the Affirming Study Group. In forming this group, we believe that Christ First will have yet more tools available for living out the New Call of the United Church and the Three Pillars of our vision.

The Future Planning Group first proposed an investigation into becoming an Affirming Church to council in 2019. This was approved but put on hold during Covid. In June of 2023, the Future Planning Group recommended that Christ First form an Affirming Study Group for the purpose of undertaking the journey towards becoming an Affirming Church according to the program defined by Affirm United. The Affirming Study Group was approved at that meeting. After just one year, the Affirming Study Group has brought the Affirming principles into dozens of activities and works of the church. Congratulations to all of the members of the Affirming Study Group on their work thus far, and all the best for the culmination of your journey!

#### Our Final Message

In 2014, it was seen that the then Christ Church United (“CCU”) would benefit from having a group whose members would be tasked with “providing Council with research, analysis and recommendations regarding strategic focus and future direction”, “to look ahead 3, 5 and 10 years and consider options for living out our mission”, and to “apply strategic thinking to practical problems”.

FPG was created in September 2014, by a motion made by John Nicholson and passed by council. Under John Nicholson’s leadership, the FPG led Christ Church’s discernment process through the United Church ‘Edge’ program. FPG held CCU’s first roundtables with community and church in an effort to discern how to articulate the focus of CCU’s “life and work”. This process culminated in the Three Pillars of CCU’s vision, presented to, and approved by the congregation in June of 2018. The Three Pillars have formed the basis of CCU’s, and then Christ First’s vision since that time.



From 2019 onwards, FPG was tasked with identifying projects and undertakings by which members of our church community could live out the Three Pillars vision. Since 2019, the FPG has created the following 'larger' events and projects:

- The Renters' Fair and Welcome Back BBQ
- Volunteers' 'Thank-you' Event (held only May 26, 2019)
- The Property Planning Ministry (precursor to REOC)
- The Community Hub
- The Neighbour Care Network
- Hub & Spoke
- The Affirming Church Study Group

As Chair of Council at FPG's inception and as Chair of FPG since 2019, my sincere thanks goes out to all past and present members of FPG, and all of the individuals who have assisted FPG in bringing these accomplishments to life. We are all volunteers – without your steadfast and inspired work, these things could not have come to pass. After nine years and nine months, FPG will now disband, effective with the installation of council members for 2024/2025 on June 9, 2024.

As individuals, the members of FPG look forward to working with all of CF's leaders again in some other form, in the next chapter for Christ First.

Thank you and God Bless.

Shawn Bausch  
Chair of the Future Planning Group



## AFFIRM STUDY GROUP

Kegan Lee-Guide

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### **Mandate:**

At the June 7, 2023 Council meeting Council approved the formation of an Affirm Study Group to undertake the journey towards becoming an Affirming Church according to the program defined by Affirm United. The members of this group are Jennifer Brodie, Rick Cranston, Rhianon Hoffman, Duncan Wheeler, staff Rev. Heather Weaver-Orosz, Victoria Keane and resource Rev. Bob Johnstone.

### **Achievements This Year:**

The group has met every three to six weeks and has been following the steps laid out by Affirm United and our Affirm United Advisor. We began by examining our current Church policies through the lens of an inclusive congregation. Significant achievements to date include the revision of our wedding, funeral and baptism policies, creating a bulletin board in the office hallway to provide current Affirming information, contacting local Affirm congregations for advice from their journey on the Affirming process, and providing "Did you know?" Facts in our weekly blast from the church office.

### **Looking Ahead:**

Our next steps will be to follow up on our contacts with local Affirming Churches, to continue with our communication plan to share news of our Affirm process via newsletters, weekly updates and social media and to plan educational events with Christ First groups, interested individuals and local community groups.



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