

Rideau Park United Church Annual Report 2024

**2203 Alta Vista Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1H 7L9**

613-733-3156

www.rideaupark.c

a

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LEADERSHIP AT RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH.....3

JOURNEY OF FAITH4

IN MEMORIAM5

CHURCH VISION STATEMENT5

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART5

STATISTICS 20246

COUNCIL7

 Transition Team7

STEWARDSHIP8

BOARD OF TRUSTEES9

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN 10

MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL..... 11

PROGRAMS..... 12

 Worship and Music..... 12

 Social Action & Outreach 15

 Christian Development 17

PEOPLE 18

 Congregational Life 18

 Nominations 18

 Pastoral Care 20

RESOURCES..... 21

 Finance 21

 Property Committee 22

 Administration and Communications..... 23

2024 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES 24

LEADERSHIP AT RIDEAU PARK UNITED CHURCH

STAFF	Rev. Steve Clifton (Jan-Sept)	Minister of Christian Family and Worship
	Rev. Elizabeth Bryce (Jan-July)	Minister of Community and Worship
	Rev. Jim Baldwin (Sept-Dec)	Supply Minister
	Rev. Dr. Steve Moore (Sept-Dec)	Transition Minister
	Iain Macpherson	Music Ministry Coordinator
	Andrew Ager	Organist
	Clara Kennedy-Shirley/Wendy Mather	Administrator
	Geoff Scollick	Custodian
COUNCIL	Ken Tong	Chair
	Stephanie Bailey	Vice-Chair
	Merrianne Crowell	Secretary
	Bob Roden	Treasurer
	Vacant	Chair of Stewardship
	Alyce Dunnewold, Nancy McPherson	Regional Representatives (EOORC)
	Michael Presley	Chair of Board of Trustees
	Nancy Begg-Durkee	President of United Church Women
	Patricia Whitridge	Chair of Ministry and Personnel
	Neil McGraw	Member at Large
	Shanti Inman	Member at Large
	Cathy Hollands	Member at Large
	Margaret Hart	Member at Large
	Merina Shulist	Member at Large
	Chris Crowell	Member at Large
	Valerie Douglas	Member at Large
	Steven Neal	Program Liaison
	Drew Presley	People Liaison
	Ron MacPherson	Resources Liaison
	Rev. Steve Clifton (Jan-Sept)	Minister of Christian Family and Worship
	Rev. Elizabeth Bryce (Jan-July)	Minister of Community and Worship
	Rev. Jim Baldwin (Sept-Dec)	Supply Minister
Rev. Dr. Steve Moore (Sept-Dec)	Minister of Transition	
Clara Kennedy-Shirley/Wendy Mather	Administrator (non-voting)	
COMMITTEES		
Programs		
Worship and Music	Karen Lamb and Sharon Sanderson, Co-Chairs	
Social Action and Outreach	Lynn Sherwood, Chair	
Christian Development	Meg Steele, Chair	
Environmental Action	inactive	

People

Congregational Life	Judy Paré, Chair
Nominations	Carolyn Scollick and Sarah Charron, Co-Chairs
Pastoral Care	Brian Neal, Chair
Congregational Development	inactive

Resources

Finance	Bob Roden (Treasurer)
Property	Brian Hamilton, Chair
Administration and Communications	Kristie Marr, Chair

Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council Representatives	Alyce Dunnewold Nancy McPherson
---	------------------------------------

Envelope Secretary	Barbara Jeffrey
--------------------	-----------------

JOURNEY OF FAITH

Baptisms	Child	Adalynn Mae Black
		George Clement
		Bloom Finn Dax
		Charles Patrick
		Thompson Kelly
		Madelyn Jean Tulk

Youth	Kate Benn
-------	-----------

Confirmation	Grace Allo
	Kate Benn
	Rebecca Crowell
	Chelsea Roebuck

Transfer to Rideau Park	Len Busby
	Lorraine Busby
	Jeremy Geelen
	Ralph Hollands
	Wanda Raymond
	Nancy Walkling

Transfer from Rideau Park	Rebekah Dillman
	Emilie Holdham
	Elmer Janzen

IN MEMORIAM

Members, Adherents and Friends of Rideau Park

Teresa Wai-oi Chow
Beulah Christison
Doug Gerro
Linda Hagglund
Fred Hobbs
Darren Jennekens
Sheila Johnson
Phebe Langdown

William (Bill) MacMillan
Saapke Mulder
Janet Palmer
John Scollick
Brian Silcoff
Joan Small
Violet Mary Smith
Kik Sumi

I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11: 25, 26

In Memoriam Donations

Don Bell
Linda Hagglund
Sheila Johnson
William (Bill) MacMillan

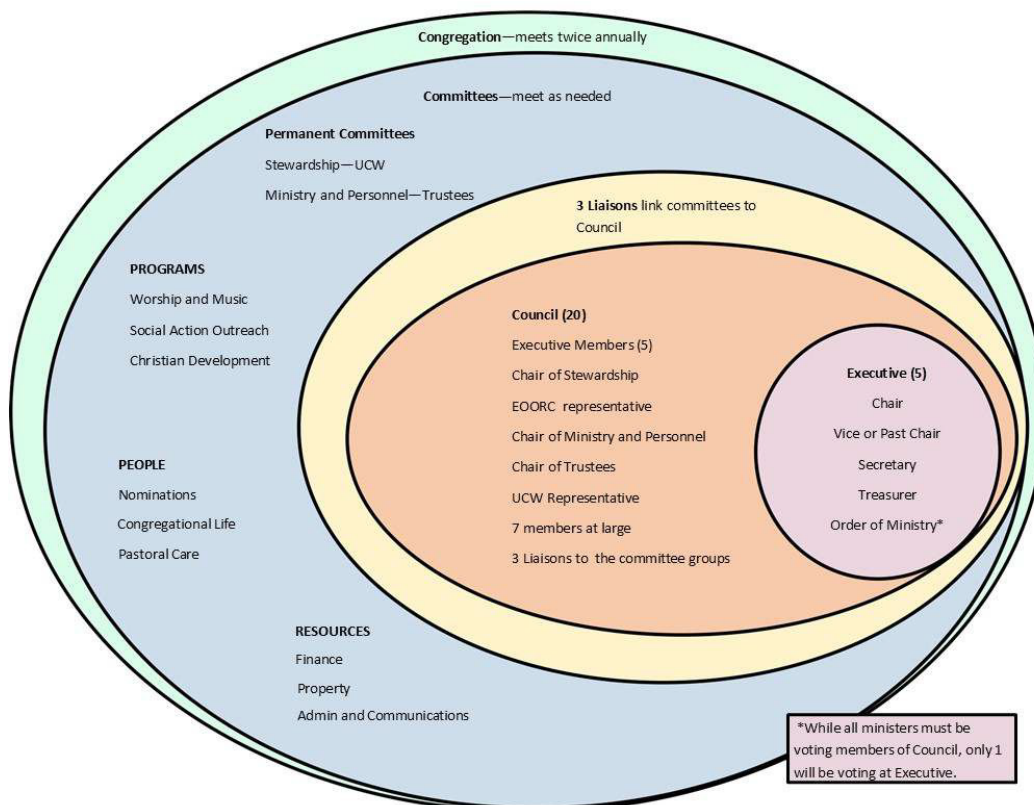
Marg McNally
John Scollick
Kik Sumi

CHURCH VISION STATEMENT

Rideau Park United Church is a vibrant faith community that seeks to embody a loving God as revealed in Jesus Christ. We recognize that, in order to reflect God’s love and grace, and to faithfully follow in the path of Jesus, we are called to honour all God’s children for their unique gifts, and to promote peace, social justice and a healthy environment as we work together to deepen our own spiritual growth.

We share in worship, prayer and learning, and we offer care and support to all, including those of diverse ages, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientations, races ethnicities, religions, and economic backgrounds. All are invited to participate fully, with mutual respect, in the life and work of the church.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



STATISTICS 2024

Number of households as of December 31, 2024	360
Total number of persons as of December 31, 2024.....	893
Members received through Transfer of Certificate	6
Members removed through Transfer of Certificate	3
Persons removed by death.....	10
Number of weddings	4
Number of funerals	12

COUNCIL

2024 has been an interesting and challenging year in many respects. Globally, there have been areas of conflict and strife in Ukraine, Middle East and South Sudan. We are facing our own obstacles dealing with our southern neighbour, and Alberta has suffered through lethal wildfires south of Jasper. We pray for peace and healing.

In 2024, Rideau Park said goodbye to our long-standing ministry team as Rev. Bryce and Rev. Clifton retired and began the next phase of their spiritual and life journeys. We thank them for their many years of dedicated, faithful love and leadership to our congregation and community.

With their departures, Council made the decision to hire Rev. Jim Baldwin for a one-year contract to keep the pastoral fires burning. Council also approved the hiring of Rev. Dr. Steve Moore for an initial six-month contract at half-time to help lead a transition team. This transition team is guiding us through a period of discernment to help determine our priorities for the congregation and new ministry. They have been holding meetings with committees, the congregation and community groups and will provide Council with recommendations which will be used to inform the Community of Faith Profile and ultimately a Search Committee.

Rev. Jim and Rev. Dr. Steve have been instrumental in helping the congregation deal with the apprehension that Rideau Parkers are experiencing in this time of change.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the staff for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. Thank you, Rev. Elizabeth and Rev. Steve C., for your leadership and guidance - enjoy your retirements. Thank you, Rev. Jim and Rev. Dr. Steve, for being there for Rideau Park during this time of transition and discernment. Thank you, Debi, for your work on our finances. Thank you, Wendy, for your administrative work. Thank you, Andrew and Iain, for sharing your gifts of music and harmony. Thank you, Geoff, for taking care of our building. Thank you also to all the volunteers that practically live at Rideau Park (you know who you are!), who keep the wheels and gears greased and moving. Most of all I would like to thank the congregation for your ongoing support of Rideau Park and your understanding as we travel the roads together as a faith community.

Respectfully submitted, Ken Tong, Acting Chair

Transition Team

Following the retirement of our ministry team, Rideau Park has found itself in a significant period of transition. Council Executive identified a need to move thoughtfully into the future, and put together our church's Transition Team (TT). The team is made up of long-standing and brand-new members of Rideau Park, of various ages and stages in life, to represent diverse elements of the congregation: Amy Bloom (Chair), Chris Crowell (Secretary), Alyce Dunnewold, Brian Geertsema, Jeff Woznow, Allyson Hopkin, Merina Shulist and Ken Tong, with two additional members representing youth (Victoria Bailey and Rebecca Crowell), accompanied by Rev. Dr. Steve Moore, our Minister of Transition.

The team's purpose is to **listen and learn, and make recommendations on how to move forward thoughtfully as a community of faith**. Ultimately, we will present a report to Council in spring 2025, which will include a summary of our findings as well as recommendations for ways forward for RPUC, in line with our mission and vision. We consider our scope to include summarizing positive elements and areas of concern for the congregation and community at

large, and making some recommendations. We are not a decision-making body and our recommendations will likely be a mix of high-level suggestions and specific ideas, depending on what we hear from our consultations.

The TT's timeline is an aggressive one. We began our work in September 2024, with the goal of presenting a final report in March 2025. To provide the reader with a more complete overview of TT activities, this report has been updated with events into January 2025. So far, we have:

- Completed consultations and/or visited with internal groups, including: Worship & Music; Finance; Social Action & Outreach; Christian Development; United Church Women; Pastoral Care; and Trustees
- Completed consultations and/or visited with external groups, including: the office of City Councillor Marty Carr; the Chair of the Alta Vista Community Association; City Councillor Riley Brockington; and onsite visits to Alta Vista community agencies
- Put on a special Sunday service (Heritage Sunday) in which the team engaged the congregation in an interactive consultative experience
 - The approximately 120 attendees were given the opportunity to share with each other and the team about their reasons for joining the church, and what keeps them coming back
 - Those present collaboratively created a visual representation of the history of our church (mural)
 - Congregants were invited to place their households on a pin map of Ottawa, creating a visual representation of where congregation members live
- Held a Virtual Heritage Sunday event via Zoom for worshipers who were unable to attend the in-person Heritage Sunday
- Created and circulated an online survey to give an additional opportunity for congregants to offer input into the transition process. Hard copies were made available as well.

The TT is passionate about serving Rideau Park during this time of change, and hopes to help the congregation embrace it as a time of opportunity. We thank Council and the congregation for your trust and support as we go about our work.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Bloom, Chair, Transition Team

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for ensuring a consistent level of faithful stewardship at Rideau Park, so that the resource potential of the congregation may be realized for our ongoing ministry. To achieve this objective a major part of our work is our annual Fall Stewardship Campaign.

This year Judith Srna generously accepted to chair the 2025 Stewardship Campaign. We are collectively thankful for her excellent leadership. She personalized the campaign theme of "With Joy" to effectively capture how Rideau Park's faces, activities, and traditions nourish our spirit and fill us with joy.

Brian and Doreen Hamilton were responsible for preparing and distributing the 2025 stewardship materials, as well as documenting the results. Lisa Sadler was responsible for the campaign's complementary publicity and social media materials. Michael Presley and Shirley Roberts continued to work on education and opportunities for Rideau Park Legacy Giving. A

“Lunch and Learn” session was organized jointly with the Trustees and offered in May to help people better understand legacy giving as part of estate planning.

The Time and Talents database is now an active document. Rideau Parkers are encouraged to add their names to the database. Those in leadership roles, coordinators and committees are encouraged to use the database as a source of interested volunteers. The list has been distributed widely. Karen Humphries and Lisa Sadler continue to develop the database and promote its use within the church.

For 2025 there were 183 pledges for \$461,880, which is \$9,237 or 2.0% less than last year. Of these 183 pledges, 161 (88%) are honoured through preauthorized remittances (PAR) via contributor banking institutions. We receive \$412,604 of our pledged contributions by PAR. Each week \$7,934 is donated to the church by PAR contributions. These contributions ensure our cash flow throughout the year. The regularity of our contributions allows us to meet our obligations and keep our monthly United Church Mission and Service contributions current.

The congregation is very thankful and appreciative of Gavin Currie’s wise guidance and direction of the Stewardship Committee since 2020. Thanks are also extended to the committee members for their ongoing support of Rideau Park’s stewardship initiatives. They include Brian Hamilton, Karen Humphries, Michael Presley, Lisa Sadler and Merina Shulist.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Hamilton, Acting Chair

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees hold title to the deed of the church property and are responsible for management of its assets on behalf of the congregation. Trustees ensure long term assets are adequately invested and maintained in accordance with the objectives of the United Church of Canada. More specifically, the Trustees administer two funds established at Rideau Park United Church (RPUC) and are entrusted with ensuring these are managed and available for distribution at the discretion of Council and its committees.

The trustees use the services of Doherty and Associates who act as a financial advisor for the funds entrusted to Trustees, according to our investment policy. **As of December 31, 2024 the total asset value of these funds was \$723,159** as compared to \$650,421 twelve months earlier. The source of these funds has largely been made by members, adherents, or friends of the Church over the years and in 2024 included an additional \$36,596 in donations. The balance of the increase can be attributed to Doherty’s management of the investments.

The Reserve Fund was established in 2010. It was created from funds received from the Hancock Estate, a portion of the receipts from the Britt Estate that are allocated to the Trustees by Council and any legacy donations. **The total asset value of investment in the Reserve Fund is \$459,563** which included an increase of \$30,454 in legacy donations in 2024. The investment earnings from this fund are available to the Council to deploy as circumstances warrant. As its title suggests, it provides the congregation with funds in reserve and is not intended as a funding source of first consideration for projects that are better funded from other sources within RPUC.

The Rideau Park Foundation Fund was established to serve as a permanent source of supplementary funding for special needs at the Church. **The total asset value of investments in the Fund is \$263,596.** All interest earned and one half of any unrestricted gifts donated to the Fund each year are available for disbursement the following year resulting in \$8,953 available

for disbursement by Council in 2025.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, Trustees also undertook other activities central to its mandate. In May, Trustees collaborated with the Stewardship Committee to organize and deliver a “Lunch and Learn” event designed to help people in the Church to better understand how to make legacy gifts as part of their estate planning. Trustees also developed a risk management policy for Council consideration in 2025 that identifies potential asset management risks RPUC has and enables strategies to be developed to address those risks.

Members: Michael Presley (Chair), Ron Little (Treasurer), Diane Keevil Harrold (Secretary), Catherine Ennis, Lynda Becker, Steve Cole.

Respectfully submitted, Michael Presley, Chair Ron Little, Treasurer

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

We invite you to learn more about and contact the Rideau Park United Church Women on the church website [United Church Women \(UCW\) – Rideau Park United Church](#). Position descriptions, including responsibilities of the RPUC UCW leadership team (Executive) and the convenors of various activities, are available by contacting ucw@rideaupark.ca.

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS FOR RPUC UCW 2024

Total Active Membership in 3 Units: 53 Life Memberships: 36

Member at Large: 25 E-buddies: 41

Not Active: 12

2024 in Memoriam: Beulah Christison, Linda Hagglund, Sheila Johnson, Janet Palmer, Joan Small, Phebe Langdown.

2024 was an active and exciting year for the UCW. The Christmas Bazaar filled our space with shoppers and tearoom participants. We thank Christel Kurz and Peggy Rader for their leadership over the last two years. The volunteer position of Bazaar Convenor(s) is well documented and we have faith one or more people will feel called to fill this role for 2025-26.

Our traditional fundraisers were successful. The UCW distributed more than \$41,000 to various local charities, the RPUC Ministry and Programs Fund (supporting the activities of our own congregation), the United Church Mission and Service Fund, and the UCC Healing Fund. The UCW also put a portion aside for future RPUC projects.

The Community Building sub-committee changed leadership with Charlotte Browne taking over from Judy Paré. The events planned by this committee are simply wonderful. We thank Judy Paré for her initiative in creating and guiding this wonderful group of women. Our goal remains to hold fun, affordable events, not to raise funds. The June Strawberry Social (an RPUC first) featuring the Stan Clark Orchestra was a resounding success with the music heard outside drawing the neighbours inside to see what was happening. The success of the events continues to inspire us. A chili supper, participation in the Alta Vista Community garage sale, September Welcome Lunch and Open House and most recently a Christmas Jazz Concert and reception — we have plans to continue with such events.

In 2023, the UCW initiated a project to renew our external church sign and install an electronic digital reader board. In 2024, based on the design received from Lundon Calling Inc., we

applied, with the support of Councillor Marty Carr, to the City Planning Committee and received the by-law variances needed to proceed. We received three estimates for pylon construction and installation. Swar Signs, Vars, Ontario, will be doing the construction work. We chose UTG Digital Media, a local Ottawa company, for the digital reader board on the strength of the training, service, and local support they offer. We are considering an application to EOORC Church Extension Office for a funding grant to help defray the costs. A portion of the UCW project funds will be used to help pay for the new sign. The UCW

received donations toward the new sign, and we thank each and everyone who has donated. We are grateful to Brian Hamilton and others for the hundreds of signs made for the UCW over the years.

It is with confidence the UCW moves forward through this time of transition at Rideau Park. Meeting with the Transition Team sparked new ideas for the UCW to try. We plan to look for ways to open doors for women of every age and stage to participate in the UCW and life of Rideau Park. We do so with faith in the continued support of our responsive and enthusiastic congregation to which we owe a great deal of thanks.

The leadership is working together, sharing tasks and supporting each other as the UCW at Rideau Park continues to evolve. The roles of Spokesperson, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Finance were held by Nancy Begg-Durkee, Judy Paré, Karen Humphries, and Lisa Sadler, all of whom keep everything in order. Other members of the executive are Mabel Bannerman, Lynda Coombe, Karin Ott, Peggy Rader, Heather Ingrams, Sandra Weedmark and Doreen Hamilton. Thank you all!

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our beloved Ministers, Rev. Steve C., Rev. Elizabeth, and Rev. Georgina who are now enjoying their well-earned retirements. We thank Rev. Jim for his enthusiastic support and Rev. Dr. Steve M. for challenging us to think forward to the tomorrows of the RPUC UCW and our congregation. Both Rev. Jim and Rev. Dr. Steve have expressed amazement at what the UCW of Rideau Park accomplishes in a year.

To Geoff Scollick, our custodian, our heartfelt appreciation, and thanks for setting up and taking down for UCW events over the year. To the volunteers and Wendy Mather who occupy the front office, we are grateful for keeping all our room bookings straight and managing any request we might have. It is a pleasure to work with all United Church women. You are a delightful group of individuals. We extend an open invite to you to join us anytime.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Begg-Durkee, Judy Paré

MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL

The Ministry and Personnel Committee has continued to support all staff members as they successfully navigated another year of challenge and change.

We said goodbye to our administrator Clara Kennedy-Shirley in March and welcomed Wendy Mather in her place.

We finished celebrating Rev. Georgina's career and December 2023 retirement with a soup lunch in January.

We continued to face new challenges, as both Rev. Elizabeth and Rev. Steve retired in 2024. We have a wonderful opportunity to examine our priorities, where we spend our time and talents and our money, and what we want Rideau Park to look like in the future.

On Rev. Elizabeth's last day, a video tribute was played during the service and ice cream was served on the lawn afterwards. A formal supper was held to celebrate both retirements in late September, including speeches and videos. Rev. Elizabeth returned for Rev. Steve's last Sunday, when gifts were presented to both Rev. Elizabeth and Rev. Steve and much delicious cake was consumed. Before their departure, exit interviews were held with both ministers by their liaisons.

Over the summer, Helen Beck led the charge to create a Briefing Book for the incoming ministers, once they would be identified. She approached chairs of existing committees and gathered a significant amount of information that was compiled into a cohesive document. A copy was provided to the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region and they were impressed by how comprehensive and useful it would be.

After research and several phone calls, a group met to interview prospective candidates. Subsequently, Rev. Jim Baldwin joined us in September as our full-time supply minister and Rev. Dr. Steve Moore also joined us in September as a part-time minister leading us through transition.

The M&P Committee is composed of Patricia Whitridge (Chair), joined by liaisons for all staff—John Durkee (custodian Geoff), Gretchen Conrad (Rev. Elizabeth / Rev. Jim), Randolph Harrold (Rev. Steve C. / Rev. Dr. Steve M), Cathy Hollands (Clara Kennedy-Shirley / Wendy Mather), Helen Beck (Iain Macpherson), and Rod Hagglund (Andrew Ager). I appreciate the help and support provided by committee members as we moved through this year of uncertainty. We have been working and learning together, as everyone shares their experience, knowledge and talents.

We thank all staff members for their work and support of the undertakings of Rideau Park United Church this past year. Their dedication and guidance are very much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted, Patricia Whitridge, Chair

PROGRAMS

Worship and Music

Members: Karen Lamb (Co-chair), Sharon Sanderson (Co-chair), Rev. Steve Clifton, Rev. Elizabeth Bryce, Andrew Ager, Nancy Begg-Durkee, Gord Dewis, Heather Ingrams, Marilyn Law, Iain Macpherson, Lisa Simpson, Judith Srna and Rev. Jim Baldwin. Steven Neal is our liaison with Council. The Committee met via Zoom and in-person in 2024.

We are grateful for: Brian and Doreen Hamilton's technical skills in webcasting Sunday services; Rev. Steve Clifton/Rev. Elizabeth Bryce for inspiring worship; Iain Macpherson and Andrew Ager for their music leadership; Rev. Jim Baldwin for supporting and leading us while we prepare to transition; and Rev. Dr. Steve Moore for leading us in the transition process.

We continue to do a land acknowledgement and welcome to all, including LGBTQ2S+, at the beginning of services. Worship services were available in the sanctuary or by webcast. We held Forest Church until Rev. Elizabeth retired and then Rev. Jim started up again in the fall.

Special Sunday services included: Several shared services with the Cluster (Rideau Park,

Riverside, Southminster, Emmanuel and Glebe-St. James); UCW Sunday; I Have a Dream Sunday with guest speaker Dieudonné Detchou; Orange Shirt Sunday; Indigenous Prayer Sunday with Bridget Trolley guest speaker; Steve and Elizabeth's goodbye service; Pride Sunday with guest speaker King Julez; Anniversary Sunda with guest speaker Rev. Lillian Roberts; and our Christmas Pageant under the leadership of Erin Brunet and Merina Shulist.

Other Worship events included:

- Easter—Ash Wednesday service and Encarna held the evening of February 14, labyrinth, Maundy Thursday supper and church service and Good Friday service held at RPUC, as well as other Lenten events hosted by the SouthEast Ottawa Cluster of churches
- Advent/Christmas—Encarna and Longest Night, two Christmas Eve services and Christmas Morning service.

The Chancel choir sang during services and at the Christmas concert. Carmen Harris and Adam Sperry provided solos throughout the year. Drumming has continued. The Cherub choir is lead by Ashley Roy.

Rev. Elizabeth retired in July. Rev. Steve C. was on study leave in April and retired in September. Rev. Jim Baldwin started in September for one year. Rev. Dr. Steve Moore also started in September and will be with us half-time for at least six months. Our two Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, Jeremy Geelen and Sharon Sanderson, also preached during the late spring and summer.

2024 was Rideau Park's 11th year webcasting Sunday worship services. This year's webcasts included 50 worship services, five funerals and three other events. An average of 65 watch the Sunday services which can be viewed from local, national and international locations. Edited services are posted weekly and maintained on the Rideau Park Webcast Archives.

In-person attendance January to November 2024 was 4,198, compared to 2023's total of 3,365.

Music visioning: Using funding obtained from the Foundation Fund, a music visioning exercise was undertaken in 2023 to get input from the congregation with respect to our music program. The final report was delivered in 2024 (see below).

Music visioning

In September 2023, the decision was made to conduct a congregation-wide consultation on music at Rideau Park United Church. The hopes and goals for this consultation were:

1. to identify a common understanding of the role of music in worship and community at RPUC.
2. to identify what it is about music at RPUC that brings people into worship and a deep sense of spirituality and/or relationship with God, as well as into community with each other at RPUC and the broader community.
3. to identify what is most valued about the music at RPUC and envision how that might be deepened in the future.
4. to identify directions and priorities for implementation

In the end, there were clear patterns of feedback identifying what kind of music program is important to the congregation: A music program that...

*Continues to facilitate peoples' experience of God and spirituality

*Supports the theme and flow of worship

***Continues to create community and connection at RPUC and in the larger community**

***Includes diverse genres and instruments**

***Has a high focus on children and youth**

*Balances a high level of musicianship with open, accessible and inclusive participation,

***Has growing participation through diverse opportunities to get involved**

*Continues to/ increases capacity to share beautiful music in a variety of events

The Worship & Music Committee reviewed the results and decided to begin with the bolded qualities. In 2024, we identified what Rideau Park is currently doing in the following areas:

Diversity/Inclusion

- Continued with: Genres: folk, jazz, R&B, soul, rock, Taizé, classical, gospel; Different faith traditions: Anglican, Presbyterian, Orthodox; Different arrangements: 4 part, solo, duets; Different genres; Various instruments: organ, piano, violin, African drums, voice, bells, guitar, percussion drums, flute, cello, and trumpet; Regional: Canadian, American, British, Scottish, African, African American, Celtic, French; Language: English, French, Swahili & other African languages, Latin, German, Spanish

Community Outreach

- Continued with: Notices in Alta Vista News and Vistas; Provided opportunities for Canterbury High School music students to participate in worship
- Activities to increase community outreach:
 - prepared handouts listing offerings, distributed/published to 4 public schools; Scouts, Beavers and other Scouting Canada groups; included in Marty Carr's Ward 18 (Alta Vista) Newsletter; other area churches; RPUC Facebook page; in the weekly Newsletter; Vistas; on the RPUC website; and to Camp Awesome attendees
 - plan a musical for Spring 2025

Participation

- Continued with: Chancel Choir (growing); Joyful Noise Children's Choir (Grades 2 and up - operating with 4 participants); Cherub Choir (ages 6 and under- ongoing); Drums Alive! (all ages -growing); Touch of Brass Bells; Ringing Praise Bells and La Bell Ensemble
- Activities focused on increasing participation:
 - new offerings: Youth chimes and Youth Bells (on hold due to low numbers -3); Youth choir; MAD (Music, Art and Drama- no interest); plan a musical for Spring 2025; Kids use of percussion (shakers, tambourines) in worship
 - contacted families with children (trouble contacting, few replied to messages); prepared handouts listing offerings, distributed/published to (see details above in Community Outreach)
 - encouraged moving your body (clap, raise hand, sway) during hymns; congregational part in anthems and closing Amen

Accessibility: this quality is woven into all the other qualities; Rideau Park is physically accessible and an affirming congregation; Rideau Park has large print orders of service and hymnaries available; Rideau Park has auditory support and space for wheelchairs in the Sanctuary

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Sanderson and Karen Lamb, Co-chairs

Handbells

A Touch of Brass, directed by Gordon Dewis, is one of three adult handbell choirs at Rideau

Park, with nine dedicated members who play regularly for the glory of God. Ringing Praise, directed by Jeanette Caton, is the second adult handbell group with nine dedicated members. They are an enthusiastic group who enjoy learning the various bell techniques and sharing their talents at the joint bell concerts (no pressure at all). La Bell Ensemble, directed by Jeanette Caton, is the third adult handbell group with 11 dedicated ringers who love to take the bells and share their talents in the community. Their talents have been shared with St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Maplewood Retirement Residence, Landmark Court Retirement Residence and The Vista on Sparks.

All the groups were active participants in the Bells in Spring Concert – a massed concert held on May 5 which included three handbell choirs from other churches in the community.

On December 1, the handbell choirs joined together for the annual Ringing in Christmas concert where 995 was raised for Christmas Cheer and the Heron Emergency Food Centre.

It has been a busy season for all, but the ringers have shone through and their gift of music brings joy to all who listen. Thank you to the dedicated ringers – new and long-standing members alike!

If you are interested in joining this merry group of people and becoming a handbell ringer, please call Gordon Dewis (613-769-5368) or Jeanette Caton (613-725-4158) or email handbells@pinetree.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Gordon Dewis and Jeanette Caton

Youth Bells

The Youth Bells performed well, under Neysa Carlson's direction, at the Bell Concert held in May. Thank you, Neysa, for your excellent work with the Youth!

In September, when the program should have resumed, there were very few youth interested in playing bells. The Youth Bell program was put on hold. We hope to re-start in September 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Iain Macpherson, Music Program Director

Social Action & Outreach

Purpose of the Committee:

- Promote active concern for all God's people and creation,
- Identify and be aware of social justice and other relevant issues affecting society, both within and beyond the church community, and
- Put into action programs that support social justice and other relevant issues.

Addressing the needs of people in our broader community at home and abroad:

- ***Banff Avenue Community House; Blair Court Community House; Russell Heights Community House, Confederation Court Community House:*** SAOC financially supported these organizations through donations every six months and by the collection of personal care items and school supplies once a year.
- ***Other organizations: SAOC responded to specific requests as needs were identified.***
 - In January, we collected socks and winter wear for residents of the temporary shelter

- at 1480 Heron Rd.
- In April, we collected medical supplies and suitcases for the charity Not Just Tourists.
 - In August, we collected shoes for Footwear4Kids at Camp Awesome.
 - **Tiny Free Library:** SAOC stocks and manages the tiny free library located at the Cunningham entrance to the church.
 - **Christmas Cheer Program:** Rideau Park's generosity provided grocery vouchers for 170 families in need in our extended neighbourhood.
 - **Heron Emergency Food Centre (HEFC):** SAOC continues to support the HEFC financially and to represent Rideau Park on their board of directors. Starting in October, we have designated the first Sunday of every month as Foodbank Sunday and encourage the congregation to contribute. We continue to participate in the annual Step Up and Step Out walkathon.
 - **Guaranteed Livable Basic Income: Rideau Park is represented by Lorraine Busby on the Executive of Basic Income Ottawa (BIO).**
 - SAOC liaises with BIO and sponsors public education information, workshops, and lobbying support with respect to a proposed guaranteed livable income program as endorsed by the United Church of Canada.
 - April 21, Wil Robertson from BIO was speaker at our worship service, followed by a SAOC hosted Lunch and Learn event.
 - Committee members attended the international *Basic Income Guarantee Conference* here in Ottawa May 23-24.
 - Rideau Park members participated in a rally on Parliament Hill on September 16 supporting Basic Income legislation.
 - SAOC hosted a showing of the video *Living Below the Line* at a Lunch and Learn event November 17.
 - **Multifaith Housing Initiative:** SAOC is a member of the Ottawa Multifaith Housing Initiative (MHI) organization, providing information, advocacy and financial support to their subsidized housing initiatives.
 - March 10, a representative from MHI spoke during the worship service, followed by a Lunch and Learn presentation.
 - In October, a member of SAOC attended the MHI Zoom membership meeting which approved the amalgamation with Gloucester Housing Corporation.
 - **Refugee Program:** At Rideau Park, we benefit from the Sponsorship Agreement held by the United Church of Canada, which helps congregations make applications to receive refugees. This allows us to assist family sponsorships as well as our own refugee projects.
 - Uba's family, comprised of two sisters, a brother and their mother, arrived in Ottawa in late 2023 and we assisted them to find and furnish an apartment in August. All three of her siblings are fully employed.
 - Marilyn Law continues to assist the families of privately-sponsored refugees to complete the requirements for their immigration to Canada.
 - Since the federal government has recently placed restrictions on this sponsorship program, we anticipate that our involvement will be winding down during the coming year.
 - **Indigenous Issues:** SAOC is responsible for education, programming, advocacy and support.
 - May 5, Rideau Park participated in Red Dress Day by wearing moosehide pins at church.

- Wanda Raymond made bookmarks for Orange Shirt Day and red felt dresses as lapel pins to commemorate Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women.
- June 23, Indigenous Prayers Sabbath, we welcomed Bridget Tolley from Maniwaki as guest speaker at our worship service. Bridget is an activist for Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women.
- **Anti-Racism Initiatives:**
 - January 28, *I have a Dream Sunday*, Dieudonné Detchou from our congregation spoke at our worship service about his work as a lawyer in Bangui in the Central African Republic.
- **South East Ottawa Cluster Initiative:** Rideau Park is part of a group of five churches that coordinates initiatives and shares information regarding issues of mutual concern in this area of the city.
 - SAOC sent representatives to several gatherings.
 - The Cluster is reconsidering its direction and focus.
- **55+ Adults Club (Harmony Club):** This group is organized under SAOC guidance. They hold events that are open to everyone over 55 years old and are not limited to church members.
 - A sold-out Spring Lunch was organized for May 22.
 - Our annual Christmas Lunch was also sold-out and took place on November 27, including a Christmas Carol sing.
- **Euchre Club:** This groups meets weekly during the year except for the summer. 16-24 people gather to play euchre on a drop-in basis. Parties are held in December and June. All are welcome, including non-church members.

Members: Lynn Sherwood (Chair), Sandra Weedmark, Marilyn Law, Wanda Raymond Lorraine Busby and Rev. Elizabeth (January-July)

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Sherwood, Chair

Christian Development

Members: Meg Steele (Chair), Tara Lockhart (Past-Chair), Gary Seymour (Scout Liaison, Secretary), Sarah Charron, Kim Allo, Diane Lagace

The Christian Development Committee (CD) focuses on the provision of programs to promote Christian development for people of all ages in the congregation.

CD supports RPUC's Sunday School program. The current curriculum is Dig in The Heart of God for the younger classes and materials from David C. Cook for the youth class. We have three classes! With gratitude to Jennifer Spencer (grades 4-6) and Hailey Laliberte (grades 7+) who join Meg Steele (SK-grade 3) in providing Sunday School. CD helps coordinate childcare. There is a roster of young adults who provide paid childcare during Sunday services to RPUC's youngest members. Hailey Laliberte is also paid to provide youth lessons. With the retirement of Rev. Steve C., Meg has taken on the coordination of the childcare schedule.

CD further supported summertime Vacation Bible School (Camp Awesome). Rev. Steve has traditionally led this and these duties will have to be discussed at the next CD meeting.

CD supports the annual Christmas Pageant. The third Sunday in December, the children, youth and young adults of RPUC come together to present a dramatization of the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. Erin Brunet-Decaire and Merina Schulist have been co-directors of the Pageant. This is the 25th year they have been involved and they have indicated that this will be their last year. Thank you, Erin and Merina! We are fortunate that both Nessa Hopkin and Sarah Charron have indicated an interest in taking the pageant in a new direction next year. CD provides cake after the pageant for everyone to enjoy as well as coordinating other family activities like Advent Happening.

The Shoebox program donated 137 boxes for children and youth that use the Banff Avenue Community

House in the Ledbury community. Thank you to Laura Presley who coordinates the program for us.

CD encourages and supports the activities of the 28th Ottawa Scouting Group which is sponsored by Rideau Park and the CD Committee. This support is evidence through participation in CD Committee meetings, Remembrance Day services, Baden Powell Sunday or offering opportunities to assist at other church events such as Bazaar Day! Gary Seymour is the Scouting Liaison. CD nominates recipients for the Carole Gardiner award which recognizes excellence in volunteerism at RPUC.

Looking forward: Meg's term as Chair of the committee ends in 2025 but she has agreed to continue until a new Chair is identified. Current committee members have indicated that assuming this position is beyond their availability at this time.

Respectfully submitted, Meg Steele, Chair

PEOPLE

Congregational Life

Congregational Life's mandate is focused on helping us to maintain our connection to one another here at Rideau Park. A group of 11 maintains regular communication with 27 members of the congregation who do not have easy access to the internet. In addition to telephone calls, these people receive *ChurchPost* and a summary of the Annual Congregational Meeting by mail. Other committees such as Pastoral Care and many individuals also provide an ongoing link to Rideau Park's members.

Members: Judy Paré (Chair), Karen Lamb, Marilyn Law, Janet Buske Wichser, Beth Campbell Keys, David Moreira, Doug Robertson and Alyce Dunnewold

Grateful thanks to all who contribute to the ministry of connecting with members of Rideau Park.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Paré, Chair

Nominations

The Nominations Committee has had a challenging year during 2024. Both of our ministers retired, we built a Transition Team under the guidance of Rev. Dr. Steve Moore, and Rev. Jim Baldwin became our full-time supply minister. We are so happy we are in good hands! Where

will we go in our future? That is the question for us to decide as a congregation.

Before all this happened, I, as committee chair, was doing some planning. We needed to update our Terms of Reference for each committee. All our chairs needed job descriptions, along with timelines to guide them as they undertake their tasks. Once I learned of the retirements, these updated items needed to be put on the back burner until we knew what our future would entail.

I recruited a co-chair to work with me—Sarah Charron. She has been a resourceful and extremely competent individual! Together, we decided to modify things as we moved through this year. Each existing committee chair was asked to summarize in point form, their endeavours by creating five lists:

1. What committee tasks are you presently fulfilling?
2. What are you doing that is enjoyable, but perhaps not essential?
3. What would you like to do, but have not had the time?
4. If your chair’s term will be ending in February 2025, are you making your own arrangements for a replacement?
5. If one of our present ministers has “taken over any tasks on your behalf,” is your committee planning to carry them out in the future?

All the returned documents are presently together in a binder to be used for guidance by the returning or new chairs in 2025.

We have been fortunate that many existing chairs have agreed to extend their terms until we have permanent staff and have made decisions on how our congregation will move forward.

We have also had successes with recruiting: a secretary for Council, two members-at-large for Council, as well as five members to officially make us a Nomination Committee, with one of them being our secretary.

Members: Caroline Scollick and Sarah Charron (Co-chairs), Mary Lynne Holton, Judith Srna, Erin Decaire and Wanda Raymond

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Scollick and Sarah Charron, Co-chairs

Council Executive (5)

Chair	Ken Tong	(2026)
Vice Chair	Stephanie Bailey	(2028)
Secretary	Merriane Crowell	(2027)
Treasurer	Bob Roden	(2025)
Order of Ministry (1)		

Permanent Committee Representatives

Chair of Stewardship	Vacant	
Regional Representatives (EOORC)	Alyce Dunnewold, Nancy McPherson	
Chair of Ministry and Personnel	Patricia Whitridge	(2026)
Chair of Trustees	Michael Presley	(2025)
UCW Representative	Nancy Begg-Durkee (no specific term)	

Members at large (7)

Neil McGraw	(2026)
Shanti Inman	(2026)
Cathy Hollands	(2026)
Margaret Hart	(2026)
Merina Shulist	(2027)
Valerie Douglas	(2027)
Chris Crowell	(2027)

Liaisons (3)

People Liaison

Chair of Congregational Life	Judy Pare	(2026)
Co-Chairs of Nominations	Carolyn Scollick	(2027)
	Sarah Charron	(2027)
Chair of Pastoral Care	Brian Neal	(2026)

Program Liaison

Co-Chairs of Worship & Music	Steve Neal	(2026)
	Sharon Sanderson	(2026)
	Karen Lamb	(2026)
Chair of Social Action & Outreach	Lynn Sherwood	(2026)
Chair of Christian Development	Meg Steele	(2025)

Resources Liaison

Chair of Finance	Ron MacPherson	(2026)
Chair of Property	Bob Roden	(2025)
Chair of Administration & Communications	Brian Hamilton	(2026)
	Kristie Marr	(2025)

Trustees

Chair Michael Presley (2026)

Members

Lynda Becker
 Catherine Ennis
 Diane Keevil Harrold
 Ron Little
 Steve Cole
 Rev. Jim Baldwin (ex officio)

Pastoral Care

Our pastoral care team shares a commitment to those members of our faith community who can no longer attend services with us and who would otherwise feel cut off. They are very appreciative of the time we spend with them and that makes this a particularly rewarding type of volunteering.

There are currently ten people on the pastoral care team as committee members, or visitors, or both.

Pastoral care team: Mabel Bannerman, Beverley-Anne Bayne, Norm Black, Beth Campbell-Keays, Anne Cook, Elizabeth Ennis-Dawson, Christel Kurz, Sandra Graham, Brian Neal (Chair), Judy Paré, Peggy Rader, Elaine Rainboth, Nadia Senyk, Jan Vuori

The number of people we visit typically ranges from 20 to 30, but recently has been in the low twenties. If you know anyone who would appreciate a visit, whether they have recently moved into a retirement or nursing home, or are housebound in their own home, please let us know.

This year we had two people take the 10-week Basic Course in pastoral care offered by the Ottawa Pastoral Care Training Program – an excellent, in-depth course. We also hosted the annual “Seniors Service and Tea” on April 14, and the “Our Hearts Remember Service” on November 10. They were both well received.

The Healing Pathway ministry at Rideau Park offers Christian-centred, energy-based healing sessions on alternative Thursdays, by appointment. Appointments can last anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes. Shorter chair sessions that last two to three minutes are offered in the chapel immediately following the worship service most Sundays.

Respectfully submitted, Brian Neal, Chair

RESOURCES

Finance

During the year the Finance Committee met several times in-person to continue its oversight of the church’s finances. While the church returned to more normal operations, 2024 still presented challenges. Work primarily centered on:

- financial status monitoring and communication
- restoring stability to financial operations following the disruptions in 2023
- managing refugee sponsorship funds
- preparing and sending a request for proposal for audit services for the years 2024 to 2026 to a selection of accounting firms
- managing the 2024 budget through the significant staffing changes that occurred in 2024.

Our previous administrator, Debi Brown was brought back in early 2024 to help sort out the 2023 financial records. Debi also agreed to continue maintaining the financial records on a part-time basis for the foreseeable future. A lot of decisions still remain around staffing and the future direction of the church. However, thanks to the support of the congregation, we incurred only a small deficit in the Ministries and Programs Fund. Programs, such as the Shoe Box initiative and the Christmas Cheer continue to do very well.

As Chair, I would like to thank Brenda and Joann (who will be stepping down from the Committee this year) and Debi, for their help and support during what turned out to be another challenging year. As a group, we would like to thank the following individuals, who have contributed, when called upon during the year, to do the financial work of the church:

- Barbara Jeffery, Envelope Secretary
- Ron MacPherson, the Committee’s Liaison Officer
- John Durkee.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Bethune, Debi Brown, Bob Roden (Chair) and Joann Roebuck. Finance Committee

Property Committee

The Rideau Park Property Committee is responsible for the management of the temporal, non-financial, affairs of Rideau Park United Church.

Committee Members are Brian Hamilton, Chair, Rod Hagglund, Mark Inman, Michael Inrig, Ron MacPherson (Council Liaison) and Bill Ott.

Operational property expenses in 2024 were lower by 6,000 at 70,400 total. A material cost increase for property insurance 5,000 was offset by decreases for heating 4,000, snow removal 3,600 and for other expenses 3,400.

It was decided at the 2021 Annual Congregational Meeting to set aside, within the Property Renewal Fund, an annual 10,000 contingency to distribute the future funding for replacement of the sanctuary roofing in 2030 (est.) and replacement of the furnaces in the next decade (est.). The furnaces were installed 38 years ago, in 1987.

Property Renewal Fund disbursements in 2024 allowed the completion of four significant projects. Within this context, some of the 2024 Property Renewal accomplishments include:

- The furnace and sanctuary roof replacement contingency has grown to 40,000.
- The Beecroft kitchen refrigerator was replaced.
- The owner of the property south of the parlour and sanctuary replaced the overgrown cedars with a new fence. It was stained for preservation and, using existing blocks and gravel, the edge of the asphalt by the fence was built up.
- The exterior entrance oak doors had to be stripped, extensively sanded, stained and varnished. The results have brought life again to the church entrances and the Cunningham doors will be refinished in 2025.
- The (five) sanctuary north stained-glass windows, covered decades ago by plastics, were opaque from UV and the elements. The plastics were removed, and the windows stripped, repaired and repainted. Glass storm windows and inserts that will highlight the light and sustain the sparkle in the stained-glass need to be installed. Robert McCausland Limited is a recognized supplier for the aluminum edged storm windows.
- Lighting in the sanctuary was upgraded with 6000 lumen LED pendant retrofit bulbs that allow light to reflect off the ceiling and increase the reflection off the walls.

In 2024 we were able to maintain a positive Property Renewal Fund year-end balance with a carry forward of 19,302 for future projects. The 2025 Property Renewal Plan identifies several projects, including continued funding of the contingency for future sanctuary roof and furnace replacements;

upgrading three stairwell railings for safety; completion of the winterization of the sanctuary, chapel and chancel windows for energy conservation and protection of investment; and replacement of the church 400-amp hydro stack. (See the statements on the following page.)

Work on the 2025 Property Plan, while considering the stewardship of resources, will adapt as the times warrant. Your ongoing and future support for this work is needed, welcomed, and appreciated.

Respectfully submitted, Brian Hamilton, Chair

Administration and Communications

With the loss of several members due to retirement and staff changes, the Administration and Communications Committee did not meet regularly in 2024.

In March, a new part-time office administrator, Wendy Mather, was hired and additional volunteers were recruited to provide administrative support.

Patricia Whitridge gathered information for the weekly emails, which are sent out every Friday using Envoke, a Canadian email marketing platform. We pay a monthly subscription for Envoke, which is also used to send out annual reports, ChurchPost, etc.

In January, Lynda Becker took over as editor of ChurchPost, which is sent out four times a year. She also created the website banners and regularly updated the website pages, including RP News.

Wayne Bond completed his long service to the Administration and Communications Committee in June 2024. He was responsible for coordinating the monthly news items and collaborating with our community paper VISTAS to keep the community updated on events at Rideau Park. We thank him for his help and service to keeping our community informed.

Kristie Marr is acting as interim VISTAS coordinator while we search for a new volunteer to work with our committees at Rideau Park and staff at VISTAS. We submit to the VISTAS Community Events section. VISTAS is published monthly (except July and August) and distributed around the community, as well as online. Information about one-time church activities submitted to the Community Events section is regarded as content, not advertising, and published free of charge. Once a year, in September, we can publish a list of all regular weekly and monthly events in this section.

Don Ford tirelessly supported the church's technology for a very long time. He helped set up our first network and WiFi system. He devoted many hours to keeping our systems alive, as different components were updated over the years. Don has now retired and we thank him for his contribution to keeping the church current. We are working to recruit a new volunteer with solid technical skills.

Until their retirements, Rev. Steve C. and Rev. Elizabeth managed the RPUC online activities on our RP Facebook page, Instagram account, YouTube channel, and the Beecroft monitor. Patricia Whitridge has taken over managing the RP Facebook group with Rev. Jim. Wendy Mather is updating the Beecroft monitor. Instagram and YouTube are currently not being maintained.

The church received a grant last year from the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council (EOORC) to purchase hybrid meeting technology and expand the use of QR code communications and donations. Work has started to purchase the necessary equipment to support hybrid technology and will continue into 2025. We are optimistic that upgrading our existing infrastructure to support hybrid technology will bring a significant improvement to our church Wifi. We continue to look into how we can most effectively use and implement QR code technology.

Members: Kristie Marr, Lynda Becker, Wayne Bond (January-June) and Rev. Elizabeth (January-July)

Respectfully submitted, Kristie Marr, Chair

2024 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

Sunday, 7 April 2024, 11:45 a.m.
In-person

Our Mission is to joyfully proclaim a loving God as revealed in Jesus Christ

Present: Stephanie Bailey, Suzanne Beausejour, Helen Beck, Nancy Begg-Durkee, Brenda Bethune, Sheila Black, Elizabeth Bryce, Lorraine Busby, Sarah Charron, Steve Clifton, Gretchen Conrad, Gavin Currie, Gordon Dewis, Valerie Douglas, Alyce Dunnewold, John Durkee, Sheila Faure, Thierry Faure, Georgina Fitzgerald, Brian Geertsema, Stephanie Geertsema, Bas Groeneweg, Brian Hamilton, Doreen Hamilton, Marg Hart, Mary Lynne Holton, Marlene Hutchison, Heather Ingrams, Shanti Inman, Karen Lamb, Marilyn Law, Ron MacPherson, Kristie Marr, Brian Neal, Judy Paré, Drew Presley, Michael Presley, Peggy Rader, Bob Roden, Joanne Rogers, Carolyn Scollick, John Scollick, Nadia Senyk, Lynn Sherwood, Merina Shulist, Judith Srna, Ken Tong, Jan Vuori, Sandra Weedmark, Patricia Whitridge

The Community Gathers before God

1. Words of Welcome and Opening Motions (Ken Tong / Rev. Elizabeth Bryce)

Ken Tong welcomed the congregation. Rev. Elizabeth asked for nominations for the meeting chair and recording secretary.

Motion: Heather Ingrams moved and Bruce Bayne seconded the motion that the meeting be chaired by Ken Tong, Acting Chair of Council. Carried

Motion: Karen Lamb moved and Thierry Faure seconded the motion that Sheila Faure be recording secretary for the meeting. Carried.

2. Lighting of the Christ Candle (Ken Tong)

Ken lit the Christ candle.

3. Prayer of Approach (Rev. Steve Clifton)

Rev. Steve gave the prayer of approach.

4. Admitting adherents (Ken Tong)

Motion: Shanti Inman moved and Kristie Marr seconded the motion permitting all adherents of Rideau Park United Church to participate and vote at this year's Annual Congregational Meeting. Carried.

5. Approval of the Agenda (Ken Tong)

Motion: Patricia Whitridge moved and Gretchen Conrad seconded the motion to accept the agenda, with the correction to show that it was the 2023 Annual Report. Carried

Life and Work of the Congregation

6. 2023 Annual Reports (Ken Tong)

Ken thanked Patricia Whitridge and Sheila Faure for preparing the annual report for several years.

Motion: Gretchen Conrad moved and Karen Lamb seconded the motion that the 2023 Annual Report and the minutes 26 February 2023 Annual Congregational Meeting be received as printed.

It appeared that the Zoom link to attend the meeting online had not been sent, so Patricia Whitridge sent it out immediately.

7. Review Engagement/Audit Report (Bob Roden)

Bob Roden thanked everyone who has helped with financial management during the past year and the congregation.

At a previous Congregational meeting approval was given to have review engagements performed by Baker Tilley every year, with an audit being conducted every fifth year. With the pandemic, this cycle was disrupted. In addition, Baker Tilley had some internal issues, which necessitated an examination of previously issued reports between the years 2017 and 2020. This work has now been finalized. In addition, Baker Tilley has completed their reviews of the 2021 and 2022 financial statements. In all cases, Baker Tilley concluded that the Rideau Park Financial Statements for these years fairly present, in all material respects, the financial position of the Church, in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Brian Hamilton raised a question about Baker Tilley costs. Bob noted that no additional cost was incurred for the additional work. Since the problems experienced were caused at Baker Tilley and the accounting fees are increasing to 8K this year, Brian suggested that the church should get a discount on Baker Tilley fees. Bob agreed to follow up with Baker Tilley and Bruce Bayne requested to be copied on the communications.

Motion: Bob Roden moved and Drew Presley seconded that the Review Engagement Reports of the Rideau Park Financial Statements prepared by Baker Tilley for the years 2017 to 2022 be accepted as presented. Carried

Motion: Bob Roden moved and Shanti Inman seconded that the Finance Committee be authorized to engage Baker Tilley to conduct a review engagement with respect to 2023 financial statements. Carried with four opposed or abstained.

Questions were raised about the continued involvement of Baker Tilley. The Finance Committee is not looking for other options for this year. The audit needs to be completed before the submission of the Charities return in June and it was clarified that the committee looked at other options last year and were not able to find another firm with the skills to conduct the audit at a comparable price. Bob was not sure, in any event, that Baker Tilley would accept to do an audit this year, based on the time it has already committed for the review engagement, or whether the church is prepared to pay the additional costs of an audit.

Motion: Bob Roden moved and Sandra Weedmark seconded, that the Finance Committee look into finding a firm, to be determined, to conduct a full audit of the 2024 statements. Carried with one abstention.

8. Receiving the Financial Statements for 2023 (Bob Roden)

Bob presented the highlights of the 2023 statements, which reflect a deficit of 46,532:

- M&P and M&S envelope givings were similar to 2022 and PAR support continues to be

strong

- 90% of Britt Funds (10,920) went to M&P Fund (compared to 7,288 in 2022)
- Foster's Farm revenues were 13,804
- The 40,000 government CEBA loan was paid off
- The UCW provided significant assistance of 13,872 (compared to 10,000 in 2022)
- Christmas Cheer and Shoe Box programs were expanded and Christmas Cheer is in good shape for next year (12,458)

Motion: Bob Roden moved and Patricia Whitridge seconded the motion that the Financial Statements found on pages 25 to 27, and the Fund Account Reconciliation Statement found on page 28 of the Rideau Park United Church 2023 Annual Report be accepted subject to the conduct of a review engagement by Baker Tilley to be completed in 2024. Carried

Bob clarified that the Property Renewal statements were not in the Annual Report, but the net activities are included in the Fund Account statement on page 28. Copies of the Property Renewal report were made available at the meeting.

Rev. Steve thanked Bob for all this work on the church finances.

9. Report from Council (Ken Tong)

Ken thanked the many volunteers at the church, notably Lynda Becker (website), Brian and Doreen Hamilton (webcasting), Patricia Whitridge (administration), John Durkee and Nancy Begg-Durkee (regular presence at the church). He noted that some of the long-term volunteers are looking to step back from committee work and are looking for replacements.

With the departure of two ministers planned for 2024, RPUC will begin a process of strategic planning to identify our priorities and what we want to be. We cannot afford to do everything as we always have and the congregation is invited to join the planning process. Gaveen Cadotte will lead the strategic planning process that began before Covid.

A transition team is being put in place to coordinate Worship and Music and Ministry and Personnel committees for the transition from one worship team to a new one. There will also be a review of the current governance model, some parts of which are no longer required, to assess whether it meets our needs.

Lunch break

10. Budget 2024 (Bob Roden)

Bob cautioned the congregation that there is a lot of uncertainty in this year's budget. He is projecting a deficit of 12,745, based on the following assumptions:

- Revenues of 576,600 with envelope givings the same as 2023
- 90% Britt revenue will go to M&P, but that the investments returns will be little less than last year
- Continued normal operations throughout the year
- 3 special appeals (Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas)
- 12,000 UCW support for 2024
- Regular use of premises revenue for the year

Bob is projecting expenses of 589,345 this year, based on the following assumptions:

- No summer student will be hired in 2024
- Replacement Minister will in place by 1 October, with the same salary as our current ministers
- Pulpit supply will to be in place from August to December as support to an interim minister
- Half-time discernment minister to be hired for September to December (possibly an out-of-town person)
- Cost of living allowance (COLA) recommended by UCC is 6.3%; COLA recommended by Finance Committee is 4.5% (6,746 less for the year)
- Property and administrative costs similar to 2023
- Budget for administrator/finance duties have been removed and replaced with costs for part-time administrator (3 days per week starting in March) and finance (1½ days a week, assuming that the administrator/finance duties will be in place by July)

Rev. Elizabeth noted that the budget for lead singers has gone down, but this is not consistent with the request from Worship & Music committee. She expressed the desire that it be reinstated at 7.6K.

Thierry Faure questioned whether there was a way to increase the use of premises. Patricia Whitridge highlighted the current number of bookings, but the Finance and Property committees have been asked to look into the rates, which have not been updated since 2019.

Alyce Dunnewold questioned why the Finance committee had not chosen to adopt the COLA recommendation of the United Church. There was discussion about the two recommendations.

Amendment #1

Motion: Bob Roden moved and Alyce Dunnewold seconded the motion that the Rideau Park United Church 2024 budgets for the Ministries and Programs Fund be adjusted to reflect a 6.3% COLA for M&P salaries. Carried with two opposed or abstained.

Amendment #2

Motion: Bob Roden moved and Gord Dewis seconded the motion that the Rideau Park United Church 2024 budgets for the Ministries and Programs Fund be adjusted to reflect an increase to the budget for soloists of 1,100. Carried with one opposed or abstained.

Motion: Bob Roden moved and Patricia Whitridge seconded the motion that the Rideau Park United Church 2024 Budgets for the Ministries and Programs Fund and the Mission and Service Fund, as presented on pages 28, and 29 of the 2023 Annual Report, as amended, be approved, subject to any major decisions that will impact the budget being reviewed and approved by Council prior to any commitments being made by the Church. Carried

11. Nominations report for 2023 (Patricia Whitridge)

Patricia thanked Ken Tong for offering to be Chair of Council for another year (and subsequently Past Chair) and Stephanie Bailey who volunteered to be Vice Chair. Ken Tong also thanked all those who agreed to extend their terms and Alyce Dunnewold thanked Patricia for her continued service.

Motion: Patricia Whitridge moved and Heather Ingram seconded the motion that the nominations for new appointments and renewals and extension of terms, as set out in the Nominations Report on pages 21 to 22 of the 2023 Annual Report, be adopted. Carried.

12. Recognition of Leadership that is concluding (Rev. Steve and Rev. Elizabeth)

The ministers thanked volunteers who are ending their leadership

- Greg Scott, retiring as the chair of the Congregational Development Committee, which has now been dissolved and the activities picked up by other committees
- Gavin Currie, retiring as the long-term chair of the Stewardship committee
- Heather Boyd and Heather Ingram, for service to Council
- Wayne Bond, for his services on the Administration committee and liaison with *Vistas* newspaper

13. Property Report and Plan (Brian Hamilton)

Brian Hamilton provided an update on Property committee activities for 2023, including the purchase of a generator, two EV charging stations, sidewalk paving and LED exterior lighting. Brian indicated that two new members had joined the committee: Michael Inrig and Bill Ott.

The discussion raised questions. Gordon Dewis expressed concern about the repairs to the roof above the music room and asked if the kitchenette could be converted to a storage room for the bells. Brian expressed the believe that the roof will be fixed. Patricia Whitridge raised concerns about the Beecroft kitchen fridge which is 14 years old. Brian indicated that the decision has been made to replace the fridge and the committee is asking for quotes. There may be a delay in the delivery of a new fridge.

Motion: Brian Hamilton moved and Patricia Whitridge seconded the motion that that the Property Renewal Plan for 2024, (sent separately from Annual Report 2023), be approved. Carried, with one opposed or abstained.

14. Trustees Report (Michael Presley)

Michael Presley highlighted a few things from his report. The approval of the revised investment policy allows more flexibility for investments and for consolidation of funds. RPUC has a reserve fund (just over 325K) and the Trustees have set a goal to grow the fund and will be hosting a workshop in early May to provide information on the fund, including legacy givings.

15. Stewardship (Gavin Currie)

Gavin Currie indicated that the stewardship report was on pages 7 and 8 of the annual report. There were no questions.

16. Worship and Music (Gordon Dewis)

Gordon Dewis presented the result of the music visioning process, to consider the role of music in worship and community at RPUC and identify directions and priorities for the future. Feedback was provided by 66 people (through a survey or Zoom or in person sessions). RPUC values three things: participation, diversity and community and its priorities are diversity, outreach and participation. The committee has been considering the results for the past few months, to identify the budget and resources to respond to these priorities. Comments were added about the need for more volunteer resources and participants.

17. Ministry and Personnel (Patricia Whitridge)

Patricia's report began with two key thoughts as we face more uncertain times: patience and managing expectations. Her report covered two issues:

- a) Replacement for our administrator who left in early March. Office duties are currently being covered by:
- Sandra Graham—volunteer on Monday
 - Debi Brown—part-time for two days a week for office duties and finances
 - Wendy Mather--part-time administrator for two days week
 - Volunteers—rotating on Friday
- b) Processes to clarify the way forward following retirements of Rev. Elizabeth and Rev. Steve are already underway:
- Reaching out to the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional (EOR) Council to identify the necessary steps for the replacement of ministerial staff
 - Identifying an intentional minister to help us with the process of discernment to identify our needs for future ministerial staff
 - Identifying a full-time supply minister for one year to provide ministerial support to the congregation
 - Setting up a transition team that will be able to listen to the congregation and be flexible to address changing needs
 - Developing key documents for new (intentional or permanent) ministers
 - Working with Worship and Music to put a plan in place
 - Engaging in strategic planning, including the development of a Community of Faith Profile

If congregational members have any issues, they are invited to bring them to Patricia or other members of the Ministry and Personnel committee.

18. Recognition of staff Ken Tong)

Ken expressed thanks to all staff: Rev. Georgina Fitzgerald, Rev. Elizabeth, Rev. Steve, Geoff Scollick, Debi Brown, Wendy Mather, Iain **Macpherson** and Andrew Ager. He also thanked the volunteers who support the music program and provide part-time support in the office.

19. Other business/remarks

None.

20. Closing (Ken Tong)

Motion: Gretchen Conrad moved and Karen Lamb seconded the motion to end the meeting.

21. Commissioning and Benediction (Rev. Elizabeth)

Rev. Elizabeth pronounced the commissioning and benediction.