

**100<sup>TH</sup>**  
1925-2025  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
Deep • Bold • Daring

*St. Paul's United  
Tillsonburg*



**2024**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



## “WHO WE ARE”

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### ST PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH TILLSONBURG, ONTARIO

#### MISSION STATEMENT

We are a community minded Christian congregation, called to serve God by serving others.

#### VISION STATEMENT

We are a church making a difference through positive and engaged members, living their faith.

#### VALUES STATEMENT

In all we do, we will be guided by the following principles:

- We will be sensitive to the needs of individuals and groups within our Congregation and the world around us;
- We will provide services and studies that are innovative, intergenerational, at all times celebrative, reverent and proclaiming of God's love;
- We will build an environment of individual trust and respect, enabling all to be cared for, to be nurtured, to feel a sense of belonging and to grow in their faith journeys; and
- We will be good stewards of God's creation; seeking justice for all, following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.



**Rev'd Karlene's Email:**  
revkarlene@execulink.com  
**Church Email:**  
stpaulsunited@execulink.com  
**Website:** stpaulsunitedchurch.net  
**Telephone:** (519) 688-0011

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER ~ Rev'd Karlene Brown-Palmer**

Dear St. Paul's Family,

As we come to annual meeting 2025, we liken ourselves to the Sankofa bird in the African tradition. A beautiful bird with its body facing forward and his head looking back. The looking back is not about regret rather it is about what we have overcome and how far we have reached. It is from that we find strength to go forward.

As a church we have experienced losses that we felt deeply but in the midst of these losses we have had many great victories. As we read this report may we reflect on all God has done for us, He has been faithful. Hymn VU # 288 reminds us:

Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator; there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

Refrain: Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see:  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided--  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

2024 was an impactful year as we shone our light in Tillsonburg.

**Worship Events** - We participated in the following scehduled services for the year:

- ❖ Epiphany
- ❖ Black History Month Sunday
- ❖ International Women's Sunday
- ❖ Cancer Awareness
- ❖ Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday
- ❖ Earth Day/Camping Sunday
- ❖ Mental Health Sunday
- ❖ Family Sunday
- ❖ UCW & AOTS Sunday
- ❖ Fathers' Day
- ❖ Environment Sunday
- ❖ Outdoor Worship
- ❖ Orange Shirt Sunday
- ❖ World Communion Sunday
- ❖ Thanksgiving Sunday
- ❖ St. Paul's Anniversary Sunday
- ❖ Multicultural Sunday
- ❖ Remembrance Sunday
- ❖ Volunteer Sunday
- ❖ Advent
- ❖ Kids Pageant
- ❖ Blue Christmas
- ❖ Cantata
- ❖ Christmas Eve
- ❖ 5 Communion services

**Reflecting on Special Services** - We reflect on a few special services below:

- ✚ **Black History Sunday** incorporated black music, dance and art display.
- ✚ **International Women's Sunday/White Gift Sunday** - boxes of toiletries were collected for DASO.
- ✚ **Palm Sunday** – two special solos from Rick Martin.
- ✚ **Maundy Thursday** - twenty-two persons attended we had a sumptuous meal.
- ✚ **Good Friday** – Seven readers lent their voices to take us to the cross.
- ✚ **Easter Sunday Sunrise Service** – A first since covid, twenty-three persons attended. It concluded with a light breakfast.
- ✚ **Camping Sunday** - Participation of children, youth and congregation, Lesley Blake and Margaret Yakubovich played special music and Jayne Coyle shared about her camp experiences as a child.
- ✚ **Family Sunday** - Members shared pictures of their moms. Lesley Jackson made and shared bookmarks for mothers, ladies and girls.
- ✚ **Environment Sunday** - Laurel Beechey shared about changes happening to our wildlife and our weather. Slider the skunk was present and we had photo opportunities with him.
- ✚ **Beginning of UCC 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** - UCC liturgy used. St. Paul's clergy with total of 86 years of ministry in the UCC, shared in the service.
  - **3:30 p.m. Gathering** – 8 people gathered in the Friendship Room in the afternoon to view the service at Metropolitan United Church, in Toronto, we celebrated with refreshments.
- ✚ **Multicultural Sunday** began with baptism and confirmation. There were displays and samples of food from countries represented in our congregation; Australia, Canada, China, Jamaica, Netherlands and Wales.
- ✚ **Outdoor Worship** – worship in the parking lot under tents followed by lunch from Todd's Food Truck and afternoon concert with Back to the Fifties Band. Event was sponsored by the Parnell's.

- ✚ **Welcome Back Sunday & Shelley's Celebration** - a reflection of over 35 years of music ministry by Shelley Vermeersch to St. Paul's. Special Music and presentations were made to Shelley.
- ✚ **Julie & Keith Avery** - shared about being different and issued a challenge for us to accept everyone irrespective of differences.
- ✚ **Peace Sunday & Recognition of Helen's 10 years of service.** A recognition of Helen's contributions to our congregation as our Admin Assistant. Presentations were made to Helen.
- ✚ **Remembrance Day Celebration** – Pastor Paul Robinson shared from his pilgrimage to sites where Canadian forces served and died.
- ✚ **Volunteer Sunday** – recognition of all those who continue to work to share God's love through St. Paul's ministries. Volunteer pins were distributed.
- ✚ **Housing Sunday** – the congregation made special contributions of new socks, gloves, hats and scarves that were to be distributed to the homeless in Tillsonburg.
- ✚ **Adopt A Family** – we adopted one family from the Salvation Army Adopt a family program. The response was great which enabled us to care for four additional families.

### **Membership**

- \* We lost thirteen members this year.
- \* We officially welcomed two persons into the membership through confirmation and affirmation of faith and two through baptism. We continue to see and welcome new persons in our fellowship and pray they will make St. Paul's their permanent home.

**Connecting with St. Paul's family** – There are efforts to continue connecting with our St. Paul's family through visitations, communion services, emails, text messages, messenger messages, e-cards and physical cards.

- ✚ Easter                      131 e-cards and 40 physical cards sent
- ✚ Mothers' Day              85 e-cards sent
- ✚ Fathers' Day              56 e-cards sent and 40 tokens distributed

✚ Back to School	18 packs of school supplies and prayer cards distributed.
✚ Canada Day	133 e-cards sent
✚ Thanksgiving	133 e-cards sent
✚ Volunteer Sunday	200 pins distributed
✚ Pagaent	4 tokens given to Sunday School teachers
✚ Christmas	20 tokens given to Sunday School students Tokens given to Council members 133 e-cards and 40 physical cards sent

**Connecting with the wider Church/Community** – St. Paul’s is represented at the Tillsonburg Area Ministerial who host at least one lunch hour meeting and provide lunch and we continue to host the last Lenten service each year. I continue to serve alongside Pastor Paul Robinson as Padre to the 153<sup>rd</sup> Tillsonburg Legion. I also continue to be an executive member of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council.

**Thanks** - We are thankful that our church family is one always ready to join hands and make things happen. We have only been able to make a difference in 2024 through the work of some special people. We sincerely thank all of you.

- \* Our Church Council led by Mary Anne Silverthorn.
- \* Our valued tech team – projectionists, live streaming and sound crew, especially having our young people onboard, namely Finn, Bella and Cory.
- \* Our outreach ministry teams especially Community Kitchen & Messy Church.
- \* Our dedicated unsung heros who set up and tear down for events, decorate and are always ready to serve you know who you are!
- \* Our support staff: Helen, Shelley, and Karen.
- \* Desmond, who kept me grounded and always stepping up to the plate when I needed him to.

As we begin chapter 2025, my prayer is that we at St. Paul’s will remain faithful to our calling to be God’s church in our lives, our homes, our community and the world at large.

Big Hugs,  
Rev’d Karlene Brown-Palmer

## **CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT ~ Mary Anne Silverthorn, Chair**

This year saw the return to almost normal since the pandemic and how wonderful it was to go for refreshments after worship allowing for visiting and laughter each week. Groups were meeting face to face except for Church Council when representatives from the Community Kitchen requested to meet with Council and a face-to-face council meeting took place: the first in about 4 years. It was a welcomed change.

Following the congregational meeting in February, Jed Drew continued to be on a Leave of Absence and I was returned to the position of Acting Chair of Council. We elected a Treasurer to take office when she returned from her winter vacation. In April, Dianne McPherson took her position as Treasurer allowing Council to dispense with the Acting Positions and move forward. By action of Council Jed Drew was named Past Chair. I became Chair, Ron Wycherley resumed his position as Chair of Finance and once again things seemed normal. It took many months to put people in place to replace all the vacancies left by Laurie's death. Thank you sincerely to all those who stepped up to help whenever help was needed.

In 2023, Worship had introduced the concept of an outdoor summer service followed by a picnic. It was such a great success that on July 21, 2024 people again arrived with lawn chairs in hand for worship. Tents had been erected and Rev'd Karlene provided a very meaningful worship service.

After worship, we moved towards the Food Truck to order our food and enjoy the social time to visit and chat, the food was excellent; and the conversation stimulating. There were many positive comments including the request "to do this again" and therefore this will become an annual event.

During the fall we as a congregation took the opportunity to celebrate the wonderful gifts of 2 of our employees. Shelley was honoured on September 8th, for her 35 years of service as Director of Music. Combined with our welcome back service everyone enjoyed sharing lunch together in the Banquet Hall. It was Wonderful!!! On Sunday September 22nd, we celebrated again to honour Helen's 10 years of service. Everyone enjoyed sharing the desserts and thanked Helen for her outstanding service. St. Paul's is blessed to have both Helen and Shelley as members of our family. Thank you both. We appreciate all you do!



At Thanksgiving we were able to adorn the halls and sanctuary with a bounty of colourful flowers, fruits, grasses, vegetables thanks to the van Hoeve family and their generosity. We greatly appreciate all their willingness to help us celebrate Thanksgiving.

As Advent approached, special worship services including those participating in the candle lighting, communion, choir cantata, Poinsettia Sunday and ending with a Christmas Eve Service were all part of the month of December. The Adopt-a-Family programme saw our family supporting 5 families. What an overwhelming response from our St. Paul's family members who demonstrated an amazing willingness to help others. Thank you sincerely to all who participated and a sincere thank you to Marianne Ferris who coordinated the entire project.

Events such as music concerts, the annual yard sale, suppers have been planned by many and enjoyed and appreciated by all; the profits helped to increase our financial position.

It is wonderful to see the church building being well used again. We have regular rentals and ongoing meetings monthly. Programmes are ongoing: Messy Church and Community Kitchen continue see rising numbers of participants and bring new faces to the building. Thank you to all the leaders who assist to make these programmes very successful.

St. Paul's is blessed to have a staff of 5 extraordinary people. We at St. Paul's are privileged to know these people and honoured that they form the staff St. Paul's United Church. Rev'd Karlene, Karen, Helen, Desmond and Shelley are committed, dedicated and professional employees who work as a team to keep St. Paul's running as a well-oiled machine. Special thanks to Rev'd Karlene for her outstanding leadership. We witness her faith in action each and every day. Thank you sincerely for all you do!

In addition, we are blessed to have the ongoing support of three Voluntary Associate Ministers (VAM) namely: Rev'd Pat Cook, Rev'd Maurice Francis and Rev'd Bonnie Pilkey.

Our large church "family" is comprised of many willing people who together makes St. Paul's run efficiently and smoothly. These people are all volunteers. Council sincerely thanks all these volunteers who continue to give many hours of service behind the scenes.

On December 1, 2024 the many volunteers were recognized for their service. As names were called each stood. It was very overwhelming but meaningful to see so many people standing indicating we truly have a lot of volunteers; what a meaningful service. Each and every one of you is greatly appreciated. Thanks, Rev'd Karlene, for arranging this celebration in recognition of our many volunteers.

In conclusion, this church family is strong and cohesive. I thank each of you and each member of staff for their support as we all have journeyed together through challenges and changes: always celebrating the good times and special occasions.

Please allow me to make a few personal comments. Thank you sincerely to all for your support given to me as I once again serve as your Chair of Council and the Congregation. It is my privilege to work with a dedicated group called your Council.

As we all work together and with your support, we will have an exciting and rewarding year as we move through 2025.

Thank you sincerely to all!

Report submitted by,

Mary Anne Silverthorn

Acting Chair: January 1- April 16, 2024

Chair: April 16, 2024

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH TILLSONBURG**

**ANNUAL MEETING 2024**

**SUNDAY FEBRUARY 9, 2025**

**AGENDA**

1. **Lighting of Christ Candle and devotion**  
– Rev'd Karlene Brown-Palmer
2. **Call to Order** – Mary Anne Silverthorn, Council Chair
3. **Motion\*\*** to appoint - Recording Secretary for this meeting
4. **Motion \*\*** - pursuant to Section 3.7 of the UCC Manual to extend voting privileges to adherents
5. **Motion \*\*** - to approve agenda for February 9, 2025 as circulated (or with additions as necessary).
6. **Motion \*\*** to approve minutes of Congregational Annual meeting – February 17, 2024 and corrections as necessary

**REPORTS:**

7. **Minister's Report** - Rev'd Karlene
8. **Transitions of 2024** - Baptism, Marriage, Funerals/Memorial Services/Committals
9. **Council Report** – Mary Anne – Chair

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

10. **Motion \*\***to approve all 2024 Committee reports as printed.
11. **Financial Reports \*\*\* Chair** - Ron Wycherley
12. **Treasurers Update\*\*\*** - Dianne McPherson --\*\*\***Motion to receive**
13. **Auditor's report** - \*\*\* **Motion to receive**
14. **Appointment of Auditor for 2025—Motion \*\*\*\***
15. **2025 Budget Proposal** - Ron/Dianne - \*\*\***Motion**
16. **2025 M and S allocation** - \*\*\***Motion**

17. **Resignation of Trustee - \*\*\*Motion**
18. **Proposed 2025 Church Council/Committees - \*\*\*Motion**
19. **Confirmation of Trustees - \*\*\*Motion**
20. **Appointment of Lay Representatives to Antler River Watershed Regional Council – Mary Anne**  
**Motion \*\*to appoint – Marianne Ferris/Mary Anne Silverthorn +1**
21. **New Business - as necessary**
22. **Vacancies - as outlined in the UCC Manual – Section B-7.3 6**  
**The governing body is responsible for informing the pastoral charge when there are vacancies on the governing body. The governing body may fill the vacancy until the pastoral charge elects a replacement. Motion \*\***
23. **Next Annual Meeting - date – February 8, 2026 TENTATIVE**
24. **Courtesy Remarks – Mary Anne**
25. **Adjournment, Blessing and Sending Forth - Rev. Karlene**
26. **Motion \*\* to adjourn**



8. Transitions of 2023 – Baptism, Marriage, Funerals/Memorial Services/ Committals

9. Council Report – Mary Anne Silverthorn – Acting Council Chair

**Motion C23-05**

Moved: Dianne Parnell

Seconded: Jed Drew

*To approve both the Minister's report and the Council Chair report*

Carried

**Committee Reports**

10. **Motion C23-06** - To approve all 2023 Committee reports

Moved: Ron Wycherley

Seconded: Dorell Clark

*To approve all 2023 Committee reports as printed*

Carried

11. Financial Report – Acting Treasurer/Finance Chair Ron Wycherley

**Motion C23-07**

2023 Financial Report

Explanation of disbursement of In Memorial donation from Thelma Hadwen Estate  
Investment breakdown re: Donation from Hadwen estate:

Donation of \$100,000 (one hundred thousand dollars) has been invested as follows:  
\$10,000 to St. Paul's UCW.

\$90,000 to St. Paul's Church distributed as follows: \$10,000 (ten thousand dollars) towards the Handicap Washroom; \$20,000 (twenty thousand dollars) to be distributed as needed for on-going church expenses; \$60,000 (sixty thousand dollars) was invested in a high interest investment account. This can be drawn on for washroom expenses and work of the church as required.

A thank you note has been sent to the family by Acting Chair Mary Anne Silverthorn and Finance Chair Ron Wycherley

Moved: Jed Drew.

Seconded: Indira Reynolds

*To receive and approve the financial report as presented*

Motion

Carried

**Motion C23-08**

Appointment of Auditor - Paul Hanson

Moved: Ron Wycherley

Seconded: Sheila McKibbin

To approve the appointment of Paul Hanson as Financial Reviewer for St. Paul's 2024 financial year

Carried

**Motion C23-09**

2024 Budget Proposal

Moved: Ron Wycherley

Seconded: Bonnie Brown

*That the Budget proposal for the 2024 year be approved as presented*

Carried

**Motion C23-10**

2024 M&S allocation

Moved: Sheila McKibbin

Seconded: Shirley Godfree

*That the M&S allocation of \$18,000 (eighteen thousand dollars) and the UCW allocation of \$6,000 (six thousand dollars) for the 2024 year be approved as presented*

Carried

**12. Approval of Proposed Church Council/Committees for 2024**

**Motion: C23-11**

Moved: Brian Clark.

Seconded: Ron Wycherley

*To approve the proposed 2024 members of Church Council and Committees as presented*

Carried

**13. Confirmation of Trustees**

**Motion C23-12**

Moved: Brian Clark

Seconded: Ron Wycherley

*To approve the proposed 2024 members of the Trustees namely: Brian Clark – Chair, Fran Bell; Brad Bennett; Rev. Karlene Brown-Palmer; Jed Drew; Dave Morris; Indira Reynolds; Deb Wycherley.*

Carried

**14. Appointment of Lay Representatives to Antler River Watershed Council**

**Motion C23-13**

Moved: Brenda Marshall

Seconded: Ron Stafford

*Moved the St. Paul's United Church Lay Representatives to the ARW Regional Council be: Marianne Ferris and Mary Anne Silverthorn +1 (vacancy)*

**15. New Business - as necessary**

There was no new business

**16. Next Annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, February 16, 2025**

**17. Courtesy Remarks – Mary Anne Silverthorn**

Mary Anne thanked all St. Paul's members for their ongoing support of our church. Thank you also to all committee and council members for your time and effort to help St. Paul's run smoothly.

Many thanks to Karlene, our Spiritual leader for her hard work, guidance and outreach to our members.

We are proud of Karen Hodges as she continues her studies as a Lay Preacher, as well as leading our Sunday school each week.

Thank you to Desmond who works above and beyond to keep our church looking clean and welcoming, and who is always available to help for our special events.

A church cannot run efficiently without an Administrative Assistant and we thank Helen Loehndorf for all her hard work and her pleasant personality.

To Shelley, our Music Director, thank you for her outstanding talent that enriches our services as well as her hard work to bring us several Cantatas throughout the year.

**18. Adjournment, Blessing and Sending Forth – Rev'd Karlene**

**19. Motion C23-14**

Moved: Dianne Parnell

Seconded: Ron Stafford

*To adjourn the 2023 Annual Congregational Meeting at 12:30 p.m.*

Note: There were forty-three (46) congregational and council members in attendance as well as those who tuned in to watch the meeting on-line.



**IN MEMORIAM**

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Marcel Henry Van Lamoen  
Nora Carolyn Metcalfe  
Eleanor Marie Story  
Clifton 'Cliff' Johnson  
Bonnie Fern Stafford  
Harvey Elliott  
Marie Claus

Blanche Julie Mabee  
Alfred Neumann  
M. Wayne Mahoney  
Marlene Baldwin  
Bonita 'Bonnie' Brown  
Ronald Morgan

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\* non-members

\*Gerald Stanley Forneri  
\*Harry Wilfred Anderson  
\*Freda Anne Pressey

\*Beatrice 'Mary' Turner  
\*Donald James Bentley  
\*Dorothy Eleanor Campbell

**CHILDREN BAPTISM**

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Adelaide Heather Marie Swance	May 12, 2024
Bradley Adam Maxwell Swance	May 12, 2024

**ADULT BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION**

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Kimberly Kirkland	June 30, 2024
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**RE-AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

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Margaret Yakubovich	June 30, 2024
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## WORSHIP COMMITTEE ~ Mary Anne Silverthorn

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From our “Constitution and Committee Responsibilities documents” the Worship Committee of St. Paul’s United Church has a long list of responsibilities all relating to worship and the many programmes/activities associated with worship and the Sunday/Weekly/Monthly services.

I was first elected Chair of Worship at the Annual General Meeting in February 2023 and re-elected for the 2024 year. The Worship Committee, comprised of 10 members represents the many groups working within St. Paul’s United Church. Each of these groups report to worship monthly as we plan events and work closely with Rev’d Karlene, Karen and Shelley to ensure that each is supported as they work through the planning for the year. In the past few years, the Christian Development Committee (CD) and Worship have worked together to plan events/activities allowing for each committee to have “more people power”. Other groups such as Messy Church work independently; however, they too report to Worship.

Worship’s budget includes monies for maintenance of the organ/piano, maintenance of the sound system and microphones, flowers in the Sanctuary (when not requested/reimbursed by individuals from the church family), supplies for each communion service and baptism, and many special events/celebrations following worship services.

Messy Church continues to meet monthly – (no meetings in July/August) Using “themes” for each month their attendance continues to increase. Many thanks to Dave and Norma and all the volunteers who make this a strong viable programme; an outreach to families who now make Messy Church their church connection.

The Community Kitchen continues to thrive under the leadership of Julie and Keith Avery. A detailed report from Julie and Keith about the work of the Community Kitchen is included separately in this report booklet.

To meet our desire for a church picnic, the town again granted approval for use of the parking lot and on Sunday July 21, we held our Second Annual service entitled: “In the SUN Celebrating the SON”. The Worship was stimulating: the food scrumptious; this was the second year we had a food truck in attendance.

Everyone present regardless of age was excited and happy to be present. From the enthusiasm we now will plan a picnic with the food truck each year. Stay tuned for a 2025 date.

Responsibilities previously done by a flower committee continue to “taken on” by the Worship committee since for many reasons there are no specific individuals volunteering to do the work of the former flower committee. We are grateful for the van Hoeve family who provide colourful cut flowers for the sanctuary every Sunday during the blooming season and cut flowers, fruits and vegetables for the Thanksgiving season. Many thanks to a small handful of people who willingly show up to assist with all the decorating for the Thanksgiving and Christmas Seasons. Your handiwork and creativity are viewed and appreciated by all who are in attendance at those special services. Thank you sincerely to each of you. Garden Gate also arrange and deliver flowers weekly as requested by families as they remember family members or celebrate a special occasion or order flowers just because.... Thank you to all those who donate to the Memorial Fund as they remember a loved one. For these many donations your generosity is greatly appreciated.

On Sunday December 15, the family of St. Paul’s delivered 63 poinsettias (plus three gift bags for those with flower allergies) to people in our family who because of grief and/or illness, need to know that we as their church family care about them. Garden Gate: (Matt and Linda and their staff) are amazing as they do the preparation of the plants for delivery and deliver those plants to the church ready for 9 teams of drivers to deliver them Sunday after worship. We know the recipients and their families are so thankful for the plant from the calls and notes we receive. Special thanks go to Susie/Jamie Cluett, Anne Foster and their families for their generous donation allowing this programme to “put smiles on faces” each year.

The Worship Committee combined with the Christian Development are a busy group as we work to be *a church making a difference through positive and engaging members living their faith*. (Reference --Vision Statement of St. Paul’s United Church).

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Silverthorn  
Chair: Worship Committee

## **Worship Committee**

Mary Anne Silverthorn - Chair

Rev'd Karlene Brown - Palmer

## **Committee Members**

Brenda Marshall - CD Committee Chair

Karen Hodges CD Co-Ordinator

Dag Morris

Doreen Smith

Shelley Vermeersch -Director of Music

Lesley Jackson – CD Committee

Dianne Parnell

Dave Collis -Messy Church

Carol Crocker – Choir member

## **CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT & SUNDAY SCHOOL ~ Brenda Marshall, Chair**

The CD Committee had a great year. We have sixteen children and youth registered for our Sunday School. Karen Hodges continues to work hard preparing lessons. We continued to use the Curriculum called "52 Weeks of Learning". The lessons in the New Year have the children Time Traveling as they went back in time for the stories. The lessons are going well with the dedication of our teachers Jeannet van Hoeve, Brenda Marshall and new this year Aliyah Helsdon. As always, more Sunday School teachers are always welcome.

Karen's Youth Group has met occasionally this past year, for breakfast. This coming year they are going to assist Karen at Maple Manor every couple of months with a church service. Finn and Bella Jackson continue to assist with sound and projection on Sunday mornings.

In December the Children presented their Christmas pageant with recitations, music and the Scripture reading. As always it was great success and very entertaining.

We hope to keep the children involved in the service on the third Sunday of the month, for example lighting the Christ Candle, reading scriptures, bring the collection, and this year the Prayers of the People, and Noisy Can Collection. If you have any ideas or suggestion to keep our children involved in the service, please let Karen know.

We hope with your prayers and Jesus' blessing 2025 we continue to stay safe and healthy.

Brenda Denham Marshall

## MESSY CHURCH 2024 ~ Dave and Norma Collis

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St. Paul's symbolic "Big Hugs" embraced a growing number of Messy Church families during the past year. With returning families to new members each time we meet, the numbers often top off at 72 participants.

Our 15 faithful "front of house" volunteers continue to model Christian values by interacting with our families with patience, and good humor. They always create an atmosphere that is welcoming and inclusive.

When the prepping for these events became overwhelming, due to our increasing numbers, Laura Mahoney stepped in and organized a team of "behind the scenes" volunteers who cut and sew and turn a glimmer of an idea into a workable craft that is appealing to all ages.

We try to offer at least one "big" craft that people will take home and use in their homes. We hope that the items they have made will be a constant reminder that they are a member of Messy Church and that their "Messy family" is always there for them.

We are able to provide these experiences thanks to money provided through our church council, plus financial assistance from the Friendship Circle (former UCW) the AOTS and from supportive individuals from our own congregation plus other community members.

Thanks to Julie and Keith Avery, metal shelving was located at a large home decor store that was going out of business. The store owner, once he learned how the shelving would be used, donated the items and even cut the units to size. Early one morning, Dave Collis and Floyd Marshall made a run to Cambridge and returned with enough metal shelving to turn the room known as "the old kitchen" into an organized Messy Church work and storage area. Many thanks again to Laura Mahoney who helped with the organization of this area.

Set up for each Messy Church is carried out during the Friday afternoon before Messy Church meets. Many thanks to Desmond who sets up the furniture with craft tables around the perimeter of the room and a long "banquet table" down the center of the room. 9-year-old Addy Swance, faithfully arrives each time, thanks to her grandparents or her mom, to set up and to decorate the banquet tables. This is quite an undertaking as we set up for 50 diners and add empty craft tables before mealtime if needed.

Two of our volunteers provide dessert for each meal while another faithful volunteer always brings healthy snacks for the snack table.

Various teams from the Community Kitchen, provide Kid friendly food with the bonus of a nachos lunch prepared and served by Nancy Peters and Dave Collis.

A Special thank you to the van Hoeve family who contribute produce and experiences (i.e. a chance to meet baby chicks) for various meet ups.

Our faithful greeter, Mary Hessler, keeps our attendance records in spotless order while respecting the privacy of each registrant.

Norma Collis meets once a month, via Zoom with Messy Church leaders from across Canada. These meetings are chaired by the national leader Rev. Carol Fletcher who lives in Winnipeg Canada. Participants in these meetings represent well established Messy Churches as well as those who are just beginning their Messy Church journey. The meetings are filled with good suggestions and focus on a different core issue of the program each time. Rev. Fletcher constantly reminds us that Messy Church is for all ages and that this should be considered each time we plan a Messy Church programme.

Thanks to Rev'd Karlene we were able to quietly help 4 Messy Church families at Christmas who have been struggling due to unforeseen circumstances.

This programme has evolved into a rewarding experience for everyone involved. The children now move with confidence from activity to activity and then come together for group time with older children, quite spontaneously, helping a younger child to sit quietly or to participate in a group game. The parents and grandparents often step in to help with busy craft centers or to help with clean up and food service.

Messy Church is a warm and wonderful experience for everyone involved. If you keep an eye open, you will see that some "little miracle" happens each time we meet.

Respectfully Norma Collis

## **VAM REPORT 2024 ~ Pat Cook**

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As I sit down to write this report, the scripture text Psalm 118:24 comes to mind. "This is the day the Lord had made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

We have much to rejoice and be thankful for. We have clean water to drink, a bountiful food supply, warm homes for shelter, and freedom to live in peace.

As I serve as a VAM here at St. Paul's I have much to rejoice about. I think of the joy and fulfillment I receive when I visit the parishioners of the St. Paul's faith community. I enjoy serving in the various capacities to help fulfill the ministry of St. Paul's community.

I would like to thank St. Paul's for letting me serve as one of their Voluntary Associate Ministers over the past years. I continue to offer my ministry as a faithful servant of God.

Rev. Pat Cook

## **VAM ~ Maurice Francis**

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I continue to give my blessings to the ongoing life and work at St Paul's.

# ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED (ARW) REGIONAL MEETINGS 2024 ~ Mary Anne Silverthorn

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## Introduction to the 2024 Meeting Reports

The ARW Regional Council meets twice a year in the Spring and the Fall. The meeting is scheduled with an agenda that meets the United Church procedures re the business of the Church.

The Spring meeting was a Tri-regional meeting – where the 3 regions who share the same staff meet together. The regions of Antler River Watershed (ARW), Horseshoe Falls (HF) and Western Ontario Waterways (WOW) met at the Unifor Family Education Centre in Port Elgin because that facility meets all the requirements necessary to have over 300 elected reps, clergy and guests. We need large meetings rooms, small meeting rooms, provision for meals and accommodation. What an amazing experience to have that number of people present and together to hear speakers, share in both large and small group meetings, share meals together and also provide accommodation for many.

The Fall meeting was one meeting for each Region held by Zoom.

Attending both meetings from St. Paul's are our 2 elected reps, Marianne Ferris and Mary Anne Silverthorn and our clergy – Rev'd Karlene-Brown Palmer.

For complete reports about the business and decisions of each meeting see the detailed reports of each attached to this introduction.

In addition, both Rev'd Karlene and I serve at the regional level. Rev'd Karlene is a member of the Executive and I am a member of the Pastoral Relations Commission (formerly called the Human Resources Commission). There are 2 other Commissions within the Region. They are the Congregational Support Commission and the Discipleship Commission. All Commissions report to the Executive. Each group meets monthly to deal with the business of the Region. The Pastoral Relations Commission has other committees working within the portfolio. One is the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Resource Team—which I Chair.

Personally, I have some other responsibilities within the Region. The Region has several Communities of Faith who are without clergy and need an appointed



Pastoral Charge Supervisor (PCS) be in attendance for all their Governance Meetings. In addition, as some Communities of Faith move through the Search process I serve as a Liaison (Resource) and PCS for them. I have been appointed the PCS to Avondale UC, Otterville UC and in mid-January College Ave UC Woodstock will be added to my list. I do these additional responsibilities with all knowing that my responsibilities to my own Community of Faith is extremely important to me and comes first.

I enjoy all this work and find working with others in the Region invigorating and keeps me current with the procedures, processes, protocols necessary as we work together all supporting the United Church and its Communities of Faith.

If you have concerns, comments and/or questions, feel free to contact me.

Introduction submitted by:  
Mary Anne Silverthorn

**Report from Antler River Watershed Tri Regional Meeting  
Port Elgin, May 24-26, 2024**

Attending Rev'd Karlene Brown- Palmer, Mary Anne Silverthorn, Marianne Ferris

The Tri Annual Meeting of Antler River Watershed (ARW), Horseshoe Falls (HF), and Western Ontario Waterways (WOW) Regional Councils met in Port Elgin at the Unifor Family Centre with the theme of the weekend being "Life Together".

Moderator of the United Church of Canada, Right Rev'd Carmen Lansdowne, was our guest speaker for the weekend.

The meeting began at 2:00 p.m. on Friday with the Covenanting with our new Executive Secretary, Mark Laird.

Presenters included, Tanya Cameron, Vocational Minister, Tim Hackborn from the Office of Vocations who works with the Indigenous Church, Brenna Baker from Community of Faith Stewardship Support and Greg Smith-Young, Growth Animator.

A presentation was made by Kindred Works who as part of their scope of work help congregations find ways to repurpose buildings and church property.

Presentations were also made by our support staff and we were introduced to Twenty-One Designated Lay Ministers who would be Ordained or Commissioned under new policies of the church.

The evening ended with our guest speaker Carmen Lansdowne. Much of her presentation was based on the works of the German Theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, author of "Life Together". The church is being challenged to take on demanding work. Many present that night said, "It felt so good to be made to feel so bad about the present state of the church because we know we can do better and MUST!" Thanks be to God!

On Saturday morning we gathered as Antler River Watershed to conduct the business of our local Regional Council. The meeting opened with the introduction of the Leadership Team - President Cheryl Bolton; Business committee Kerry Stover; Recording Secretary Louise Hall and Parliamentarian.

Proposals #1 Opening and Procedural Motion as well as Proposal #2 which approved the GC 45 Commissioners Slate were both approved.

We had the opportunity to meet new Commissioners to the region and also had time to share some very interesting ideas of what special events people were doing to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Church of Canada. We felt that many of them were activities our congregation would enjoy.

We had the privilege of hearing from the three Candidates who were being admitted into Ministry through Ordination or Commissioning later in the afternoon.

The Moderator gave the second part of her presentation. People were enthusiastic about her and her message.

Following lunch we participated in the celebration of ministry service. Although lengthily it was beautiful to see so many answering the call and the support of friends and family there for this special moment.

In the evening the ARW Regional Council met again. Our President Elect Nominee, Richard Auckland presented to the court. Richard is from First United in St. Thomas.

Proposal #3 regarding the approval of the slate of officers and commissioners with the addition of Rev'd Jane Van Patter as a Member at Large until 2027 was carried. Eileen Antone will be the Indigenous Representative to the Executive.

The Moderator stopped into the meeting, giving those present a time to share information and ask questions.

On Sunday morning the Regional Council met again. Richard Auckland was elected incoming President of ARW Regional Council. He will officially begin his position in 2025.

The Regional Council Evaluation was discussed. Areas to work on include: Communications; people feeling that it feels sometimes that the work is being led by the staff; and people feel disconnected sometimes since we went to the regional model from the Presbytery model. There are always ways to improve!

There was a discussion about the need for more people to volunteer. People were reminded that much of the work is open to anyone within our regional council. It doesn't have to be Commissioners.

Proposal # 4 Provided for all unfinished business and any new business be left to the Executive. This motion was approved. The AWR Regional Meeting was closed.

We reconvened as part of the Tri Regional meeting, to share in worship. We celebrated the Retirees and Jubilands, and honoured In Memoriam and Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes.

Executive Secretary Rev'd Mark Laird gave the message for the day based on the theme for the weekend, "Life Together".

The meeting closed at noon and all were sent on their way with a delicious bagged lunch. We will gather by Zoom in the fall.

Report submitted by Marianne Ferris

## **Antler River Watershed Regional Council Fall Meeting**

**October 25 – 26, 2024**

Report to St. Paul's United Church

Attending from St. Paul's United: Rev'd Karlene Brown-Palmer

: Mary Anne Silverthorn

: Marianne Ferris

Members of Antler River Watershed Regional Council met on Friday evening October 25<sup>th</sup> and Saturday morning October 26 by Zoom.

The theme for the meeting was A Time of Renewal: Rebuild, Reconnect, Revitalize. Council President, Rev'd Cheryl Bolton, called the meeting to order and constituted the meeting for business. Chair-Elect, Richard Auckland, Acknowledged the land on which we were meeting from.

Chair of Agenda and Business, Rev'd Kerry Stover brought forward **Proposal #1** regarding Opening of the meeting and all Procedural Motions. Motion was carried. Rev'd Charmaine Baily, Equity Support, Read the BRAVE and Affirming Statement.

Opening Worship was led by Rev'd Doug Peck, using the theme, Reconnect. The music ministry was provided by several choirs from congregations within the Region.

### **Commission Report- Human Resources - Chair Rev'd Kerry Stover**

Kerry gave highlights from his report. He had a video featuring some of the activities of the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Gathering. The committee which supports the LLWLs is led by Mary Anne Silverthorn. The LLWLs provide worship leadership and preaching when other ministry personnel are unavailable.

There was conversation on how congregational Ministry and Personnel committees can be supported by Council members- passing on notices of training opportunities throughout the Region.

### **Finances**

Doug Cameron, treasurer, gave the financial report. Finances for 2024 are on track at the third quarter mark. Investments have performed well with an average return of 4.5%.

We receive two grants to fund the Regional Council- an assessment Grant and a Mission and Service Grant. We also receive funds from investment income, 50% grant from Archives Reserve to cover its costs and the Regional Council share (25%) from disbanding congregations.

## **Proposal#2**

**To review the 2024 Year to date and adopt the 2025 Operating budget.** The motion to approve was carried. KPMG LLP was appointed as auditors for the 2024 Financial year. The executive may adapt the 2025 budget as necessary within the approved guidelines.

Rev'd Pam Wilcocks led Community Building. We were assigned to breakout rooms and had an opportunity to connect or reconnect with four or five others. We talked about our home congregations, what ministries in the church we participated in and what exciting or interesting activities we had taken part in that might be of interest to another congregation.

Following our return to the larger group we acknowledged Community Life Cycle Changes with the disbanding of Essex United Church in October 2024.

We remembered Rev'd Normalie Voakes and Rev'd Norman Jones, who had both passed away recently, as part of our In Memoriam celebration. Executive Secretary offered a prayer of remembrance and thanks for all. Council President, Cheryl, closed the meeting for the evening.

The Fall Meeting resumed on Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup> at 9 am.

After reconstitution of the meeting by President Rev'd Cheryl Bolton, Rev'd Doug Peck from Lambton United Church in London led worship again, Doug visited Camp Kee-Mo-Kee and used the theme, Remember. Music ministry was led by choirs from around the Region.

## **Meeting the candidates for ministry**

Vocations Minister Tanya Camerson introduced the two candidates for ministry:

Roxanne Bale - Designated Lay Minister    Greg Simpson - Ordered Ministry

The Celebration of Ministry Service took place at Lambeth United Church later in the day.

## **Discipleship and Justice Commission**

Rev'd Joshua Lawrence, co-chair, presented a report on The Discipleship and Justice Commission. A main area of interest to this commission is camps and work with youth and young adults. This commission is also involved with Right Relations, Affirm etc.

## **Education Session**

Executive Minister Mark Laird provided an education session on the Principle Based approach in working with justice issues. This was approved by General Council in 2023.

## **Proposal #3**

Executive Ministry Rev'd Mark Laird presented **Proposal 3** which offers a new granting process in using funds received by the Region from disbanding congregations from the Property Fund. The **Bridge Financing Fund** would have an opening balance of \$300,000 with 1/3 of funds being available in one year. Up to \$30,000 would be available to any one community of faith. (C of F cannot have more than \$100,000 in non- restricted funds available to them). The loan would be at 4% for up to 3 years. The first 6 months would be at 0%. This proposal was passed.

## **Proposal #4**

Executive Minister Mark Laird presented **Proposal 4** which is the creation of a **Moving Expense Fund**. These funds come from the Property Fund The fund would have an opening balance of \$100,000. A grant of up to \$10,000 max. (50 % of moving expense) for ministry personnel required to move to accept a new call or appointment. The Community of Faith may not have more than \$100,000 in unrestricted funds to be able to apply. This proposal was passed.

## **Proposal #5**

Executive Minister Mark Laird presented **Proposal #5** which is the creation of a **Collaborative Ministry Fund**. These funds come from the Property Fund. The fund will have an opening balance of \$200,000 with a maximum of \$50,000. per year may be withdrawn from the fund. Each application approved may only receive a max. of \$10,000. You may reapply in a following year with no guarantees of being approved and the amount granted. There will be at least two United Church Communities of Faith on the application. This is for operating expenses not capital expenses. The proposal was passed.

## **Stewardship**

Rev'd Breanna Baker from the General Council office presented on Stewardship. We were asked to reflect on something good we've accomplished. We agreed that the good things take time and work, not unlike growing a culture of generosity in our congregations. So now is the time to start- we can and need to do it so we can live out our ministries.

## **Youth Forum**

Youth Forum animator for the three Regional Councils: Horseshoe Falls, Western Ontario Waterways and Antler River Watershed, Matthew Tyhurst presented on the election of youth commissioners to GC 45.

## **Congregational Support Commission- Greg Simpson-Chair**

Greg explained that this commission works with congregations in transition. This may involve collaborations, multipoint charges, nesting or joint worship. Several examples of what is going on in the Region. If congregations are looking to try something new, reach out to the Commission.

## **Closing**

Rev'd Kerry Stover, Chair of Agenda and Business reported that there were no new proposals and no new business to bring to the meeting.

President Rev'd Cheryl Bolton and Chair Elect Richard Auckland gave closing courtesies and Cheryl gave the closing prayer.

## **Closing Motion**

The work of the Regional Council continues until we meet again in the Spring: May 30-31 and is entrusted to the Executive. The Executive is authorized to fill any vacancies, and they will be confirmed at the spring meeting.

The Fall meeting closes at the end of the Celebration of Ministry Service being held today, beginning at 4:30 pm at Lambeth United Church. To view the meeting in its entirety, check out YouTube- Antler River Watershed Regional Council Fall Meeting Friday and Saturday.

Report submitted by

Marianne Ferris

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES ~ Brian Clark, Chair**

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The Trustees manage the insurance of the Church property and the investments. The premium for insurance will be \$18,000.00. The Trustees insure the property through the HUB program of the United Church of Canada.

A summary of St. Paul's investments is attached and reflects our position at December 31, 2024. The Trustees are advised by Scotia Wealth Management. Some of the investments are Restricted as shown in the notes.

The Trustees this year were Fran Bell, Brad Bennett, Rev'd Karlene Brown-Palmer, Brian Clark, Jed Drew, Dave Morris, Indira Reynolds, and Deb Wycherley. After many years of dedicated service, Deb Wycherley has tendered her resignation from the Trustees. Her insights and advice have been appreciated and we will miss her at our meetings. Thank you for your service, Deb!

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Brian Clark, Chair  
Board of Trustees



**St. Paul's United Church  
TILLSONBURG, ON  
Investment Funds Summary Statement**

**NO FINANCIAL INFO. AVAILABLE ONLINE**

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## **MEMBERSHIP, FELLOWSHIP AND CARE COMMITTEE ~ Jed Drew, Chair**

A critical role of the Membership, Fellowship and Care Committee is to ensure that the Official Roll of Members is maintained. The following table shows our status as of the end of 2024:

### **ST. PAUL'S UNITED TILLSONBURG HISTORIC MEMBERSHIP ROLL SUMMARY**

**Updated as of Dec 31, 2024**

<b>Full Members</b> (with voting privileges)	
Active	183
Inactive	36
<b>Total Full Members</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>Members</b> (without voting privileges)	
Children of Full Members	1
Other Baptized Children	18
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Non-Member Children</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Adherents</b> (conditional voting privileges)	
	<b>55</b>
<b>Total Congregation</b>	<b>294</b>

In comparison to the previous year, our congregation declined by 7 persons, principally through the death of members. This decline is consistent with the experience of recent years as the congregation ages.

The Membership, Fellowship and Care Committee continued to send out cards to those who were ill, bereaved or who had achieved significant life milestones such as birthdays (age 80+) and anniversaries (50+ years). In addition to the numerous cards, members of the committee made numerous telephone calls to congregation members, simply to chat and keep in contact. A bulletin is delivered to our residents of Harvest Crossing once a week – this is one method in which we can keep in touch with members for whom attendance at church is difficult.

It has been our pleasure to serve on this committee.

**Committee Members:** Jed Drew (Chair)  
Karon Harris, Mary Hessler, Lisa Houston and Dianne Parnell

## **MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE ~ Marianne Ferris, Chair**

St. Paul's has been blessed over the past year with a continued excellent staffing compliment.

The staff ensures that the building and grounds upkeep and the congregation's needs are met in a timely manner and with great efficiency.

Two of our staff celebrated milestone years of employment with St. Paul's. Helen, our office administrator, celebrated ten years with us and Shelley, our organist and choir director, hit an incredible milestone of thirty-five years leading our music ministry. The congregation was able to celebrate with both and express our sincere gratitude for all they have brought to church life here at St. Paul's. The congregation showed their ongoing support with a social time for each, and a token of our appreciation.

Rev'd Karlene continues to provide exciting, thoughtful worship as we continue to grow in our faith and be the best we as a church family can be. She provides support to individuals and families facing challenges.

Desmond keeps the building and grounds spotless, and this does not go unnoticed by our many visitors. They have now been with us for over seven years.

Karen is in her eleventh year leading the Children and Youth ministry. We are so fortunate to have such committed staff!

The committee continued to contact the staff to offer personal support. We will work in the New Year to update job descriptions that will ensure the current needs are identified and being addressed.

The committee for 2024:

Deb Beres- secretary

Brad Bennett

Brian Clark

Karen Helsdon

Dave Morris

Marianne Ferris- Chair

Report submitted by Marianne Ferris

## **PASTORAL CARE TEAM ~ LEADER: Rev. Pat Cook**

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The Pastoral Care Committee met numerous times throughout the year. It is with sadness that I report several of our congregants, that we served through our outreach, passed away this past year.

Our main focus is to faithfully visit our St. Paul's parishioners throughout the year. Whether by phone or personal visit, the pastoral care committee carried out this calling to let the people know we are thinking of them.

Rev'd Karlene, Rev'd Maurice, and Rev'd Pat served our parishioners, Harvest Crossing Retirement Centre, Maple Manor, and The Tillsonburg Retirement Center, respectively with communion.

We presently are researching the availability of grief sharing gatherings in our community.

Submitted by

Chair, Rev. Pat Cook

## PROPERTY COMMITTEE 2024 ~ Dave Morris, Chair

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The Property Committee has the responsibility of general oversight of the Church edifice and grounds delegated to it by the Trustees and serves as the working arm of the Trustees. Duties include maintaining the physical condition of the building, grounds, and contents, collaborating with appropriate groups in maintaining property and inventory. Other duties include developing a five-year maintenance program as well as a list of all physical assets, maintaining building security and safety, submitting all fundraising plans to the Church Council, and arranging volunteer work parties.

In keeping with the ongoing review of Accessibility, the need for a fully accessible washroom for the Church was identified. A plan to convert the Men's Washroom on the Main floor of the Church to a fully accessible washroom for all was approved by Church Council as recommended by the Property Committee. This has been implemented under budget and was funded by a bequest from the Estate of Thelma Hadwen. Higher toilettes have also been installed in the washrooms on the lower floor of the Church.

One of the largest Property Budget items for St. Paul's is the Utility Costs, particularly Natural Gas costs for heating. The heating system is being monitored and adjusted to use less fuel. We can report that Natural Gas usage has been reduced in 2024. Efforts will continue to find ways to reduce Energy Costs where feasible. Also, a reduced Elevator Maintenance Contract has been negotiated starting November 2024 until Nov 2032.

The Committee was saddened to lose a member of the Committee, Bonnie Stafford. She is missed by all.

Thanks to the Property Committee members- Ron Stafford, Bob Jenney, Floyd Marshall, Desmond Palmer, and Barb Aubrey – for their continued service to St. Paul's. A special thanks to Desmond for his continued high standard of caretaking of the Church.

Dave Morris, Chair

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT 2024

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St. Paul's United Church continued to actively practice Stewardship in our community and beyond; a significant part of this was our contributions to the Mission and Service of the United Church of Canada.

The committee welcomed our new treasurer Dianne McPherson and Karen Hodges. We continued to be proactive in our community and the UCC at large. We are indebted to Marianne Ferris who continues to spearhead our Adopt-a-Family program each year.

The special offerings throughout the year enabled St. Paul's to support the following local community programs (Community Kitchen, Domestic Abuse Oxford (DASO), Helping Hands Food Bank, Salvation Army Tillsonburg, Sakura House) as well as the following United Church sponsored programs (United Church of Canada World Development, Camp Pearce Williams, Operation Sharing Woodstock, Canadian Food Grains Bank, Cuba relief, World Change and World Development & Relief) The amounts contributed are to be found in the Financial Report.

There were a few special projects in our local community.

- We participated in the Salvation Army's Christmas Adopt a Family program by adopting one family and helped four other families.
- We collected new gloves, scarves and hats that allowed the Community Kitchen to distribute to clients in our community.
- Toiletries were collected and delivered to DASO on International Women's Sunday.
- The work of the Community Kitchen saw new extension to the programme to include a community closet. More updates in the Community Kitchen Report.

With God's help, St Paul's continued to be faithful in its support to the United Church of Canada Mission and Service Fund with the sum of \$ 23,905.70 for the year as well as the contribution from the UCW of \$6,000.00 for the year.

In the midst of challenges, we are thankful. We have experienced God as 'Jehovah Jireh,' the God who provides. We are grateful for our committed givers and for continued provision of creative ways that allow us to garner the much-needed funds to be able to assist others.

We are St. Paul's, called to serve God by serving others. Our aim is to continue making a difference in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and reaching out to all who are sons and daughters of our Lord, God being our helper.

Special thanks to Helen, our administrative assistant and all who work together to make the work of the Stewardship committee possible

Blessings,

Rev'd Karlene Brown-Palmer



## **Adopt-a-family 2024 ~ Marianne Ferris**

St. Paul's church family came together once again in a spectacular fashion to support five families over the Christmas season.

We began our campaign with a family with six children between 6 months and 15 years, and two dogs, mom, and dad. This family had recently experienced a devastating fire and had lost everything.

The church took on the challenge to not only support their Christmas wishes but to help the family get back on their feet in a new temporary home by providing various household necessities such as a microwave, mixer, flatware, bedding- sheets and blankets etc.

We completed the Christmas lists for each child and added extras were plentiful. The money continued to flow into the account so we decided that this was a sign that we could do more.

We picked up four additional families that are connected to us through programming and the shopping began! Thanks to Karlene for taking on the leadership of this project.

By Tuesday December 17<sup>th</sup>, the shopping was complete, and the gifts delivered.

I cannot express enough, my gratitude to all who supported this program, and I hope you took immense pleasure in being a part of this worthwhile effort.

Marianne Ferris

## **COMMUNITY KITCHEN 2024 ~ Keith & Julie Avery Coordinators**

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Community Kitchen resumed operations on October 19th following the summer break. This resumption of operations will now lead into our year round service for the guests from our community. We now have 5 teams involved in Community Kitchen, with our latest team being comprised of members from Crosspoint Community Church. There have also been many new volunteers calling wishing to help with Community Kitchen. Julie and I have been introducing the new volunteers to the roles and responsibilities associated with the service of the meal. Volunteers begin working with our team, before we assign them to one of our other teams on the regular schedule.

This year we have also introduced "Delivery Drivers" for each team. This takes the burden off the team leader having to deliver the meals after the meal service and cleanup is completed at 2pm. Our delivery recipients now know that meals will be arriving between 11:30pm and 12:30pm each Saturday.

Community Kitchen is also thankful for the relationship we have with the Helping Hand Food Bank and their new Director Samantha Hamilton. Samantha has been very supportive of our program and sends extra perishable food that was not taken during the weekly distribution at the food bank. This food is either used it in our meal preparation or given out to our guests to use at home.

On the financial side of things, Community Kitchen has been fortunate to have had good financial donation support from the St. Paul's Congregation again this year. This combined with our various fundraising efforts, grant applications - (\$6000.00) from the Oxford United Way and appeals to community organizations we have been able to operate in a surplus fashion. This surplus will be drawn upon in the coming fiscal year as we double the number of weeks that we will be serving in our year round operational model.

Income: \$30,136.08

Expenses: \$8,098.37 (6.5 months of operation)

Surplus: \$22,037.71

### **Community Closet Year End Report for 2024**

Upon being granted permission by church council to start a new outreach initiative to run in conjunction with Community Kitchen, the Community Closet opened its first clothing room in March of this year. It was met with a very positive response from our guests who noted that the room felt very welcoming, and the clothes were of high quality and smelled very clean. They loved the fact that they could “shop” like they were in a regular store, but with no associated costs. The Community Closet (and Messy Church) were the recipients of free shelving units sourced from the now closed Bed, Bath and Beyond in Cambridge. These shelving units made the organization of the clothing easier as well as looking very professional.

As this initiative gained traction, the Closet has received many donations from church members and the community at large. Word has gotten out in the community that we provide free clothing for all ages. In September, church council was approached about the availability of a second classroom so that we could offer an expanded clothing selection while being able to store and organize the donated clothing. Church council approved the request, and the second room was organized and opened in October. There are now dedicated rooms for children’s clothing, bedding and blankets, and our original room for adult clothing.

Each week the Community Closet is open during the Community Kitchen service hours, and throughout the week by special appointments arranged in advance. There have been literally thousands of items that have entered and left the Community Closet this year. Each week there are over 50 items that are selected

by our guests and community members who make use of this service. We have also received winter coats, hats, mitts and scarves. This year we have distributed around 80 coats for both adults and children.

Many individuals have also donated items from their own closet, back to the Community Closet. This is especially true for our infant and children's clothing, where the young ones grow too quickly to wear out the clothing. Small items are returned and the next size up is taken. This demonstrates how truly thankful the young parents are for the opportunity to get quality clothing without the associated costs.

It has been a fantastic year for the Community Closet. We would like to thank all that have stepped forward to donate quality clothing to support this outreach program.

Income \$0.00    Expenses \$0.00

Keith and Julie Avery  
Coordinators,  
Community Kitchen at St. Paul's

## **ST. PAUL'S ARCHIVES ~ Beth Sandor, Archivist**

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Throughout 2024, information about church events were added to the archive binders that are stored in the archives cupboards. For many of the events and special Sundays, photo collages were displayed on the board at the back of the church. The most recent binder and other items of interest are displayed in the table in the archive area.

The boxes of archive materials slated for delivery to the United Church's national archives in Toronto are still in the archive area.

Materials that St. Paul's members have for our archives can be placed on the table in the archives area or in the Archives file folder outside the church office door.

Beth Sandor



## **St. Paul's AOTS Fellowship Club (As One That Serves) 2024**

AOTS was active throughout 2024 with a Potluck and games night last January, a Spaghetti Dinner in March and a Greek Dinner in October. We assisted with the annual Church garage sale and pancake supper.

The group had 3 Sunday morning breakfasts with a speaker, followed by a general membership meeting. We also met at local restaurants the third Thursday of the month for a time of male fellowship and breakfast.

This year, the AOTS church service was on November 24 with guest speaker Rev. Brian Wilkie from St. Paul's United church in Aylmer. A number of AOTS members plus our youth from St. Paul's church family were involved in this service. We thank Rev. Maurice Francis for organizing this service.

We teamed up with Tillsonburg Sailing Association and over the year, we were able to make donations to: Helping Hands Food Bank, Community Kitchen, Messy Church, Salvation Army backpack program and Tillsonburg Minor Baseball as well the Upper Deck Youth Centre and St. Paul's General Fund.

Originally this group was a "Men's only club". At our general meeting in October we voted to open the membership to all members of our congregation and change the name to St. Paul's AOTS Fellowship Club. Our focus remains on assisting the youth in our community. We welcome all who are interested in fun and fellowship to join.

Respectfully submitted AOTS Executive

Dave Morris, Dave Collis, Maurice Francis, Floyd Marshall & Ron Stafford



## **~ The United Church Women 2024 - Shirley Godfree, President**

The ladies of St. Paul's UCW have had an exciting and busy year. It has been filled with worship, fellowship, and activity.

In April we hosted the Oxford UCW meeting. The women of the county met here, at St. Paul's, to enjoy a speaker and share time with fellow members. June found us meeting in Ingersoll for a spring get together with other Oxford members. At Siloam United Church in London, the Antler Watershed UCW enjoyed a very informative day with singing, worship, fellowship, and an excellent lunch. In October the Oxford UCW met again for more get together time. We are a part of a wider membership.

In May we held our UCW Sunday with our special guest speaker Rev. Paul Ivany, retired minister from Georgetown. He brought an inspiring message. Guests attended from other Oxford churches.

With the unfortunate passing of our UCW charter member, Thelma Hadwen, we received over \$1500 in tribute of her life. In our own acknowledgement of her dedication to the UCW, we decided to give a \$2000 bursary to a student at Glendale High School entering the nursing program in the fall of 2024. The recipient of this bursary was Isabella Monsere.

In addition to the tribute from Thelma's funeral, Thelma left the UCW \$10,000.00. After much discussion members decided to give donations to the Lighthouse Transition House, the Community Kitchen, and the Food Bank. \$5000.00 was invested towards future educational purposes.

We sponsored a camper at Pearce Williams summer camp. From the thank you note we received, it was evident a fun, exciting time was had.

To fund our many donations and activities, fundraising is an integral part of our work. We participated in four major fundraisers.

In May we sold geraniums. We held a bake sale in June in coordination with the St. Paul's garage sale. In November we took part in two events. We sold Rheo Thompson chocolate and held our Christmas Bazaar. We were very blessed to have Julie Avery be the coordinator of our bazaar. She was an excellent planner and organizer. We thank her so much for all the time, energy, and effort she dedicated to this project.

In past years there were six UCW groups. However, recently, we were down to two: Unit 1 and Unit 6. With the passing of Thelma Hadwen, leader of Unit 1, and the aging of many of our members, we are now one unit which we have renamed The Friendship Circle. From this amalgamation we see no need for an executive body who used to coordinate the units. December was the last meeting of this executive body which has now disbanded.

We want to thank all the members of St. Paul's for their continued support of all our endeavours. Without this support we would be hard pressed to complete our projects. Thank you so much.

Shirley Godfree  
UCW President



## **UCW Friendship Circle**

Our UCW Friendship Circle, previously called Unit 6, meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 1:00 pm in the Friendship Room. Members of the Circle provide a program. We have several new members and want to welcome all ladies to join us for a time of fellowship.

The topics for our meeting for 2024 were as follows:

January: "Looking Back to Move Forward".

February: "Lent is about Love".

March: "The Easter Story" presented by our guest speaker Rev'd Bonnie Pilkey.

April: a very interesting program on gardens.

May: Kelly Spencer was our guest speaker. She talked about well-being-physical, emotional, mental and spiritual mindfulness.

June: "Canada" was the theme for a fun filled afternoon.

We do not meet in July and August.

September: Janine Jackson, manager of Sakura House Hospice in Woodstock was our guest speaker. She enlightened us about the wonderful facility and the care given to patients in their final days.

October: An excellent program about "Animals of the Bible" was presented by the program committee.

November: The theme was Special Christmas ornaments and their symbolism which reminds us of Christ's birth.

I want to thank our Friendship Circle members for all of the support you have given me this year.

Laura Mahoney, UCW Friendship Circle Leader

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## **U.C.W. ARCHIVES ~ Beth Sandor Archivist**

Photographs and information pertaining to U.C.W. events continue to be archived in the annual binders which, when full, are stored in the archive cupboards. Collages of some special U.C.W. events, such as U.C.W. Sunday and the Frosty Fair Bazaar have been placed on display in the archives area.

Beth Sandor, UCW Archivist

To unite women of the community of faith for the total mission of the church and provide a means through which we may express our loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ through Christian witness, study, fellowship. And service.

### **UCW PURPOSE**

May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest upon all the work done in God's name.

May God give us light to guide us, courage to support us, and love to unite us, now and forever. Amen.

### **UCW BENEDICTION**

**ST PAULS' UNITED CHURCH WOMEN FINANCIAL REPORT**

Asset Balance As Of **December 31,2023** **\$23,029.28**

*Current Account Balance carried forward from 2023 \$ 10,009.83*

	<u>DECEMBER 31, 2024</u>	Year To Date
<b>Receipts:</b>	<b>Bazaar</b>	\$5,618.00
	<b>Donations</b>	\$10,150.00
	<b>Funeral Receipts</b>	\$0.00
	<b>GIC Interest</b>	\$39.07
	<b>Miscellaneous</b>	\$5,000.00
	<b>Offering</b>	\$3,087.00
	<b>Savings Acct. Interest</b>	\$0.00
	<b>Special Project</b>	\$240.00
	<b>Transfer from Savings</b>	\$0.00
	<b>UCW Membership</b>	\$224.00
	<b>UCW Projects</b>	\$6,446.97
	<b>TOTAL</b>	\$30,805.04
<b>Expenses:</b>	<b>Bank Charges</b>	\$80.68
	<b>Bazaar</b>	\$822.80
	<b>Bibles &amp; Literature</b>	\$0.00
	<b>Charity Donations</b>	\$11,538.45
	<b>Flowers</b>	\$73.45
	<b>Funeral Supplies</b>	\$0.00
	<b>Kitchen Supplies</b>	\$100.00
	<b>Membership to Presbyterial</b>	\$0.00
	<b>Miscellaneous</b>	\$10,000.00
	<b>Mission &amp; Service</b>	\$6,000.00
	<b>Speakers &amp; Gifts</b>	\$600.00
	<b>Special Project Healing Fund</b>	\$240.00
	<b>St. Paul's – Other</b>	\$0.00
	<b>St. Paul's – Refurbishment</b>	\$0.00
	<b>Stationery + Office Supplies</b>	\$160.00
	<b>UCW Projects</b>	\$3,516.34
	<b>TOTAL</b>	\$33,131.72
	<b>2024 BALANCE</b>	\$2,326.68
<b>Balance On Hand</b>	<b>Current Account</b>	\$7,683.15
	<b>Savings Account</b>	\$5,221.14
	<b>Thelma's Long Term GIC # 13809 Matures May 31,2025 @ 4.65%</b>	\$5,078.14
	<b>Original GIC #139830 @ 4.5% Matures June 11, 2026</b>	\$8,310.10
	<b>TOTAL</b>	\$26,292.53
<b>Note:</b>	<b>Total for the memorial fund is included in the current account</b>	\$265.48
	<b>First Ontario Credit union share account</b>	\$65.00

<b>2025 UCW BUDGET</b>		Approved Nov 27, 2024
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	Bank Interest (GIC)	\$50
	Bank Int. (Savings account)	\$15
	Bazaar (Includes float)	\$6,500
	Donations	\$100
	Membership	\$200
	Miscellaneous	\$0
	Offering	\$2,600
	Special Project Healing Fund	\$240
	UCW Projects	\$6,500
	Transfer from Savings account	\$0
	<b>TOTAL BUDGET RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$16,205</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	Community Kitchen	\$200
	Five Oaks Centre	\$100
	Food Bank	\$600
	Medical Electives	0
	Messy Church	\$400
	Mission & Services	\$6,000
	Operation Sharing (Avondale)	\$200
	Sakura house	\$300
	Salvation Army Tillsonburg	\$600
	Special Project	\$240
	Sponsor Camper	\$650
	Transition House (Lighthouse)	\$200
	Victoria's Quilts Tillsonburg	\$250
	World Relief	\$300
	Youth For Christ Tillsonburg	\$250
	Bank Charges	\$75
	Bazaar	\$500
	Bibles & Literature	0
	Flowers	\$75
	Kitchen Supply & Repair	\$100
	Membership	\$200
	Miscellaneous	\$50
	Speakers & Gifts	\$600
	St Paul's Emergency Fund	0
	St Paul's Office Supplies	\$100
	St Paul's Other	0
	St Paul's Refurbishment	0

Stationery	\$100
UCW Projects	\$3,500
<b>Total Budget Expenses</b>	<b>\$15,590</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$16,205</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$15,590</b>
Transfer from Savings to balance	\$0
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$615</b>

ST PAUL'S UCW MISSION AND OUTREACH FOR 2024	
Community Kitchen	\$3,200
Education Bursary	\$2,000
Five Oaks Centre	\$100
Food Bank	\$500
Messy Church	\$1,200
Mission & Services	\$6000
Operation Sharing (Avondale)	\$200
Sakura House	\$300
Salvation Army Tillsonburg	\$600
Special Project (healing fund)	\$240
Sponsor Camper	\$640
Transition House (Light House)	\$200
Victoria's Quilts Tillsonburg	\$250
World Relief (Food for North)	\$300
Youth For Christ Tillsonburg	\$250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,980</b>



## **FINANCE COMMITTEE ~ Ron Wycherley, Chair**

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2024 was a challenging year with the passing of Laurie Drew our leader. With the guidance of Helen we carried on. We welcomed Dianne in the spring as our Treasurer.

In the past year our expenses have increased significantly more than most years. Our income was propped up with memorial donations and bequests. This trend will not sustain us and the greater use of reserve funds is a distinct possibility. We are looking for significant ways to increase revenue all ideas are welcome.

I would like to thank our committee Deb, Roger, Marianne, Indira, Anne, and Rita for their weekly efforts and commitment.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Wycherley, Chair of Finance

## **TREASURER'S REPORT ~ 2024 ~ Dianne McPherson**

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I wanted to open by thanking everyone in the St. Paul's Family for your help and support during my first year as Treasurer. I certainly have big shoes to fill as Laurie Drew knew all the ins and outs of this position.

We continue to find ourselves in a deficit position as we begin 2025. We have drawn down undisbursed investment interest to meet our obligations over the past year.

I would like to thank Helen Loehndorf, Jed Drew and the entire Finance Committee for their support and guidance this year. I greatly appreciated their assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne McPherson

Treasurer

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

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### *St. Paul's United Church*

ANTLER RIVER WATERSHED REGION  
Minister: Rev. Karlene Brown-Palmer, M Div.  
Chair of Council: Mary Anne Silverthorn

88 Bidwell Street  
Tillsonburg, Ontario N4G 3V2  
519 688-0011, 688-0012

January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025

St. Paul's United Church  
Church Council

Re: 2024 Audit

I have reviewed the financial records of the Church for the year 2024 and have confirmed the bank balances and investment certificates as at December 31, 2024.

St. Paul's holds a Bequest Trust Certificate of \$50,000 Restricted Investments of \$296,000.00 and Non-restricted Investments in the amount of \$258,209.00 including \$1,311.00 undisbursed savings interest. The total Investments are \$554,209.00. Interest from these funds is to be used for church purposes; but the principal cannot be used for expenses.

I found the records to be correct according to good accounting practice and would like to thank Helen Loehndorf for her assistance during the audit.

I believe the attached statement reasonably reflects the financial status of the church as at December 31, 2024.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely

Paul Hanson

Email: [stpaulsunited@execulink.com](mailto:stpaulsunited@execulink.com)  
Website: [www.stpaulsunitedchurch.net](http://www.stpaulsunitedchurch.net)

"We are a Community minded Christian congregation, called to serve God by serving others."

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2024**

**NO FINANCIAL INFO. AVAILABLE ONLINE**



**ST. PAULS UNITED CHURCH PROFIT AND LOSS YTD COMPARISON**  
January 1 through December 31, 2024

**NO FINANCIAL INFO. AVAILABLE ONLINE**

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH

2025 BUDGET

**NO FINANCIAL INFO. AVAILABLE ONLINE**

## **Proposed Church Council --- 2025**

**Chair** -- Mary Anne Silverthorn

**Past Chair** – Jed Drew

**Recording Secretary**- Debbie Beres

**Treasurer**- Dianne McPherson

**Clergy**- Rev. Karlene Brown-Palmer

### **Committee Chairs -**

**Christian Development** – Brenda Marshall

**Finance** – Ron Wycherley

**Membership Fellowship and Care** - Dianne Parnell (Acting Chair)

**Ministry and Personnel** – Marianne Ferris

**Property** - Dave Morris

**ARW Regional Council Reps** - Marianne Ferris, Mary Anne Silverthorn, 1 vacancy

**Stewardship** –

**Trustees** – Brian Clark

**Worship** – Mary Anne Silverthorn

**UCW** – Mary Hessler

**AOTS** – Dave Morris

**Voluntary Associate Ministers** – Rev. Pat Cook, Rev. Maurice Francis

### **Committee Members –**

**Christian Development:** Marianne Ferris, Karen Hodges, Lesley Jackson

**Finance** – Treasurer -Dianne McPherson, Roger and Margaret Betty, Jed Drew, Deb Wycherley

**Membership, Fellowship and Care**- Karon Harris, Mary Hessler, Lisa Houston, Jed Drew

**Ministry and Personnel** – Brad Bennett, Debbie Beres, Brian Clark, Karen Helsdon, Dave Morris, Kelly Springer

**Trustees** - Brad Bennett, Fran Bell, Rev. Karlene Brown-Palmer, Norma Collis, Jed Drew, Dave Morris, Indira Reynolds, Beth Sandor, Kelly Springer

**Property** - Bob Jenny, Floyd Marshall, Desmond Palmer, (Custodian), Ron Stafford, Lesley Jackson, Nancy Gowette, Dianne Parnell (UCW)

**Stewardship** - Karen Hodges, Clergy, Treasurer, Council Chair

**Worship** - Dave Collis, Carol Crocker (Choir), Karen Hodges, Dag Morris (Greeters), Dianne Parnell

**Other:**

**Archivist** – Beth Sandor

**Communion** Preparation - covered by Worship

**Flowers** for the sanctuary - covered by Worship

**Live Streaming** –Floyd Marshall, Dave Morris, Adriaan van Hove, Cory Ling.

**Pastoral Care** – Fran Bell, Rev. Pat Cook, Rev. Maurice Francis, Sheila McKibbin, Dianne Parnell

**Projectionists**- Debbie Beres, Dorell Clark, Bella Jackson

**Sound System**- Brian Clark, Wayne Beard, Finn Jackson

**Sunday Counters** -Deb Wycherley, Roger Betty, Indira Reynolds, Marianne Ferris, Anne Galeckas, Rita Van Lamoen

