

Almonte United Church



Annual Report 2023

Table of Contents

Minister's Report.....	3
Chair of Council Report.....	4
Eastern Ontario and Outaouais Regional Report	5
Auld Kirk Cemetery Report and Proposed Budget.....	6

Congressional Life and Care

Catering and Hospitality Report.....	9
Marriages, Baptisms and Burials Report.....	9
Pastoral Care Task Group Report.....	9

Finance and Stewardship

Finance Committee Report.....	10
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Learning and Outreach

Bert Brydges Memorial Library Report.....	13
Canadian Food Grains Bank Project Report.....	13
The Lanark Food Bank Report.....	15
Likulezi Project Report.....	16
Spiritual awareness and Growth Explorations(S.A.G.E.)	
.....	17
Sunday School and Youth Group Report.....	17
Ministry and Personnel Committee Report.....	21
Property and Maintenance Committee Report.....	22
Board of Trustees Report.....	23
Worship Committee Report.....	24
Senior Choir Report.....	27

Minister's Report

Annual Report 2023- Minister – Rev. Mary Royal-Duczek

It is always so interesting to look back at the past year, the highs and lows, the memories that stick out and ones that we must check our notes to remember. Sometimes, the years blur together, don't they? And so, we're reminded of the importance of taking the time to reflect and record the details of the life of the church.

I attended the Festival of Homiletics online in May. This is a popular festival held each year in the United States and attended by many UCC clergy. Since Covid they have offered an online option. Homiletics is the academic word for preaching and I listened to several sermons during the conference. In November I was off to Kingston for the Moderator's Flourishing Event. It was great to join with colleagues in person and reconnect with old friends and meet new folks. It was obvious just how hard it has been on our clergy and church communities to have missed several years of gathering together in person.

A highlight of the year for me is always the Study Groups and Discussion Groups that I lead. It is so great to dive deep into conversations and get to know folks in the congregation better. In the Winter we read *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others* by Barbara Brown Taylor. We had a great time, even ending the session with a potluck meal. In the Spring I pitched the idea of reading through the book of Acts together. There is some unexpected stuff in there! It was a neat way to get into the pages of the Bible and see what's there. In the Fall we read the book *Freeing Jesus* by Babara Brown Taylor. This led to some interesting discussion as well.

I continued to serve on the Board of the United Church of Canada Foundation and attended a board meeting in Halifax in September. The weather was absolutely beautiful, and the days were scheduled in a way that allowed us to see some of the city. This was a treat for my soul as both sets of my grandparents lived in Halifax when I was a child and I have many beautiful memoires of my visits with them in that city.

In May of 2023 the churches of Almonte were able to resume the schedule of Sunday afternoon worship services at Country Haven and Fairview Manor. Unfortunately, these services often need to be cancelled do to outbreaks at the homes however it is still special to finally be able to go in and offer services to the residents there. It has also been complicated by the construction at Country Haven and everyone is looking forward to the work there being completed.

I also was involved with the committee who helped develop a Strategic plan for Eastern Ontario and the Outaouais Regional Council. This was a great way to meet new people and get connected in again with the work of the Region. I attended the Annual Meeting of the Region in Brockville in May and the Fall meeting in Ottawa in October.

I've heard folks describe 2023 as the year we didn't have to focus all our attention on Covid safety precautions and as such it was a busy year rebuilding some structures and developing new ways of doing things. It was also a year when Sunday morning church attendance was down significantly, and it became harder to find volunteers to fill some crucial roles in the life of the church. As such 2024 is shaping up to

be a year of discernment, conversation, and imagination about how Almonte United Church will be continuing the journey of the work of building the Kingdom of God in our time and place.

God Bless,

Rev. Mary Royal Duczek



Chair of Council

I am well into my inaugural year as Chair of YOUR Almonte United Church Council this in the shadow of my predecessor Terry Church - so first off, I want to extend my gratitude to Terry for showing me the ropes and giving me the confidence to jump in. I landed on very stable ground!

As a parishioner of nearly 30 years, I have many wonderful memories, have made many cherished friends and feel very connected to the AUC and greater Almonte community. It is my hope that I can 'pay back' a small measure of the treasures received through service along side a great group of dedicated colleagues and friends.

So, with my fellow council members guidance, and your patience, I look forward to watching our AUC family continue to evolve and thrive. I hope to see you about.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Mansfield

Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council (EOORC)

The Winter meeting of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council (EOORC) for 2023 was an on-line gathering and was held on Saturday, March 4th. It was well attended with more than 150 people signing on to Zoom (including me), to hear presentations on the theme of “Building Strong Communities”. The three speakers were Rev. Dr. Frank Emanuel, Dr. Bianca Bricise and Rev. Kimberly Heath, offering insight on this topic from three different perspectives, each complimenting the other. Rev. Eric Hebert- Daly gave us a reflection that was relatable and on topic with the theme.

The annual meeting was held at the Brockville Memorial Centre on May 26th and May 27th, 2023 – the first in-person annual meeting since 2019 - and was a success with nearly 200 people attending either in person or by Zoom. I attended in person and was billeted and as a result made new friends.

The Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary of the United Church of Canada gave the keynote address on the Friday and a presentation on the theme of the Annual General Meeting” Being Courageous” on Saturday.

We heard from “Setting our Sights” task group and had table group discussions as well. Rev. Mary is part of this group. “Setting Our Sights” was formed in response to the United Church of Canada’s Strategic Plan.

The fall meeting was held on Nov. 4th, 2023, at Woodroffe United Church in Ottawa. The highlight of the meeting was celebrating the important step of EOORC becoming an Affirming Ministry in the United Church of Canada. We were honored to have the Right Reverend Dr. Cameron Landsdowne, Moderator of the United Church of Canada speak to us even though she was unable to attend in person. We had time for discussion around the remit on removing structural barriers so that the Indigenous Church can determine its place and structure within the United Church.

This report would be pages long if I reported everything that goes on at these meetings. In between , you can follow along on the website if you email Anita at ajansman@united-church.ca and she will put you on a mailing list and you will receive the EOORC News every two weeks in your inbox. You can also go to the website at www.eoorc.ca.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Rintoul

Auld Kirk Cemetery 2023 Report & Proposed Budget

Chairperson: Mary Fulton

Secretary/Treasurer: Elaine Fulton

Directors: Dawn Blackburn, Clarence Bowes, Toby Ford, Wendy Ford, Elaine Fulton, Julie Julian, Keith Lowry, Brian Morrison and Jill Moxley

Caretaker: Trent Weir

*** replaced Michael Wiggins who resigned to pursue another job opportunity in July 2023*

Accountant: Bob Watson

As Auld Kirk Cemetery Board Directors we are responsible for the maintenance and upgrades required to keep the cemetery serviceable to the people of community.

2023 was an extremely busy year. There were 54 burials comprising of 14 casket burials and 40 cremations between May and November. A total of 41 plots/niches were sold.

Our Annual Decoration Day was held in August, and we are grateful to Rev. Matthew Dyck of Hillside Church for officiating. Friends and family were welcomed to visit during Decoration weekend and Board members were on-site to greet visitors. This resulted in the cemetery being beautifully decorated, good foot traffic and generous donations to the cemetery fund.

During the 2023 season some problematic trees were cut down. Also, we were delighted to be able to have a new fence installed along County Rd. 16.

Our cemetery mapping project continues.

We are pleased that Trent Weir accepted the role as Cemetery Caretaker in July 2023 and has been doing an exceptional job. He replaced Michael Wiggins who resigned in order to accept another job opportunity. Appreciation is also extended to Michael for his efforts during his employment with the Cemetery.

I would like to thank all the Board members who work so well together for the betterment of the cemetery. We are very appreciative to Elaine Fulton for her outstanding efforts and support to keep the cemetery in its usual high standard.

The Board is also grateful to a few volunteers that frequent the cemetery, namely John Fulton, Merville McGrath and Peter Cochran.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Fulton

Auld Kirk Cemetery 2024 Proposed Budget

Auld Kirk Cemetery Proposed Budget 2024	Budget 2022		Actual 2022		Budget 2023		Actual 2023		Budget 2024	
Revenue										
Care & Maintenance Markers	\$	2,000.00	\$	3,000.00	\$	2,000.00	\$	3,400.00	\$	3,500.00
Care & Maintenance Plots	\$	12,000.00	\$	9,170.00	\$	12,000.00	\$	14,870.00	\$	15,000.00
Donation Income	\$	6,000.00	\$	7,746.75	\$	6,000.00	\$	8,119.55	\$	7,500.00
Special Donations				1,850.00				347.00		
Total Revenue	\$	20,000.00	\$	21,766.75	\$	20,000.00	\$	26,736.55	\$	26,000.00
Foundations										
Foundation Income	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	58.50	\$	-
Foundation Expense	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-
Total Foundations	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	58.50	\$	-
Investment Income										
GIC - Illingworth	\$	1,500.00	\$	7,950.00	\$	1,500.00	\$	3,703.00	\$	3,700.00
CIBC Mellon Trust Income	\$	17,000.00	\$	19,503.46	\$	17,000.00	\$	23,454.36	\$	24,000.00
Total Investment Income	\$	18,500.00	\$	27,453.46	\$	18,500.00	\$	27,157.36	\$	27,700.00
Engraving Sales										
Engraving Income	\$	-	\$	151.00	\$	-	\$	199.15	\$	-
Engraving Expenses	\$	2,400.00	\$	2,549.00	\$	2,500.00	\$	4,404.65	\$	2,500.00
Total Engraving Balance	\$	2,400.00	\$	2,398.00	\$	2,500.00	\$	4,205.50	\$	2,500.00
Other Revenues										
Open & Close	\$	22,000.00	\$	33,350.00	\$	30,000.00	\$	27,200.00	\$	30,000.00
Overtime Fees & Vault Charges	\$	3,500.00	\$	5,625.50	\$	4,500.00	\$	3,550.00	\$	4,500.00
Rental Income	\$	1,400.00	\$	1,900.00	\$	1,400.00	\$	1,400.00	\$	1,400.00
Sale of Internment Rights	\$	28,000.00	\$	22,650.00	\$	25,000.00	\$	38,950.00	\$	35,000.00
Total Other Revenue	\$	54,900.00	\$	63,525.50	\$	60,900.00	\$	71,100.00	\$	70,900.00
Other Revenue										
Other Revenue			\$	419.85						
Transfer of Plots	\$	800.00	\$	225.00	\$	600.00	\$	350.00	\$	300.00
Vault Storage Income							\$	50.00		
Total Other Revenue	\$	800.00	\$	644.85	\$	600.00	\$	300.00	\$	300.00
Monies to C&M Trust										
Care & Maintenance Sent to Trust	\$	15,000.00	\$	9,722.50	\$	15,000.00	\$	15,409.45	\$	15,000.00
Total Monies to C&M Trust	\$	15,000.00	\$	9,722.50	\$	15,000.00	\$	15,409.45	\$	15,000.00
TOTAL REVENUE	\$	75,200.00	\$	101,270.06	\$	82,500.00	\$	105,137.46	\$	106,800.00

**Auld Kirk Cemetery
Proposed
Budget 2024
EXPENSE**

Administration Expense

	Budget 2022	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Bank Charges & Interest	\$ 400.00	\$ 388.53	\$ 400.00	\$ 330.86	\$ 400.00
Decoration Day Expense	\$ 500.00	\$ 510.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 489.50	\$ 500.00
Office Expense	\$ 600.00	\$ 1,459.48	\$ 750.00	\$ 755.50	\$ 750.00
Licenses	\$ 650.00	\$ 663.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 984.77	\$ 1,500.00
Misc. Expense	\$ 500.00	\$ 417.53	\$ 700.00	\$ 5,436.79	\$ 5,500.00
Total Administration Expense	\$ 2,650.00	\$ 3,438.54	\$ 3,350.00	\$ 7,997.42	\$ 8,650.00

Operating Expense

Equipment Repair & Mtce	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 345.82	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 96.78	\$ 1,000.00
Equipment Replacement		\$ 3,999.00			
Gas	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,073.92	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,483.63	\$ 1,500.00
Grass Cutting/Snow Plowing	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 7,200.00	\$ 7,200.00	\$ 3,965.13	\$ 5,000.00
Grave Open/Close	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,925.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 5,185.00	\$ 5,000.00
Hydro	\$ 250.00	\$ 363.67	\$ 480.00	\$ 384.88	\$ 400.00
Almonte United -Rent Expense	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,600.00
Almonte United -Insurance Exp	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,235.99	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,193.98	\$ 1,500.00
Memorial Markers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Misc. Supplies	\$ 300.00	\$ 139.88	\$ 300.00	\$ 42.56	\$ 300.00
Phone	\$ 800.00	\$ 553.58	\$ 600.00	\$ 827.62	\$ 900.00
Property Tax	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,134.03	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,155.90	\$ 1,200.00
Soil & Gravel	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 660.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,118.00	\$ 1,200.00
Property Maintenance Expense	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 11,151.82	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 9,709.99	\$ 5,000.00
Columbarium Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,000.00
Map Info Project	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,836.20	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 6,074.82	\$ 7,000.00
Boundary Fence Project	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 4,850.00	
Monument Project	\$ 1,500.00		\$ -		\$ -
Transfer to Investments	\$ 2,800.00	\$ 29,617.00			
Total Operating Expense	\$ 37,350.00	\$ 72,735.91	\$ 42,180.00	\$ 37,688.29	\$ 61,600.00

Payroll Expenses

Salary - Caretaker	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 23,856.00	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 16,510.00	\$ 22,500.00
Salary - Secretary/Bookkeeper	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,850.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,260.00	\$ 9,500.00
Salary - Bookkeeper	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,230.00	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 2,869.79	\$ 3,000.00
Staff Honorarium				\$ 500.00	
Caretaker Honorariums				\$ 2,200.00	
El Expense	\$ 550.00	\$ 516.67	\$ 550.00	\$ 376.94	\$ 550.00
WSIB Expense	\$ 350.00	\$ 165.71	\$ 350.00	\$ 195.75	\$ 350.00
Total Payroll Expense	\$ 34,800.00	\$ 36,618.38	\$ 34,800.00	\$ 31,912.48	\$ 35,900.00

TOTAL EXPENSE

\$ 74,800.00	\$ 112,792.83	\$ 80,330.00	\$ 77,598.19	\$ 106,150.00
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Net Gain/Loss for the period

\$ 400.00	\$ -	\$ 11,522.77	\$ 2,170.00	\$ 27,539.27	\$ 650.00
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Congregational Life and Care

Mandate

Our mandate is “to provide for the social and pastoral needs of the congregation”. The following task groups fall under Congregations Life and Care.

Cards

Nancy Peters of our Pastoral Care team reaches out to our congregation members via email or a card on behalf of our congregation, when we are aware of birthdays, anniversaries, illnesses, or grief. Our list of special dates needs to be increased! Please let Nancy know of any cards you wish to be sent or of people who could benefit from a card either by calling 613-793-6106 or by sending an email to nancycarolpeters1942@gmail.com Thank you, Nancy, for your commitment and dedicated service you provide.

Coffee Time

On most Sundays when the church is open, coffee time is held in the social hall to encourage everyone to stay after the service to mingle and chat. Thank you, Nick and Dini Frans, for all your hard work.

Pastoral Care Task Group Report

Pastoral Task Group members:

Nancy Peters, Norma Glandon, Margie Graff, Eleanor Rintoul and Terri-Lynn Funnekotter

Every December we deliver a small poinsettia and a Christmas card to many individuals in the congregation who are sick, lonely, shut-ins or bereaved. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to deliver for this special and important task.

We are always looking for folks to join the Pastoral Care Team. If you are interested, Rev. Mary would love to hear from you.

Submitted by Terri-Lynn Funnekotter

Catering & Hospitality Sub-Committee Report

There is no report for the Catering/Hospitality sub-committee from Donna Lowry and Louise Owens

Marriages, Baptisms, Burials Report

There were no baptisms performed in 2023 but we did register 6 marriages and 9 burials.

Finance & Stewardship

Finance Committee Report

Finance Committee members: Nick Frans and Bob Lesser (Chair)

O Happy Days! Have you noticed? Since the Christmas season, the parking lot and street in front of our church have been filled with vehicles on Sunday mornings, and the church has been at its fullest since the latter days of 2019. Not only is this wonderful news for our community of faith; it is also wonderful for the future health of Almonte United. We are not yet at the point of having to build more pews but there is always hope and prayer.

The work of our church and its upkeep requires both financial and volunteer contributions. We have benefitted from both. Over the last few years, donations via e-transfer, plate and cash offerings, fund-raising and rentals have increased nicely. Also, more members of the church are volunteering their time and talents to help with the services as greeters, members of many committees, singing in the choir, and doing amazing activities with our Sunday School and AUC Youth Group. Of special note, members of the Sunday School have enriched our services through their musical talents, reading scripture and making announcements of upcoming activities.

Although we continue to draw heavily on our trust funds, the increased donations mean that we draw less from the trust funds, thus extending the life of our church as it is presently. The 2024 draft budget, yet to be approved by the congregation, includes moderate increases in offerings. This hopefully will reflect the growth we have seen over the last few years, due to increased givings, returning members and very importantly, new members.

As we are all experiencing, costs everywhere continue to rise, including the costs for continuing the work of our church and the building upkeep. For example, utility costs increased from \$9,836 in 2020 to \$15,356 in 2023. We are fortunate that some of the maintenance work has been done or assisted by members of our church, thereby reducing labour costs. A significant expense in 2023 was the repayment of the federal government's cost-free loan (CREB). It was very helpful that we only had to repay \$30,000 of the \$40,000 loan as it was paid just before the due date. The use of these funds meant that we didn't need to withdraw that amount from the trust funds, leaving them to gain interest over the intervening years, when the markets were beneficial.

Wanting to always note the positive, it is also important that you take time to reflect upon the Trust Funds report. Since 2020, \$300,000 has been taken from the accounts, and it is projected that we will require \$100,000 in 2024. In as much as the funds have done exceptionally well in the last few years, they are not never ending. The more we as a congregation can increase our revenues, through coordinating and supporting fund raising activities, continuing to do what we can ourselves to maintain the building and growing our congregation, the longer the trust funds will be able to be our lifeline.

Your Financial Committee

Bob Lesser (Chair) and Nick Frans

Balance Sheet - December 31, 2023

Assets	2023	2022
Petty Cash	\$200	\$200
Bank operating funds - Bank of Montreal	-\$7,225	\$29,839
HST recoverable	\$1,527	\$1,163
Prepaid expenses	\$351	\$3,308
Total Assets	-\$5,147	\$34,510
Liabilities		
<i>Current Liabilities</i>		
Accounts Payable Operations	\$0	\$7,896
Federal Covid-19 Loan	\$40,000	\$40,000
Food Grains Bank	\$0	\$0
Likulezi project	-\$215	\$2,235
Total Current Liabilities	\$39,785	\$50,131
<i>Designated Funds</i>		
Syrian refugee project	\$0	\$1,794
Youth Group	\$768	\$768
B. Bridges fund (library)	\$27	\$27
Senior Choir music fund	\$468	\$488
Senior Choir social fund	\$0	\$468
Memorial Fund	\$8,420	\$8,395
Total Designated Funds	\$9,683	\$11,940
Total Liabilities	\$49,469	\$62,070
Accumulated carryover (surplus/-deficit)	-\$27,560	-\$31,633
Current year (surplus/-deficit)	-\$27,055	\$4,073
Net Equity	-\$54,615	-\$27,560
Liabilities & Net Equity	-\$5,147	\$34,510



THANKS
 FOR YOUR
 Support!

**Almonte United Church
2020 - 2023 Income/Expense
And 2024 proposed Budget**

REVENUE	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Proposed
Envelope Income	\$37,321	\$26,445	\$28,486	\$28,000	\$25,347	\$28,000
E-Transfer General	\$4,360	\$14,165	\$17,895	\$18,000	\$18,055	\$18,000
PAR Income	\$53,720	\$53,910	\$55,347	\$56,000	\$53,451	\$56,000
Plate & Cash Offering	\$180	\$100	\$1,086	\$500	\$2,391	\$2,500
Other offerings	\$4,468	\$1,630	\$150	\$1,100	\$170	\$1,000
Fund Raising	\$1,700	\$159	\$135	\$1,000	\$2,726	\$3,000
Rentals	\$14,275	\$19,964	\$22,536	\$22,600	\$23,890	\$25,250
Young & Rains Bequest	\$523	\$284	\$1,175	\$284	\$652	\$285
Other Revenue	\$1,373	\$10	\$80	\$100	\$358	\$0
Government Covid funds	\$32,487	\$15,048	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Manse Trust Funds	\$10,000	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$40,000	\$0	\$50,000
General Trust Funds	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
CREB Loan forgiveness				\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$185,406	\$176,714	\$196,889	\$237,584	\$177,039	\$244,035
EXPENSE						
Interim Pastor	\$9,966	\$0	\$10,204	\$0	0.00	0.00
Payroll Minister and Administrator	\$90,405	\$93,121	\$96,869	\$98,340	99,116.88	107,050.00
Pastoral Travel and Education	\$394	\$266	\$972	\$2,143	\$1,075	\$2,135
Learning & Outreach	\$550	\$266	\$0	\$100	\$331	\$175
Worship Expense	\$16,864	\$17,137	\$18,723	\$18,985	\$19,199	\$19,407
Congregation Life & Care	\$432	\$1,595	\$1,094	\$3,260	\$1,386	\$1,750
Administration Expense	\$12,122	\$12,749	\$13,593	\$12,350	\$12,963	\$14,128
Presbytery Assessment	\$5,324	\$8,409	\$6,016	\$6,430	\$6,365	\$6,200
Property Maintenance	\$14,542	\$17,848	\$15,006	\$19,500	\$27,347	\$19,790
Utilities - Gas, Hydro, Water	\$9,836	\$9,186	\$11,714	\$13,100	\$15,365	\$17,200
Insurance	\$11,953	\$14,799	\$18,625	\$20,000	\$17,638	\$15,500
Major Repairs	\$39,012	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$3,308	\$3,000
CREB Loan repayment				\$40,000	\$0	\$40,000
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$208,775	\$172,642	\$192,816	\$244,208	\$204,094	\$246,335
TOTAL REVENUE	\$185,406	\$176,714	\$196,889	\$237,584	\$177,039	\$244,035
NET INCOME	-\$23,369	\$4,072	\$4,073	-\$6,624	-\$27,055	-\$2,300

* Repayment was moved to
January 2024.

Learning & Outreach

Bert Brydges Memorial Library

I had received 3 bags of books from Nancy Peters in the fall; some of which I put in Library already. There are still books of Indigenous reading and books of other topics that I want to put in the library. I will also take out some older books and replace them.

Thank you,
Donna Smith

Donnasmith142@hotmail.com 613 256 2265 or 343 572 1367

Canadian Foodgrains Bank Project Report

Canadian Foodgrains 2023 Project

For the 2023 Mississippi Mills growing project, we went back to our traditional project crop of soybeans. The crop was no-till planted on May 18th into slightly dry ground. A moderate temperature in May/June accompanied with excessive moisture, made growing conditions less than ideal for this year's project. Some flooding drowned some of the crops and stunted the growth of other parts of the field. Even with these setbacks, we harvested an above average crop of 1.6T/acre in early October.

A contract was signed for \$590/ T in early July. Prices since then have dropped significantly.

2024's project will be corn to ensure a proper crop rotation is maintained.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Lowry and Lindsay Cavanagh



2023 Mississippi Mills Canadian Food Grains Project

8 Acres of Soybeans Planted May 18, 2023

Expenses	Per acre	Donated Total	Not Donated total	Donated by
Seed	130	1040		BTLF Carp (Andy Ross)
Fertilizer	109.9		879.27	
Spray				
Herbicide	53.27		426.16	
Fungicide	26.33		210.66	
Application X2	11.5		184	
Planting	35	280		Penlow Farms
Crop Insurance	2.86		22.88	
Harvesting Cost	65	520		Hilliard Farms
Land Rent	60	480		Penlow Farms
Trucking to Elevator (per tonne)	13.25		106	
Totals		2320	1828.97	

Revenue Yield = 1.6T/acre =12.8T Avg \$/T 590 **Gross Revenue = 7552**

Revenue - Expenses **\$5,723.03**

Church Member Donations **\$2,815.00**

**Total Submitted to
Foodgrains Bank \$8,538.03**

The Lanark Food Bank Report

In 2023 we held two food & cash drives for the Lanark Food Bank. In addition, we participated in the annual Christmas Stocking Campaign.

In so doing, we collectively raised \$6,735 and approximately 200 lbs. of food items. The stocking drive brought in 105 stockings loaded with personal items and seasonal treats for the adult users of the Food Bank.

Regarding the Stocking Drive, we once again thank Kelly Church (Textile Traditions) for her assistance in collecting stockings at her store and helping to promote the initiative.

2024 will once again be a challenging year. Unfortunately, the work is never done, so please consider giving as you are able to, this coming year.

Thanks for your support!

Ron MacMeekin



Likulezi Project Report

The Likulezi Committee

Doug Younger-Lewis, Laurie Blackstock, Bob Lesser, Liz Barron and Evelyn Ironside

Likulezi Project
Phalombe District, Malawi

Likulezi Website: info@africaaware.net

International Fundraising Webpage: <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/plant-the-seeds-of-tomorrow-for-an-orphan-child/>

Facebook Public Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/likulezipublicgroup/>

In 2023, the AUC congregation continued its support of this home care project in Malawi, East Africa, by donating \$3832. These funds were raised through generous individual donors and the sale of refreshments, baked goods and compost at the Annual AUC Plant Sale in May.

Thank you everyone for your support! It makes a world of difference for people living in poverty in this rural area, prone to cyclones, floods and drought. To learn more about the project, please visit the links above.

The Likulezi Committee

Doug Younger-Lewis, Laurie Blackstock, Bob Lesser, Liz Barron and Evelyn Ironside



Cyclone Survivors March 2023



Spiritual Awareness & Growth Explorations (S.A.G.E)

S.A.G.E has not been active since the pandemic.

Sunday School and Youth Group Report

Sunday School Report

The Sunday School kids had another wonderful year of learning and spreading God's love near and far. With 15 students officially registered at the beginning of the year, an average of 10 children and youth attended each Sunday to grow as part of God's loving family.

Here are some of our favourite highlights from the year:

- Our "Take What You Need" Board was a great success as we wrote notes of encouragement for anyone who needed a little something to make their day.
- We helped make homemade truffles to sell to our church family and to raise money for the work of AUC.
- Throughout Lent we photographed for 40 days straight producing our Lenten Art Gallery entitled "Connections". Our unveiling of the sanctuary gallery at the start of the Easter season was well received with over 250 photos connecting us to the Lenten story and to each other.
- As well during Lenten, our Change for Change collection raised much needed funds for the United Church's Earthquake Relief program in Turkey and Syria. Over \$200.00 in coins were collected for this very important work.
- We celebrated Palm Sunday with our church family, once again leading the Palm Parade after 3 years of not being able to due to COVID.
- Earth Day saw us out in the community for our annual clean up around the church, library, and The Alameda. We also took a pledge to become water protectors and learned of the importance of taking care of God's precious gift of water.
- We made seed bombs to sell as part of our church's garden fund raiser.
- Our first ever Sunday School "Messy Church" was a huge success as we celebrated the gifts of the dandelion with our church family. Art workshops, prayer journals, ice block challenges, dandelion food samples, and games all helped us discover that we all are gifts from God.
- After a summer break, we returned to Sunday School classes in September where we welcomed one and all to our lessons and special activities such as an Agape Meal, our Truth and Reconciliation art installation, and Thanksgiving games.
- We took a Gratitude Walk for Remembrance Day and paused at the Cenotaph to hear Jack Lockhart play the bagpipes as we reflected on the gift of peace so many had given to us.
- Our annual Pyjama Advent Service on Peace Sunday took us to the pasture where the shepherds and the sheep taught us about the importance of peace now and always. The congregation joined in by wearing their pj's too and we collected 48 pairs of pyjamas for Lanark County Interval House.
- We surprised our church family on the last Sunday of Advent with decorated Advent cookies to wish everyone a joyous Christmas.

Throughout the year, including on Christmas Eve, our Sunday School kids read scriptures and readings, played piano, made announcements, and lead worship. Learning to do the work of the church is part of what we love to do.

Margie Graff and Jessica Badger had the joy of helping the Sunday School Kids through the past year, planning lessons, making crafts, telling stories, and picking SO many dandelions! It is a privilege to learn with and from these amazing young people. Thank you to each and every one of them, Rev. Mary, the Worship Committee, and our whole church family for your ongoing support and encouragement.

At the Sunday School Celebration Service, the kids shared their thoughts about what Sunday School is all about. It seems a fitting way to sum up our year together:

“In our Sunday School there is...

DANCING AND SINGING... God gave us bodies that love to move, and voices that like to make joyful noises... so we should do that!

A CHANCE TO BE ALL TOGETHER... we really like being with our church family!

FOOD ... its one of our favourite gifts from God!

PLAYING GAMES ... we think God likes to have fun!

ART ... really cool stuff happens when we create!

LAUGHING... we think God likes a good joke!

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE... we aren't all the same so church shouldn't always be the same either!

HELPING OTHERS... that's what church is all about!

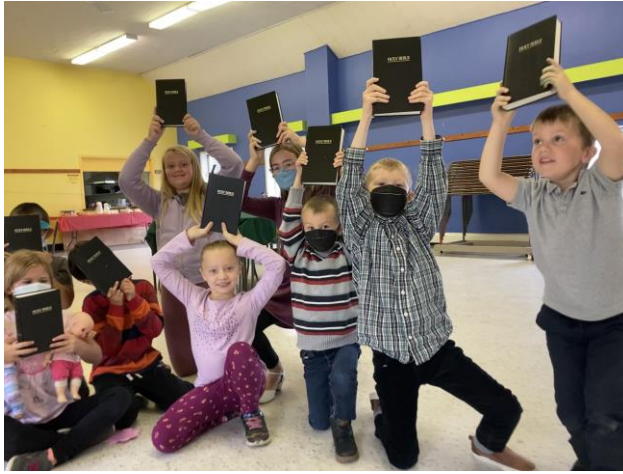
SOMETIMES A MESS ... good things can get a little messy!

ALWAYS LOVE... because where God is, Love is!”

(AUC Kids ‘Words of Wisdom’, May 2024)

Respectfully Submitted by Margie Graff and the AUC Kids





Youth Group Report

The Youth Group here at AUC had another busy year putting their faith into action. Nine youth, Grade 5 through Grade 11, met, first on a monthly and then bi-weekly schedule, to share in fellowship, take part in lively discussions, and plan activities that put God's love out into the world. Drawing on our own congregation and other churches in the area, this diverse group, with their facilitator Margie Graff, worked together to make a difference in our community and the world.

- The Youth joined Mary Smiley and the Sunday School in making truffles for our candy fund raiser in February.
- The sanctuary doves were lovingly taken down and the Lenten Gallery appeared, thanks to the hard work of our Youth Group members.
- Earth Day meant another community clean up and our youth pitched in to keep the Earth healthy.
- Making and packaging seed bombs were next on the list as the youth prepared for the church's gardening sale to help raise funds for the work of AUC.
- The gang became expert dandelion bakers as they baked SO MANY COOKIES for the Dandelion Daze "Messy Church" in June.
- After a well-earned summer break, the youth returned to do the work of Reconciliation, preparing for our "Gifts From the Land" sale on Truth and Reconciliation Sunday, supporting the work of SchoolBOX building Indigenous libraries in Treaty 3. Special thanks to Dot Lockhart for once again creating beautiful chalk art at the front of the church to mark the occasion.
- For the first time, our youth took the lead in the Truth and Reconciliation Vigil for Mississippi Mills. Acting as hosts handing out pins and information to members of the community and reading during the program, our youth represented Almonte United very well at this important event.

- The first annual Turkey Trot gave the group a chance to celebrate Thanksgiving and have a lot of fun. (Ask them to do their turkey calls!)
- Following a very busy kick off to the Youth Group year, they took part in a “Mission Possible” night to plan the year ahead and share their feelings about the work that they do and how doing the right thing can sometimes be difficult.
- In preparation for Advent, our youth created table centerpieces and helped decorate the Social Hall for the return of the church’s Advent Christmas party.
- And throughout it all, the preparations began for the upcoming used book sale and reading rockathon in 2024 - their biggest project yet!

Thank you to our whole church family for your continued support of our young people as they find their place in the church and the world.

Respectfully submitted by

Margie Graff and the AUC Youth Group (Ellie, Olivia, Jack, Dot, Lana, Elias, Jessica, Erika, and Charlotte)



Ministry and Personnel Committee Report

AUC M & P Committee Members:

Mary Smiley (Chair)
Dorothy Day John Day
Ron MacMeekin

Ministry & Personnel Committees are a requirement of each United Church of Canada and are given specific duties described in the by-laws of the United Church of Canada and supported by a set of comprehensive guidelines for the work of M & P Committees. The M & P Committees are accountable to and report regularly to their respective Church Council.

Our M & P Committee members are Ron MacMeekin, John Day, Dorothy Day, and Mary Smiley as Chair.

The Committee meets on an as-required basis, and in 2023 we met six times.

The primary duty of the Committee is to conduct Annual Reviews with each of our four paid employees. A process that is presently underway. Additionally, the Committee works to clarify and communicate specific staff responsibilities, to resolve conflicts should they arise, and to encourage and support communication between members of the congregation and the Church Staff.

Each member of the M&P Committee understands and respects the confidential nature of the work.

So, to our leader the Rev. Mary, to Virginia in the Church Office, to Neil our Music Director and to Kim, who keeps our beautiful church fresh, warm, dry with the lights on, we want to express the gratitude of all of us.

Respectfully submitted.

The AUC M&P Committee

Property & Maintenance Committee Report

Property and Maintenance Committee Members: Andrew Badger (Chair), Leon Page, Sean Norris

2023 was a 'repair and maintain' year which involved a lot of building envelope concerns and water sneaking into the church. The entrance foyer roof was a large project done to mitigate the infiltration while ensuring the safety of the congregation below. Many thanks to our custodian Kim Julian and everyone who has dedicated time and effort to maintenance, repair, and cleaning projects this year.

Water remains a concern in a few areas and a more thorough investigation will be done as the spring thaw moves in.

This year will still have repair and maintenance work, but the focus will be on the energy efficiency of our beloved building. We will be enrolling in the United Church of Canada's Faithful Footprints program which offers tools and grants to help churches like ours to reduce energy use and carbon footprint. We will be exploring small are large projects that can be done to create a more cost effective and sustainable physical environment where we can gather and pray for years to come.

Thank you to everyone who donates their time and money and all those before us that strived to keep this safe and wonderful space alive.

All the best to you and yours in 2024,

Andrew Badger, Chair of the Property Committee



Board of Trustees Report

AUC Board of Trustee Members:
Richard Alexander (Chair) Marina Johnston
Terry Church Beverly Taylor
Willie Haliburton

While the return on our Trust investments improved slightly, our main concern is the amount we must draw from our trust funds annually to support the operation of our Church. During 2023 we drew down \$50,000. from our General Trust fund. In addition, we drew down another \$40,000. in January 2024 to repay our Covid loan from the government. This draw along with the \$50,000. had been approved by Council for 2023.

Activity for 2023 is as follows.

Contributions: \$1,304. – income from the Young & Raines Bequest

Withdrawals: \$50,000. - from General Trust

Drawings from Trust Fund was approved by AUC Council.

The year-end Almonte United Church and Auld Kirk Cemetery Trust balances for the past 3 years are as follows.

	Dec 31/21	Dec 31/22	Dec 31/23
Manse Trust	\$281,147.	\$276,521.	\$292,157.
General Trust	\$266,681.	\$209,787.	\$167,085.
AKC Trust \$	\$129,777.	\$153,385.	\$158,220

Your Trustees wish to thank Bob Watson, our church bookkeeper who provides assistance by preparing a monthly report outlining the activity in our Trust Funds and AUC Office Manager Virginia Atkinson, for her kind assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Alexander,
Chair of Trustees.

Worship Committee Report

Worship Committee Members

**Margie Graff, Eleanor Rintoul - Chair (January - February),
Terri-Lynn Funnekotter - Chair (March - December), Rev. Mary Royal-Ducezk, Neil Milnes, Robin Soule**

In a year that saw us bring back much loved traditions and try out new and innovative ways of worshipping, we celebrated being people of God through a variety of worship experiences. The Worship Committee met monthly to reflect on services, plan for upcoming themes and seasons, as well as looking at how all of this fit in to the “work of many hands”.

At the beginning of the year, the challenge of inviting the congregation back to in-person worship was met with creativity and a positive approach. Newcomers were invited to try out some of the work of the church such as ushering and scripture reading. Members of the congregation were encouraged to invite others to join them at church. Attendance began to rise and so did the work of the church.

Some of This Year’s Highlights:

- Our Shrove Tuesday pancake supper returned for the first time since before COVID under the wonderful leadership of Eleanor Rintoul. With the helping hands of Terri-Lynn Funnekotter, Jeff and Anne Paul, Evelyn Ironside, Nick and Dini Frans, 25 people enjoyed delicious pancakes, sausages, and much longed for fellowship. Children were invited to take part in mask making with Margie Graff. The Social Hall was once again filled with the sounds of conversation and laughter.
- We had the honour of hosting the first ecumenical service in three years as churches in our area were welcomed to Almonte United Church for the World Day of Prayer service, focusing on the country of Taiwan. Thanks goes out to Rev. Mary, Terri-Lynn Funnekotter, Eleanor Rintoul, Laurie Blackstock, and Evelyn Ironside for providing such a meaningful opportunity for the 40 worshippers to gather.
- After exploring the theme of “Connections” throughout the season of Lent, the children of the Sunday School once again joyfully paraded throughout the sanctuary for the Palm Sunday service. The early morning Easter service as well as the communion service heralded the start of the Easter season. The Sunday School’s Lenten Photo Gallery was unveiled the following Sunday to a very appreciative congregation.
- June saw a first for our church family as the Sunday School invited everyone to attend “messy church” to participate in a series of activities centred around the gifts and lessons of God’s gift of the dandelion. Everyone participated whole heartedly and the laughter, learnings, and community were enjoyed by all.
- Rev. Dr. Peter Bartlett was our guest speaker at the Anniversary Service which was followed by a soup luncheon and cake. It was also an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the years of service of the various clergy members of our congregation.

- Summer supply went well thanks to the efforts of our guest pianist, Ruth Hammond, and worship leaders, Rev. Matt Gallinger and Jessica Noyle.
- Welcome Sunday officially kicked off the Fall season with 60 people attending the service, Faith Fair, and potluck lunch. Congregation members had the opportunity to learn about the work of the church and various opportunities to become involved, regularly or on occasion.
- Truth and Reconciliation Sunday saw many in the congregation wearing orange shirts and adding their orange ribbons to an outdoor installation prepared by the Sunday School. The “Gifts From the Land” Sale by the Youth Group was well supported and we all took another step along the reconciliation path.
- World Communion Sunday returned to a traditional sharing of different breads of the world. Thanks goes out to Terri-Lynn Funnekotter, Gaye Bennett, Jessica Badger, and Eleanor Rintoul for their organization and contributions of various breads.



- Special thanks goes to Jack Lockhart for playing the pipes for the congregation on Remembrance Day. Special guest Glen Morrison played the trumpet for us and was much appreciated, as was Amanda Pulker-Mok for reading the Roll of Honour as we paid tribute to those who gave so much.
- The season of Advent had many highlights including the children’s Peace service, the choir’s music service and a well-attended Christmas Eve service. Rev. Mary and Maria offered an online Christmas Day devotional.



It really took the work of many hands to make this year happen. We would like to thank Eleanor Rintoul, as she steps away from her position as Worship Committee Chair, for her years of dedication and her generous sharing of her wisdom and time. We have benefitted so much from her leadership and faithful guidance over the years. Terri-Lynn Funnekotter stepped into the role in March and seamlessly led us throughout the rest of the year with her generous and caring spirit.

We would like to thank the following people who have contributed so much to our worship throughout the year: Mary and Ron MacMeekin for the beautiful sanctuary decor; Amanda Pulker-Mok for organizing our scripture readers; Julie Julian for keeping the usher roster running so smoothly; Bonnie Schnittker for her work as Communion Facilitator from January to June; Eleanor Rintoul for reading the weekly Minutes for Mission; Bob Lesser for recording special services and getting our website up and running so that we can share the work of Almonte United beyond the walls of our building; Virginia Atkinson for preparing our weekly bulletins and helping us out whenever needed; Rev. Heather Kincaid for stepping in as pulpit supply throughout the year with much skill and love; and to all of our church family who have helped out

with our sound system, ushering, and scripture readings; we have all benefitted from their expertise and generous offering of their time. Thank you everyone for all that you do.

The gift of music, so key to our worship experience, is skillfully led by our wonderful Senior Choir and Music Director, Neil Milnes. Over the year, he and his choir have offered anthems that speak to all of us, enhancing the message of the sermons, giving opportunity for prayer, expressions of joy, and a chance to feel God's spirit among us. Guest instrumentalists have offered their talents as well including Krista Lowry, Marilee Mansfield, Ellie, Emmett, and Graham Badger. Thank you to each of our dedicated musicians, choristers, and Neil for the gift of your music ministry.



Last but never least, we have been blessed with another year having Rev. Mary as our worship leader. Her weekly services offer us varied opportunities to learn and then to reach out to the world that we live in. She continues to care for us all and to inspire us to express our own unique relationships with God and each other through study groups, book clubs, as well as in her sermons and conversations. Her positive approach to our faith journey helps us all as we move forward to do God's work. Thank you, Rev. Mary, for showing us what it means to be a blessing in this world.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margie Graff, for the Worship Committee:

Eleanor Rintoul - Chair (January - February), Terri-Lynn Funnekotter - Chair (March - December), Rev. Mary Royal-Ducezk, Neil Milnes, Robin Soule



Senior Choir Report

As the choir continues to lead hymns and sing an anthem most Sundays, I would like to thank them for their dedication and hard work. You are doing a great job. I am also excited to see more faces in the choir. But we would love to see more. And I know there are some awesome singers in our congregation. So how about joining us on Wednesday evenings at 7:00pm and sing, sing, sing.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil Milnes

