

KNOX UNITED

Annual Report 2024

Vision Statement

Knox is a progressive Christian community that seeks to walk fully in the path of Jesus while recognizing the wisdom inherent in our world's wisdom traditions.

Our community of faith puts the UNITY in community!

We are United:

In our love for God, one another, and our neighbours,
recognizing that justice is what love looks like in public;

In our desire to honour personal, cultural, and religious diversity;

In our celebration of spiritual experiences that stimulate heart and mind;

In our practice of spiritual disciplines and opening ourselves to the leading of the Spirit;

In our commitment to Mission and Service in the UCC and beyond;

In our dedication to living in right relationship with Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island;

In our reverence for the Earth and its systems;

In our celebration of innovation as we are open to creative transformation and led by the Spirit;

In our pursuit of equity in our relationship with Canada's racialized (diverse) peoples.

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**Spirit Kids' Club
Christmas
Pageant**



**PIE Day
hosted by
Knox and Trinity
with Lara Rae**



**The Kairos
Blanket Exercise
in
September**

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Agenda for the 2025 Annual Congregational Meeting

February 2, 2025, Part 1

1. Call to Order
2. Opening Prayer
3. Knox Mission Statement
4. Moments of Remembrance
5. Approval of Agenda, Minutes of Last Congregational Meeting, and Voting Rights of Members and Adherents.
 Omni motion:
 That the agenda be approved as written, that all present have the right to vote at this meeting, and that the minutes of the May 5, 2024 Congregational Meeting be approved as distributed.
6. Introduction of Council
7. Committee Reports – Questions and Answers
8. Mission and Service Fund
9. Review of the 2024 Financial Report (not reviewed externally at this time)
13. Operating Budget 2025
10. New Business
 - a. Approval of new Trustees
14. Adjournment
15. Commissioning and Blessing

Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths

Baptisms 2024

March 6, 2024	Berkeley Ileen Adele Earle
May 26, 2024	Mengqi Guo
August 7, 2024	Willa Isabelle Colpitts, child of Christopher Nathan Colpitts and Tara Leah Wight

Marriages 2024

None

Deaths 2024

<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Date of Burial</u>	<u>Name</u>
May 13, 2024	May 17, 2024	Robert William Marsh
May 25, 2024	June 20, 2024	William James Barry Bromley
November 4, 2023	July 26, 2024	Heather Marion Morrison
October 4, 2024	November 15, 2024	Gregory Miles Steeves
November 4, 2024	November 12, 2024	Mildred Catherine Hillis
November 10, 2024	November 23, 2024	George Watson Norton
December 2, 2024	December 6, 2024	Winelda Merle Curtis
July 24, 2024	December 12, 2024	Wesley Andrew Turnbull

Knox United Church Council

MINISTER: Rev. Craig Miller

CHAIR: Debby Dandy

VICE CHAIR: Vacant

SECRETARY: Kendra Carnegie

TREASURER: Shelley Tataryn

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL: **Coleen Wall**, Jim Lewthwaite, Art Godfrey, Karen Turnbull, Laurie Crowe, Sandy Jasper

WORSHIP: **Diane Shepherd**, Pat Cavanagh, Deb Carnegie, Sheila Marion, Cheryl Doull, Rosemary Cornett

PROPERTY: **Brian Kayes**, Brian Manns, Robert Brown, Ed Turnbull, Duncan Waddell, Jim Cobb

CONGREGATIONAL CARE & MEMBERSHIP: **Deb Carnegie**, Ida Hallatt, Lynn Cupples, Karen Elves, Janet Olmsted-Wood, Shelley Tataryn, Brain Clark, Norma Lowe, Bill Spanjer, Sharon Christmas

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: **Leanne Sprung (Jan-June)**, **Antoinette Gravel-Ouellette (Sept-Dec)**, Katheryne Lumgair, Jill Hannah-Kayes, Madelyn Robinson, Julia Schettler, Brittany Schettler, Jennifer Braun, Myrna Haslen

OUTREACH: **Betty Kelly**, Debby Dandy, Lydia Glawson, Madelyn Robinson, Margret Kristjansson, Elaine Gibson

GREEN TEAM: **Madelyn Robinson**, Quentin Robinson, Ken Wojnarski, Wayne Clayton, Rob Brown

STEWARDSHIP: **Alan Moulin**, Duncan Waddell, David Paul, Vivian Mitchell, Katheryne Lumgair, Janet Braun

AFFIRM COMMITTEE: **Laura Crookshanks**, Lynne Manns, Gail Shepherd-Clark, Judy Dandridge, Steve Derendy, Ron Evancio, Myrna Haslen Sharon Pedlow

TRUSTEES: Wayne Clayton, Vivian Mitchell, Doug Crookshanks

Chairperson's Report

I have found the role of Chair of Council at Knox to be a rewarding and challenging task. The rewards have come in the results of great work by our committees, who faithfully give of their time and energy to support the ministry of Knox.

Brian Kayes and Brian Manns have contributed to the wellbeing of our building through their assessment and attention to the areas of concern in an old building. Their work on our behalf to successfully administer the Faithful Footprints grant work has helped us to reduce our emissions, and to replace aging infrastructure.

Coleen Wall and her Ministry and Personnel team have a knowledge of the UCC manual, human resource practices, Revenue Canada requirements, the Knox manual, and all things payroll. We couldn't do things without them and are grateful!

Diane Shepherd and her small team on the Worship Committee work with Craig to take care of all things worship from baptisms, weddings, and funerals to getting communion ready. They shape the place of worship to create a space that makes us feel like we are home. This work is done quietly, behind the scenes, and enhances our worship each week. They support the work of Bernie and Jane that we appreciate so much.

We all worry about finances and Shelley Tataryn provides the interpretation of what to many are just numbers. She provides guidance and advice as we make difficult decisions throughout the year. She does an amazing job of helping to make complex financial reports understandable, the bills paid, and our budget in order!

Betty Kelly and her Outreach team live up to the name "outreach", with an understanding of the needs of those within and without the church to have shelter, food and care. They are often the conduit from those who attend Knox and feel called to help, to those who need that help. They also provide information that our community of faith needs to understand the underlying issues for those who need and/or receive that help.

Madelyn Robinson represents the Green Team around the council table, but her energy, knowledge and commitment is an amazing gift to not only our community of faith but to the larger community. She has helped us to understand the crisis of climate change and challenges us to respond in faithful and responsible ways. She has raised the profile of Knox as a community of people who are taking concrete actions to remediate climate change. She leads a hardy group of faithful climate activists to publicly speak out for a positive future. She has launched and led a group of concerned citizens to form "Sustainable Brandon", where she has led community impact and change. She walks her talk in her life and supports other to do the same.

The Affirm committee is a force to behold! Laura Crookshanks and her committee work with many community partners in breaking down the misunderstanding of gender diversity. Affirm has helped our community of faith to be allies, and to live out our commitment to equality and loving all God's children. They have changed attitudes in the surrounding community and have created the widespread recognition of Knox as a place that truly welcomes all who come. They have assisted other churches to reach Affirming status. We are proud!

The congregational care and membership group helps to keep communication alive between members of Knox who may not be present in the building for various reasons. They send cards and keep track of any changes in circumstance. I appreciated them this summer when I was filling in at the office, and Debra Carnegie was well acquainted with the historical roll. If you don't know what that is, ask her! They create social opportunities for people new to our church, and those living in supported living. We are grateful for their work.

I am so excited about the work of the Christian Education committee! They have taken the goal from the Strategic Plan and created a vibrant youth experience within Knox. Children join Craig on Sunday morning, attend Sunday School, or participate in youth groups. Children have an amazing time with Hailey and Brittany, with glowing reports from the youth and parents about the friendship skills developed and the fun had! They are our future, and it such a joy to see the numbers building.

We are so fortunate to have Craig leading us in spiritual practice. He works many hours at Knox, responding to those who are in crisis, providing support for those who are struggling, and on call for those with health issues and their families at the Health Center. He has partnerships in many areas in the community, which benefits us as we learn about the needs that exist, and the community initiatives that we want to support. He relates to young and old from a place of love and acceptance. In this challenging world he helps us find our quiet center where we find the energy and commitment to love each other, and to respect the interconnectedness of creation.

We are also grateful to Sharon Christmas and her many helpers who make the kitchen a fun place to be. Whether it is brunch on Sunday, food for a meeting happening at Knox, a funeral lunch or a party they respond with amazing results.

I cannot leave out the role that our building plays in creating a safe space for others to come together. So many groups share our space and we welcome them in the way that loving communities do - AIAnon, Genealogy, Moms stop the Harm, Sustainable Brandon, Westman Immigrant Services, the Indigenous People's Center and more. Even our pickle ball people find a welcome here! Our building is always welcoming and spotless! Thanks to Charles for that. Kendra ties us all together. She maintains the administrative aspects of operating our building, our work, our Council and Craig!

As I write this, I am very conscious of the fact that Knox is struggling with the budget. Those days of an annual surplus are behind us, and for the last several years we have been facing a shortfall at the end of the year. It is not difficult to understand why this is, as we see the attendance and membership slowly drop. We need to look realistically at the future and determine the best path forward as a community of faith, as resources shrink. To begin this exploration a group of members have agreed to meet and look at options and possibilities. After a time of review, analysis, and exploration the group will return to the larger community of faith to have some conversation. Together, we will look at how we must change as the world around us changes. Life doesn't stand still and neither can we.

Submitted by Debby Dandy, Chair

Annual Report by Rev. Craig Miller

The General Council adopted new call and vision statements at the end of 2021 to guide us as we seek to become the Beloved Community, which I use again this year to report on our ministry together.

Call – The United Church of Canada Call reflects the core of our purpose, sharing who we seek to be in “such a time as this” (Esther 4:14).

‘Do not think that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.’

Deep Spirituality – Bold Discipleship – Daring Justice

Vision – The UCC's vision reflects what the church aspires to be over a 5- to 10-year span. Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.

My ministry with you included:

Deep Spirituality

- Facilitating The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don’t Want to Know About Each Other, online study group in March and April.
- Leading the faith formation program, Painting the Stars: Science, Religion, and an Evolving Faith. Seven sessions from October to December.
- Planning and leading the following worship series: Bread, Bath & Beyond (Epiphany) What R U Up to? – Remember the Hot Air Balloons? (Lent), A Place to Call Home (Easter), Green Christianity (Season of Creation), Do Unto Others (Ordinary Time) and On the Way to Bethlehem (Advent/Christmas).
- Facilitating the One Strange Rock sessions.
- Working with Spirit Kids’ Club and providing opportunities for intergenerational worship stations at Transfiguration and on the Sunday before Advent.
- Attending gatherings in Brandon offered by Indigenous knowledge keepers.
- Attending the Earth Song Camp in Winnipeg.
- Providing spiritual direction for members of our community.
- Working with eight families to provide a celebration of life for their loved one and speaking at one Blue Christmas service.
- Serving as a member of the Process and Faith Christian Path Advisory Team. For information about this initiative, check out <https://processandfaith.org>.

Bold Discipleship

- Faith formation work and confirmation of two youth on Pentecost Sunday.

- Reworking the Children's Program Coordinator position and supporting new ministry initiatives
- Serving as a Spiritual Care Associate at the Brandon Regional Health Centre.
- Working closely with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and offering assistance and counselling for dealing with fundamentalist Christian family members, and providing letters of support to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- Supporting our Affirm United work through initiatives and events, including PIE Day, Trans Day of Visibility, Pride Week, and the Transgender Day of Remembrance.
- Meeting with the Men's group at the John Howard Society.
- Curating social media posts on the Facebook page (with Leanne Sprung and Madelyn Robinson) and managing our YouTube channel.
- Providing material for our email newsletter and website.
- Providing pastoral care at PCH and Assisted Living centres.
- Serving as a member-at-large on the Executive of the Prairie to Pine Region and as the supervisor for the Hartney Lauder Pastoral Charge.

Daring Justice

- Working with the Interfaith community in Brandon to support two peace rallies.
- Resourcing the Prairie to Pine Region's climate justice initiatives.
- Working with the Brandon Indian Residential School Cemeteries Project.
- Serving on the Truth and Reconciliation Week planning and implementation committee.
- Working with multiple communities to assist them in hosting the Brandon Indian Residential School Mobile Learning Centre.
- Providing letters of support for initiatives at the John Howard Society, Brandon Urban Aboriginal People's Committee, Samaritan House Ministries, and the Safe and Warm Shelter. I continue connecting with service providers and neighbours through volunteer work with the Brandon Bear Clan.

What a joy it is to work with Kendra, Charles, Bernie, Jane, Brittany, Antoinette, and Hailey! We are working to be good stewards of the resources you provide and respond with grace, love, and communion in these challenging times.

Most of all, we are grateful for your partnership in ministry. A special shout-out to Debby Dandy, Sharon Christmas, and Coleen Wall. They stepped in during Kendra's medical leave, and we laughed a lot. We also learned how much we've come to depend on Kendra. We are better together.

With a Grateful Heart, Craig

Chaplain's Report to Knox 2024

From Joe Ball

Dear friends in the family of faith,

The past year of ministry in this health care context has been both challenging and rewarding. Unlike other areas of health care, Spiritual Care doesn't have a lot of 'measurable outcomes,' which naturally inclines one to want to measure inputs. Some of these figures are familiar from congregational ministry, as ways to indicate how one is spending one's time in service the community. In 2024, I can see that I presided at 9 funerals, and at 1 wedding.

Of note is that many of these formal services come out of the informal relationships formed with staff over the 16 yrs I have been at the Brandon Hospital. While my work is with patients and families, the staff I work alongside see that work, and when they ask for help in time of need, it's very validating. Those relationships are precious and meaningful to me, as the staff at the hospital are a vital part of the community I seek to serve.

In addition to the formal services, I was also involved extensively over the year with the PMH CISM Team. To unpack the acronyms: PMH is Prairie Mountain Health - the region that extends beyond the hospital to include the local care homes in Brandon, as well as the hospitals and health care facilities that stretch between the borders of Sask & the 'States, up to Swan River, and East as far as Treherne.

CISM is Critical Incident Stress Mgmt, and I have long been involved with that Team, who travel the region to help staff unpack or debrief upsetting events in the workplace. Over the years, that has taken me to Swan River and Souris, Virden and Birtle, and many places beyond, besides.

In 2024, a larger portion of my time was spent being 'on-call' for the hospital. In this work, our dep't is supported by a number of Spiritual Care Associates, including both Craig Miller and Doug Neufeld (from Trinity). But health issues meant that some of the volunteers who have carried the pager faithfully and well had to step away from that responsibility at times this past year. As a result, in 2024 I found myself 'on-call' for the things that can't wait for a total of 2446.25 hrs. Just for the sake of perspective, a full time job (40hrs/wk with 2 weeks vacation) is 2000 hrs/yr. Thankfully, we are not always called in when on call - in fact, it's only about 40% of shifts that see us called back - so many of those hours were spent in peace and quiet.

I also see that I visited some 714 patients in hospital, as well as having 193 folks come in to speak with me there. I was also out in the community to see a further 150 patients or families outside the hospital - and managed only 7 visits in the care homes during the year. That amounts to 1064 pastoral visits as part of my work in and out of the hospital over the year.

I am grateful for the continued support of the community at Knox, not only Craig who carries the pager, but all who have provided a spiritual home, through your fellowship and encouragement throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted, Joe Ball

Knox Music Team Report

There are many events to indicate the passing of another year. The Knox Annual Report is one of them!

It's impressive that "new" folks step up to join the choir every year. It's a clear sign that Knox United is a good place to gather and join our family of faith whether it be to make music, or to get involved with the many aspects of the life and work of this church.

This year we explored, through music, the themes thoughtfully selected by Rev. Craig: Bread Bath & Beyond, What R U Up To, A Place to Call Home, Green Christianity, Do Unto Others, and On The Way To Bethlehem. With just over 500 titles in our library and several on-line resources, we are blessed to find choral messages that align with the themes.

This spring, the choir, in concert with friends, entertained our audience with songs all relating to Colours - Red River Valley, Yellow Bird, Green Sleeves, Deep Purple, Pink Panther. We were treated to a Father-Son Duo Alexander and Daniel Tselykov performance of Blue Danube. A Knox choral concert wouldn't be complete without our dear friend Edna Knock who arranged and performed 5 of the "colourful" pieces with us. Knoyse added in blue, brown, and black, and Jane performed an organ arrangement of Whiter Shade of Pale. Thanks to our Knox Family for raising over \$3500 for the Knox general fund.

The advent worship theme, On The Way to Bethlehem, was a fitting setting for the Carol Service as the choir sang their way to Bethlehem, I Wonder and I Wander and How Far Is It To Bethlehem.

Knoyse, with the leadership of Madelyn and Quentin, pulls together a motley musical crew on many Sunday mornings throughout the year to provide lively gathering music in a sing-a-long style. This has been a great way to centre us on Sunday mornings.

Thanks to Eleanor Taylor, Sandy Jasper, Naomi Russell, Donna Lowe, who filled in for Jane and I, and to Lynn Whidden, and Megan Mossop who added instrumental accompaniment to the choir on several occasions.

As always, we are grateful to our Knox family for your support. We enjoy making music for and with you.

Respectfully submitted

Jane Skinner and Bernie Whetter

Worship Committee Report

Members: Diane Shepherd(Chair), Cheryl Doull, Pat Cavanagh, Sheila Marion, Deb Carnegie, Rosemary Cornett and Rev. Craig Miller.

When we have Communion services we will continue, for the coming year, to use the glasses and have the servers wear gloves to minimize contact.

The Worship Committee led the service on August 25, 2024 while Craig was away. Cheryl had permission to use a service and she, along with Deb C, Sheila M and I presented it.

This committee decorated the sanctuary for Thanksgiving with produce and autumn wreaths. We were able to take produce to Samaritan House for distribution.

A cross and a wreath were placed at the front of the sanctuary for our Remembrance Day service on November 10, 2024.

The Decorating of the Sanctuary was done a bit differently this year, the Sunday before Advent there were several stations set up around the church for crafts and other activities. Several members of the congregation helped 'Hanging the Greens' by decorating the tree and hanging wreaths. The Chancel was decorated during the week in time for the First Sunday of Advent. It was decided not to hang the banners down the side of the sanctuary. The Braun Family helped with greeting on Christmas Eve and handing out candles. Gerry Whetter, Rod Whetter, Lydia Glawson and Coleen Wall took up the offering.

Thank you to Bernie Whetter for the additions to the Chancel during the worship year. The plants are always appreciated.

Respectfully submitted
Diane Shepherd, Chairperson

Affirm Committee Report

This past year, the following activities were carried out within the Knox Congregation and in the broader community:

- Knox Affirm Committee was approached by both Brookdale and Forrest United Churches to assist them with their affirming process. A couple of members of our Committee met with both Communities of Faith (together) on January 20th to share information and experiences about the process.
- “PIE Day” (Public, Intentional and Explicit): Once again, we teamed with Trinity United Church. An in person event was held on March 9th. The featured speaker was Lara Rae who shared her personal story and entertained us with her humor. Attendance was approximately 115. Over \$1279 was raised and donated to the Westman Empowerment Fund (WEF was created to assist individuals who identify as transgender, non binary or two-spirited in their transition journey by targeting financial barriers to their transition-related care).
- On February 21st, we held a viewing of “Quinn”, a Canadian-made video chronicling the story of a young non-binary person. About 15 people attended with interesting discussion following the video.
- Brandon Pride celebrations: The Affirm Committee and Spirit Kids Club & Youth hosted a button-making/sign-making & beading intergenerational event on June 2nd. Knox held a Pride Worship Service on June 9th. Many members from Knox participated in the Pride March on June 15th and volunteered at the Knox table at Pride in the Park. The items we made were handed out at our table at Pride in the Park where we always receive warm reception from attendees.
- The Affirm Committee led worship on August 11th.
- Our “rainbow sidewalk” was re-painted, thanks to the efforts of Antoinette and our wonderful youth. And many thanks to our anonymous donors who covered the cost of the paint!
- The Affirming Anniversary Service of Celebration to mark the anniversary of becoming an Affirming Ministry was held on October 27th.
- A “Pot luck for Inclusion”, an initiative of Sheila Marion, was held on November 17th.
- Knox continues to partner with SERC, PFLAG and Brandon Pride to plan the annual Trans Day of Remembrance Service. Knox hosted the in person and livestreamed Trans Day of Remembrance Service at noon on November 20th as well as the evening candlelight vigil. Attendance was somewhat down this year at the noon hour service. The group who gathered for the evening vigil were very appreciative of a safe space to meet to commemorate the event.
- There continues to be much work to do in ensuring our community is inclusive and respects diversity. Many in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and their families and friends, still experience hateful messages in person and especially online. We need to continue our efforts to be public, intentional and explicit in our support for inclusivity.

- We had some new members join our committee and are thankful for their energy and participation in our work. Many people have helped out at specific events - which is most appreciated! We are always open to new members joining us. We are thankful for the support and guidance that Craig Miller provides our committee.

Membership: Judy Dandridge, Steve Derendy, Ron Evancio, Myrna Haslen, Lynne Manns, Gail Shepherd-Clark, Sharon Pedlow, and Laura Crookshanks.

If there are events/discussion ideas that you would like to see addressed, or you would like to join our Committee or help out at an event, please contact one of us or the Church Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Crookshanks

Christian Education Committee Report

Committee Members: Jill Hannah-Kayes, Jennifer Braun, Julia Schettler, Madelyn Robinson, Myrna Haslen, Leanne Sprung (Sunday School Superintendent), Antoinette Gravel-Ouellette (Part Time Sr. Youth Director, Chair as of September 2024), Brittany Schettler (Part Time Jr. Youth Director), Katheryne Lumgair, Reverend Craig Miller

This was another dynamic year for connecting and building community among all ages of Spirit Kid's Club. With new staff and committee members, programming aligns with the Knox Strategic Plan, while CE planning continues to progress.

In February 2024, a new part-time staff member for the Junior Youth age group was recruited and hired for the term from January to May. This role included regular teaching at the Sunday morning Spirit Kid's Club and routine gatherings/events during the week for the Grades 3-6 age group.

Leanne resigned as chair of CE, shifting to only the role of Sunday School Superintendent for a transition period. Leanne had been in the combined role of Chair and Superintendent for eight years, regularly leading Sunday morning lessons, coordinating intergenerational events and special events throughout the Christian year and supporting new initiatives to align with the Council Strategic Plan such as the garden plot, Ukulele Project and Jr. Youth Director position.

Antoinette was recruited to assume the role of the chair, effective September 2024.

In the summer of 2024, recruitment for the part-time Junior Youth group position prompted us to split the role into two: Brittany Schettler led the Sunday Morning SKC lesson times, while Hailey Noto coordinated the out-of-church youth gatherings and events. At this time, the age groupings also shifted to grades 3-7 for Junior Youth and grades 8-12 for Senior Youth (Antoinette).

Sunday morning Spirit Kid's Club (SKC) had three age groups:

- kindergarten to grade 2 - volunteer Julia Schettler is responsible for the using the lesson plans/resources provided by Brittany
- grades 3-7 - Brittany Schettler (paid) with between 3 to 10 attending
- grades 8-12 - Antoinette (paid) with 8 to 12 youth attending; an increase in participation partly due to the increased social media promotion

The curriculum is the GO Project from the United Church online site.

Our volunteers provided intergenerational stations for the entire congregation on Transfiguration Sunday, February 11, and on the Sunday before Advent.

Easter SKC was an all-ages interactive event with fun activities to highlight the meaning of Easter.

The Christmas pageant, *"Christmas at the Olive Garden,"* written by Jayden Schettler, was humorous and engaging. Members of all ages participated, and it was enjoyed by everyone!

On September 29th, SKC made soup from the garden produce and bannock. Each participant was able to take it home and enjoy it with their families.

SKC outside of Sunday morning included:

- Senior Youth (Grades 8-12) gatherings

- Several events took place over the past year, including mini-golf, games night, bowling, and cookie decorating. Participants ranged from 3 to 12, and you were encouraged to bring a friend.
- Junior Youth (grades 3-7) have had 12 regular events on alternative Wednesdays and Fridays. These have been a huge success, with anywhere from 5 to 25 youth attending events such as slime making, game nights, pizza making, dodgeball game night, gingerbread house contest, and tobogganing.
- All ages combined youth events, such as movie nights and bowling parties, and in partnership with the Affirm committee, repainted the sidewalk on the west side with pride colours. This initiative reminds and helps youth understand why this is important to the youth and Knox, showing the community that Knox is inclusive and supportive.

Prairie to Pine Youth events are popular with Knox youth, including the following;

- ZEEBU, February 17-19 2024 in Killarney and we had 5 interested in attending and had 3 attend.
- ALF, October 25 - 27, 2024 at Gordon King Memorial United Church in Winnipeg. One youth participated as a leader and 5 youth attend as participants
- One youth attended Neechi Camp at Jessie Saulteaux Centre in summer
- Jayden Schettler has applied to attend the Youth Forum at General Council 45 next summer, Knox Council has agreed to sponsor

In response to Knox Council's request to increase communication of CE activities and events to the congregation and the public, the Junior Youth staff has increased their social media activity on Facebook and Instagram, using photos, posters, and engaging content. Additionally, they communicate with parents via WhatsApp and email to advertise events, facilitate arrangements, and encourage participation.

The Ukulele Project, which began in September 2022, continues with the aim of creating joyful music. Children and youth are learning to play, singing, and sharing music during worship. The group has performed at various services to spread their joy! Between four and eight players, including the adults who joined in fall 2024, meet each Sunday after SKC for 30 minutes under the guidance of Deb Gray and Dianne Sloane.

Confirmation

Craig facilitated a confirmation class with Edison and Emerson Braun. They covered the eight sessions of the Go Project Confirmation Curriculum. Confirmation Sunday was held on Trinity Sunday, 26 May.

Adult Christian Education

In April, a small group of adults participated in an online study of The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don't Want to Know About Each Other. We watched a conversation between the Moderator and the two authors. Craig provided background material.

In the autumn, Craig led the Painting the Stars study (A Living the Questions Curriculum), which had nineteen participants. A few people joined by Zoom each week. There were seven 90-minute sessions.

The Affirm and Outreach Committees organized lunch and learn sessions, and the Green Team hosted various educational presentations.

The Broadview Reading Club meets on the third Thursday of each month from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Five to twelve members foster fellowship and meaningful conversation.

Submitted by Leanne Sprung (January to June) & Antoinette Gravel-Ouellette (September to December)

Ministry & Personnel Committee Report

On behalf of your M & P committee, I want to say Thank you to an abundance of People.

To our staff Rev Craig, Office Administrator Kendra, Caretaker Charles, Choir Director Bernie, Organist Jane, Youth Directory Antoinette, Children's Co-Ordinators Brittany & Hailey. I also want to Thank You the congregation for your support to all of our staff throughout the year!

This year started with the hiring of 3 part-time Office Co-Ordinators to cover the office while Kendra was on medical leave for 3 months. As you can see it took 3 to do the Job. HAHAHA. These 3 have a new appreciation of the work that is done in the office on a regular day. We Thank: Debby Dandy, Sharon Christmas, Coleen Wall also known as "Craig's Angels". Thank you to everyone for your patience during these 3 months. I speak for myself in saying I felt the patience & support, as I am sure that Debby & Sharon did as well.

We also said Thank You & See you Again to Tara Onayoade Children's Co-Ordinator in June as he Graduated Grade 12 & was accepted to start University in Ontario in September. Did you notice he joined us during his time home at Christmas?

We posted the Children's Co-Ordinator position; we had 4 applicants interviewed. We were able to hire 2 of the four recognizing these two brought many skills & talents. In August we hired Brittany Schettler & Hailey Noto each taking on 6 hours a week filling the position requirements. Many positive comments are being heard about both of these young ladies.

Thank You to those who said Yes to helping cover Sundays when Craig is away on Vacation, Continuing Education, or 5th Sunday time off: Kim Lewarne, Sandy Jasper/Stewardship Committee lead by Katherine Lumgair, David Paul/ Rob Brown/ Affirm Committee lead by Gail Shepherd-Clark/ Lydia Glawson/ Worship Committee lead by Cheryl Doull, Diane Shepherd, Deb Carnegie, & Sheila Marion/Musicians lead by Bernie Whetter, Jane Skinner/Blanket Ceremony lead by Debby Dandy, Susie McPherson-Derandy.

If I missed anyone I do apologize.

Thanks to those who covered for the Choral Director & Organist when they were away or were musical guests: Eleanor Taylor, Naomi Russell, Deanna Ginn, Sandy Jasper, Donna Lowe, Kireran Perreault, Kathy Shepherd.
I apologize if I missed anyone.

Our Caretaker had medical time off Thank you Diane Shepherd for helping cover those duties.

M & P Committee members: Art Godfrey liaison to Caretaker, Karen Turnbull Secretary to the committee & liaison to the Organist/Pianist, Laurie Crowe liaison to Choral Director & our financial numbers person, Jim Lewthwaite liaison to Youth Director, Sandy Jasper liaison to the two Children's Co-Ordinators, these people give support to

their staff & without them me Coleen Wall Chair, liaison to Minister & Office Administrator I couldn't do my job. They make it easy for me. Thank you!

I am pretty sure I am forgetting something or someone going back on a year it is easily done.

Blessings to everyone in 2025!

Submitted by: Coleen Wall
Chair of M & P Committee

Stewardship Committee Report

Committee: Alan Moulin, Chair (2012 to present), Duncan Waddell (2013 to present), David Paul (2016 to present), Vivian Mitchell (2018 to 2024), Katheryne Lumgair (2021 to present), Janet Braun (2024 to present)

Stewardship supported the Knox congregation in 2024 with respect to fellowship and fundraising. Our committee members provided input to council related to the committee's mandate. Membership in the Stewardship Committee changed, as Vivian Mitchell resigned from the committee in 2024. Our committee sincerely thanks Vivian for her contributions to Knox and Stewardship, she was a major organizer and participant in all of our committee's activities, as well as providing significant insight into church finances. Welcome to Janet Braun who joined the committee in 2024.

The past year was highly successful with respect to fundraising, the Stewardship spring and fall fundraisers approximately \$4402.00 for Knox United Church. Total fundraising for the year was \$27,800.42 which compares well with \$21,812.49 in 2023, and also with our church budget of \$23,500.00. These fundraising events provided considerable fellowship within the congregation.

Our committee thanks the congregation for their generosity during 2024, which resulted in donations of \$166,345.69 as of December 2024, which is an increase of \$10,660.06 from \$155,694.63 in 2023 and compares well to the budget for 2024 which was \$159,000.00. Church giving in 2024 occurred in the context of increased income due to rentals, which improved the church's financial status. Financial data are based on information from the December financial statement.

Church donations in 2024 increased relative to 2023. The number of pledges returned to Knox for the fall 2024 campaign totaled 31. Our committee will review the year-end financial report for 2024 and previous years, to further assess seasonal variability in church giving, the need for additional donations and fundraising in 2025, to provide input to the Knox strategic plan. The committee encourages members and adherents to contribute by Pre-authorized Remittance (PAR) to provide funding throughout the year. Contact Kendra for details.

New ideas for church giving were shared with council in the context of financial planning and the benevolent fund. The committee recognizes the significance of bequests and annuities to the church in 2025, and the importance of planned giving.

Our committee continues to assess and improve stewardship for our church, and is actively soliciting new ideas, strategies and plans for fundraising from the congregation. Please share your ideas and opportunities for stewardship with our committee members.

Submitted by,
Alan Moulin

Congregational Care and Membership Committee Report

Committee Members:

Deb Carnegie	Chair / Visitor
Lynn Cupples	Secretary / Visitor
Janet Olmstead Woods	Roll / Visitor
Sharon Christmas	Coffee / Brunches / Kitchen events / Visitor
Bill Spanjer	Cards
Ida Hallatt	Mailboxes within the Narthex / Visitor
Shelley Tataryn	Visitor / Budget of the Committee
Karen Elves	Visitor
Brian Clark	Visitor
Norma Lowes	Visitor

Highlights of the 2024 Year Include:

- Funeral prices have been reviewed and set in place To be reviewed annually
- Coffee within the Sanctuary is now supported by a contract with Forbidden Flavours
- Criminal Records Checks for all visitors was completed in summer - ongoing
- Roll membership was updated for statistical submission in February
- Visitation cards were prepared and currently being utilized in hospital & pch visits
- Mailboxes within the Narthex were organized and new members included.
- Newcomer luncheon was held in April - 17 members were invited to attend
- Cards were mailed out ongoing and several Christmas cards are sent out annually - accommodations were made due to the Postal Strike this past festive season.
- An annual summary of Knox's vibrant community life was prepared to accompany the Christmas card. This practice commenced in 2023.
- PPT of committee members and brief bio was presented before Sunday services for several months - as an engagement strategy raising awareness of membership and roles within the life of the church. Discontinued over summer months. Currently evaluating other engagement strategies.
- Visitation - the committee resumed hosting (this practice had been interrupted during Covid) a meal within assisted living facilities of Riverheights Terrace and Victoria Landing. Each site had 8 residents / committee members and Craig in attendance. Each gathering brought suggestions forward for further actions to support members who may / may not be attending Knox in person.
- The Committee was invited to attend Victoria Landing to tour the facility. One of our monthly meetings was conducted on that site following the tour
- Visitation - continues across approximately 20 - 25 members at any point in time. This number shifts based on needs and health status / caregiver supports available. Problem solving and community building remains our main focus in offering ongoing linkage to Knox, support, reducing loneliness and isolation.
- Nametags continue to be ordered for members as they desire. One engagement strategy included offering single use name tags to all who attended - met with varying success.

- Prairie to Pine hosted a Pastoral Care training session in Carberry on date of Nov 9th. Three committee members attended and have returned to Knox committee with suggestions as a result.
- Pew Registry - signing each Sunday was discontinued over summer months and has not recommenced. The value of this practice which had launched in the 1990s was examined and found to no longer meet our needs.
- The Committee also endeavors to support the varied work of the church through connections to other committees: providing kitchen support for various events / Worship committee / Children's program etc.

Items Brought Forward to the 2025 Year:

1. Ongoing consideration of engagement strategies to build community within Knox.
2. Examination of Knox pamphlet to reflect current mission / services.
3. New Comers Luncheon annually and/or as required.
4. Examine potentials to further engage and meet the needs of men.

Respectfully submitted:
Debra Carnegie

Spring and Fall Luncheons

Our Spring Luncheon was held on June 5, 2024. Our menu consisted of a variety of salads and a variety of bunwiches along with cheese, pickles, hot and cold beverages and our delicious homemade desserts. Delivery was offered as well as in house sitting. Our profit was \$ 979.50.

The Fall Luncheon was held on October 16th where our menu changed to a variety of soups, bunwiches, cheese, pickles, hot beverages and once again a great selection of homemade desserts.

Deliveries were offered again and we realized a profit of \$ 808.00.

These luncheons could not happen without the many volunteers who work and/or donate desserts etc. We are very thankful to you all every year for making these 2 luncheons so successful.

Sharon Christmas, Coordinator

Brunch Bunch

The first Brunch at Knox was held in April of 1998. It was going to be a 2 month test to see if the congregation would be receptive to this new initiative. It was for fellowship and not a fundraising event.

Today people are constantly asking when the next Brunch will be so we know the "test" was a success!

For \$5.00 a person, under 12- \$3.00 and preschoolers free we offer brunch after worship as often as we can. We hope to be consistent by having the first Sunday in the month "brunch Sunday" but because of staffing and being such a busy church we are not meeting this goal. In 2024 Brunch was offered 6 times, down from our projected goal of 9.

We lost a very important member of our Brunch staff in the spring of 2024, Barry Bromley. We are carrying on without you Barry but miss you a lot.

We put out a call for more interested folks to help out with Brunches and did receive around 4 new members willing to help. Thank you for stepping up! We will be calling on you in 2025.

Sharon Christmas, Coordinator

Outreach Committee Report

Outreach Committee: Debby Dandy, Elaine Gibson, Lydia Glawson, Betty Kelly, Madelyn Robinson, Margrét Kristjanson (January - June):

The Knox Constitution tells us that 'the Outreach Committee is responsible for developing and maintaining individual and congregational social justice projects within the community (local, national and international)'. This report provides a summary of the Outreach activities and community outreach over the past year. This work is one of the ways Knox United Church lives out its faith in the wider community.

In June 2024 we said a reluctant goodbye to Margret Kristjansson and in November welcomed Elaine Gibson to the Outreach team. If you would like further information or are interested in being more involved, please be in touch with the appropriate Committee member. New voices and perspectives are welcome as we continue to do this work in and with the community.

Support to incarcerated people leaving Brandon Correctional Institute - Debby Dandy

Debby Dandy connects with the John Howard Society on a regular basis to drop off items to support individuals leaving the Brandon Correctional Institute. These individuals often have no personal supplies to get started in a new living situation. Men are required to find shelter as best they can, and make do without the personal items which would facilitate a positive interface with the community. Debby prepares backpacks that contain hygiene items, information about accessing resources, basic clothing items, bus money and so on. If you have any extra backpacks or basic hygiene items such as shampoo, shower soap, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste, chewing gum, warm gloves etc., please pass them along to Debby. Rev. Craig meets periodically with the men's group at JHS.

Blanket Exercises: Debby Dandy & Susie McPherson-Derendy

Blanket Exercises are recognized as an important learning and sharing experience and demand has increased over the last few years. Debby and Susie have travelled to Rolling River School Division in Neepawa, Minnedosa, River and Forrest. They have travelled south to Minto, Hartney and Souris, and provided the Exercise for the staff of the Southwest Horizon School Division. We have worked cooperatively with both Brandon School Division and Brandon University in sharing the Blanket Exercise, both of whom have adopted the Exercise as part of Indigenous Education. Many church communities have requested a Blanket Exercise, and GATE Church invited us to be their service on a Sunday morning. Westman Immigrant Services invites us to lead regular Blanket Exercise with newcomer populations, many of who share the colonization experiences of their home countries. We have also offered the Blanket Exercise for Brandon Police Service and the new cadet recruits several times. MB Employment and Income Assistance invited us to deliver it to their staff. We held regular Blanket Exercises as part of the work of the Community Wellness Collaborative in 2024 and will continue in 2025. These offered the Blanket Exercise to many who were not affiliated with an organization but came out of personal interest. It is a gratifying experience that we feel builds increased understanding and connection to the history of Canada, and to our personal place in the reconciliation process.

Blanket Exercise at Knox facilitated by Debby Dandy & Susie McPherson-Derendy On Sunday, September 22, Knox Outreach Committee invited the congregation, including

children to attend a Blanket Exercise in the Auditorium. The exercise replaced the regular service. Approx. 70 people participated and many told us *it couldn't have been better*. People talked about how much they learned and how impactful it was. Special Thanks to Debby and Susie for this invaluable work they continue to do.

Truth and Reconciliation: Craig Miller

National Indigenous Peoples' Day

The committee recruited volunteers from Knox to support the work of the Brandon Friendship Centre on 21 June at the Riverbank Discovery Centre.

Brandon Indian Residential School Cemeteries Project Update

In July 2021, the UCC announced funding for the "Bring the Children Home" initiative. The General Council Executive set aside an additional 3 million dollars to assist Indigenous communities as the work of identifying cemeteries and graves at the fifteen schools administered by the UCC continues.

The first meeting with the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation was held in June 2022. A second meeting was held on 20 September 2024 with members of the working group, myself, the Moderator, and the Executive Secretary. Nichols briefly outlined current needs, and Michael Blair assured SVDN that the funds were still available.

In June 2021, the Council of Knox United provided a letter of support for the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation's application for the Indigenous Agriculture Science Partnerships Program (ISAPP) through Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada (AAFC) (the federal government). As part of the application, Knox committed to raising \$5,000 as a partner on the grant. We fulfilled our obligation at the end of 2024.

Projects supported by the grant included:

- Access to the site: Improving access for those with permission while controlling access to others - gates, grading the road, road improvements, benches for Elders.
- Site clean-up and rejuvenation: Removal of illegally dumped waste, signage to make people aware that this is a sacred site, to commemorate and educate (in multiple languages)
- Protect the burial sites: Expanded the North Hill burial site fence to include graves outside the existing fence, fence the North-East Fields and East Hill burial sites.
- Identify, manage and plant culturally important plants: Conducted vegetation surveys, mapped plants, looked to increase populations with transplants and management, developed a walking route to act as a medicine teaching tool, identified areas near the burial sites for enhanced plantings to honour the children.
- Host a cultural feast: Honoured the BIRS survivors and those buried on the site & community consultation. A new tepee was installed in 2024 with the names of the children who died while students at the school.

Truth and Reconciliation Week – 27 September - 4 October

Craig was a member of the planning committee. Outreach members participated in many events throughout the week. The flag-raising ceremony at City Hall with Susie McPherson-Derendy was a highlight. Craig recruited volunteers to set up and pack the BIRS Mobile Learning Centre, which was showcased at the Discovery Centre.

Brandon Indian Residential School Mobile Learning Centre

We serve as the keepers of the Brandon Indian Residential School Mobile Learning Centre. Bookings can be made with Krissy Teall at krissy.teall@gmail.com, as she keeps the calendar. The host is responsible for picking up the containers at Knox Brandon and returning them.

Mission & Service Fund: Lydia Glawson

Again in 2024, Knox continued its long history of generosity to its various Outreach ministries, both at home and abroad, primarily through the Mission & Service Fund.

This fund, together with Knox's givings to Samaritan House Safe and Warm, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Christmas Cheer, and other appeals is a testament to the ongoing commitment the Knox United Church congregation has to our neighbour/partners in need. We are reminded that in the economy of Jesus, the "jars are full." Outreach has made a recommendation to maintain the M&S target at \$43,000 for 2025.

Anti-Racist Work: Lydia Glawson

The Israel-Hamas War: Seeking Understanding

The Outreach Committee hosted a 2-part Zoom information and discussion series in April, encouraging participants to think more deeply about the war and ongoing conflict in Israel/Palestine. We watched a recording of the Moderator's conversation with authors Jeff Wilkinson and Raja Khouri about their book *The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don't Want to Know about Each Other*.

The response for the first session of this 2-part series far exceeded our expectations.

40 people from around P2P region participated in the Zoom call.

13 were from Knox, There was a group of 8 participants from the UC in Russel, as well as folks signed in from across the region.

A **Pilgrimage March** supporting a Gaza Ceasefire organized as a Brandon Multi-faith Action for a Just Peace happened on Saturday, May 11. It started and ended on the 18th street lawn in front of Knox. Craig Miller and Debby Dandy were part of the organizing team. Just under 100 people participated and logged over 500 Km towards the National total.

Fair Trade Committee: Madelyn Robinson

The Fair-Trade committee was not as active as hoped, throughout 2024. We order every month for the Knox Koffee Klub from Level Ground Trading Co. out of BC. We welcomed Les Kelly as a new member along with Deanna Ginn and Madelyn Robinson. We hope to once again begin do educational events in our church and community.

Refuge Brandon: Madelyn Robinson

Refuge Brandon is currently working to help a young woman from Somalia, bring a brother and a sister to Canada. They have been living in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya since 2008. We are helping her get the documents in order and will help support them for 12 months if/when they arrive in Canada. As the number of refugees grows due to war and the climate crisis, it is heartening to live in a country that is willing to offer sanctuary to those affected.

Samaritan House, Safe & Warm Shelter & Bear Clan: Maureen Cobb

Even though Maureen stepped away from the Outreach Committee in 2023, she and Jim still organize and deliver the Knox donations to Samaritan House on a regular basis. Maureen tells us that the donation tub is full more often now. Thanks to the continued generosity of Knox people, they have been able to deliver a full bin of food to Samaritan House about every 3 weeks. As well, the Safe & Warm Shelter and Bear Clan both appreciate the winter gear that we are able to provide during the winter season. We extend a warm thank you to Maureen and Jim for cheerfully continuing with this piece of outreach ministry.

Sustainable Brandon: Madelyn Robinson

Sustainable Brandon grew out of the work from the Kairos-Love of Creation initiative. This work led directly to the wider community initiative of Sustainable Brandon that is sustained by both the Green Team and Outreach here at Knox Church. There is often overlap in environmental justice work, which benefits our community of faith with consistent messaging from Outreach and the Green Team. This overlap continues to be lived out with various projects. Sustainable Brandon continues to keep track of what is happening with the Class IV Wetland SW of Brandon in the interest of seeing it protected. We continue to organize along with other organizations throughout Brandon, the Earth Day activities and will do so again in 2025. A grant received from the Climate Action Team to Sustainable Brandon to help with a project in our community was given to the Riverbank Discovery Centre and became the seed money to help with an array of solar panels on the Interpretive Building which will be realized this spring.

The Knox Neighbourhood BBQ happened as rescheduled on Thursday, May 23rd.

Almost 75 people took part, with a good number of folks from the neighbourhood coming out. There were several goals for this event: first, to acknowledge and say thank you to the neighbours for the many times there are lots of cars parking on the street in front of their houses due to events at Knox. Secondly, to begin to build connections between the neighbours and the Knox community. Thirdly, to HAVE FUN and FOOD together.

The Community Street BBQ fits into Knox's strategic plan and is related to Critical

Area 1, Community Engagement. With two years of piloting the BBQ, it has become an effective way of Knox United Church actively being 'in the community'. Plans are underway for the Knox Neighbourhood Street BBQ to happen again in 2025, this time likely in early September as the post-secondary students return to the neighbourhood.

A Camping Supplies initiative, organized by Margret Kristjansson to support SHIFT (Supporting and Honouring Indigenous Families Together) has also been a success. Again, the Knox family has stepped up. People contributed their surplus camping supplies and Margret Kristjansson made multiple trips to drop off donations. The contributions far exceeded what Lisa Ramsey and the staff of SHIFT expected. They said a heartfelt thankyou on behalf of the children and families who were able to have a camping experience this past summer.

Wider Assiniboine Cluster gathering on May 2nd , hosted at Knox and spearheaded by Outreach had just over 40 people attend from across SW part of Manitoba. The consensus was quite positive. People spoke of feeling isolated and disconnected since Presbytery ended, and appreciated the opportunity to get together to enjoy music and conversation. Minnedosa United Church hosted a second Cluster event in September, which was equally well received. Plans are already in place for a spring gathering in Wawanesa. Knox Outreach continues to provide quiet behind the scenes encouragement and helps with email notices.

Book Reviews: There are many current books that offer readers insights into social justice issues and / or Canada's colonial history. In an effort to help us learn more about these books, Outreach is soliciting book reviews on books found in the Knox library and posting them in the Knox weekly Connections. If you have a book you think should be included, please speak to one of the Outreach team.

Advocacy Activities:

Brandon Zoning Bylaw: On behalf of The Knox Outreach Committee Betty Kelly made a presentation to the City of Brandon Public Hearing for Proposed Zoning Bylaw Changes on May 15th. Sustainable Brandon spoke as well, focussing on the environmental aspects of City planning. These Zoning changes support the development of a variety of low-density housing in more neighbourhoods of Brandon.

Self-Cleaning Public Toilets for Downtown Brandon: Lydia and Debby explored potential ways the City of Brandon might address the need for public toilets in the downtown back in 2023. Outreach sent a letter advocating council to include funds in the 2024 budget for one or two public toilets. Outreach members attended several City Budget & council meetings, continuing to advocate for low-cost housing, downtown toilets and a commitment to sustainable development. We recognize that the lack of available public vandal-proof washrooms in downtown Brandon is only one piece of a much larger social issue. But access to a washroom is such a basic human need that surely Brandon can make it a priority. At the January 2025 Budget information session, we were told that after much research and consideration about effective designs, a public toilet for the downtown core area are included in the 2025 budget.

In closing: Knox Brandon continues to be well respected across the P2P region for all parts of its social justice work. The work of the Outreach Committee is truly a team effort, and each member deserves recognition and thanks for sharing their passion and their unflagging energy. Once again, in the words of our Moderator, *We are indeed better together!*

Respectfully submitted by

Betty Kelly, Chair of Knox Outreach Committee

KAIROS Report

Kairos Canada is a social justice organization, with head offices in Toronto, with membership including ten Canadian churches. The pillars of the work done by KAIROS include: Ecological, Gender, and Migrant justice. As well Kairos is a prophetic witness to history and current actions in these areas. There are 6 regions across the country where local people of faith and conscience come together in Coordinating Committees. I am the chair of the Northwestern Ontario MB committee, which meets in Winnipeg with representatives from many different faiths or focus.

In the recent past we have been working with our Indigenous neighbours in Manitoba about the government approved resource extraction initiatives in their communities. Although Canada signed on to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, provinces have failed to recognize the principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent which is part of the UNDRIP. In British Columbia an Indigenous community has gone to court about the failure of the BC Government to recognize the right for communities to agree to any development on their land. This situation is complicated, as Government recognizes the Colonial imposed structure of elected Chief and Council. In Indigenous communities there are different understandings of community leadership, with Elders and Traditional leaders being seen as leaders as well. In Manitoba, near Lake Winnipeg alone there are many licenses granted for resource extraction. Silica mining, which the community of Springfield rejected, has been approved at Hollow Water First Nation. Peat mining has also been approved in Indigenous communities in the Interlake. A large hog barn is proposed for the Brokenhead community. Community members have reached out to KAIROS for support in their concerns about the lack of free, prior and informed consent. Chiefs and Councils are looking at the financial benefits of these operations, which is understandable in the current times for Indigenous communities. The overriding concern for community members and KAIROS is the environmental impact of these operations, but community members are not able to express concerns or ask questions. Lake Winnipeg already faces environmental crisis and there is prioritization of the financial benefit over the health of the body of water.

We have also been participating in Community Solidary Manitoba, currently planning action in response to concerns about changing attitudes toward immigrants. We are involved in For the Love of Creation, a national coalition of groups concerned about climate change. In Brandon, the resources from FLC were used to host discussion groups that led to the formation of Sustainable Brandon. Kairos nationally was vocal in supporting a call for peace in Gaza. In Brandon, almost 100 people from our community joined Knox and the Islamic Center responded to the widespread concern about the people of Gaza in a community walk, concurrent with other walks across the country.

Locally the KAIROS Blanket Exercise has become a recognized teaching tool to develop a better understanding of the history of Canada and its Indigenous peoples. There are active teams holding Blanket Exercises at Brandon University, ACC, and Brandon School Division. Many community based exercises also occur, which is creating a common understanding of our history and opening hearts and minds to be allies to our First Nations friends and neighbours.

KAIROS has launched a campaign to raise awareness of the impact of the drastic impacts of debt repayment by the global south to the global north. They urge us to participate in reaching out to our Government to take the following actions:

1. Stop the debt crisis now by cancelling and remedying unjust and unsustainable debts without economic policy conditions
2. Prevent debt crises from happening again by addressing their root causes, reforming the global financial system to prioritize people and planet
3. Establish a permanent, transparent, binding and comprehensive debt framework within the United Nations

Finally, worship resources and position papers are offered for us to use to keep the pillars of KAIROS before us. The website at kairoscanada.org is a wealth of information and resources, as well as invitations to be part of a response to the challenges facing us. I urge you to look at the website or ask me directly about the work being done on behalf all of us in our community of faith.

Respectfully submitted,

Debby Dandy

Green Team Report

Committee: *Quentin Robinson, Madelyn Robinson (co-chairs), Ken Wojnarski, Wayne Clayton, Rob Brown, and Craig Miller*

The Knox Green Team is responsible for encouraging and supporting individuals to become involved in greening initiatives in our Knox faith community as well as the wider community.

The Knox Green Team activities in 2024:

- Just A Green Minute: Information on the Climate Crisis sent out in the email news most weeks. Then published as a blog on the Knox website.
- Just A Green Worship Minute: Information presented to the congregation twice a month on how to live more sustainably.
- Climate Strike-the last Friday of every month
- January/February/March
 - Movie Nights “One Strange Rock”
- Over the summer, the Green Team mentored Anna Ramsey as Climate Motivator. She was hired through the United Church of Canada and worked on a project about climate.
- December
 - Workshop 50x30 presented by Quentin Robinson
Partnered with Sustainable Brandon. Had 30 people attend and it is now on the Knox YouTube channel.
- Green Team members are active participants in the Manitoba Sustainable Energy Association (ManSEA) and the Manitoba Environmental Industries Association (MEIA) as well as Manitoba Electric Vehicle Assoc. (MEVA) and Sustainable Brandon
- The Green Team has a representative at each Knox Council meeting
- Green Team has two representatives on the Environment and Climate Change Committee of Council for the City.

Submitted by Madelyn Robinson
on behalf of the Knox Green Team

Property Committee Report

Committee members include: Brian Manns, Rob Brown, Ed Turnbull,(with assistance from Jim Cobb and Duncan Waddell), Brian Kayes Chair.

The roof continues to leak intermittently on the west side of the sanctuary depending on the severity of rain and wind as well as during the freeze thaw cycle. This was attended to twice this year with little effect. An attempt to have a local eaves troughing company complete some repairs was made again this year with no response. Several eaves troughing joints were resealed.

A building contents inventory was completed however the final report is yet to be finished.

The 17th Street entrance step was repaired and new carpet installed. The gap between the ramp and the building was also sealed.

Measures to improve drainage at the front of the building were completed this summer and new grass was seeded.

The sidewalk at the 18th Street entrance was levelled to remove a trip hazard.

An emergency water shut off plan was developed.

All internal lighting, save two floodlights in the sanctuary were upgraded to LED under the Efficiency Manitoba grant.

Eighteen worn out or damaged windows were replaced with energy efficient units under the Faithful Footprints grant. A dozen other widows had the flashing repaired.

One of the two kitchen stoves was repaired early in the year but subsequently damaged again to the extent that a new stove was purchased.

A new commercial vacuum cleaner was purchased to replace the worn out unit.

The annual boiler and heating system inspection was completed and things were found in generally good repair.

Rob Brown conducted a service on behalf of the Property Committee.

General maintenance is ongoing, including repairs to weather stripping; adjusting doors; professionally replacing failing circuit breakers; cement work; plumbing repairs; pest control and so on.

Brian Kayes Chairperson, Knox Property Committee

Trustees Report

The Knox Trustees Committee consisted of 4 members in 2024—Wayne Clayton, Vivian Mitchell, Doug Crookshanks, and Craig Miller. Activities on the part of the Trustees focused on 2 areas:

- An inventory of contents of Knox was commenced in 2024, in conjunction with Property Committee members. We thank all of those who participated in what was a very significant undertaking.

- During our annual review of our insurance policy with our Broker, Mark Tremaine, it was determined that Knox would benefit from lower premium payments for essentially the same policy by changing from the company that we have been using to a different company—Red River Insurance Company. We were assured that Red River has a good history of honouring claims (something that we regard as essential) and it was recommended to Knox Council that we switch from our previous carrier to Red River. Under the policy the limit of the building coverage is placed at \$4,981,288, with contents limit being \$464,000. The annual premium is \$9887. The Accidental Death and Dismemberment as well as the Directors and Officers Liability Insurance policies continue to be in place separate from the policy with Red River.

During 2024, Vivian Mitchell submitted her resignation from the Trustees Committee. We thank her for her contributions during her time with us. Wayne Clayton has also indicated his intent to step down from Trustees as of the end of his current term and I thank Wayne for his many hours of work on behalf of Trustees and Knox in general. The Trustees Committee is therefore needing 2 replacement volunteers. Interested parties can either contact our Nominating Committee or current members to obtain more information.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Crookshanks
On behalf of Trustees

Planned Giving Committee Report

The Planned Giving Committee did not meet in 2024 given that there were no requests made for money from the fund nor were there any contributions to the fund that had to be discussed. However, there was one expenditure from the fund which occurred—one that was approved on a 2 year basis starting in 2023 and continuing into 2024. That expenditure was for the funding of the Youth Animator, which in our opinion has proven to be a very good use of the funds. Fund details during 2024 are as follows:

Balance at the beginning of 2024: \$115,676.66
Expenditures for the Youth Animator position: \$3861.44
Interest allocated to the Fund in 2024: \$3695.79
Year end balance: \$115,511.01

Respectfully submitted,
Irene Bromley
Brian Manns
Doug Crookshanks

Inbetweeners

We are a group of approximately 40 women who get together on a frequent basis for fellowship and "treats". I'm sure everyone has heard this before "since Covid we have not been back to normal yet" but we will try to rectify this in 2025. We usually meet the 4th Tuesday of the month in the evenings BUT we are going to meet in 2025 in the afternoons around 1:30 PM in the church lounge. Our day of the week may vary according to guest speakers etc. All members are notified by email as to when and where to gather for our meetings. We are inviting all women to join us, if you are new and want to be a part of our email please let me know so we can put you on the list.

A few highlights in 2024:

- Catered to the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper on Feb. 13th in the auditorium of the church.
- Had a potluck spring windup at the country home of Donna Pearen on June 17th.
- Donated \$100.00 to the Gardening Club at Knox.
- Clear Lake gathering on Sept. 14th. Lunch at Sharon Christmas's Cookshack and supper at Edy Clayton's Cookshack. 17 women and 5 men attended.
- A behind the scenes tour of the Westman Centennial Auditorium followed by a meeting and snacks in the church lounge. A \$100.00 donation was made to the auditorium from the InBetweeners.
- \$1000.00 was given to Knox for the new window project which had taken place during the summer and into the fall.
- Catered to the Transgender Day of Remembrance lunch after the service that was held on November 20th. We have always donated the cost of the luncheon on behalf of InBetweeners on this day.
- A Christmas gathering was held at Riverview Curling Club on December 12th. Feminine hygiene products, diapers, socks, mitts etc. were collected and left with the Women's Resource Center so they could distribute the products where needed. This was catered to by the canteen operator at Riverview, Jode. 24 ladies were in attendance.

Thank you to Iona Godfrey who has been our Treasurer for many years. She always has a balanced account. Nancy Strahl has been given the authority to sign cheques for us as well as Iona. We are in good hands.

Sharon Christmas, Coordinator.

Java Jabbers

Every Wednesday morning at 10:30 AM a group of women gather in the food court at the Shoppers Mall for coffee and conversation. We welcome all women to come join us any Wednesday, we are sitting in the food court by A&W. We'd love to have new faces and new stories shared with us so please join us if you can. Java Jabbers have been meeting for over 25 years now, it has been a great way to get to know each other personally.

Sharon Christmas

Indoor Garage Sale Report

We had a very successful garage sale this past spring! We had a great turnout of workers! Thanks to all!

Our fall sale went well! We sold a lot of products at very low prices and had a lot of happy people! Many thanks to all our donors, workers, and helpers! Thank you to Bernie for his generous donation.

Our spring sale is coming up, please keep the dates in mind! April 3rd to April 5th.

We will be open to the public from 9 Am until 1 PM on Saturday the 5th. Again, thank you for keeping us in mind for donations and assistance!

Cec Foster on behalf of Knox Indoor Garage Sale

Christmas Cheer

Again, this year the Knox Christmas Cheer initiative was a success. The need continues to grow, and YES once again, the Knox family stepped up. On Dec. 18th, Knox provided Christmas Hampers to 22 families, including gifts to over 70 children. During our phone calls and then during delivery, families tell us that these hampers mean a lot. They say Thank You to Knox!

We all know how groceries have continued to get more expensive. This meant the hampers were even more important for the families receiving them. This year the hamper expenses were up about 12% and your contributions were also up! The donations more than covered costs. After setting aside a reserve for next year's startup, the remainder was passed along to the general fund. A HUGE THANK YOU for your generosity!

Also special thanks to all who volunteered their time and effort to knit, to find and sort the presents, to wrap gifts, to organize the grocery order, to pack the hampers, or to deliver the Knox Christmas hampers! It's an amazing well-coordinated process from start to finish and as the saying goes - 'many hands - make light work'.

The weather cooperated, and despite the heavy snowfalls ahead of time, the deliveries went smoothly. Again, our special thanks to Charles for setting up the tables in the narthex ready for the packing team to put the hampers together. Thank you as well to Safeway/Sobeys. The delivery team from Safeway arrived as always just after 9:00 with the first load of groceries. 22 hampers mean a lot of groceries to organize and then deliver first thing in the morning.

Thank you to all who helped in any way to share Christmas joy with these 22 families, and their children. We are all One family.

The Knox Christmas Cheer Team for 2024

Nancy DeRoo
Audrey Waddell
Lynne Manns
Cheryl Doull
Laura Murray

Kirsten Ardon
Lynn Cupples
Gail Sheperd-Clark
Vonnie Coates
Betty Kelly

Prairie to Pine Region Report

The Prairie to Pine Region of the United Church of Canada held its annual meeting over Zoom on two evenings in October, 2024. Debby Dandy, Betty Kelly and Craig Miller are the representatives to Prairie to Pine Regional Council from Knox. Craig is a member of the Prairie to Pine (P2P) Executive and participates in their Zoom meeting one evening each month. At the Annual Meeting, Craig Miller was named as one of the 14 Commissioners from P2P to serve on the National United Church of Canada General Council 45. This is a 3 year appointment that includes a face-to-face gathering in Calgary, August 7 - 12, 2025, and then one - two Zoom meetings per year.

Congratulations Craig.

The most profound agenda item from the annual meeting for me (Debby) was the recognition of United Churches which had closed over the past year (six). In fact, many of the statistics on the number of churches and ministry personnel from the Pastoral Relations Minister's report are worth noting:*

- 6 Communities of Faith disbanded in the 2023-2024 Pastoral Year (Elm Creek; Ashern; Miniota; Winnipeg Korean United; Alexander and Lakeside: Ste Rose (September)
- P2P currently has 142 Communities of Faith in the non-indigenous stream of P2P, with nine of these designated as Ecumenical Shared Ministries, including St. Paul's UC and St. Luke's Anglican Church in Souris.

These 142 Communities of Faith are served by:

- 40 full time Ministry Personnel, among those 4 from other denominations serving Ecumenical Shared Ministries; 7 in Collaborative arrangements serving 14 Communities of Faith in FTE positions; and 1 in the Admission process;
- 24 Ministry Personnel were in part-time employment including 12 Retired Supply.
- 45 Pastoral Charges have been without paid accountable ministry leadership for a year or more and some have not yet /or are not intending to engage the profile /search processes. (perpetually vacant of paid accountable leadership).
- As of October, 16 Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWLs) and 4 retired designated lay ministers were available for pulpit supply throughout various areas within Prairie to Pine Regional Council:
- As of June 30, 2024, ten pastoral charges were still engaged in the Pastoral Relations Profile or Search processes.
- 56 volunteers (15 lay people & 41 ministry personnel) served as Pastoral Charge Supervisors in 2023-2024 Pastoral year.

Prairie to Pine also includes **eighteen Indigenous Ministries** served by 12 Indigenous Ministers and supported by Reynold Anderson, the Community Capacity Development Coordinator for Keewatin Circle.

If you want more detailed information about Prairie to Pine Region, the link below provides access to all the reports submitted to the Annual Meeting in October.

[Regional Council Meeting | Prairie to Pine Regional Council](#)

**These statistics are constantly changing.*

Respectfully submitted by: Debby Dandy, Betty Kelly & Craig Miller

More Users of Knox

- Brandon Nursery School
- Scouts, Cubs, Beavers
- Japan Karate
- Al Anon
- Smart Recovery
- Brandon Community Orchestra
- Brandon Festival of the Arts
- South West Branch, Manitoba Genealogical Society
Margaret E. Goodman Memorial Library
- Manitoba Choral Association
- Roads to Rhythm Music (Courtney Lindenberg)
- SERC (Sexuality Education Resource Centre)
- Kathy Sheppard Piano School (student recital)
- Sheridan Anderson Piano School (student recital)
- Konektis Choir
- Pickleball
- Manitoba Possible
- HAMI (Hispanic Association of MB)
- SPCG Brandon (Hindu Community)
- Brandon University
- Mini University
- Coldest Night of the Year (Samaritan House)
- Women In Harmony
- St Amant
- 4-H Manitoba
- Filipino Community
- Climate Action Team
- Stand Easy Soul (Karyn Rice)
- Healing Hearts
- Sustainable Brandon
- RANA Group Brandon
- Men's Resource Centre
- HSS (Hindu Swyansevak Sangh)
- Brockie Donovan
- Punjabi Cultural Association
- Prairie Blend Men's Choir
- Various one-time private events