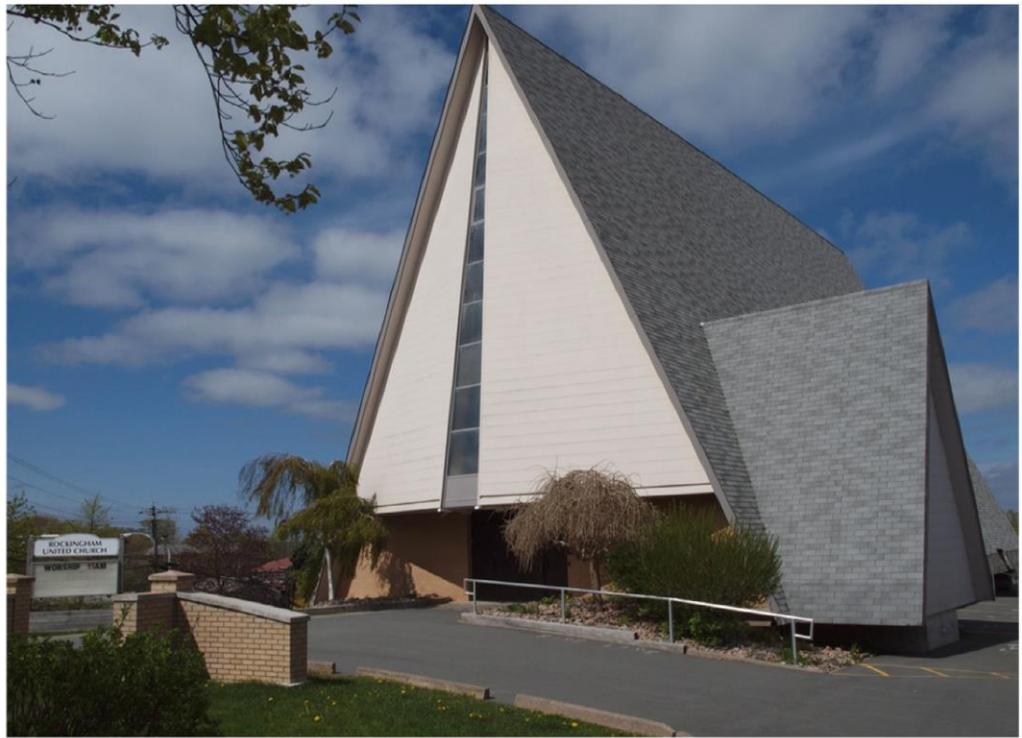




*Moved by the Winds of God  
Bearing Gifts of Faith, Respect  
and Peace  
Charting a Course for Life*

# Rockingham United Church Annual Report



**July 2018 – June 2019**

12 Flamingo Drive  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3M 1S5

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## MINISTER'S REPORT

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Dear RUC -

In my time with you, I've had the opportunity to witness great compassion and care for the well-being of the whole being threaded throughout every decision-making process in which your leadership teams have participated. Here, I have witnessed your community's strength and resilience amidst deep grief following your beloved Rev. Debbie's retirement. Here, I have encountered an eagle's eye within your Pastoral Care Committee ever ready to scan your horizon for signs of souls in need of a call or a visit. Here, I see welcomers from a Membership Committee on the lookout for visitors ready to offer the gift of a candle, a smile, a handshake, and conversation. Here, I see a creative Worship Committee planning for services in the hope of fostering deepening connections between you and the Divine. Here, I see excited children soaking up a sense of God in your Sunday School. Here, I frequently see people sitting around tables laden with food prepared by many hands. Here, I see members of the Building and Property Committee working overtime and diligently to find solutions for the sanctuary light palaver while Council simultaneously prays for attenders' blood pressure to remain normal amidst the inevitability of less light in the sanctuary. Here, there is a gifted tech and communication's team and three wonderful choirs. Here, you "feed the hungry" at Brunswick St. Mission and create webs of kinship with neighbours of different faiths. Here you "welcome the stranger" from refugee camps. Here, there is an aura of loving-kindness, a generosity of spirit, and an abundance of healing and life-giving laughter. Throughout my short time with you, I have witnessed many living stones working tirelessly to build up the heart and soul of this faith community. It has been an honour and a joy to serve as your ordained minister these past few months for you truly are a "holy priesthood of believers" who continue to carry forward the ministry of Christ in this place!

**Rev. Diane Tingley**

## COUNCIL REPORT

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I recently reread my report of last year; in it I summarized some of the highlights for the year which included: our inspiring worship services lead by Reverend Debbie Aitken, our time with David Atwood (now Reverend) during his internship, the coming arrival of Helen and Haifa from Syria, the increase in our church administrator's position to full time, the new doors nearing completion, the success of the Capital campaign and the planning for a new roof and the work of the nominating committee. Now here we are one year later.

In my mind, without question, the pivotal point of the past year was the decision by our loved Reverend Debbie to take a well deserved retirement. For 8 ½ years she was our "complete" minister leading us spiritually, teaching, inspiring, challenging, encouraging, listening, and offering wise counsel and comfort. I think none would disagree that we were truly blessed to have had Debbie with us. She was involved with every aspect of our church and if anyone deserves a retirement it is she. Thus, 250 of us came together and filled the church hall on an evening in January for a celebration dinner. What a wonderful party it was. So many people contributed to its success. The danger of mentioning one person is the risk of omitting to mention dozens of others who contributed in many different ways, all of us were necessary to make this party what it was. As more than one person said to me afterwards, "what an amazing congregation". It was

an evening of celebration, gratitude and optimism. It was a real witness to who we are at RUC and what we can do together. I think Debbie felt the love and appreciation.

We are blessed that Reverend Diane Tingley agreed to come out from retirement (again) to come to Rockingham and lead us from February until June. Diane is doing a wonderful job leading worship, and has been a calm, sensitive, steady influence among us. We are deeply grateful.

With Debbie's decision we began the process of finding a new minister. We are all grateful for those who served on the Joint Needs Assessment Committee. After their report was accepted by the congregation we formed a Joint Search Committee to look for a new minister who best fit our needs as outlined in the report. We are also thankful to the members of this committee. Only last week they reported their recommendation to us that Reverend Sarah Reaburn be called as our new Minister. With the unanimous agreement of the congregation the recommendation was approved and Reverend Reaburn will be starting with us in September. The sense of excitement and optimism is nearly palpable.

Also of note during the past year is the reorganization of the United Church of Canada. Gone are the Presbyteries and the Maritime Conference to be replaced by Regions, ours being region 15 (Nova Scotia and Bermuda). We are grateful to all who served over the years as our representatives on Halifax Presbytery. With the restructuring there will come changes in how pastoral charges will be administered. Rockingham will have three representatives to the Regional Council and we will hopefully know more after the Regional meeting in May.

Referring back to my introductory paragraph I am in awe of how much has been accomplished in the past year. The results of some activities are easy to see such as the completion of the doors, security and entrance system, the new sign, and the new roof, now nearing completion. We are thankful to the Building and Property Committee (and their consultants). These huge undertakings have required many hours of volunteer time to ensure their success. It is inspiring to see the work of all the different committees and groups within our church. So many of us work away diligently behind the scenes making Rockingham United the wonderful place it is.

All of us are blessed by the dedicated hard work of our staff each going way more than the extra mile to enrich our life at Rockingham United. Each is a pleasure to work with. We give a huge thank you to them.

Soon you will hear the report of the Nominating Committee as they bring forward this year's slate of wonderful people who have agreed to serve as Chairs for Committees and on your Church Council. We are each an integral part of a pretty special whole that is Rockingham United Church. I have often thought of us as "a can do" group of people, when a job needs to be done we step up; when faced with a challenge we meet it together; we are indeed a community of worship, fellowship, caring, and joy. It is wonderful each year to see people new and not so new, young and old who say "yes" when asked.

Four years ago it was I who received a surprise call and now, this is my final month as Chair of your Church Council; I will be replaced by Joanne Perry, who I know will be a terrific Chair. It has been a remarkable experience for me, one that I consider a true privilege. I am grateful to the Nominating Committee, Reverend Debbie and to you the congregation of R.U.C. for having the confidence in me to allow me to do this job. I have learned a lot but most of all I have truly enjoyed the opportunity of working with a tremendous group of people each with skills and knowledge different than mine, that's all of you, the people of Rockingham United. Thank you. I look forward with confidence and excitement to our continuing journey.

This Annual Report is a reflection of an active growing, vibrant community of faith. We are heading into a new chapter. I am certain it will be amazing.

**Respectfully submitted, Ron Tanton, Chair**

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

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The members of the Board of Trustees consisted of the following with the terms of office dates. Each term is five years.

Santosh Lall (second term expires June 2023) recording secretary

Gary Wilson (second term expires June 2023) chairperson

Donna Richards (second term expires June 2023)

Janet Mosher and (second term expires June 2023)

Rick Lowery (first term expires April 2021)

Doug Chaytor (first term expires October 2021)

Craig Sutherland (first term expires June 2024)

Santosh Lall ended his term as chairperson and Gary Wilson replaced him in that role. David Martin completed his two five year terms and tendered his resignation from the committee effective April 2019. Craig Sutherland has agreed to serve as a Trustee and his name will be brought to the congregation for approval in June 2019.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) held three meetings during the last 12 months. The BOT continued to follow the checklist outlined in the United Church Trustees Handbook of Accountabilities (2013), particularly checklist items that are relevant to Rockingham United Church (RUC).

The Trustee Handbook accountabilities were reviewed during the past year. A bequest was also discussed and approved as well as a review of the various church funds and investments. A recommendation for a portable defibrillator was also discussed from the point of view of liability and community need for the various groups using the church. The acknowledgement of bequests was also discussed and it was determined that recognition in the Book of Remembrance would be an appropriate place for the permanent record.

**Respectfully submitted, Gary Wilson**

## **COMMITTEES**

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### **BUILDING AND PROPERTY**

The Building & Property Committee was focussed on the roof replacement project for a majority of this year. The roof project is scheduled for completion by the end of May. As of the time of this report, the roof project was on budget with very little of the contingency required. The sheathing was in good shape underneath the deteriorating shingles. The project was enjoyed by

the surrounding community as everyone appreciated the heroics of the roof installers and their safe work practices. Special thanks to our roofing subcommittee: Ray Mills, Bill Sutherland and Michel Sarrouy.

The roofing project did cause damage to the electrical wiring which is located directly beneath the sheathing and was subsequently hit by the roofing nails. Discussions are currently underway to determine the preferred method to restore lighting to the sanctuary. The funding for the lighting will either be from the remaining contingency of the roof project or the Building Fund.

In the fall, the church janitorial services switched from an employee to a contract service. This arrangement seems to be going well and the church is considered cleaned and well maintained. In support of using a contract service, the swipe card installation was completed and operational last fall. A lock box was installed to assist with congregational access to the garbage bin.

A LED sign was installed to replace the aging sign at the entrance. We have received many compliments on the sign and it has the ability to inform our community of the numerous events that occur weekly at our church. Work continues on consideration for solar panels and other green and cost saving initiatives for the building.

The members of the B&P committee include: Garner Hill, John Sutherland, Mark Thornton, Sandy Munro, Doug Redden, Paul Gorman, Chris Bona, and Kate Brown

**Respectfully submitted, Colleen Rollings**

## **Technology Sub-Committee**

**The Committee's Mission:** The Technology Sub-Committee of Rockingham United Church will seek to adhere to our church's mission to worship God, share Christ's teachings, welcome all with love, reach out, work for social justice and to care for God's creation. (Paraphrased) This will be done by promoting the use of technology to assist the operations of The Church Office, provide technological tools for our minister, council and all volunteers who will assist them to communicate with members/adherents, the wider church community and to reach out to the community around us. The committee will support technology in the sanctuary to enhance the worship experience; will support and enhance our church web page and expand the use of social media.

During this past year, the committee has been busy with the following items:

- We continue to oversee the technology piece in regular Sunday worship, weddings, concerts and funerals. Bill Dodsworth maintains the schedule of the volunteers that look after audio and projection each Sunday.
- Provide support for the church office on technical matters
- Oversee the expansion of technology throughout the church

At the recommendation of Geoff Doane, one of our committee members, we purchased and installed a digital sound board. This sound board is proving to be a benefit to the overall production and quality of sound in the sanctuary. It has brought with it a learning curve for the operators but appears to be much easier to operate. The purchase was approved by Church Council and paid for from designated funds for this committee. With the approval of Council, the old analog sound board was donated to our church office administrator's Salvation Army Citadel.

We discovered one of the mics used for worship was faulty and needed replacement. That has been done.

Don Hailstone, one of our committee members, completed an upgrade to the security camera system and looked after the installation of the security systems for the entrance ways into the building. Don also installed a wireless system which allows those in the building access to a secured connection to the internet. The password for this Wi-Fi network can be acquired by contacting the church office.

We have been considering other technology avenues, but, with the announcement of the retirement of Rev. Debbie Aitken and the arrival of a new minister in September of this year, it was decided to wait and seek input on these ideas from our new minister.

I thank the committee members for their continued involvement in this committee:

Geoff Doane	-	Sound Specialist
Don Hailstone	-	Networking, wired & wireless
Shawn Silver	-	Server, Cloud Computing & Computer Maintenance

**Respectfully submitted, Rodger Middleton**

## **CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION**

**Members:** Claude Isaacs, Wendy Hawley (Sunday School Coordinator / Youth Group Leader), Stephanie Gorman, Rachel Sutherland, Sharon Ernst, Katie Cawthra, Wendy Bona (Chairperson)

### **Nursery and Sunday School Programs**

We continue to utilize the space at the back of the sanctuary for parents and care givers with small children. There are rocking chairs, toddler toys, coloring pages, and Play-Doh for children to use each Sunday. This space is much loved and used every week.

The nursery room is available downstairs for parents. There are baby and toddler toys available if needed and a rocking chair. There is also a TV that is hooked up to the service upstairs so parents and care giver can still watch the service. This is a great space that is not used a lot with the even better space that is now in the sanctuary. The Sunday School had a great year. Wendy Hawley is our new Sunday School coordinator. We have an average of 20 to 25 children each Sunday and some weeks 30. Some curriculum was purchased by Katie and Wendy to use throughout the year and it is a great help in planning classes to match the theme that is discussed upstairs. Each week the Bible story and related activities mirrored what the minister was discussing upstairs.

The Christmas pageant was written by Wendy Hawley this year and went over very well. It was titled the Grinch of Rockingham. The children loved participating in this event. The children also enjoyed having a Christmas party in the church hall along with the Rockingham Youth Group. It was a great event that included all the Rockingham children and youth.

During the Easter service this year the children stayed upstairs for a Family Service. 40 treat and activity bags were handed out during children's time. This helped keep everyone together for the special service.

We had many volunteers help with Sunday School this year: Judy, Monica, Claude, and Amber were a great help. Amber is an older youth of the church who loves working with the younger children and will help out when needed. It would be helpful if we added a few new volunteers to our list as it can be tricky to fill spots at times.

The Sunday School will be finishing up this year with a Youth Led Service on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. After much discussion between the children and youth this service will focus on important men and women of the Bible and their stories. The service will be followed by a family picnic at D.J. Butler park on Flamingo Dr.

The goal for next year is to continue to grow and participate in the youth service Sundays.

## **Youth Group**

The Rockingham youth group is finishing up its third year and it is growing each year. We now have 15 to 25 children attending each meeting. Wendy Hawley is our new Youth Group Coordinator. The Youth Group meets typically every second week (not on long weekends or over March Break).

The youth group themes are different for each meeting. They participated in a baking night, a movie night, a Christmas party, a paint night, going to the Discovery Center, pizza night, games night, a scavenger hunt, and bowling. They also participated in Oktoberfest, the Christmas fair, and pancake supper by selling cookies and items to raise money for the *Out of the Cold Shelter*. John McLearn was in to talk with the youth about different charities that the church is involved with and the youth did up care packages for people staying at the Out of the Cold Shelter. The youth also helped serve at Rev Debbie's farewell supper.

The youth are finishing their year with an end of the year party and movie night on March 24. There are also included in the end of year picnic on June 2 as well.

The goal for next year is to participate in more community outreach activities, with possibly partnering with another church youth group and holding an event together, along with continued growth.

## **Adult Education**

Rev. Debbie Aitken's hosted an event on 'The Face of Mental Health' in October. The speakers were Starr Cunningham and Nick Peters. Approximately 70 people attended. The event was very well received.

With Rev. Debbie's retirement in January no other events were held.

Our goal for the 2019/2020 year is to meet with the new minister and decide on the direction to take for Adult Education. We will then continue with various study series, workshops and events.

**Respectfully submitted, Wendy Bona**

## MEMBERSHIP RELATIONS

**Committee Members:** Vivian Coughlan; Sharon Ernst; Mary Lou Evans Isaacs, chair; Eleanor King; Noelle Murphy; Joanne Perry; Gaye Wishart; Gary Wilson, Rockingham Reflections editor; Rodger Middleton, Webmaster.

The Membership Relations Committee is tasked with helping to make Rockingham United a welcoming community. We obtain greeters for each Sunday and Mary Lou stands at the door with the minister to give a candle to visitors. We host Cup and Conversation each Sunday with the exception of the first Sunday of the month. That Sunday is known as “Munro Day” as Brenda, Joan and Sandy Munro host with the proceeds going to Brunswick Street Mission. We keep coffee, tea, sugar, napkins and apple juice stocked in the kitchen for the use of the congregation and the Sunday School. The Webmaster, Rodger Middleton, and Rockingham Reflections editor, Gary Wilson, keep the church family informed of activities and events at Rockingham United. Thank you to you both for your work and dedication again this year.

On September 30<sup>th</sup> we hosted our annual Welcome to Fall Kickoff Barbecue. We welcome the congregation to gather for lunch following the service. It is always well attended and people get caught up with one another after the summer. Our thanks go to those who look after the cooking for us each year. Thank you especially to those who attended the lunch and made our efforts worthwhile.

On December 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> we joined with the Outreach Committee to provide snacks for the students at Mount Saint Vincent University during their exams. Thank you to all who donated items for this special project and to those who came to pass out the treats to the very grateful students. It is a lot of fun to see these young people get excited about a homemade cookie!

On Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, the committee hosted a reception following the Carols by Candlelight concert by our choirs. Thank you to Sharon Ernst for seeing that things ran smoothly as Claude and I flew across the country to spend Christmas with our family. Thank you to everyone who offered a helping hand for setting up and cleaning up.

On Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup> I provided a birthday cake for the congregation to share in wishing Rev. Debbie Aitken well for her birthday January 10<sup>th</sup>. Following church the committee gathered at my home for lunch. We were pleased to have Rev. Debbie join us one last time.

Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup> was the celebration of Rev. Debbie’s ministry among us. It was a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful event as we packed the church hall with well-wishers. We looked after the meal portion of the evening and we thank those who helped us with the preparations and supplies and serving of the meal. As always I want to extend special thanks to those who helped with the cleaning up in both the hall and the kitchen. I want to single out Daniel Sutherland and Liam Johnston who stayed to help after they had done a stellar job of serving the tables. The future looks bright when you have young people who will do this. It was truly a community effort. It was a wonderful event for a great lady who gave us so much.

On Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> I provided a cake for the congregation to welcome Rev. Diane Tingley back among us. We have been blessed to have Rev. Diane with us offering her wisdom and sharing Sophie with all of us.

On February 10<sup>th</sup> I provided cupcakes for Anniversary Sunday for the congregation to share along with the soup lunch provided by the Stewardship Committee.

Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup> was a special Cup and Conversation to raise funds for Amber and Paige Thornton who are going to Oslo with the Guides this summer. Amber and Paige volunteer regularly at RUC. They have been around our church since their father, Mark, was our caretaker. They used to come to help him and now they come on their own to help us. Thank you to those who supported this event. Best wishes for a wonderful trip, Paige and Amber. We look forward to hearing about it.

Sunday, May 26<sup>th</sup> Cup and Conversation was hosted by the Kaseb family. It was their way to thank the Rockingham United Church community for their support over the past year. Thank you to Haifa, Helen and Nader for your generosity.

Our final activity for the year will be to invite the congregation to join us on Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> for lunch to say thank you to Rev. Diane Tingley. We have been in very good hands since Rev. Debbie retired. The Worship Committee will be helping us with the lunch and we hope there is a good turnout to wish Rev. Diane well for another attempt at retirement. Many thanks, Rev. Diane and Sophie! Later in the day we will be gathering at my home for our end of the year barbecue and social time.

In closing I would like to thank all the members of the committee as well as Jean Mulvihill, Gaye's mother, and Haifa and Helen Kaseb who have helped with the hosting of Cup and Conversation and with Rev. Debbie's dinner. It has been wonderful to have you with us.

The committee is in need of new members and we are always looking for people to greet at the door on Sundays. If you would like to join us on the committee or greet please contact me, Mary Lou Evans Isaacs. We do not have monthly meetings and we gather twice a year at my home when I provide a meal and we have a wonderful social time.

**Respectfully submitted, Mary Lou Evans Isaacs**

## **MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL**

**Members:** Gaye Wishart (Chair), Barb Lall, Nancy Lowery, Ken McLeod, JoAnne Tanton

- Katie Cawthra resigned from her position as Sunday School/Youth Group Coordinator to pursue a full-time position in Education.
- Wendy Hawley was hired on a limited term to June 2019. Following a successful performance review in May 2019 Rockingham United Church Council has confirmed Wendy as Sunday School/Youth Group Coordinator with an ongoing renewable contract.
- The contract for the Janitor was not renewed. Nicole was planning to leave this fall to fulfill her commitment to her position in the school system. She put her notice in effective November 2, 2018.
- Cleaning services were outsourced to Custom Clean Atlantic. Building and Property has organized volunteers for regular maintenance requirements and church activities. Sylvia Thorne, Office Administrator, has also taken on additional responsibility and oversight. Her hours have been increased to full-time to accommodate the increased workload. Her job description has been updated.

- The contract for Kathy Stone, Church Organist/Choir Director, was renewed for a two year period January 1, 2019-December 31, 2020. Her job description has been updated.
- The Minister, the Office Administrator, the Church Organist/Choir Director and Sunday School/Youth Group Coordinator received a 1.6% cost of living increase effective January 1, 2019.
- Reverend Debbie Aitken retired in January 2019. A wonderful celebratory dinner was well attended and we all wish her well in the next chapter of her journey.
- Diane Tingley accepted the Short-Term Supply Appointment and we are blessed to have her serving our community.
- We look forward to our new Minister, Rev. Sarah Reaburn, joining us this fall.
- The Chair attended an M&P workshop run by Rev. David Hewitt, Region 15 liaison.
- Performance reviews were discussed with the Church Organist/Choir Director, the Office Administrator and the Sunday School/Youth Group Coordinator.
- Staff are performing in an exemplary way and we are blessed to have them supporting our mission at Rockingham United Church.
- Ken McLeod is stepping down from this Committee in June. We thank him for his years of service.
- Nancy Lowery stayed on an additional year to orient the new Chair. We thank her for her incredible contributions in her time as Chair and for the guidance and support given to me as Chair.

**Respectfully submitted, Gaye Wishart**

## **OUTREACH AND REFUGEE COMMITTEE**

This has been a wonderful year in many ways. It flew by very quickly and was rewarding in so many ways, if for no other reason than meeting so many people and dealing with many organizations.

The new committee was struck this past September with the leadership of Rev. Aitken. As of this date, no chair has volunteered to take on this task. The committee was made of the following people: Terri Billard, Brenda Munro, Diana Prest, John McLearn, Donna Richards and Sandi Broadfield. Sandi had to resign due to family requirements this spring.

Refugee sponsorship and our ongoing participation with the Provincial Private Refugee Sponsorship Round Table took much of our effort. Our Outreach to Al Rasoul Islamic Centre and Shar Shalom have also been of great benefit and education. Our efforts with other charities have borne fruit. The Society of Atlantic Heroes received a land grant to help develop a campus in Halifax. Out of the Cold has provided advice and assistance with recent efforts to develop a shelter in the Fairview to Bedford area. Our ongoing efforts to help Brunswick Street Mission, the AIDS Coalition and Shelter NS were very successful this year and the program will continue in the fall and winter next year.

This was a makeover year in many respects. Efforts of the committee involved key initiatives including:

- a. Care of our sponsored Refugee family, ongoing, due to end the legal requirement on 19 May;
- b. The White Gift campaign in November and December to support Metro Turning Point and the AIDS Coalition of NS;
- c. Participation in the Refugee Private Sponsorship Roundtable of NS, ongoing;

- d. Outreach to the Al Rasoul Islamic Centre and Shar Shalom Synagogue, ongoing;
- e. Community improvement campaign with Al Rasoul and the Ecology Action Centre, ongoing;
- f. Truth and Reconciliation Efforts with the Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre, ongoing;
- g. Support to Brunswick Street Mission, ongoing;
- h. Set up of a shelter for the homeless in the area of Fairview to Bedford area; ongoing.

Refugee sponsorship was started nearly four years ago by Steve MacMurray and Sheila McGinn. Our family has been with us for nearly a year with our legal obligations ending on 19 May 2019. Members of the Congregation will continue with some aspects of assistance. Despite all the efforts by the family and many people, one year is insufficient time to become functional in a new language and culture. They will need our moral support as their family in Canada. Haifa and Helen have both been active in the Church.

The White Gift campaign was successful once again with both cash and gifts which were appreciated by both Shelter NS and the AIDS Coalition.

This year RUC chaired several of the meetings of the Roundtable. There is a move to create a private sponsorship network to assist new groups. RUC is continuing its efforts in this area although we are no longer sponsoring a family. We do have lessons to pass to new groups. The community improvement plan is ongoing; it unfortunately took a back seat to many of our other efforts. It is hoped to bring a project to fruition.

This year we made contact with the Mi'kmaq Friendship centre and we are planning for a program in the fall. More to follow on this effort.

RUC supported many breakfasts and activities in the past year. Brenda Munro was instrumental in this overall effort. The Men's Group and UCW also contributed their time money and effort to this mission.

Early this year, there were several meetings in regard to the provision of shelter in the Fairview to Bedford area. A small team from Rockingham United, Bedford United and Al Rasoul met to develop possible plans. RUC was able to assist because of our excellent relationship with Shelter NS. Linda Wilson stated that this project was ongoing and that it was recognized as a major need from the community. Health NS was also heavily involved to meet the needs of the community.

The coming year will see more on Truth and Reconciliation with the Aboriginal community, but details are yet to be confirmed. The White Gift campaign will start with a Poetry Slam event hosted by RUC. This effort not only helps our charities but also reaches out to youth in the Halifax area and to our neighbours. Bedford United Church has shown interest in this effort as well and will support the effort if needed. Support and education on refugee issues will continue including work that may include more support in various ways not only to the refugee families but also to the less fortunate. We will also increase efforts in areas such as mentoring, continued moral support and friendship with our family and help with the setup of a Private Refugee Sponsorship network with ISANS. Outreach will continue our efforts with other faith communities as well. There are tentative plans to reach out to the LBGT2Q community. There are several ideas that are under consideration which may increase our visibility in that community and in Halifax overall. It will be an interesting 2019-2020 year in Outreach.

**Respectfully submitted, Terri Billard, John McLearn and Dianna Prest**

## PASTORAL CARE

**Members:** Eleanor King (Coordinator), Heather Coady, Barb Lall, Charlie Murphy, Doreen Martin, Gerry Butler, Jan Mills, Hazel McLeod, Janet McMurtry, Jean Wentzell, Joan Munro, Lynda Pentz, Diane Ward, Rev Debbie Aitken and Rev Diane Tingley. Rev Aitken and Rev Tingley were extremely valuable advisors and supportive of our work.

The Pastoral Care Committee provides support to members of our church community, especially during times of illness and death. We make hospital, nursing home and home visits as needed and provide communion to shut-ins. Cards, notes and telephone calls are also an important part of the support we bring to our church family. We celebrate with those who are 90 and over with tea, flowers, and treats and those between 80 and 90 receive birthday cards. We appreciate any information that helps us update our birthday and anniversary greeting information. Joan Munro provides excellent leadership in planning and implementing the Friendly Socials which are always well attended. We assist the minister with worship at Parkland, Clayton Park once a month, September-June.

We meet monthly with the exception of July and August.

We trust that the information in the bulletin re the Prayer Circle (contact Janet McMurtry) will ensure all members of the church community are aware of this service. We hosted an educational session on Alzheimers and Committee members attended another educational session End of Life Conversation hosted by Fairview United Church.

**Respectfully submitted, Eleanor King**

## PRESBYTERY

**Members:** William Dodsworth

Full Court Meetings of Halifax Presbytery have been held on June 12, 2018 at Woodlawn United 54 Woodlawn Rd. Dartmouth, NS, September 11, 2018 at St. James United (Sambro) 3811 Old Sambro Rd., Sambro, NS, November 13, 2018 at First United, 7964 Hwy 7, Musquodoboit Harbour, NS and attended by Ministry Staff and Presbytery Reps.

The final full meeting of Halifax Presbytery was held on November 13, 2019 at First United Musquodoboit Harbour. Halifax Presbytery will be a part of region 15 starting January 1, 2019. Any business left over will be handled by region 15.

The main business of the meetings was church reorganization which will take place on January 1 2019. There will be 16 regions no presbyteries and no conferences. This was voted on at General Council 43 which met on August 2018. Maritime Conference was split into regions 14 and 15. Region 15 will be Nova Scotia and Bermuda. Region 14 will be New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The annual meeting of both regions will be held at Sackville NB in May.

Details of how the regions will work will be determined in the future. Currently regions 14 and 15 will have office space at Sackville NB.

**Respectfully submitted, William Dodsworth**

## STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship committee held its first meeting in September to map out its plan for the coming church year. We set as our goal to have an event planned for every month until the spring. The plan was to have events that would be entertaining, build a sense of community, and also raise funds for our church. Our very first event was held on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Once again we invited the Bedford Fiddlers for an evening of entertainment. This event was attended by an enthusiastic crowd and enjoyed by all.

In October once again we held an Oktoberfest party. This event was very well attended and a great time was had by all. The Chicken dance competition was won by our own Reverend Aitken and the Beer keg bowling was a big hit with the children. Many thanks go out to Chris Brothers for their great deal on Oktoberfest Sausages and Charlie Murphy for his untiring sourcing abilities. This has proven to be a great family event enjoyed by young and old alike.

November is Stewardship month at Rockingham United. With all the upgrading projects ongoing and planned for the church building we decided on the theme of legacy for our campaign. Members were reminded that we must keep our church building in good order, as we are holding the church as a trust for the next generation. In the interest of going green we e-mailed our appeal letter to all congregation members on our e-mail list. We also had hard copies available to those without e-mail. Good feedback was received for this initiative and we will probably continue to use this method for our letters.

Because we had such a good response to our *Tea and Terrariums* event in the spring we decided to hold a Christmas flower arranging workshop in December. This was a fun event that got everyone in the Christmas spirit. All participants were pleased with their own creations, and left over supplies were used to make arrangements to sell. December also saw us helping with the preparation and distribution of the Christmas letter.

January was a bittersweet month. The stewardship committee members participated in organizing the party for Reverend Aitken's retirement. We will sorely miss Reverend Debbie on our committee but we all wish her much happiness in her retirement.

To warm up the month of February we decided to hold a soup luncheon. We had this luncheon after Church and had an excellent turnout. There were a variety of soups to choose from and not a drop was left. Many thanks go out to our excellent cooks.

In March we celebrated St Patrick Day with a musical evening, entertainment provided by the Bedford Fiddlers. The hall was decorated for St Patricks' Day and green drinks and munchies were provided. Toe tapping and dancing ensued. March also saw our group help prepare and distribute the Easter letter. Special thanks go out to Ruth Gillis who spent a morning folding letters.

Special thanks also go out to Beth Wilson who single-handedly organized our "April Antics" event. This event showcased the many talents of our congregation. We had singers, story tellers and comedians. Participants and audience alike had a great evening.

Lynn Knapp has been our tireless supporter and administrator of Fund scrip. This is a wonderful fundraiser that continues to bring in a large amount of money for our church. Please remember to fill your order forms. Thank you, Lynn, for your great work.

Thanks also go out to David Carmichael working quietly behind the scene organizing the counters every Sunday.

There are many unofficial helpers who have been great supporters of the Stewardship committee and I would like to thank them all for their help. I would also like to thank all those people who supported our events. We are all working to build our Church community and keep the fires burning.

**Respectfully submitted, Sandra Taweel**

## **WORSHIP**

### **Membership of the Committee:**

Rev. Diane Tingley (ex-officio, short-term), Heather McLearn (Chair), David Clare, Sandra Allen, Anne Forbes, Shelley Snair, Joanne Perry, Ann Collinson and Kathy Stone (Music Director)

<b>Statistics for 2018-19:</b>	Weddings	1
	Baptisms	0
	Funerals	9
	Transfer of Membership	0

This has been a year of change for Rockingham. In June of 2018, Rev. Debbie Aitken announced her decision to retire at the end of January 2019, after 8 years of ministering to us. She has been sadly missed since her departure, but we have been greatly blessed to have Rev. Diane Tingley with us as our short-term supply minister for the months of February through June 2019. Words are scarcely adequate to express our gratitude for her wisdom, skill, and leadership during this time of transition. After many months of diligent work from our Joint Needs Assessment Committee and Joint Search Committee, we were delighted to call Rev. Sarah Raeburn to be our new minister beginning in September 2019.

The Worship Committee met monthly on the second Tuesday, for the months of September through June. Ongoing activities included planning Sunday Worship under the guidance of the minister, arranging and planning special services, recruiting volunteers for participation in worship services and for tasks related to the maintenance of the Sanctuary and Narthex, and arranging for supply ministerial and music staff.

We would like to thank the many contributions of our committee members:

- David Clare and Sandra Allen for taking care of the duties for our funerals.
- Sandra Allen for taking care of the banners in the sanctuary.
- David Clare for assisting with Announcements.
- Anne Forbes for looking after our Communion and gathering Communion servers and Scripture readers.
- Joanne Perry for performing so capably as our Committee secretary.
- David Clare, Joanne Perry, Shelley Snair, and Anne Forbes for participating in the Laity Worship services.

- Ann Collinson for taking over the care of the Christ Candle, and organizing hanging of banners in the Sanctuary, with assistance from Paige and Amber Thornton
- Kathy Stone for our wonderful music in Worship.

Thanks to members of the congregation who have taken on certain duties to maintain and enhance our Sanctuary and our Worship:

- Karen Middleton for gathering candle lighters for worship.
- The Audiovisual Team for their work during Worship.
- All those who have volunteered as ushers, communion servers, readers, and candle lighters who welcome and serve our congregation during Worship.
- Bev Andrews for agreeing to maintain the cloth covering the Communion Table.
- Hugh & Carolyn MacDonald, for their many years of care of the Christ Candle
- Sharon Ernst, Mary Lou Evans-Isaacs, Gary Wilson, John McLearn, Brenda Munro, Beth Wilson, and Ron Tanton who helped us with the Laity services during the past year.
- Sandra Taweel, for her help in planning for enhancements to the Narthex.
- The devoted group who regularly give their time and talents in decorating the sanctuary and assisting in worship services. All have given of their gifts, time and talents during this past year.
- The youth of the congregation, who have continued their participation in worship services once a month during the past year, as well as ushering on those Sundays.

Special thanks to Sylvia Thorne for her invaluable assistance and encouragement.

#### **Services and Accomplishments of the Worship Committee during 2018/19:**

- We organized and participated in 5 Laity-led Sunday Services.
- Shared services with Fairview United Church for the months of July and August, as well as Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday Services.
- Contributed to special services for Remembrance Day, Advent and Christmas Eve, Anniversary Sunday, Baden-Powell Sunday.
- The offering of special music from guest musicians Matthew Fraser, organist, and Shimon Walt, cellist, during the month of March.

#### **Summary**

We are truly blessed to have an abundance of talents within our congregation and are grateful to those who have shared their gifts so generously.

As a new and very inexperienced chair of Worship, I personally thank the members of the Worship Committee, the wonderful, wonderful staff of RUC, and the congregation for your patience and support. It's been quite a ride so far!

New opportunities await as we begin another chapter in the life of Rockingham United. We would like to extend an invitation to any member of the congregation who has an interest in worship planning to consider joining our committee.

**Respectfully submitted, Heather McLearn**

## GROUPS

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### CHOIRS

#### Youth Choir

WOW! What a great time we have had this year singing together on Saturday afternoons and usually, and at least, twice a month in worship services. Our mighty dozen participated with the Men and Senior Choirs in the Armistice Memories 1918-2018 in November, marking one hundred years since the end of World War I, as well as the Carols by Candlelight annual Christmas event in December. We offered our traditional Mother's Day Medley on May 12th, and we still look forward to offering a 'concert' of music in worship on Father's Day, June 16th. It has been exciting to see so many of our young singers take on soloist roles this year. My, how we have grown and matured in our voices and our confidence; not to mention, offering multiple gifts of instrumental music. We hope to continue to offer great and many new and exciting musical events in the coming church year.

#### Members:

Emily Brown, Rebecca Brown, Emily Gorman, Hannah Gorman, Beth Hailstone, Alanah Hawley, Liam Johnston, Daniel Sutherland, Maya Sutherland, Patrick Sutherland, Amber Thornton and Paige Thornton

**Proudly submitted, Kathy Stone, Youth Choir Director**

#### Senior Choir

**Members:** Kathy Stone (Director), Cathy Gillis (President), Samantha Bixby, Wendy Burns, Gerry Butler, Ann Collinson, Doreen Crick, Reg Crick, Myrna Davies, Sharon Ernst, Mary Lou Evans-Isaacs, Mary Fife Jost, Brian Martin, Heather McLearn, Janet McMurtry, Karen Middleton, Joan Munro, Lynda Pentz, Carole Phillips, Donna Schnare, Dale Ward, Beth Wilson, Gary Wilson

**Overview:** The Rockingham United Church Senior Choir is currently a 22 member four part choir (SATB) directed by the church organist, Kathy Stone. The Senior Choir is a ministry of music that strives to enrich worship services with praise and song. The Senior Choir offers a wide variety of sacred music ranging from early Baroque to contemporary. The Senior Choir contributes each week from September to June to the Sunday morning services. Typically, the choir sings an anthem and choral benediction. The choir is often invited to participate in special events at other churches and/or venues.

The Senior Choir practices on Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. The choir also gathers on Sunday Mornings at 9:30 a.m. for a 30 minute rehearsal prior to the morning service.

#### Review of Past Year:

Choir practice began the first Thursday after Labour Day.

In the evening of November 11<sup>th</sup>, the Senior Choir, along with the other choirs of the church, presented, ARMISTICE MEMORIES. Sing-a-longs were included so all persons attending to could join us in song.

Rockingham United's annual "Carols by Candlelight Service" was held on December 16<sup>th</sup>. The Senior Choir was joined by the Youth Choir and Men's Choir for this annual event.

On January 19<sup>th</sup>, the choir participated in celebrating Rev. Debbie's retirement. We sang some of Rev. Debbie's favorites and enjoyed a great evening with many of Rev. Debbie's family and friends. Many tears were shed as we wished her well as she began a new road in life.

Along with our participation in all Easter worship, the choir offered selections during the "Special Easter Music" that was included in the service on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

We always welcome former choir member Joanna Rowe, now living in Ontario, to participate in services when she visits. We look forward to seeing her and enjoy listening to the flute.

The choir would also like to thank Simon Saulnier for his regular attendance at Thursday evening choir practice. He sings tenor and we have been able to occasionally convince him to participate in our special services.

The choir has allowed organist Kathy to have a few Sundays off and we were pleased to have 2 guest organists this year, Matthew Fraser and Zita Poirier. We thank them for "taking us on".

The Senior Choir is always seeking new members. A percentage of our group reads musical notation but non-readers are always welcome. Come and join us on a Thursday evening or contact Kathy Stone at 435-4812.

**Respectfully submitted, Cathy Gillis**

### **Men's Choir**

**Members:** Joan Munro (Director), Kathy Stone (Accompanist), Gerry Butler, David Carmichael, Reg Crick, Geoff Doane, Claude Isaacs, Brian Martin, Charlie Murphy, Rodger Middleton, Sandy Munro, Ken McLeod, Alan Schnare, Ron Tanton, Hiram Tiller, Dale Ward, Gary Wilson

Each Sunday at 8:45 am from October until April, men of the congregation meet to sing and learn various gospel and other selections under the capable leadership of our director Joan Munro and accompanist Kathy Stone. The choir continues to offer music at least once a month during worship from October until the end of April. December saw us join with the Senior and Youth choirs for the annual Carol's by Candlelight concert. We also participated in the Good Friday Service. Our season this year ended with one concert '*Songs from the Mountaintop*' held jointly with the Bravo Boys Choir from Dartmouth.

We always welcome any men of the congregation, who enjoy singing to join us. Please keep us in mind as we anticipate our first practice in October on the Sunday following Thanksgiving.

**Respectfully submitted, Gary Wilson**

### **UNITED CHURCH WOMEN (Women's Ministry Network)**

President-Sharon Ernst

Vice President-Vacant

Secretary-Heather McLearn

Past President- Joanne Perry

Stewardship-Diane Ward

Church in Society-Eve Tupper

Treasurer-Mary Lou Evans Isaacs

Chair of Finance-Heather McLearn

Kitchen-Joan Aitken, Eve Tupper

Unit Leaders:

Clayton Park - Eve Tupper

Jean Hogan- Audrey Wade

Laura Wright- Mary Lou Evans Isaacs

The members of our three units enjoy work alongside one another in our support of Rockingham United Church and our Mission and Service projects. With the change of the United Church of Canada structure to Regions there is still uncertainty about how the structure will work and if there will be regional representation for the UCW.

In 2018 we held meetings in September and October to plan for our Annual Christmas Sale, and a wrap-up meeting in November following the sale. The Christmas Craft sale held on Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup> was well received. There were a variety of home-made baked goods, jams, pickles and handcrafts, along with items made by the RUC Men's Group, a jewelry table and a variety of used books. People enjoyed the Christmas decorations, the setup of the Christmas Café and the informal, comfy seating areas which made it relaxing and inviting.

Our orders for baked goods initiative was a success again this year. Orders could be placed for small or large trays/boxes of a variety of squares or small trays/boxes of shortbread cookies, with pickup available on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup>. This is very convenient for people especially as they host get-togethers with family and friends in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Our last event for 2018 was the Christmas social in December, where our three units participated in a themed worship programme led by the Clayton Park Unit. The evening wrapped up with a social time and refreshments served by the Laura Wright unit. Donations of items for homeless men were also collected at the social.

In January 2019 we held our Annual General Meeting, where we presented our proposed budget to the membership. Members gathered items for gift baskets with the theme "Pampered Snowy Evenings". The gift baskets were made up and presented to Rev Debbie Aitken after her last service on Sunday January 27<sup>th</sup>.

In February, we held a successful bake sale in conjunction with the Men's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. The proceeds from the bake sale went to RUC operating fund. As always, we greatly appreciated the generosity and support of those who donated the baked goods and other items for the sale, and also those who purchased them.

In March we hosted the World Day of Prayer service with participation from the ladies from Saint Benedict's and Birch Cove Baptist. The service was prepared by the women of Slovenia, who invited the world to "Come to the table—everything is ready" and asked "Who is not at the table?". Following the service, we enjoyed a time of fellowship and refreshments.

Following the April 14<sup>th</sup> service, the Laura Wright Unit active and home members hosted a buffet lunch fundraiser, which included a variety of casseroles, salads and sweets, as well as juice and hot beverages. This was attended by many people in our congregation who all enjoyed the warm, social atmosphere as well as the delicious food. Our Easter food drive initiative in conjunction with the youth was very successful again this year, with many needed items being donated and delivered to the Food Bank prior to the Easter holidays.

In May, we held changed our format of our annual UCW gathering. We invited the community to join us to hear our guest speaker, Cherry Laxton, Chief Operating Officer from Souls Harbour Rescue Mission. Cherry shared information about the mission, what they are doing and ways that we can help. Our last event before the summer holidays will be each unit along with their home members dining out together at a local restaurant, usually before the end of June.

**Respectfully submitted, Sharon Ernst**

**UCW Financial Reports January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018**

ROCKINGHAM UNITED CHURCH WOMEN TREASURY 2018

Balance forward		9927.68
<b>INCOME</b>		
Interest	200.05	
AGM Offering	66.00	
UNITS	1816.75	
KITCHEN USE	200.00	
INVESTMENTS	3010.19	
CHRISTMAS SALE	5322.00	
BAKE SALE	<u>685.00</u>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<u>11299.99</u>
		<u>21227.67</u>
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>		
ROCKINGHAM UNITED CHURCH	5185.00	
PRESBYTERIAL DUES	92.00	
BANK FEES	5.50	
PLANTER	61.71	
SINKS AND TAP	498.66	
MISSION AND SERVICE	1500.00	
CAMP KIDSTON	325.00	
ATLANTIC MINISTRY OF THE DEAF	100.00	
DAL CAMPUS MINISTRY	100.00	
BRUNSWICK STREET	250.00	
ST.PAUL'S	175.00	
PELHAM ELECTRIC	2343.50	
PLUMBER	373.19	
KENT (countertop)	1940.00	
SALE EXPENSES	79.19*	
PAINT	119.07	
STAFF GIFTS	200.00	
LEAST COIN	<u>17.43</u>	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<u>13365.25</u>
<b>BANK BALANCE</b>		<u>7862.42</u>
*Includes \$5 bank fee		

**UCW PETTY CASH 2018**

Balance Forward	51.38	
Rec'd from Heather (Baking Tray)	13.50	
Kitchen Cleaners	18.90	
Sale of Plates to Shirley Nicholson	8.00	
Total	72.88	
Mop and Refill	25.97	
Total	<u>44.87</u>	
Balance		<u>\$28.01</u>

**MEN'S GROUP**

The Men of RUC is an opportunity for all men of the congregation to gather, thru service to our church, Outreach to those in need and in a social setting, and focuses on the spirit of friendship of men involved in our church.

Each year, we formulate plans for activities at the outset in early September. The following are the activities that occurred during the past year:

**September: RUC/BUC Golf Challenge:** On October 12<sup>th</sup> men from Bedford United Church and Rockingham United were to hold their annual Golf Challenge. The weather failed to cooperate, and the tournament was cancelled as a result. The event was being hosted by the men of Bedford United. As fall was upon us, no other dates were available for this event. Bedford will attempt to host this event again this year.

**January:** Our Mooseheads Hockey Game outing got moved to a Sunday afternoon and was preceded by lunch at Maxwell's Plum. On this occasion we had about 17 guys in total from Rockingham and Bedford United Men's Groups. Changing the time of day and the food venue may have been a contributing factor to the success of this event this year.

**Pool Outing:** In February, our men joined with Bedford United for an evening of Pool.

**Outreach Projects:**

**Monthly Lunch Meetings:** Our monthly lunch meetings continued this year. This is the sixth year we have held these Outreach Luncheons. The cost of admission is new socks and/or underwear for The **Brunswick Street Mission** which end up being used at the Men's Turning Point Shelter. We also collected used clothing which was taken to **Brunswick Street Mission** or **The Out of the Cold Shelter** at St. Matthew's. We thank Len Sweett for his continued willingness to look after getting these items from the lunch to the mission. For our April meeting we invited the men of Bedford United and men from the Alrasoul Islamic Society. We had 27 people attend this event which was well received by all. A special thank you to the staff of Freeman's on Dutch Village for accommodating our expanded group that month.

**Brunswick Street Mission Breakfasts:** Our men continued to agree to support Brunswick Street Mission taking responsibility for three breakfasts throughout the year. The men of RUC agreed, and we did the breakfasts on November 11<sup>th</sup>, December 27<sup>th</sup> and Good Friday. This has turned out to be an enjoyable and warming event for all who take part.

**Fund Raising Projects:**

**Candy Cane Carnival:** We again had a Made By Men Table for the Candy Cane Carnival and we also provided men to police the parking lot. Proceeds from the Made By Men Table are included in the overall receipts the UCW gather from this event.

**Memorial Christmas Tree:** Charlie Murphy championed this event again this year. We had a tree donated by Harrington's Tree lot at the bottom of Kearney Lake Road again. A brief dedication occurred just prior to the Candlelight Concert in December.

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper:** On Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> the annual Pancake Supper was held. This is a fun event to work at and a great meal is provided. Thank you to Champions, Ken McLeod and Claude Isaacs for their work on this event.

**Mother's Day Lobster Lunch:** Mother's Day Lobster Lunch was held on May 12<sup>th</sup> this year and realized the sale of 96 Lobster Dinners, up from 72 last year. The meal consisted of an Argyle Market Lobster, Potato Salad, Coleslaw, Roll & Cookies. Thank you to all who participated in this event, including the champion, Alan Schnare who drove to Argyle to pick up the lobsters from a relative.

**Projects around the Church:**

**John Turner Memorial Garden & Either Side of Sanctuary Entrance:** We continue to do some maintenance of these areas at the front of our church. This work included trimming of trees either side of the entrance to the sanctuary. It's our hope to remove a 'weed' tree to the south of the entrance, allowing the weeping tree to grow better.

**Provide support for Property & Maintenance Committee:** The Property & Maintenance Committee had asked for some sort of association between their committee and the men of RUC. We continue to provide that support on an as need basis.

**Finances:**

**Men's Group Financial Report**  
**May 15, 2018 – May 15, 2019**

<b>Opening Balance July 1, 2018</b>		<b>\$2,461.90</b>
<b>Receipts:</b>		
Memorial Tree	\$1,384.00	
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	\$1,178.00	
Lobster takeout 2019	<u>\$1,000.00</u>	\$6,023.90
<b>Disbursements:</b>		
Brunswick Street Breakfasts	\$369.37	
Purchase Oscar cans for 2019 campaign	\$30.38	
Transfer to Church Operating Fund	<u>\$2,850.75</u>	<u>\$3,250.50</u>
<b>Closing Balance May 15, 2019</b>		<b><u>\$2,773.40</u></b>

**Join our Email List:** Stay in tune with the happenings of this group, the Men of Rockingham United. Simply send an email to [rmiddleton@eastlink.ca](mailto:rmiddleton@eastlink.ca) requesting your name to be added and we'll keep you up to date on the group's happenings.

**Respectfully submitted, Rodger Middleton for The Men of Rockingham United**

## WEBSITE – SOCIAL MEDIA

**RUC's Website:** Rockingham United has had a website for about 16 years. Work is constantly done on the site to make it as informative as possible to both members and adherents of our church as well as folks considering coming to our church. The website is located at [www.rockinghamunited.org](http://www.rockinghamunited.org)

**Website Contents:** Along the left side of the landing page are a number of links to other pages on the site. The **Announcements** and **Order of Service** pages are updated each week by Friday with the bulletin for the coming Sunday. The Announcements page is the most viewed of all the pages on the site. The rest of the buttons on the left provide all sorts of information about various groups in our church, a brief look at our church history, and a look at our physical property. There is a Links Button that provides connection to the wider church community, including Regional Staff Contact information for Fundy, St Lawrence and Dawning Waters Regional Council and The United Church of Canada. In addition links are there to Camp Kidston Memorial Camp, The Tatamagouche Training Centre, The Atlantic School of Theology and The Canadian and American Bible Societies. There is a button that is a link to Our Daily Bread, an on line Daily Devotional. Just below the photo and to the right on the landing page is another group of buttons. There one can quickly get to our Reflections Newsletter, the Calendar of Events and links to The United Church of Canada's webpage and The United Church You Tube site. Events that are brought to the attention of the Webmaster are highlighted here for easy quick reference. A scrolling bar near the top of the landing page highlights events in a very simple format, to get the attention of folks arriving on the website. Once they see this reference, it is hoped they will seek out more info on those events elsewhere in the website. An Audio Button where special event services/concerts are featured for folks to listen to. This link can be found on the right side of the landing page, below the featured image for the week. The 'Our Photo Gallery' button on the left will take you to a page where there are several slideshows of photos outlining the life and work of our church.

**Website Traffic:** Over the past five years the average annual traffic has remained steady. We use Statscounter and Google Tag Manager to track stats on use of the website. Most visits happen on Friday or Saturday of each week and are higher in the Fall to Spring months than in the Summer.

*Returning Visits* - Based purely on a cookie, if this person is returning to your website for another visit an hour or more later

*First Time Visits* - Based purely on a cookie, if this person has no cookie then this is considered their first time at your website.

*Unique Visits* - Based purely on a cookie, this is the total of the returning visits and first time visits - a total count of visits.

*Page Views* - The number of times a page has been visited.

Whether or not cookies were placed on the visitor's system when they were on our site depends on whether or not they have cookies enabled on their computer. Therefore, the First Time Visits and Unique Visits can be higher than Returning Visits.

**Social Media:** Over the past year Rockingham United has opened accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These social media sites are maintained by the church office and Dianna Prest and me. Dianna looks after Facebook on a weekly basis and events that are occurring at Rockingham United get posted to these programs as well.

Our website and our social media posts serve our congregation well, getting our message out to the church and wider community.

**Respectfully submitted, Rodger Middleton**

## **CO-OP PLAYGROUP**

On most Fridays from September to June, from 10:00 a.m. to noon a group of preschoolers and their caregivers gather for play time at RUC. During the first hour they enjoy playing with toys and ride on cars. We usually have a table set with craft supplies, Play-Doh and colouring sheets, stickers, crayons and markers. At around 11:00 a.m. we gather in the Fireside Room for story time and singing. Then we gather around tables for lunch which is brought by the caregivers for the children. At the end of the morning we play with balls and a parachute. Please join us for a fun and energetic time together. Feel free to call me or send me an email for further information.

**Respectfully submitted, Karen Middleton, Playgroup Co-Ordinator**

## **THE YARD SALE**

Every second year for the past several years Rockingham United Church has had a Yard Sale. Previously a Men's Group event this has now become an event of the Congregation. This year's sale took place in May. Many members and friends of Rockingham United scoured their homes and set aside articles to donate for sale. Each evening of the Yard Sale week volunteers gathered in the church hall to price, and sort donations. Participation by dozens of people of all ages made this a real community event. The hall was filled with "merchandise" and on Saturday morning we opened our doors to the community once again. That the event was a huge success can be demonstrated in many ways, including the fact that we made over \$5,000 for our church; however, the most telling measure of success is the tremendous participation and the fun that was had. Left over merchandise was taken and donated to Mission Mart run by Soul's Harbour. The sale is a lot of work but with many hands it is a great fund raiser and community event.

**Respectfully submitted, Dianna Prest and Ron Tanton, this year's Co-Chairs**

## **STATISTICS**

### **Year Ending December 31, 2018**

Households under Pastoral Care – 346  
Households Financially Supporting – 230  
Number of Baptisms – 0  
Number of Funerals – 9  
Number of Marriages – 1  
Average weekly attendance – 130

~~~~~END~~~~~