



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

Rockingham United Church Annual Report



July 2016 – June 2107

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Halifax, Nova Scotia
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MINISTER'S REPORT

When I sat down with Sylvia to create a puzzle picture that would reflect the ministry pieces that compose the congregation of Rockingham United Church, I had no idea how many pieces there would be in this puzzle. We know we may have missed some pieces so we have left some of them untitled for you to add the names of ministries we have not named.

I am humbled and awed by the story told in all these ministry pieces. They are the story of the many and diverse commitments that are part of this congregation's life. They tell the story of ministries of education and outreach. They tell the stories of ministries of compassion and hospitality. They tell the stories of ministries rooted in spiritual nurture and in the search for justice. They are the stories of adults and children seeking to live each day in the way of Jesus of Nazareth. They are your stories – your ministries within and beyond the walls of Rockingham United Church. I invite you to sit with the puzzle. What pieces do you identify with as part of your ministry? What pieces were you surprised by? What pieces might you like to be part of, sharing your gifts and energy? What pieces of ministry would you like to see added to our Rockingham story? Please let us know.

Ours is an ever-changing story for ours is an ever-changing and evolving community of faith. Within this last year as we have grieved the deaths of beloved and long-time members, we have celebrated and honored the ministry gifts they have shared within the life of this congregation. Within the last year, we have welcomed new faces, bringing with them their stories and their gifts, and we have celebrated the blessing of their presence, bringing new life among us. Within the last year, we have sought to be open for the Guidance of the Spirit calling us to enter into new ventures of faith, and with the support of one and all, we have continued our journey.

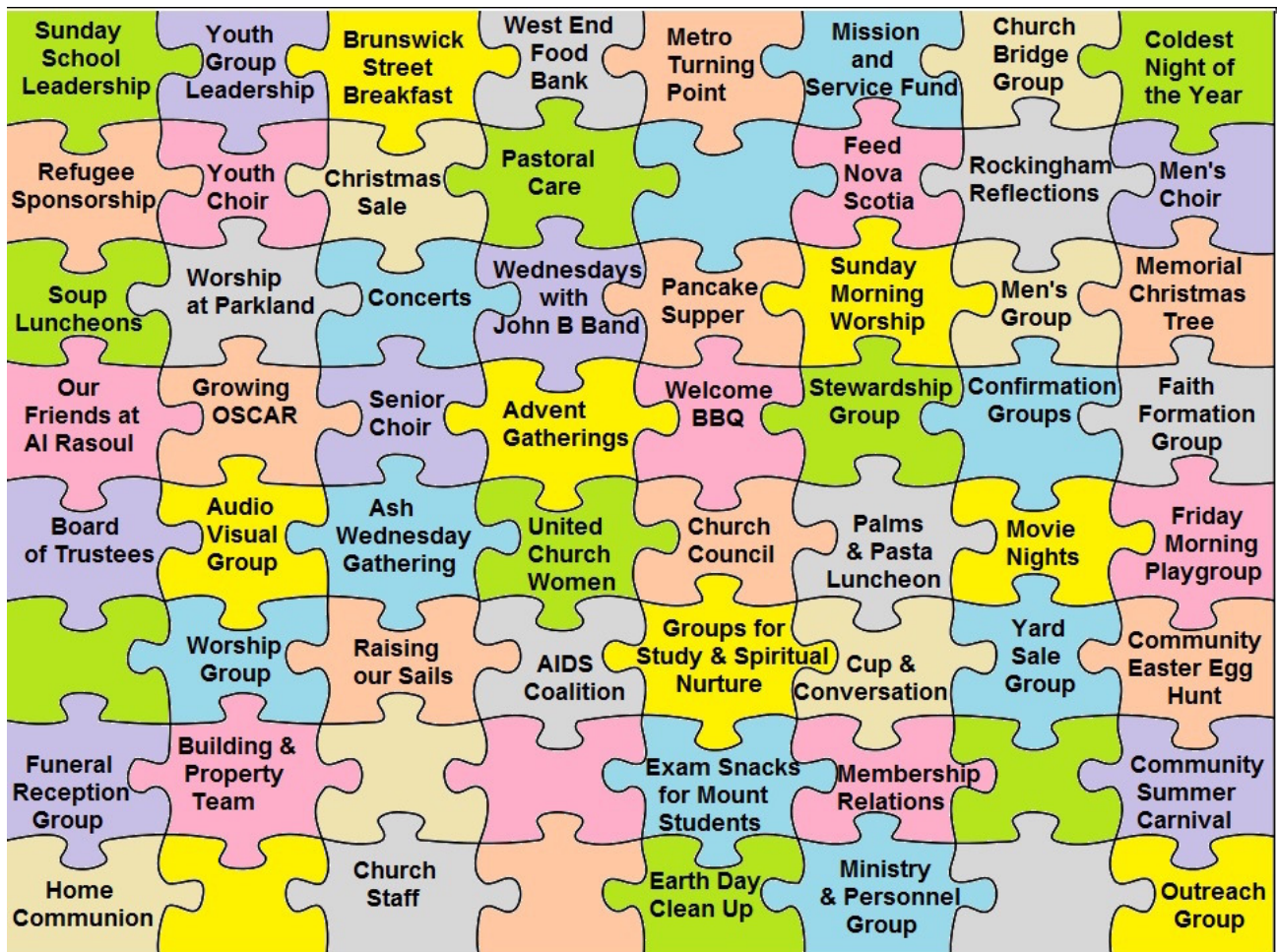
Under the church governance that has been part of our church life these past seven years, the elders who make up our Church Council hold the larger vision of ministry for Rockingham United Church. They are an amazing group of people whose leadership and commitment are a living vibrant presence, always asking the questions that help us to discern our way forward with faithfulness and courage. I give thanks always that I am able to share ministry with such a spirit-filled group of people.

I also celebrate the opportunity to be in ministry alongside the rest of the staff of Rockingham: Kathy Stone, our music director; Sylvia Thorne, our office administrator; Katie Cawthra, our Sunday School Coordinator; and Nichol Smith, our custodian.

It is in the inter-connectedness of all the pieces that the puzzle is complete and the whole story is made known. Mine is a prayer of deep gratitude for the blessing of the ministry pieces each and all of you offer in the Spirit and way of Jesus.

Rev. Debbie Aitken

The Many Ministries of Rockingham United Church



COUNCIL REPORT

The annual report is a time for us to look back and a time to look forward. As you read this document you will be reminded of the many activities of the past year; the wonderful fellowship of worship; the many events within our congregation and the activities through which we reach out to the community at large. These speak to who we are as a community. They speak to our values as Rockingham United Church and how we live them. I thought, therefore, that it might be helpful for me to summarize our Mission and Values as stated in our Long Range Plan of 2014. I would suggest that as you read the reports of the various groups and committees that make up our congregation that you consider how we are fulfilling our Mission and living our Values.

The introductory words of our "Mission, Vision and Values" statement are "Moved by the winds of God; Bearing gifts of faith, respect and peace; Charting a course for life". Faithful, respectful, peaceful, listening for the direction of God!

- Our Mission (paraphrased) is to worship God, share Christ's teachings, accept all with love, reach out, work for social justice and to care for God's creation.

Our values, written to shape the way in which we live are(paraphrased):

- Following the way of Christ, we seek to live his teachings, trying to discern God's will, maturing in our faith and leading by example
- Respecting the commitment of other faiths, we value the opportunity to know, understand each other and work together to strengthen our community
- With nurturing, listening, care and respect we value supporting each other in God's work
- We share in the growth of our children, we value providing them with a moral compass, and engaging them in worship
- We value receiving "the richness of the gifts we have been given" with gratitude and sharing them with love
- We understand we are entrusted with the safekeeping of the world we inhabit
- We love our neighbours a ourselves and welcome all

So, that is what we have said is our Mission and what we value. What do you think? As you read the Annual Report do you agree with me that we have "talked the talk" and together as a community of faith we are "walking the walk". Thank you to all of you for who you are and what you do. I hope you share in the joy of looking at where we have been and the excitement at where we can go.

At this time it is appropriate for me to recognize two individuals who have completed their time on Council and have earned the privilege of stepping back for a time, making room for others to step forward, and being justly satisfied at a job very well done.

Lynn Knapp is stepping down from Council after serving two terms as Chair of our Stewardship Committee. We all have benefited from the tremendous commitment, enthusiasm, creativity, sincerity and hard work the Stewardship committee has done under Lynn's leadership. She has brought all of these qualities to the Council, she doesn't understand the meaning of the words "cannot do" and whenever a volunteer was needed she would always step up. I believe she is staying on as a member of the Stewardship committee for which we can all, especially the new chair of Stewardship be grateful. Thank you Lynn.

Mary Lou Evans Issacs completes her term as the UCW (or in "Council speak" "Women's Ministry Network") representative. Any of us who have ever shared a meal at RUC, as we sit enjoying great food and conversation, are aware that on most occasions Mary Lou has been busy working behind the scenes. At Council she has been a wonderful representative of the UCW. She has represented the great work done by the group and expressed opinions on issues from the UCW's perspective while very much being a part of the team that Council must be. I am not sure how many times she has served on Council over the years but I know she has seen many Council chairs come and go. As you know two years ago I was the "new boy" at the table. I have really appreciated the welcoming, supportive attitude of Mary Lou and others who have been around the block before. It is based on this that we are able to move forward. We all thank you, Mary Lou and look forward to all you will continue to do.

So, as you read this report I invite you to reflect on where we have been, what we have done and where you see us going as a community as we try to live our values and fulfill our mission. Thank you and may God's Blessing be on all of us.

Respectfully submitted by Ron Tanton Chair

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees (BOT) held three meetings. The BOT continued to follow the checklist outlined in the United Church Trustees Handbook of Accountabilities (2013) particularly the checklist items that are relevant to Rockingham United Church (RUC). All the information related to bequests, investments, taxes, insurance, risk assessment, repairs and congregational property and related matters was reviewed in the May 2017 meeting. Rick Lowery and Doug Chaytor took the lead to review the current church insurance coverage by Hub Insurance. It appears that the public liability coverage for the church is adequate but the maximum limit of \$100,000 for oil-spill coverage by Hub Insurance may not be adequate. A recommendation has been made to inspect the oil tank and take appropriate action to bring it to the required standard. Additional umbrella liability may not be necessary at this time at an additional cost. The insurance cost for 2017 is \$6007.00. Equipment breakdown insurance and the questionnaire required by the insurance company were forwarded to the Building Committee, which took appropriate action on these matters. The property assessment for 2017 is \$1,008,500, lower than the 2016 assessment of \$1,144,000.

All pertinent information related to bequests, investments, taxes, maintenance, repairs and congregational property were acquired and reviewed. David Martin, a BOT member is the co-chair (with Gaye Wishart) for the capital campaign “Raising Our Sails” which was launched in 2016 with a fundraising goal of \$150,000. To date, the congregation commitment is \$130,000. A BOT representative serves on the Finance Sub-Committee which manages the investment portfolio of RUC and ensures that various funds are appropriately invested. BOT continues to work with the council on financial and other church matters.

Respectfully submitted, Santosh Lall

COMMITTEES

BUILDING AND PROPERTY

Committee members: Mark Thornton, John Sutherland, Doug Redden, Sandy Munro, Garner Hill, Mark Forsythe and Colleen Rollings (Chairperson)

The focus of the committee has been building on last year’s efforts to focus on the current list of repair items to be tackled around the church building and property. The current membership list has been meeting approximately every 6 weeks since September. An effort is being made to spread the workload amongst the committee and few other handy volunteers in the congregation. A dedicated event will be held in January with assistance from the Men’s Group and others to tackle several repairs and clean up tasks.

The committee has also been working with the M&P committee to ensure tasks are tackled efficiently by church staff. The updated janitor role has required additional duties around the building to be tackled by the B&P committee, but all the committee members have generously volunteered their time to complete these various items. We continue to prioritize repairs that impact the use of the building by our tenants, the Montessori school, to ensure they are able to give safe and secure care to their students.

A vehicle accident in January caused damage to the conduit that houses the power line to the church. A repair was completed and the costs were recouped through the Church's insurance policy and the driver's policy.

The recommendations of the Efficiency One energy audit completed in 2016 continue to be implemented throughout the building. The hall lights were replaced in the fall with energy efficient LED lights. The savings on the power bills are continuing to be monitored to reap the benefits of this action. The committee will continue to address ongoing repairs and maintenance throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted, Colleen Rollings

CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Committee Members: Judy Whiteway, Claude Isaacs, Wendy Hawley, Rev. Debbie Aitken, Katie Cawthra (Chairperson)

Nursery and Sunday School Programs

We have expanded our program for infants and toddlers. We have continued to have the back of the sanctuary set up for children and parents, and those young at heart. There are toys, colouring pages, crayons, and other items available, this is a space well-loved and well-used, used each and every week. We have also opened the nursery in the Rainbow Room again! It is not staffed and does not currently have volunteers as it does not have a lot of use yet, but it is set it up, available, then put away each week. It is an open space that welcomes anyone who would like to be there. We have a rocking chair donated by Wendy Hawley and many wonderful toys donated by Stephanie Gorman and family. There is a T.V. which is set up each week to stream the service from upstairs. We would love to see families use this space, but this is not a replacement for the play area set up at the back of the sanctuary, our goal is to have both spaces available.

Our Sunday School has seen another successful year. I was the part-time employed Coordinator again this year. As I did last year, instead of purchasing curriculum I wrote our own on a "semester" basis. We have had many volunteers' help to make our year so successful, a special thanks to Wendy and Judy for all they do.

We had a very tiny gathering of children at the Kids Korner during the Candy Cane Carnival, and feel it may be because of the change in time. We will be considering next year if going forward with a Kids Korner will be worth it with so few.

Wendy and myself wrote this year's Christmas Pageant, it went over well with the kids. We did not have an Easter Egg Hunt this year as we instead focused on Earth Day in April, and we joined Beth's crew in the Earth Day Cleanup. With many kids and youth showing up (12 from Rockingham and 3 from Al Rasoul, 15 in total!) We also had the youth be involved with the Worship committee and CD committee to put on the Palms and Pasta Lunch. During the Easter Service there were over 50 children's treat bags available. Our Year End Youth Led Service will be held on June 4, the theme is "Church Community" followed by a BBQ.

Youth Group

WE HAVE A YOUTH GROUP! This first year has been a success and a huge joy to be a part of. Wendy, Debbie, and I began, planned, and facilitated/led the group. We had much needed help from many people, especially Judy, Claude, MaryLou, and John. We met every two weeks, with a few exceptions. Our group began with about 10 being involved, and we are now at 18 kids

participating! We did a lot of fun things, including a cooking class, pizza party, Christmas Party, 2 Bake Sales, the Palms and Pasta Lunch, Earth Day Cleanup, and we will be ending the year with a movie party and sleepover on June 17!

Youth/Young Adult Education

Now that we have a stronger and more engaged group of youth, we have begun discussing the possibility of having a confirmation class in the near future.

Adult Education

Debbie held excellent series for Adult Education this past year. One of these series was for the season of Lent, titled *“Living the Questions”*. People also continued to gather throughout the year to see new movies together and have discussions afterwards.

Council held a Book Club like workshop for committee chairs, focusing on church and community growth. The Book used for study was *“Fishing Tips: How Curiosity Transformed a Community of Faith”* written by Rev. Dr. John Pentland. The conversations this study brought to light were intriguing, and have already helped us continue and to refocus on our goals in growing our church.

GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR

- **Nursery:** Expand on the reopened nursery, encourage people to use as they like. If we reach higher numbers, we will begin a search for volunteers.
- **Sunday School:** Continue to grow our Sunday School, and welcome all newcomers.
- **Youth Group:** Continue to grow the Youth Group and provide the youth a happy and safe place to come to learn about community, friendship, and God. We need to strive to support and engage our youth, this has been made evident over and over again, throughout the long range plan, all CD meetings, and at council meetings, having a newly expanded employed spot will help us to be successful.
- **Young Adult and Adult Education:** Continue with various study series, workshops, and look toward and plan for a confirmation class as youth numbers rise.

It was a joy to chair the CD&E committee and I look forward to my last year chairing this committee!

Respectfully submitted, Katie Cawthra

MEMBERSHIP RELATIONS

Committee members: Vivian Coughlan, Sharon Ernst, Mary Lou Evans Isaacs (Chairperson), Eleanor King, Charlie Murphy, Noelle Murphy, Janet Patterson, Joanne Perry, Jean Wentzell, Gaye Wishart and Kay Youle.

Webmaster, Rodger Middleton, is also under the umbrella of Membership Relations as well as Gary Wilson, Rockingham Reflections editor. We thank Rodger and Gary very much for all their efforts on behalf of Rockingham United throughout the year.

The Membership Relations Committee looks after obtaining greeters each Sunday and hosts Cup & Conversation the second, third and fourth Sundays of the month from September until June. We keep the tea and coffee and juice stocked in the kitchen for the congregation to use throughout the week. We purchase Just Us! Fair trade coffee for use at Cup & Conversation. In September we hosted our annual Welcome Back and Fall Kickoff Barbeque. This year was special with the return of Rev. Debbie after her sabbatical and some light entertainment was arranged. Thank you to everyone who helped to make the day special. Committee member, Gaye

Wishart, did the painting that was presented to Rev. Debbie in December. This was presented on behalf of the congregation to show Rev. Debbie our appreciation for all she does for us. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

In December we hosted receptions for the carollers after Carols at RUC homes with hot chocolate and toast. We also held a reception for the choirs after Carols by Candlelight. These are two of the highlights of our year. In January we supplied a cake at Cup and Conversation for Rev. Debbie's birthday. We also had a gathering at the home of Mary Lou Isaacs at which we thanked founding member, Kay Youle, for her many years of service by presenting her with a bouquet of roses. No words can express how thankful we are for Kay's presence in our group. We are blessed to have her cheeriness among us.

Anniversary service took on a different format this year and we supplied cupcakes instead of the usual cake for the lunch following the service.

As members of this committee we are tasked with trying to make sure that people feel welcomed in our midst. While this is the job of everyone at Rockingham United, we try to make an extra effort to identify visitors and newcomers. Mary Lou stands at the door with Rev. Debbie and gives candles to visitors and obtains the names of newcomers. It has been a very busy year in this regard which is a good sign.

We will be helping with the Sunday School closing barbeque in June. I would like to thank Sharon Ernst who represents Membership Relations on RUC Council.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Lou Evans-Isaacs

MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL

Members: Nancy Lowery (Chairperson), Barb Lall, Ken McLeod, Craig Sutherland, and JoAnne Tanton

The Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee met several times in the late fall and once in January to make preparations for the annual performance reviews of ministry and staff. The review for the Janitor was held on December 2, 2017 and a recommendation for a two year contract renewal was brought to Council. Meetings with the Office Administrator, the Organist/Choir Director and the Minister took place on March 1, 2017, March 16, 2017 and March 30, 2017 respectively. A two year contract renewal for the Organist/Choir Director was suggested to Council as well as an increase in the Organist's fees for weddings and funerals. The performance review for the Sunday School Coordinator was not held until May 7, 2017. For the Minister, the Office Administrator and the Organist/Choir Director, and the Sunday School Coordinator, a 1.1% cost of living increase, effective January 1, 2017, was recommended to Council while the Janitor, on April 1, 2017, received the minimum wage increase of 15 cents per hour.

After updating the usual job descriptions, initiating performance reviews, and recommending any pay increases and contract renewals to our Church Council, the attention of the M&P Committee was directed towards hiring a Sunday School/Youth Group Coordinator. A search committee of three (Nancy Lowery, Colleen Rawlings and Madison Silver) was formed to find a candidate for this new, congregational designated ministry position starting September 1, 2017. On May 30, 2017, the Church Council, upon the recommendation of M&P, agreed to hire Katie Cawthra as the Sunday School/Youth Group Coordinator.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Lowery

OUTREACH and Refugee Committee

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

1. Refugee sponsorship issues, ongoing;
2. The White Gift campaign in November and December to support Metro Turning Point and the AIDS Coalition of NS;
3. Participation in the Refugee Private Sponsorship of NS, ongoing;
4. Raise All Boats Campaign to support social assistance increases for all those affected by low assistance rates, ongoing;
5. Outreach to the Al Rasoul Islamic Centre, ongoing;
6. Community improvement campaign with Al Rasoul and the Ecology Action Centre, ongoing;
7. Speakers Program, ongoing.

Most of these efforts are continuing. The main emphasis was away from fund raising this year with the White Gift campaign being an exception.

The White Gift campaign was successful in raising more than \$1000. in donations and contributed more than 200 gifts as well; this was a marked increase over last year. This effort was led by Mark Thornton with the support of the overall congregation.

The refugee sponsorship effort is ongoing although at a lower pace than the first year of the main effort. It was decided to down play this activity during the period of the application, acceptance and screening process which although time consuming, did not affect most of the volunteers. More than \$21,000. Was raised in this period out of a \$25,000. goal. It should be noted that this figure is enough to do the basic sponsorship for one year as the accommodations are being provided by a private citizen of Halifax. A special fund raising effort will take place this fall.

We were fortunate to meet Nader, an elder son of our family. Most of the family is safe and are in safe countries. Nader is taking English lessons in Halifax and is here on a student visa. He is staying with Katrina Al Alam who has visited RUC several times. It has been of great benefit to create a relationship with Nader and Katrina before the arrival of the family. It is hoped that Nader will still be in Canada when his Mother arrives. He has not seen her for six years.

As both part of Outreach and the Refugee sponsorship project, we have joined the Private Refugee Sponsorship of NS. This is designed to bring together all the groups participating in private sponsorship. It has been instrumental in understanding issues regarding refugee sponsorship and it has been of great service by identifying problems before they really start. The April meeting was cancelled due to severe weather but there have been meetings usually with a guest speaker every six to eight weeks during the fall and winter at Veith House. It is our intention to remain part of this effort.

The Raise All Boats initiative fell out of the private sponsorship group. At month 13 when the sponsorship is officially over, many families are unable to achieve independence and are forced on social assistance in month 13. This idea was the brain child of participants. Its goal is to raise the level of social assistance from its present levels not just for refugees but for everyone caught in unfortunate financial circumstances often through no fault of their own. Our own family will likely be caught in these circumstances. This project has received interest from the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democratic Party. It is hoped that this issue will be raised during the current election.

Our Outreach Program with Al Rasoul Islamic Centre is ongoing and is picking up momentum. The main goal is to create relationships between the members and not just have it based on “official” get togethers. This program has been an effort over the past two years with increasing numbers of people involved. On 5 April, we had our first meeting to discuss possible joint projects. A total of 13 people were present six from RUC and seven from Al Rasoul. We came up with a large number of project ideas, however, our own Beth Wilson proposed a joint effort on Earth Day which was already planned. A total of 45 people participated including 30 from RUC and 14 from Al Rasoul. It was a popular event and was followed by a get together in the church hall. The next meeting of the group will occur on 17 May at Al Rasoul to discuss the next steps, a community garden was very well received as an idea and was the overall favourite.

Lastly, as part of the overall Outreach program our speakers program had limited success, although we have had some speakers in November in support of the White Gift campaign from Shelter NS. Mr Andy Blair of the Universal Unitarian Church refugee sponsorship program also spoke to our Refugee Sponsorship Committee on their experience to date. Several other speakers were asked but cancelled due to pre-existing commitments. This program will be stepped up in the fall. It is hoped that Syed Shah will speak to our Congregation of the similarities between Islam and Christianity and Eric Rowe on the experience of St Andrews United Church on their private sponsorship of a Syrian family. This is part of the overall effort to educate the Congregation on key issues.

It is anticipated that our family will arrive this summer or early fall. We will be ramping up our efforts to support them and nurture them effectively as they navigate their new surroundings. It will be our main focus in the next year.

Respectfully submitted, John McLearn

PASTORAL CARE

Members: Heather Coady (Co-ordinator), Barb Lall, Charlie Murphy, Doreen Martin, Eleanor King, Gerry Butler, Hazel McLeod, Jan Mills, Janet McMurtry, Jean McIntyre, Jean Wentzell, Joan Munro, Lynda Phelan, Diane Ward, Rev. Debbie Aitken

The Pastoral Care Team provides support to members of our church community, especially during times of difficulty, 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 those who reach the age of 90 and over with tea, treats and flowers and those between 80 & 90 years receive birthday cards. We send cards for special anniversaries of 50 years, 60 years and over. There were an average of 60 cards sent this year. We also acknowledge significant events in the lives of our members through notices in Rockingham Reflections. We assist Rev. Debbie Aitken with worship at Parkland (Clayton Park) once a month from September to June. On average, we offer support to 30-50 members of our congregation each month. We appreciate information that helps us update our birthday & anniversary greetings and other information important to our church family.

The Pastoral Care Team chaired the Memorial Hymn Sing committee and organized the reception held at the end of April. The following committees and groups also were involved; Worship, Choirs, Stewardship and Funeral. Our thanks to all who worked on this and provided a special & memorable evening enjoyed by all.

We meet once a month, with the exception of July and August. The work of the pastoral care of our congregation is ongoing throughout the year and **always in a confidential setting.**

Since our last report we said goodbye to our long time member, Joan Aitken who stepped down from the team. She will be missed and we thank her for her caring support. We welcomed new member Hazel McLeod to the team. Our thanks, as always, is extended to our Rev. Debbie for her continued support of this important part of our RUC mission.

Respectfully submitted, Heather Coady

PRESBYTERY

RUC Members: Rev. Debbie Aitken (Clergy), William Dodsworth (Lay Member), William Jost (Lay Member)

The work of the Halifax Presbytery continued in 2016-2017. The Committee was made up of both Lay persons and clergy continued its work in meeting with pastoral charges in the Halifax Area. The key challenges faced by the charges are financial and decreasing number of volunteers. The Presbytery recommended three tools to address these issues:

1. Webinar M7P 101 for members of the Ministry and Personnel committee members
2. The use of "Salt and Light" program for Stewardship
3. Participation in the "Fishing Tips"

Sadly, the Presbytery supported the disbanding of the St John's United Church in Beverbank . It is also will support St Andrew's United Church in Moses River as it closes its doors.

The Presbytery is also working to Support Sheet Harbour with its pastoral Charge. Lastly, there are 8 new visits scheduled for completion. Halifax Presbytery met seven times between June 2016 and June 2017.

Respectfully submitted, William Jost

STEWARDSHIP

Santosh Lall, Charlie Murphy, Beth Wilson, David Carmichael and Lynn Knapp (Chairperson)

Our busy year began in September with an immediate need to fill vacancies in our roster of Sunday Counters as some of our team retired from the job after many years of faithful service. A list of possible recruits were contacted and a couple of new volunteers joined the counting team.

Our Fundscrip campaign resumed in early October of 2016 and has continued through to May of 2017 at which time we take a summer break when attendance is low and support is reduced. At the time of writing this report, this campaign has raised \$ 2504.21 for our church since last October simply by the purchase of gift cards to pay for our individual monthly needs of grocery, gas and pharmacy items. We hope that this campaign will continue to grow.

On Saturday October 29th our committee organized a "Time and Talent auction". The evening consisted of a "live auction" of donated items created by members of the congregation along with desserts and coffee prepared by volunteers. We were thrilled to have Graham Sweett return as our auctioneer for the evening. We charged a \$10 admission which included a bidding paddle along with unlimited refreshments. The event was very well attended and we are delighted to report that it raised \$5731.95 for the church's operating fund. Although the committee was responsible for the production of the event, its success was entirely due to the generous participation of the Rockingham Congregation.

In November the Stewardship letter was drafted and prepared for distribution on Stewardship Sunday November 20th. The intended message was that of celebration and ongoing generosity and we encouraged the PAR method of payment of weekly offerings. Once again, in an effort to save church postage, the committee hand delivered to over half the congregation with the remainder mailed by Canada Post.

The committee met casually in December to prepare the Church's Christmas Letter in the same manner to be hand delivered on Sunday December 11th. Once again this act of Stewardship saved the church office a considerable amount of postage.

Our meetings resumed in January with our focus on the fund raising budget for the upcoming year. We attempted to map out fundraisers for the year that would not only generate revenue, but that would bring us together as a congregation creating fellowship as well as encourage participation from people outside our congregation. We also aimed to keep them spread out on the calendar.

On February 12th the Stewardship committee hosted a soup luncheon. This casual lunch was held in the hall following the Cafe style worship celebrating Anniversary Sunday. Lunch was topped off by dessert consisting of Valentine cupcakes which were generously prepared by Mary Lou Evans Isaacs and decorated by the Youth Group. The lunch was well attended and resulted in a free-will collection totaling \$596.35.

On Friday March 10th the committee hosted an evening of Irish music with entertainment provided by the Sham-Rocks. We charged \$10 per ticket and offered punch and light snacks in a fun, pub style atmosphere. It is interesting and exciting to note that a large percentage of people who attended were people from the community and not regular church members. We are pleased to report that the evening resulted in a profit of \$1127.84

The committee met on March 30th to prepare and package the Easter letter for hand delivery on Sunday April 2nd. Once again this project helped to save the church on postage costs.

On Sunday April 9th following the service we enjoyed the Palms and Pasta Bar Luncheon organized by the Youth Group and their families in partnership with members of the Worship committee. This event was well supported and enjoyed by the congregation and raised \$926.01 for the church.

On Saturday April 22nd the committee hosted an "Earth Day" celebration with a neighborhood clean up which involved the voluntary participation of 45 adults and youth including 14 adults and youth from the Al Rasoul Islamic Society. The group broke into teams and collected garbage in the area surrounding our church and several nearby streets. The results included 25 bags of garbage and 2 bags of recyclables totaling 440 pounds. We ended the morning with a casual shared meal in the church hall.

On Sunday evening April 30th a Memorial Hymn Sing was held in our church sanctuary. This choral event was designed to remember and honor loved ones through music and song. The three choirs performed music and led us in hymns selected through submissions from our congregation and family members. The organizing team was made up of members of the Pastoral Care committee, the Membership Relations committee, the Stewardship committee, the Choir and was heavily supported by the church office staff. This beautiful event resulted in a great deal of positive feedback, along with raising \$3140 through donations.

On Saturday May 6th members of the Stewardship committee along with many of our church

members assisted with the running of the “Giant Indoor Yard Sale”. This huge undertaking would be simply impossible without the reliable commitment and hard work of a great many church members. Once again this event generated many hours of fellowship and lots of laughs as well as raising \$4867.24 for the operating funds of our church.

On Friday May 14th the committee hosted a concert by The Bedford Brass Quintet. The music for this event was a celebration of Canadian Music in connection with Canada 150 and was held in the church sanctuary. This event raised \$285.37.

The final fundraiser of the first half of the year will be a “Paint Nite” scheduled for Tuesday June 20th at 7pm at Clay West Bar & Grill in Bayers Lake. This event can accommodate up to 60 participants and tickets are currently available for purchase on line. A portion of each ticket will be donated to the church and we hope to fill all 60 seats.

Finally I would like to thank the congregation as well as the members of the Stewardship team for their support and tireless efforts throughout this past year. A special thanks to Rev. Debbie and to Sylvia Thorne for their constant willingness to help and endless encouragement with all we attempt to do. It has been a real pleasure to serve as chair of this outstanding committee.

Respectfully submitted, Lynn Knapp

Raising Our Sails

Members; Gaye Wishart and David Martin (Co-Chairs), Doreen Crick, Lynn Knapp, Santosh Lall, Steve MacMurray, Kim Silver, Craig Sutherland, Jean Wentzell, Gary Wilson.

“Raising Our Sails” is a sub-committee of Stewardship, and was officially launched on May 1,2016, in order to raise the sum of \$150,000 to help pay for the eventual replacement of the church roof. During personal visits, we are soliciting pledges over a three year period, and have had a very positive response from the congregation, with \$130,000 in pledges received to May1,2017. Our visits are providing a great opportunity for relationship building, and we look forward to continuing the program over the next year. For those we are unable to visit, an information package will be mailed out, seeking financial support.

Respectfully submitted; David Martin and Gaye Wishart (Co-Chairs)

WORSHIP

Members: Rev. Debbie Aitken (ex-officio), Dianna Prest (Chairperson), David Clare, Sandra Allen, Anne Forbes, Pam Roddick, Shelley Snair, Joanne Perry and Kathy Stone (Music Director)

Membership

As Chair of Worship Committee, we welcomed a new member this year, Joanne Perry as we say goodbye to Pam Roddick as the Roddick family prepares for their move to Ontario. We wish Pam and her family all the best and thank her for her insight as a teacher and parent of children in our Youth group at RUC. We want to thank the many contributions of our members. David Clare and Sandra Allen for representing Worship Committee and taking care of the duties for our funerals. Sandra Allen for taking care of the banners in the sanctuary. Anne Forbes for looking after our Communion and gathering Communion servers and Scripture readers. Joanne Perry for assisting with announcements. I'd like to thank David Clare, Joanna Perry, Sandra Allen, Shelley Snair & Pam Roddick for participating in the Laity Worship services. Thank you Rev. Debbie Aitken and Kathy Stone for our wonderful Sermons and music in Worship. Thanks to Hugh & Carolyn MacDonald for their care of the Christ Candle. Thanks to Karen Middleton for gathering candle

lighters for worship. Thanks to the Audio Visual Team for their work during Worship. Thank you to the greeters, ushers, communion servers, and candle lighters who welcome and serve our congregation during Worship. Thanks to all those who help behind the scenes decorating the sanctuary and assisting in worship services. All have given of their gifts, time and talents during this past year.

Meetings and Accomplishments

The Worship Committee met on the first Wednesday of the month except for a couple of times where a later week and/or time met our committee needs better. The committee continues to be a living breathing entity that has vibrant discussions as we reflect on previous services, plan future services and discuss needs and wants of the congregation. We continue to incorporate the Long Range Plan initiatives for Worship as part of our monthly agenda and discuss in every meeting. The following is some of the services and accomplishments that the Worship Committee planned, presented and/or supported in the last year:

- Shared services with Fairview United in July and August as well as shared Ash Wednesday & Maundy Thursday Services with about 30 people attending each service.
- Acknowledgement in Worship & the bulletins of significant events in the lives of our brothers & sisters of God.
- Special services such as Remembrance Day, Baden-Powell Scouting Sunday large attendance of Scouts & Guides and Hilary Brown cellist performance in Worship
- A noticeable increase of youth participating in Youth led Worship services once a month created totally by the Youth & Sunday school groups with Katie Cawthra's assistance.
- Holy Currencies sermons for Advent, an earlier time for Family Christmas Eve service to accommodate young families & Christmas services including a Miracle on Flamingo Rd service with the Youth & Worship Committee led New Year's Day service.
- Sermons of Intention during Lent & Easter services including Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday at Fairview United, Good Friday service that took us on a journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem through a Christmas Tree, Sunrise Easter service with the release of bubbles & Communion Easter Sunday service with 250 people in attendance
- Volunteers decorating of the church during Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter time
- A Palms and Pasta Luncheon coordinated between the Youth Group, their parents and Worship Committee members was a great success and a lot of fun as well as raising funds for the Life & Work of our church.
- Memorial Hymn Sing, a collaboration of many committees led by Joan Munro, which delivered a beautiful evening of song & readings to honour our loved ones and with a donation of a banner in honour of Fran Paton from the Senior Choir that now has a permanent placement at the front of the church.

Summary

Throughout the past year we experienced excitement of 6 baptisms that included an adult baptism & confirmation as well as an older child baptism of his choosing. We had 3 weddings & transfers of memberships. We also experienced the grief of losing a loved one with 9 funerals. We lost mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and friends. In their memory we strive to continue to do God's works as we move closer to welcoming our refugee family and we invest in our many children & youth in our worship through a new Sunday School/Youth group Coordinator position.

We are blessed to have vocal talents and musicians within our congregation. The Senior Choir, Men's Choir and growing Youth Choir continue to bless us with their musical gifts under the direction of our Music Director Kathy Stone.

The Worship committee is looking forward to the rest of the summer to come as well as the anticipation of new ideas and collaborations in the fall. We are always open to new members who may be interested in joining in the exchange of ideas for Worship service.

Thanks to all those who work behind the scenes to make this a wonderful place to celebrate God in our lives.

Respectfully submitted, Dianna Prest

GROUPS

CHOIRS

YOUTH CHOIR

Members: Beth Hailstone, Alanah Hawley, Hannah Gorman, Lily McLeod, Brynn Roddick, Cate Roddick, Daniel Sutherland, Maya Sutherland, Amber Thornton and Paige Thornton.

The Youth Choir maintained a busy singing schedule this year, offering anthems at least twice a month, as well as combining with the Men's Choir several times throughout the year. We began our season in September, singing on Remembrance Sunday, and contributing significantly to the Carols By Candlelight evening service, even offering instrumental prelude music for this event. The many anthems we learned with the Men led to an invitation to join the Mens' Choir for their annual visit to William Black Memorial United Church for their 196th Anniversary celebration on May 7th.

Of course, we ended our singing season with the Mother's Day Medley on May 14th, including excerpts from as many as 22 anthems. We will gather for a breakfast social on May 28th to concluding a fun, and sometimes silly, season of musical growing and sharing. I am very proud of the accomplishments of this special ensemble of musicians.

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Stone, Director

SENIOR CHOIR

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

Overview: The Rockingham United Church Senior Choir is currently a 21 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 10:00 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.

Rockingham United's annual "Carols by Candlelight Service" was held on December 11th. The Senior Choir was joined by the Youth Choir and Men's Choir for this annual event. Along with traditional readings, this year took on a new twist. We enjoyed "The Legend of the Candy Cane, The Candy Cane Poem, A Partridge in a Pear Tree" and an excerpt from "How the Grinch Stole Christmas".

The Senior Choir organized and presented a Hymn Sing in the evening on Sunday April 30th. This allowed members of Rockingham United Church to choose a favorite hymn and dedicate the hymn(s) in memory of loved ones. The bulletin was provided "In memory of Fran Paton" from her family and a banner was dedicated in loving memory of Fran by Rev. Debbie and Doreen Crick. A special thank you to choir member Janet McMurtry for finding the perfect banner that now hangs at the front of the church.

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), Peter Bowden, Gerry Butler, David Carmichael, Reg Crick, Geoff Doane, Calude Isaacs, Sam MacKay, Brian Martin, Ken McLeod, Rodger Middleton, Sandy Munro, Charlie Murphy, Alan Schnare, Ron Tanton, Hiram Tiller, Dale Ward, Gary Wilson

Each Sunday at 8:45am 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. Once again we were pleased to have Peter Bowden join us for our evening or special concerts. Rodger Middleton continues to organize the printing of the concert bulletins and keeping the entire choir in the email loop. We also remember the loss of member Jim Taylor in the past year.

The choir continues to offer music at least once a month during worship from October until the end of March. December saw us join with the Senior and Junior choirs for the annual Carol's by Candlelight concert. We also participated in the Good Friday Service and a very special Memorial Hymn Sing event. Our season this year ended with a concert at William Black Memorial United Church in Glen Margaret where we had the great honour of having the Youth Choir join us for a very memorable evening of song.

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-Joanne Perry

Vice President-Vacant

Secretary-Sharon Ernst

Past President-Heather McLearn

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

With our "Summer Break" just around the corner, we look back over the past year feeling blessed and grateful for the wonderful times our three units have enjoyed, both with each other, with our ever-growing congregation and with the wider UCW community.

The first UCW-sponsored event of 2016 was a chicken pot pie luncheon, held on January 17, 2016 immediately following morning worship. It was well-received, and \$670.00 was raised.

The 2016 Annual General Meeting of the Rockingham United Church Women was held at the Church on January 24, 2016.

- No new nominations or changes to the current Executive were made for 2016.
- The Rockingham UCW General budget for 2015 was presented and approved. It was moved that \$2,500.00 be donated by the UCW to Rockingham United Church, in addition to the amount allotted in the budget.

On Feb 9 2016, a bake sale was held in conjunction with the Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper organized by the men of RUC, and the proceeds donated to RUC general funds.

The Women's Inter-Church Council World Day of Prayer Service was held on Friday, March 4th at 7:00pm at St. Benedict's. There was good attendance overall, with a number of members of Rockingham UCW participating in the service, which was written by the women of Cuba.

The annual Spring Potluck Social was held on May 18, 2016 in the church hall, with 22 members attending. Our after-dinner speakers were Noelle Murphy and Mary Louise Mills, who gave a very entertaining presentation on their recent travels in Italy. Items for women in conflict with the law were collected at his event.

Over the summer months, RUC provided thirty dozen cookies for the Cookie Cottage at the United Church Camp in Berwick, NS. Avis Densmore helped to transport the cookies to the camp.

On Saturday, November 19th, 2016 we organised and hosted the RUC Christmas Sale from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., which was a newly-formatted version of our Candy Cane Carnival. The event included the always-popular pantry table, craft tables, a 'made-by-men' table, and a 'new-to-you' jewellery table, and we also provided a canteen serving chilli, soup, sandwiches, cakes and muffins. The sale was well attended and enjoyed by all and our total revenue for this event was over \$5,000.00.

Our annual Christmas Social was held on December 7th in the church hall, where members and invited guests enjoyed a wonderful program of worship led by the Clayton Park unit. This was followed by Christmas-themed games and singing of Christmas carols with a delicious lunch being served by the Laura Wright unit. Items for Coverdale Mission assisting women in conflict with the law were collected at this event.

The 2017 Annual General Meeting of the RUC Women was held at the Church on January 14th where the new Executive members were presented and sworn in. At the end of January, the Laura Wright unit held a chili lunch fundraiser and at the end of February, all units participated in a sale of baked goods and pantry items, in conjunction with the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. The proceeds from the sale were turned over to Rockingham United for general operating expenses and we appreciate the Men's Group allowing us to join in their event.

This year, on March 3rd 2017, Rockingham United had the privilege of hosting the World Day of Prayer and our UCW ladies were responsible for planning and participating in the service, along with our partners from Birch Cove Baptist Church and St. Benedict Catholic Church. The programme, entitled "Am I Being Unfair to You?", was beautifully and inspiringly written by the ladies of the Philippines and we were very pleased to welcome 62 attendees from our combined church congregations, including St. Peter's Anglican Church and the Al Rasoul Islamic Center. A reception was held following the service, where an array of sweets, fruit and vegetable platters and cheese and crackers were served to guests, along with beverages. The sweets included a pineapple upside-down cake, which represented the fact that The Philippines are the third largest exporter of pineapple in the world. Next year's World Day of Prayer service is being hosted by Birch Cove Baptist Church.

On April 21st 2017, we sponsored a homemade beans and brown bread takeout supper at the church, which was very popular and made close to \$600.00. Many compliments were received, especially for the homemade bread! We also helped with an Easter food drive for the Bayers Westwood Food Bank by stuffing coloured plastic eggs with suggestions for food donations and distributing them to members of the congregation. The food items were to be brought in the following Sunday and the generous response from the congregation was wonderful.

On May 10th we held our annual UCW Spring Pot Luck Supper, where we were privileged to have a member of our congregation, Brenda Munro, talk with us about her more than twenty-year journey with Multiple Sclerosis. She had prepared an accompanying slide show, and we were all very humbled by her positive attitude and humour in dealing with this condition. We also loved her determination and courage in raising such an amazing amount of money each year towards research into this disease, alongside her fellow Rockingham Riders participants.

During the month of May, all our units will be enjoying their 'end-of-year' outings to various local restaurants, where we will be celebrating friendship, fellowship and good food. It has certainly been a busy and productive year for all of us and above all, another year to be thankful for.

Respectfully submitted, Heather McLearn (Past President) and Joanne Perry, President

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. Throughout the year we have planned activities. The following are the activities that occurred during the past year:

Planned activities

September: RUC/BUC Golf Challenge: On September 30th, men from Bedford United Church and Rockingham United attended this outing at Lost Creek. A great day was had by all and the

scores were secondary although Bedford did walk away with the challenge trophy on this occasion. That's one for Bedford and one for Rockingham. A rematch is slated for 2017.

January: Again this year, Ken McLeod organized a Mooseheads Hockey Game outing that was preceded by dinner at the Midtown. On this occasion we invited the men from Bedford United to join us. We had 10 guys from each church. A great social evening.

Outreach Projects

Monthly Lunch Meetings: Our monthly lunch meetings continued this year. We first started doing these in December of 2012. We have had as many as 20 guys turn out. The cost of admittance is new socks and/or underwear for The Men's Turning Point Shelter. We also collected used clothing which was taken to the shelter or distributed through the ARK program. Len Sweett was very appreciative of these items.

Brunswick Street Mission Breakfasts: In the fall of 2015 we were approached by Elna Siebring, Saturday and Holiday breakfast coordinator at the Brunswick Street Mission to consider taking responsibility for a couple of breakfasts. The men of RUC agreed and we did the breakfasts on November 11th and December 28th and this year we added Good Friday to this commitment. 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.

Oscar: This project has changed for this year. Oscar was returned in November of 2016 realizing \$3,897.02 in receipts. On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, Oscar was again rolled out to the congregation, but not strictly a fund raiser for the men of RUC. This year, Oscar's focus is on Youth Ministry and it is hoped the proceeds received when Oscar returns in June will go a long way towards supporting this ministry.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper: On Tuesday, February 28, 2017 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 held on May 14th this year realized the sale of 75 Lobster Dinners, consisting 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 relatives.

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

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.

In the summer of 2016 the men of RUC were called upon to help with the laying of concrete paving stones outside the Montessori School area.

Upgrade of Computer in the Sanctuary: The sanctuary computer was upgraded to a new machine and Microsoft Windows 10 in the summer of 2016. Some learning curves occurred but overall its operation has made for smoother operation of video in worship in the sanctuary.

Finances

Men's Group Financial Report May 10, 2016 – May 15, 2017

Opening Balance May 10, 2016		\$2,719.44
Receipts:		
Memorial Tree	\$1,105.00	
Oscar Proceeds 2016	\$3,897.02	
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	\$1,201.84	
Lobster Takeout 2017	\$767.00	
Refund Computer expenses	<u>\$45.73</u>	\$7,016.59
Disbursements:		
Patio Stone Montessori School	\$467.39	
Brunswick Street Breakfasts	\$419.71	
Transfer to Church Operating Fund	<u>6,500.00</u>	\$7,387.10
Closing Balance May 15, 2017		<u>\$2,348.93</u>

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 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

Rockingham United has had a website for about 14 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

Website Content

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 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 Halifax Presbytery, Maritime Conference 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. The last button is a link to The Upper Room 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. Newly added this year is a scrolling bar near the top of the landing page. This Scrolling Bar 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. We have also added an Audio Button where special event services/concerts are featured for folks to listen to. 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 been as follows

- 15,700 Page Views
- 7,450 Unique Visits
- 5,177 First Time Visits
- 2, 273 Return Visits

Most visits happen on Friday or Saturday of each week and are higher in the Fall to Spring months than in the Summer.

These numbers are dependent upon the following:

- *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 your 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 lower than Returning Visits.

The Web Page is in need of tweaking in order for it to work easily on all sorts of devices including I Phones, Android Devices, etc. As Webmaster, it is my privilege to serve my church in this manner.

Technology In The Sanctuary

There is an opportunity in each worship service and other services such as funerals for the use of technology to enhance the service and add audio or video that will help those present better understand the message of the day. A small group of members are scheduled each week to look after the sound or the visual parts of the service. This roster is managed by Bill Dodsworth. Bill has written a computer program that takes the Microsoft Word Document of the Order of Service for worship or a funeral and convert it into a Power Point Presentation. Most of the operators are content to run this presentation as it is, but there are a couple who like to enhance the presentation with images, etc., again to bring more meaning to the service. From time to time Rev. Debbie likes to use a video or photos as a part of the children's story or her sermon message. Going forward, it's hoped that more training can be done in order to better utilize the presence of this technology. Discussions are being had about the quality of the sound and it is hoped that some tweaking can be done in order to improve the sound, both over the speaker system and thru the wireless devices that folks can wear for the duration of the service to better hear what is being said.

RUC on Facebook

Yes, Rockingham United is represented on Facebook. Once in Facebook, simply search Rockingham United Church and you will find it. Dianna Prest posts items to the Facebook Page on a regular basis. As of the writing of this report there were 92 people liking and following our facebook page and 60 people have visited the page.

Mass Emailing

Over this past year, our Church Office Administrator has put together a vast distribution list and does emails out to the list outlining events and special worship occasions. If you would like to be added to that list, please email church.office@rockinghamunited.org with your request.

Summary

Technology is truly present at Rockingham United, but, more can be done. Reaching out to younger folks can be achieved with meaningful Technology. The message each Sunday can be brought alive using technology. Communication with Members and Adherents can be heightened using social media as well as other technology tools. We are only seeing the tip of the iceberg.

Respectfully Submitted, Rodger Middleton

CO-OP PLAYGROUP

This lively group of parents, caregivers, grandparents and pre-schoolers meet in the Church Hall every Friday a.m. from 10:00 to 12:00 noon. The program consists of free play, crafts, and a circle time of storytelling, singing and a snack. We celebrate holidays with special parties. Attendance is usually 14 – 20 children. Please join us for fun and fellowship with this friendly and welcoming group from mid September until the end of May.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Middleton, Playgroup Co-Ordinator

STATISTICS

Year Ending December 31, 2016

- ❖ Households under Pastoral Care - 328
- ❖ Households Financially Supporting - 213
- ❖ Number of Baptisms - 5
- ❖ Number of Funerals - 16
- ❖ Number of Marriages - 3
- ❖ Average weekly attendance – 130

END