



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

# Rockingham United Church Annual Report



**July 2017 – June 2018**

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Halifax, Nova Scotia  
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## Table of Contents

<b>MINISTER’S REPORT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>COUNCIL REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>COMMITTEES</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>BUILDING AND PROPERTY</i>	7
<i>Technology Sub-Committee</i>	8
<i>CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION</i>	9
<i>Nursery and Sunday School Programs</i>	9
<i>Youth Group</i>	10
<i>Youth/Young Adult Education</i>	10
<i>Adult Education</i>	10
<i>MEMBERSHIP RELATIONS</i>	11
<i>MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL</i>	12
<i>OUTREACH and Refugee Committee</i>	12
<i>PASTORAL CARE</i>	15
<i>PRESBYTERY</i>	15
<i>STEWARDSHIP</i>	15
Raising Our Sails	17
<i>WORSHIP</i>	17
Membership	17
Meetings and Accomplishments	17
Summary	18
<b>GROUPS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>CHOIRS</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>YOUTH CHOIR</i>	19
<i>SENIOR CHOIR</i>	19
<i>MEN’S CHOIR</i>	20
<b>UNITED CHURCH WOMEN (Women’s Ministry Network)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>MEN’S GROUP</b>	<b>24</b>
Planned activities	24
Outreach Projects	24
Fund Raising Projects	24
Projects around the Church	25
Finances	25
<b>WEBSITE – SOCIAL MEDIA</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>RUC on Facebook</i>	26
<i>Mass Emailing</i>	26
<b>CO-OP PLAYGROUP</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>STATISTICS</b>	<b>27</b>

## MINISTER'S REPORT

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*Inch by inch, row by row  
Gonna make this garden grow  
Gonna mulch it deep and low  
Gonna make it fertile ground*

*Inch by inch, row by row  
Please bless these seeds I sow  
Please keep them safe below  
'Til the rain comes tumbling down*

*Pullin' weeds and pickin' stones  
We are made of dreams and bones  
Need a place to call my own  
'Cause the time is close at hand*

*Grain for grain, sun and rain  
Find my way in nature's chain  
Till my body and my brain  
Tell the music of the land*

Each year as I sit down to write my Annual Report, I search for a metaphor that speaks to me of the year that has been. This year David Mallett's *Garden Song* kept playing in my head and the more I thought about the life of Rockingham United Church in the year that has been, it was the metaphor of the gardener at work that continued to resonate.

Ours has been a year of diligently tending the garden of faith here at Rockingham and in the surrounding community.

Our Trustees and our Stewardship Committee have worked diligently to ensure we have the resources necessary for planting and nurturing a faith garden now and into the future. Our Trustees and Capital Campaign gardeners have been very intentional, and as a result, we are almost there in terms of the financial resources needed to replace our roof, even as our Endowment Fund moves slowly and steadily upwards. Like good gardeners, our Stewardship Committee have not been afraid to experiment with new varieties of plants alongside traditional staples: Octoberfest and Fundscrip, for example, each helping us to meet our Fund-raising goals.

The gifts and skills and commitments of our Building and Property Committee have enabled us to provide a garden plot that is accessible to all. The new glass doors now open to welcome long term perennials as well as those seeking to check out our spiritual food menu.

Our Christian Development Committee continues to oversee the nurture of seedling faith, while also providing opportunities for other plants to deepen their roots and produce the fruits of possibility and courage. The Friday morning Play Group reaches out to make a place for the tiniest of seedlings to stretch their limbs and delight in growing time.

Our Pastoral Care Team are vigilant care-giver gardeners reaching out to gently support those plants that are struggling amid seasons of their lives that drain their energy and leave them in need of special attention.

It is the Worship Committee that seeks to ensure that this garden is a place of joy and delight, as well as a place of respect and remembrance. They are intentional in creating a garden that encourages the blossoming and the maturing of lives of faith that they may bear the fruits of justice and compassion and goodness for all.

As new plants arrive, diversifying the garden, Membership Relations reaches out to learn their names and ensure they feel welcomed and included.

Gathering together the men and women of the congregation in their respective seed plots, the Men's Group and the United Church Women, have provided support and fellowship for those who thrive as they are fed and pollinated by the gifts of fellowship and community.

Those amazing gardeners who have chosen to expand the edges of the garden in order that others may be fed and nurtured have provided an Outreach that has transformed us in a multitude of ways. I am praying that by the time this report goes to print, Haifa and Helen will have arrived in Halifax to join their family. We have also been persistently challenged to look beyond this community to the city we are part of and to the stories of those whose lives are often overlooked and ignored, and whose lives and potential are at risk of been drowned by the storms of life.

Overseeing the ministry team and the staff, the Ministry and Personnel Committee have guided our ministry and work as gardeners assigned a diversity of tasks. This garden continues to be richly blessed by the diverse talents of Sylvia, Kathy, Katie and Nichol. This year the decision to risk into the presence of an Intern has brought us the gifts and wisdom of David Atwood who has nurtured the spirit and soul of all who have worshipped with him, received pastoral care from him, or participated in one of his interfaith study groups. We wish him well as he goes forth to be ordained.

It is our Church Council that holds the vision for the Garden and I am grateful for the leadership of Ron and those Council Elders who continue to take time to reflect on the not yet, and who invite us to prayerfully consider what we need to be planting in order to continue to nurture the spirits of our sisters and brothers in faith.

A garden thrives as life's staples are enhanced by new varieties of seedlings. A garden thrives with the work of gardeners prepared to risk in planting and nurturing in new ways. A garden thrives when those same faithful compassionate gardeners dare to see the not yet. A garden thrives when gardeners attune their lives and their spirits to the vision of the Creator who has created each and all with Love to grow as blessing. May it continue to be so here at Rockingham United Church.

***Inch by inch, row by row  
Gonna make this garden grow  
Gonna mulch it deep and low  
Gonna make it fertile ground  
Plant your rows straight and long  
Season with a prayer and song  
Mother Earth will make you strong  
If you give her loving care***

**Rev. Debbie Aitken**

## COUNCIL REPORT

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Another full and wonderful church year is drawing to a close. Soon some of us will be opening cottages, spending leisure time with friends and family, perhaps travelling, playing golf, gardening, or just reading a good book. It is the time of the year when we look back on the past 12 months to recognize and celebrate the time we have spent together as a church family and look forward and reflect on the challenges and tasks that face us in the coming year.

As you read the Annual Report you will remember what a busy congregation we are. Of course our major focus is worship and we continue to be blessed with the work of the Worship Committee and Reverend Aitken. I am sure all of you will agree with me that in Worship and in all the activities of Rockingham United Debbie is inspirational, motivating, calm, wise, supportive and understanding. We are indeed blessed to have her.

It seems to me that Debbie is fond of challenging us to “risk”, to go outside of our comfort zone. About a year ago an opportunity presented itself for Rockingham United to accept a part time intern. There were lots of questions as to how this might work; how such a person would affect Debbie’s workload, how they would fit in with and add to our spiritual life, how we would find the funds to pay the salary and what we could offer in return. With Debbie’s agreement we decided to go ahead. The result was that David and Margaret Atwood have been with us for the past eight months. What a positive decision that turned out to be. Their contributions to our church life have extended from worship, pastoral care, to the choir, the ministry of the drums, leadership of workshops, study groups, participation in Men’s Group, children’s time and attendance at committee meetings. I think the recent event honouring David and Margaret’s time with us showed how all of us agree that taking the risk of offering David an internship at Rockingham United was well worth it. We all join in wishing David and Margaret well in their ongoing Ministry.

This year also saw the continued commitment of the Outreach Committee and the Refugee sponsorship group, who with our support are about to achieve the goal of seeing Helen and Haifa arrive from Syria through Lebanon. A giant leap of faith and hope, risking that coming to Canada will give them peace, security, and opportunity for a fulfilling life in this wonderful country that we are blessed to call home.

With a busy congregation such as ours we are aware that we are putting increased demands on our staff, in particular our Office Administrator. This has resulted in a workload that has far exceeded the hours we allocate for the job. Thus, with the advice of the Ministry and Personnel Committee we will be increasing the number of hours for this position; a step of faith and confidence in our future.

Another big step this year was the decision to rebuild the entrance to our church. A costly venture to be sure, but one that had to be done, and when the decision was made, we were given 50% of the cost up to a maximum of \$10,000 from the Hunter Fund. Under the guidance of the Building and Property Committee this project is nearing completion and again, I think most would agree that it has enhanced the appearance, function and welcoming nature of our building; a step of faith and confidence in our future.

A middle aged building such as ours has many challenges. In relation to this the next challenge that we face is that we are getting close to having to fix our roof. One just has to walk around the outside of the church and pick up shingles after a big storm to realize that this cannot be put off much longer. The Capital Campaign is nearing its goal of \$150,000, which is truly wonderful and

a reflection of the good work of the Campaign Committee and your commitment to our church. The Building and Property Committee under the chairmanship of Colleen Rollings, with the assistance of Ray Mills has presented a Preliminary Roof Replacement Report to Council; they have looked at various options, including preliminary cost estimates and suggested a way in which we might proceed to ensure this very large, expensive and important project is completed in a cost effective, and timely manner. No decisions have as yet been made. If any who read this have any expertise to offer, Colleen would welcome their input. Our current roof is 25 years old so it has served us well; prices have pretty much doubled since that time; these are important decisions and we want to make sure we get it right.

Our Nominating Committee is very busy. Members of Council most of whom are Committee Chairs can only serve two terms of two years each before having to step down as Committee Chair and come off Council for a year. This gives people a break and also allows opportunities for new people to take the lead, with new ideas, energy and enthusiasm. So if Charlie Murphy or Jean Wentzell look your way please listen to the opportunity they are offering and give it your prayerful consideration. Next year we will have a new Secretary, and new chairs of Worship, Christian Development, Pastoral Care, Outreach, Ministry and Personnel, and Trustees. Some have already agreed to fill these roles, to you I say thank you and we will look forward to having you around the Council table. I would encourage all of you to consider getting involved in one of our committees. Each of us has much to offer. Participating is personally enriching, and very important to the health of our congregation. This is of course God's church but it is our job to do our part to take care of it.

So, with the activity of the Nominating Committee comes the time to recognize those folk who have completed their terms. These include: Gary Wilson, our secretary; Dianna Prest, our Chair of Worship; Heather Coady, our Chair of Pastoral Care; John McLearn, our Chair of Outreach; Nancy Lowery, our Chair of Ministry and Personnel; Sharon Ernst our representative from Membership Relations who stays on Council as the representative from U.C.W.; and, Santosh Lall, our Chair of the Board of Trustees. To each of these people I give sincere thanks on your behalf and on behalf of myself. I can say without reservation that I have really enjoyed working alongside each of them. Each has shown wonderful commitment and wisdom in their roles within the church and around the Council table, thank you.

Also attending their last meeting of Council for a while will be Joanne Perry as President of UCW; even though her term as president of UCW will not end until January she has to step down from Council so she will meet the requirement to be off Council for a year before she comes back on in June, 2019 as Chair.

If you have comments or questions please ask any of us on Council or anyone else who has written a report.

**Respectfully submitted by Ron Tanton Chair**

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

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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).

All information related to bequests, investments, taxes, insurance, risk assessment, repairs and congregational property and related matters was reviewed during the November 2017 and April

2018 meetings. The current Endowment Fund balance is \$85,956. David Martin, a BOT member is co-chair (with Gaye Wishart) of the capital campaign “Raising Our Sails” which was launched in 2016 with a fundraising goal of \$150,000. To date, the congregation pledges are \$143,322. A BOT representative serves on the Finance Sub-Committee which manages the investment portfolio of RUC and ensures that various funds are appropriately invested.

The trustees of RUC received a property assessment of \$100,600.00 (9.58% of the total assessment value) identified as commercial taxable for the use of space by the Atlantic Montessori School. Rick Lowery and Doug Chaytor looked into various possibilities for an appeal of this assessment. After discussion with council members it was decided not to pursue an appeal. Although, the property assessment for 2018 is \$1,050,500 lower than the 2017 (\$1,085,000), the estimated tax bill for commercial use by the Montessori school will cost RUC about \$3,460.

The insurance coverage for RUC by Hub Insurance for 2018 is \$6,007.00, which is unchanged from the previous year. BOT continues to work with council on financial and other church matters.

**Respectfully submitted, Santosh Lall**

## COMMITTEES

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### BUILDING AND PROPERTY

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

The Building & Property Committee has completed several upgrades around the building over the past year. The major project was to install 4 new entry doors on the Narthax. This has provided a bright and welcoming entrance to our building. One door was equipped with an electric operator to improve our accessibility. A swipe card system installation is also underway at the front door to increase security of our building. The swipe card system can also be expanded to the office entrance door in the future. As well, new lights were installed in the 3 washrooms as well as new data cabling installed to enable technology upgrades.

The fire safety plan was reviewed and updated extensively. A fire drill will be planned in the future to test our plan. Planning continues for the roof replacement project. Materials and contract services options have been pursued and a summary has been presented to Council. Further work will continue on this effort in 2018.

Winter maintenance was continued as per past years to keep our entrance safe for our tenants and congregation. Maintenance issues within the building continue to be addressed as they are identified. A focus was placed on the sanctuary leading up to the Christmas season to replace light bulbs and polish up the pews. A secure area was constructed for the recycling and compost bins to avoid the bins being spilled during high wind storms.

A Technology Sub Committee was organized as our technology needs for our congregation usage and rental usage have outgrown our currently installed technology. A report from the subcommittee is included below.

**Respectfully submitted, Colleen Rollings**

## Technology Sub-Committee

After discussion by our Church Council a Technology Sub-Committee was formed in February of this year. This committee is a sub-committee of Building & Property. The committee will liaise as necessary with The Worship Committee on technology matters in the Sanctuary, Narthex and with other committees as necessary.

### 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 which 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.

### Responsibilities

The Technology Sub-Committee is responsible to the congregation through The Building & Property Committee and The Church Council for the following:

- Maintaining a technology plan.
- Providing staff and volunteers with technology training as required.
- Making recommendations concerning acquisition, implementation, maintenance, and upgrading of technologies.
- Communicating with ministerial personnel, administrative staff, Director of Music, Worship Committee & Building & Property Committee and ultimately, The Church Council.
- Preparing a budget for acquisition, maintenance and replacement of technologies to be considered by the Building & Property Committee and forwarded to Council for approval.
- Developing policies concerning the use of technology including computers, hearing assistance and audio/video uses in the sanctuary in consultation with the Worship Committee.
- Maintaining the security of networks, both wired and wireless used within our church
- Carrying out routine maintenance such as physically cleaning Computers and A/V equipment regularly to eliminate dust accretion.
- Determining the usable lifespan of computers or other digital/electronic equipment and associated software and plan for timely replacement, including consideration of changes in technology, methodology and philosophy of the Church.
- Determining the optimal applications and operating systems, considering cost, reliability and legal compliance.
- Obtaining and installing appropriate software.
- Carrying out upgrades as necessary.
- Maintaining records of software in use and where it is installed.
- Maintaining and enhancing our presence on social media as appropriate.

### Committee Membership

Membership of this sub-committee would possess some understanding of any of the targeted skills needed, including but not limited to:

- Microsoft Office Suite
- Microsoft Power Point slide preparation for Sunday worship
- Audio Recording Software such as Audacity
- Computer Networking
- PC Setup, Maintenance and Updating
- Secure Antivirus Software installed and maintained on all computers
- Software Installation
- Sound System maintenance and training of operators to get the best quality sound
- Ability and interest in enhancing our use of social media

### **Sub-Committee Members**

Geoff Doane	-	Sound Specialist
Don Hailstone	-	Networking, wired & wireless
Shawn Silver	-	Server, Cloud Computing & Computer Maintenance
Rodger Middleton	-	Chair, Website, Visual Presentation in Sanctuary

**Respectfully Submitted, Rodger Middleton, Chair**

## **CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION**

Members: Judy Whiteway, Claude Isaacs, Wendy Hawley, Rev. Debbie Aitken, Stephanie Gorman, Rachel Sutherland, Sharon Ernst, Madi Silver, Katie Cawthra (Chairperson)

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

We have continued to have the designated space at the back of the sanctuary for anyone who would like to use, outfitted with rocking chairs, infant and toddler toys, a large mat, colouring supplies and playdoh. This is still a much loved space in our sanctuary and used often.

We have also continued to have our “Nursery” downstairs open each week for our youngest children, parents often accompany their children, but it is monitored by a volunteer. There is a new T.V. which is set up each week to stream the service from upstairs. We 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 readily available.

Our Sunday School has had a successful and happy year! I was the part-time employed Coordinator again this year. As done in previous years, instead of purchasing curriculum I wrote our own on a "semester" basis, based on our children’s individual needs and their current “funds of knowledge” that they bring to our classes.

As discussed last year, we decided not to have a Kid’s Korner at the UCW Christmas fundraiser due to low numbers as a result of the time change, but instead had the youth group participate in fundraising for the event.

We used online resources for our Christmas Pageant this year, and adapted found material to better fit RUC, the kids performed *A Super Christmas!!* This went very well, the kids all worked hard to make it a fun and memorable pageant!

This spring we had prepared about 50 treat and activity bags available to our children and youth who came to the Easter service this year, and everyone stayed together in the sanctuary for the family service.

We are very fortunate to have had many volunteers' help to make our year so successful, a very special thanks to Wendy and Judy for all they do!!!!

Our Youth-Led service and community BBQ will be held on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, our theme being Creation and Where We Come From!

## Youth Group

We had a fabulous second year with our newly organized Youth Group. We met every two weeks, with a few exceptions, and planned and facilitated many fundraising events this year, it was our committee's goal to become more community and outreach oriented. The youth raised money to donate to a family in need before Christmastime, they held a Christmas bake sale in efforts for UCW, they assembled 35 "Love Bags" for a Valentine's event for people in need, with help and guidance from Brenda and her mission work, these bags contained snacks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks, lip chap, and love notes for participants. The youth was also very excited to make nearly 50 ham sandwiches for a men's shelter, with personal notes from RockingHAM, our youth are very "punny!" The youth group also enjoyed events such as Claude's famous scavenger hunts, games nights, movie parties, making and selling pretzels at the fall fundraising event, and also helping with the auction, they also enjoyed learning opportunities such as a missions work presentation put on by Brenda. Our much anticipated Year End Youth Sleepover was held last evening (May 26) with a Pizza Party, Movie, Games, Snacks, Flashlight tag, and of course waffle breakfast in the morning. We had 14 youth join this year for the sleepover, and had between 12 and 18 participants consistently during our meetings and events.

Thank you so much to all who have helped us this year, a special thanks to Claude, Mary Lou, Brenda, John, Kathy, Wendy, Judy, Sharon, and Madi, and everyone else who has helped with planning, monitoring events, and driving!

## Youth/Young Adult Education

As discussed last year, we had hoped to have a confirmation class in the near future, and on Mother's Day of this year we confirmed three youth (two from RUC)! Debbie worked so hard to plan for the confirmation classes, facilitate, and organizing times that worked for the youth, whom have very busy schedules! We have had many enthusiastic comments from the youth about what they were learning, and the morning they were confirmed was very exciting for them.

## Adult Education

We have been so fortunate to have David spend the year with us, he and Debbie worked together to put on series for adult education, everything always ran smoothly with them working together, but everyone especially enjoyed learning about other faiths and different ways of thinking about spirituality, these themes have been a main highlight this year.

## GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR

- **Nursery:** Expand on the nursery resources, such as bringing in new toys, and continue to encourage people to use as they like. If we reach higher numbers, we will begin a search for more volunteers. Also, continue to maintain the children's space in the sanctuary.
- **Sunday School:** Continue to grow our Sunday School, and welcome all newcomers with warm and open arms.
- **Youth Group:** Continue to grow the Youth Group and ensure we are providing the youth of our community a happy and safe place to feel belonging. 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 the expanded employed spot has helped tremendously to ensure the right amount of time is being devoted to our youth.
- **Young Adult and Adult Education:** Continue with various study series and workshops.

It was a joy to chair the CD&E committee over the past few years, I am sad but also very excited to step back and assist and support a new chair for next year!

**Respectfully submitted, Katie Cawthra**

## MEMBERSHIP RELATIONS

Committee members: Vivian Coughlan, Sharon Ernst, Mary Lou Evans Isaacs, Eleanor King, Charlie Murphy, Noelle Murphy, Joanne Perry, Gaye Wishart and Jean Wentzell. Kay Youle is a Lifetime member. Also under Membership Relations are Webmaster: Rodger Middleton and Rockingham Reflections Editor Gary Wilson.

The Membership Relations Committee looks after Cup and Conversation three Sundays a month and obtains people to greet at the door every Sunday. We welcome assistance with these two ministries. We also maintain a supply of tea and coffee for the use of the congregation during the week as well as purchasing Just Us! coffee for Sunday's Cup and Conversation. We provide the juice for the Sunday School each week.

We started the 2017-2018 year off with our fall kickoff barbecue for the congregation. In December we provided snacks for two nights during exams for students at Mount St. Vincent University. The snacks are always appreciated by the students. The people who pass them out enjoy the event immensely. We hosted the Carols by Candlelight reception following the concert by our choirs.

We brought in the new year by having a gathering at Mary Lou's; a time of food and fellowship. We provided a birthday cake for Rev. Debbie and the Sunday School children made birthday cards.

Mary Lou provided cupcakes for Anniversary Sunday to accompany the lunch. On April 29<sup>th</sup> we hosted an event for David Atwood. The Pastoral Care Team provided the egg sandwiches and we made the others. Mary Lou provided a cake. It was a nice opportunity for members of the congregation to speak to David and Margaret. We will miss them but wish them well as David graduates and is ordained and starts his ministry career in PEI. On May 13<sup>th</sup> we hosted a breakfast for the confirmation class and those transferring their membership to Rockingham United. It was a lovely gathering with more than thirty people in attendance.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> we will join with the Christian Development Committee to provide a barbecue following the Youth Led service. There will be games available for the children and young at heart.

We will close the year with a gathering at Mary Lou's on June 24<sup>th</sup>. I would like to thank Sharon Ernst for representing the committee on Church Council. I will begin a new term in September.

**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 did not meet formally over the summer of 2017 but, when necessary, communication was maintained by email. A contract was prepared for Katie Cawthra who agreed to accept the new staff position as the Sunday School/Youth Group Coordinator for 2018. In July of 2017 two new manuals, the "Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, Practices" and the "Resources for Ministry and Personnel Committees", became effective. There was also a new Ministry Personnel salary scale issued for 2018 and in the cases where a manse is not provided, the minister would now receive a single comprehensive salary that incorporates what were formerly referred to as "base salary and housing allowance". The deadline for moving to this new model is July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. More policy updates to be applied to ministry personnel were issued several months later and were discussed at the November meeting of the M&P committee. Yearly police checks became mandatory and a new "Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy" required a renewal training course every five years. There was also issued a "New Policy on Workplace Violence and Harassment".

The Ministry and Personnel Committee met again on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to plan for the annual performance reviews. The United Church Ministry Personnel cost of living increase of 1.4%, effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 was applied to the salaries of the Minister, the Office Administrator, the Organist/Choir Director and the Sunday School/Youth Group Coordinator. The latest increase in minimum wage, effective April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, was added to the Janitor's salary.

Prior to the performance review of the Office Administrator the M&P Committee did a complete assessment of the changes to the job description from 2013 to the present. As a result of the apparent increase in responsibilities it was recommended to Council that the weekly work hours for the Office Administrator be increased from 25 to a maximum of 35 hours. A new contract was prepared and will become effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

**Respectfully submitted, Nancy Lowery**

## **OUTREACH and Refugee Committee**

This has been a wonderful year in many ways. It is my last report as Chair of Outreach as I come to the end of four years. 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.

This is the third year of an experiment to see if Outreach could continue to flourish without a specific committee as such but relied on people to take on activities of their choice. On the whole it has been successful, but it is suggested that some hybrid of this model whereby a few are permanent but only a small number is actually required. Generally, it has been found that people will rise up for a good cause as we have seen with the refugee sponsorship and our ongoing participation with the Provincial Private Refugee Sponsorship Round Table, our Outreach to Al Rasoul Islamic Centre and most recently to Shelter Nova Scotia, AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia, Out of the Cold, Brunswick Street Mission and the Society. Just a thought as we explore other governance issues as we develop for the future.

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

- a. Refugee sponsorship issues, ongoing;
- 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 of NS, ongoing;
- d. Outreach to the Al Rasoul Islamic Centre, ongoing;
- e. Community improvement campaign with Al Rasoul and the Ecology Action Centre, ongoing;
- f. Speakers Program, ongoing; and
- g. A Charitable Spring, ongoing.

Refugee Sponsorship has played a huge part in our overall efforts. We raised more than \$27000. In this effort. This focus has brought many people into the orbit of Outreach and many have participated in non-refugee related activities as well. It appears that after nearly three years of effort our family will arrive in mid-May. This has been a long-anticipated event and the start of an effort that RUC can deal with hands on, as opposed to the constant waiting and lack of information prior to this point. Few could have foreseen the wait and the constant requirement to adjust our efforts to meet new timings and conditions. This year also saw the arrival of Ghassan Kaseb in April as he was forced to leave Lebanon. We assisted by using some of the refugee funds to assist his travel arrangements. Our family finally arrived on 18 May 2018. This event saw a family to safely join together for the first time in more than seven years. The next twelve months should be a challenge but also rewarding.

The White Gift campaign in November-December has raised over \$2600. and provided more than 600 separate gifts for Shelter Nova Scotia and the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia. Over \$800. was raised this past year alone and over one third of those gifts.

We continued our participation with the Private Refugee Sponsorship Round Table under the chair of Liz MacBeth. We have been an active participant since its foundation. It has enabled us to both receive information and provide information as part of a network of over 110 separate and diverse groups.

Our efforts with Al Rasoul continue with the anticipated development of a community garden. Some special thanks should also be mentioned to Beth Wilson who has organized the Earth Day clean up at Dewolfe Park on 23 April. David Atwell's Genesis program was also a great event providing a further opportunity to reach out beyond our walls to other faith communities. It is hoped we can continue to build on these efforts.

The main event for Outreach was the panel discussion and question and answer event called "A Charitable Spring" held in the church hall at 7 PM on 18 April 2018. It saw a panel of five different

charitable organizations brought together to discuss their organizations goals and future developments and their key issues. These organizations were:

- a. Shelter Nova Scotia – Director Linda Wilson;
- b. AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia – Director Dena Simon;
- c. Brunswick Street Mission – Director Sandra Nicholas;
- d. Out of the Cold – Director Jeff Karabanow; and
- e. Society of Atlantic Heroes – Vice-President Maurice (Moe) Muise.

The event had approximately 80 persons in attendance including MLA Barbra Adams Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage and District 12 Councillor Richard Zurawski. There were, as typical of RUC, a vast array of refreshments that were enjoyed during and after the event. Many people stayed to talk with the panel members and their staff.

The event raised more than \$1600 that was divided amongst the five groups equally unless the giver specified a particular group. I have to publicly express my deep appreciation to the many volunteers who selflessly baked and prepared the food, did the set up and tear down as well as participating in the actual event. Special thanks should be given to Geoff Doane for his outstanding support with his sound system and recording of the event. Sylvia Thorne was simply outstanding in her support administratively and for her ideas and creativity. Two other people who also deserve mention, Liz MacBeth of the Provincial RoundTable on private refugee Sponsorship who assisted wherever she could including set up and tear down and Mr Joshua Young who did any job we set for him as well as taking pictures and video of the event. Mr Young has been of assistance in trying to find work for Nader Kaseb and is continuing to work on this issue with us.

One piece that is nearing completion is our first short film as RUC. As you are aware, most of the session was filmed and sound recorded courtesy of Josh Young and Geoff Doane. Joshua Young, a former director at DHX and film producer and Geoff has been a sound man for over 35 years; they have been instrumental in trying to get the basic messages out from each organization based on the event. It is our first foray into You Tube. We have tried to keep it to about 12 minutes as we thought any longer would be too long and people wouldn't watch. I have to do the introduction piece again, (I was too long winded ... a constant problem for me.) I will send it out to you before it goes live so you can turn it off if necessary. Josh and I tried to make sure the basic messages are intact but...I would rather have your OK up front. I am hoping to have a relatively finished product this week for your review. Any mistakes or omissions are mine not Josh's or Geoff's.

I would also like to mention other groups, although not officially part of Outreach, that have done amazing work which was in fact an Outreach effort of the finest kind. This includes the Men's Group support of Metro Turning point and the Breakfasts at Brunswick Street. The UCW for their outstanding support for virtually everything but also for Shelter Nova Scotia. The Munro family for their spectacular support for Brunswick Street Mission and the MS Society. The Youth Group for its ongoing efforts to both learn, being active and providing new opportunities for youth (not only from our Congregation) with Katie Cawthra. It is a great overall effort by the church as a whole and supports our efforts as an active and outward looking church.

This concludes my last annual report. My sincere thanks for the support I have received in the past term to everyone. I could not have pulled off many of the events and activities without the support of everyone.

**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 Wentzell, Joan Munro, Lynda Pentz, Diane Ward, Rev. Debbie Aitken

We were pleased to welcome David Atwood this year. He joined us as part of his intern ministry with RUC.

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 have reached the age of 90 and over with tea, treats and flowers and those between 80 & 90 receive birthday cards. We send cards for special anniversaries, 50, 60 & over years. Cards sent this year averaged 65. We also acknowledge significant events in the lives of our members through our Rockingham Reflections. We assist Rev Debbie with worship at Parkland Clayton Park, once a month, September to June. On average we offer support to 35-50 members of our congregation each month. We appreciate information that helps us update our birthday and anniversary greetings and other information important to our church family.

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

Since our last report we said goodbye to our long time member, Jean McIntyre, she will be missed and we thank her for her caring support. Our thanks as always 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)

Full Court Meetings of Halifax Presbytery were held at CFB Stadacona (June 2017), St. Luke's United (September 2017), Bedford United (January 2018), Woodlawn United (April 2018) and St. John's United Fall River in May 2018..

The main business of the meetings was church reorganization which will take place on January 1 2019. There will be 16 regions with no presbyteries or conferences. This could change as the final vote will be held at General Council 43 which meets in August 2018.

**Respectively submitted, William Dodsworth**

## STEWARDSHIP

Members: David Carmichael, Lynn Knapp, Brenda Munroe, Charles Murphy, Beth Wilson, and Sandra Taweel (Chairperson)

Our first meeting of the year was held in early September with two new members present. With seven eager participants we mapped out our plans for the year. Lynn Knapp generously agreed

to continue to organize the Fund script campaign. David Carmichael agreed to soldier on and organize the after church counters.

The first Stewardship event held was an Octoberfest party. We served Octoberfest sausage on a bun with all the “fixins” and German Apple cake for dessert. David Carmichael manned the bar which served Root beer, Ginger beer and butter beer. After supper there were some fun events, a Chicken dance contest, beer barrel bowling and a goat milking contest. We send many thanks to Rick Mercer who promoted our event on his national show. Thanks also goes out to Lauren Knapp who was our official photographer and organized the photo booth. This event raised just under \$2000.

November is Stewardship month at Rockingham United. The theme of this year’s campaign was “The realities of maintaining our church building”. Once again the congregation was encouraged to participate in the PAR method for weekly offering. Thank you to the committee members who helped prepare the Stewardship letter and hand distribute it to many members of the congregation.

At our December meeting we had a fun morning organizing the Christmas letter for distribution and once again thanks goes out to those committee members who hand delivered these letters to the congregation.

In January we decided to combat the winter doldrums’ with an old time music night. The Bedford Fiddlers donated their time and talent for the evening. There were a large group of players with various musical styles. Many members of the congregation attended as well as a number of Bedford Fiddler groupies who enjoyed dancing to their music. The hit of the night was a very talented lady playing the Ugly Stick. Light refreshments were served and we made a profit of \$750.00

To warm up the cold days of February we joined with the worship committee to host a Soup Luncheon. This luncheon was immediately following the Sunday service. It was very well attended and a warm time of fellowship was enjoyed by all. \$423.85 was realized by this event.

As April arrived and people began to long for spring we decided to hold an event with a spring theme and so Tea and Terrariums was born. At this event participants were provided with plants, containers, soil and decorations. Then they were instructed as to how to properly plant a succulent or tropical garden in a pot. Many members of the congregation, as well as a group of Red Hat ladies attended. It was also nice to see several members of the surrounding community attend. It turned out to be a very fun event and many people enjoyed their refreshments while admiring each other’s projects. This event raised \$446.94.

Our last big event of the year was a Time and Talent auction. I would like to take a moment to thank all of the congregation members who kindly donated many wonderful items and imaginative talents. It was a fun evening of playfully competitive bidding made more enjoyable by our enthusiastic auctioneer Graeme Sweet. Many thanks also go to Sylvia who went above and beyond to keep us organized. At the end of the night we had raised almost \$5000.00

All of the committee members put many hours into delivering what we hope were enjoyable events that brought the congregation together and in a fun way generated funds for Rockingham United.

I would like to recognize the invaluable aid provided by Rev. Debbie and Sylvia. They were generous with their time for my many questions and an invaluable resource for all our events.

**Respectfully submitted, Sandra Taweel**

### 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 May 1, 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

This year the Worship Committee welcomed intern David Atwood into the Rockingham family. David blessed Rockingham United Church Worship with his many talents including his drumming skills, his leadership skills, his sermons and his connection with the children & youth during children’s time. We wish him all the best as he continues his spiritual journey as York Cove pastoral charge in PEI. 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 & Anne Forbes 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 Tuesday 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.
- Special services such as Remembrance Day, Baden-Powell Scouting Sunday large attendance of Scouts & Guides, Anniversary Sunday Café in the church hall, special drumming by David Atwood & the Youth and Hilary Brown cellist performance in Worship
- Rev Debbie led An Advent Space for slowing down and David Atwood led Genesis: A Living Conversation during Lent that brought together many faiths at many places of worship in Halifax including RUC, Al-Rasoul Islamic Centre and 2 synagogues.
- Volunteers decorating of the church during Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter time. David Atwood and members of the congregation for making Bermuda kites for Easter Sunrise service.
- We had dedication of the new doors at the front of the church which also led to conversations of improving the Narthex over the summer months and making it more welcoming .
- The Youth of our congregation have really stepped up by participating in Worship once a month and serving Communion to the congregation
- Technology Sub Committee formed through meetings with Worship, Office personnel & Building and Property. This committee will fall under Building & Property

### Summary

Throughout the past year we celebrated 3 Confirmations and 7 transfers of memberships in Worship. We had 4 weddings & 2 baptisms. We also experienced the grief of losing a loved one with 10 funerals. We lost mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and friends. All who enriched our lives at Rockingham. In their memory we strive to answer God's call as we welcome our refugee family, Haifa and Helen, and venture through the open doors God presents to us.

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.

This is my last year as chair of the Worship Committee. I have enjoyed 9 years on the Worship Committee and want to thank all of those over the years that helped me to be the person I am today, members in the committee, Church Council, the congregation, adherents and of course, Rev. Debbie Aitken. I would not have been able to chair the last 4 years without you all. I look forward to new adventures at Rockingham as I prepare myself to answer God's call and walk through those open doors.

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. The committee is 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

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### CHOIRS

#### YOUTH CHOIR

Members: Rebecca Brown, Hannah Gorman, Beth Hailstone, Alanah Hawley, Liam Johnston, Lily McLeod, Daniel Sutherland, Maya Sutherland, Patrick Sutherland, Amber Thornton and Paige Thornton.

The ten-member Rockingham United Youth Choir participated faithfully and joyfully in at least two services each month this church year, often sharing music in three of four Sundays in a month. Our anthems were occasionally enhanced with percussion accompaniment by our student intern, David Atwood, and we were thrilled to have him play along with us. The Carols By Candlelight service was a highlight, especially as we joined with the Men's Choir, the Ladies Chorus, and the combined choir numbers. The Youth also offered selections during the Special Easter Music Sunday.

The enthusiasm of the Youth Choir was most evident as we shared two concerts with the Men's Choir, at Rockingham and at William Black in Glen Margaret. Liam join with us just in time for these events. We ended our year with a celebration meal, and a couple more anthems in the Sunday School closing on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. A special thank you to the Youth Choir parents who accommodated our busy schedule.

**Respectfully submitted, Kathy Stone, Music Director**

#### SENIOR CHOIR

Members: Kathy Stone (Director), Cathy Gillis (President), Samantha Bixby, Denis Boisvert, 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 Phelan, Carole Phillips, Donna Schnare, Dale Ward, Beth Wilson, Gary Wilson

**Overview:** The Rockingham United Church Senior Choir is a 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. The choir was delighted to have David and Margaret Atwood join us for the year while David was completing his internship at

Rockingham United. The choir will miss the addition of David's various percussion instruments but we wish them both well as they continue on their journey. The choir also welcomed Samantha Bixby and Denis Boisvert to the "blue people" and look forward to many more Thursdays and Sundays with them.

Rockingham United's annual "Carols by Candlelight Service" was held on December 10<sup>th</sup>. The Senior Choir was joined by the Youth Choir and Men's Choir for this annual event. During the worship service on Sunday April 8th, the Senior Choir along with the Youth and Mens choirs presented a service of Easter music.

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, Sam MacKay, 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. 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 Junior choirs for the annual Carol's by Candlelight concert. We also participated in the Good Friday Service. Our season this year ended with two concerts, one at Rockingham United Church and one at William Black Memorial United Church. The concerts, "*Songs of Faith*", were presented by a combined Youth Choir/Men's Choir.

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

Although there is some uncertainty at the present time around what the future holds for United Church Women's groups, the members of our three units are still feeling very positive about our future roles in working alongside one another in our support of Rockingham United Church and our Mission and Service projects. After the United Church of Canada votes on the changes to its mandate, there will be no more Maritime Conference UCW. We will no longer be called a Presbyterial but will most likely change to a regional UCW with local and regional meetings.

In 2017 we held meetings in September and October to plan for our Annual Christmas Sale, and a wrap-up meeting in November following the sale. On offer at the event, held Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, were a variety of home-made baked goods, jams, pickles and handcrafts, along with items made by the RUC Men's Group and a variety of used books. Many comments were received from participants about how relaxing and enjoyable they found the atmosphere to be, which was in part due to the delicious offerings of our popular Christmas Café and the informal, comfy seating areas.

Our new bake tray initiative was launched in November, where orders could be placed for small or large trays of either a shortbread selection, or variety of squares, with delivery in December. This was extremely popular, especially as many people host get-togethers with family and friends in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Our last event for 2017 was the Christmas social in December, where our three units participated in a themed worship programme led by the Laura Wright Unit. This included special readings which were interspersed with carols accompanied by Heather McLearn on the harp. Donna Schnare organised some fun games and the evening wrapped up with a social time and refreshments served by the Clayton Park unit. Donations of items for homeless men were also collected at the social.

In January 2018 we held our Annual General Meeting, where we presented our proposed budget to the membership. We also made the decision to cash in our Investment Certificates and use the monies for kitchen upgrades, which was the intended designation for these funds. These upgrades will be carried out in July when the church is closed for services. In February, we held a successful bake sale in conjunction with the Men's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. 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 participated in the World Day of Prayer service being hosted by Birch Cove Baptist Church, along with ladies from Saint Benedict's. The service was prepared by the women of Suriname, situated in the northeastern part of South America and the theme of the service was for us to think about and evaluate how our actions affect our planet. Following the service, we enjoyed a time of fellowship, along with refreshments provided by the ladies of Birch Cove. Our Easter food drive initiative in March was very successful again this year, with many needed items being donated and delivered to the Food Bank prior to the Easter holidays.

Following the April 15<sup>th</sup> service, the Laura Wright Unit organised and 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. In May, we held our annual UCW pot-luck supper, where we enjoyed great food followed by our guest speaker, Charlotte Wood, telling us about her amazing trip to China accompanied by beautiful pictures of the various places and

sites she visited while there. Our last event before the summer holidays will be the members of each unit dining out together at a local restaurant, usually before the end of June.

### UCW Financial Reports January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017

#### 2017 ROCKINGHAM UNITED CHURCH WOMEN TREASURY REPORT

##### RECEIPTS

Opening Balance Forward		<u>7819.37</u>
Investment Interest	200.00	
Christmas Sale (late sales)	458.75	
Bake Sale	817.00	
AGM Offering	59.00	
Laura Wright Unit	1100.00	
Jean Hogan Unit	450.00	
Clayton Park Unit	300.00	
Baked Bean Sale	587.50	
Bank Interest	0.11	
Mite Box	54.00	
Kitchen Use	100.00	
Least Coin	11.40	
Christmas Sale	6521.60	
World Day of Prayer Offering	321.25	
Anniversary Pins	24.00	
TOTAL	11004.61	<u>18823.98</u>

##### EXPENDITURES

Rockingham United Church	4000.00	
Mission and Service	1600.00	
Brunswick Street	225.00	
St. Paul's	175.00	
Camp Kidston	300.00	
Dal Campus Ministry	100.00	
Atl. Ministry of the Deaf	100.00	
Bake Sale	817.00	
Bank Fees	13.00	
World Day of Prayer Offering	321.25	
Kitchen	57.91	
Anniversary Pins	42.00	
Presbyterial Dues	92.00	
Mite Box	54.00	
Least Coin	11.40	
Christmas Sale	297.74	
Sale Float	465.00	
Staff Gifts	225.00	
TOTAL	8896.30	<u>8896.30</u>

**CLOSING BANK BALANCE** 9927.68

**2017 UCW Petty Cash Report****RECEIPTS**

Balance Forward		<u>44.90</u>
Received from Jean Hogan Unit for Anniversary Pins	18.00	
Sale of salad plates	10.00	
Christmas Sale (late sales)	32.00	
Christmas Sale (late sales)	17.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<u>121.90</u>

**EXPENSES**

Joan Aitken (kitchen)	6.90	
Receipt Book	13.70	
Heather for sympathy card	9.20	
Joan Aitken (plastic wrap)	11.50	
Stamps	9.80	
Eve Tupper (planter)	13.70	
Heather (Christmas Sale name tags)	5.72	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<u>70.52</u>

**CLOSING BALANCE** 51.38

**INVESTMENTS**

In addition to the balance in our bank account and petty cash on hand we have \$5,000.00 invested with the Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada. These are in the form of 1 @ \$1,000.00 and 2 @ \$2,000.00. These funds came from our kitchen account and were set aside to be used for purchases for the kitchen. We receive an annual return of 4% on these investments.

**Respectfully submitted, Joanne Perry**

## 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. While we have 46 men on our email distribution list, we typically have 15 – 18 ready and willing to participate in our various activities each year.

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

### Planned activities

**September: RUC/BUC Golf Challenge:** On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 8 men from Bedford United Church and 12 men from Rockingham United attended this outing at Lost Creek. A great day was had by all and the scores were secondary. Rockingham bounced back bringing the Challenge Trophy home with an adjusted score of 41.416 vs Bedford's 42.625, certainly not a cake walk on this occasion. The longest drive winner was David Martin (RUC); the closest to the pin winner was Richard Cushing, a friend of Hiram Tiller's (RUC) and the most honest golfer was Alan Schnare (RUC).

**January:** Again this year, a Mooseheads Hockey Game outing that was preceded by dinner at the Midtown occurred. On this occasion we had about 10 guys in total from Rockingham and Bedford United Men's Groups. This event seems to have lost its popularity, especially by the men of Rockingham United.

### Outreach Projects

**Monthly Lunch Meetings:** Our monthly lunch meetings continued this year. This is the fifth 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 the shelter or distributed through the ARK program. We thank Len Sweett for his continued willingness to look after getting these items from the lunch to the mission.

**Brunswick Street Mission Breakfasts:** Our men continued to agree to support Brunswick Street Mission taking responsibility for a 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, February 13, 2018 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 13<sup>th</sup> this year and realized the sale of 72 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 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

**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, 2017 – May 15, 2018

<b>Opening Balance May 15, 2017</b>		<b>\$2,348.93</b>
<b>Receipts:</b>		
Memorial Tree	\$1,075.00	
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	\$1,092.50	
Lobster takeout 2018	<u>\$745.00</u>	5,261.43
<b>Disbursements:</b>		
Brunswick Street Breakfasts	366.33	
Fairview Family Resource Centre (Family Support)	100.00	
Transfer to Church Operating Fund	<u>2,578.15</u>	<u>3,044.48</u>
<b>Closing Balance May 15, 2018</b>		<b><u>\$2,216.95</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 15 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 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. 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 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 higher than Returning Visits.
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**Respectfully Submitted, Rodger Middleton**

### 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](mailto:church.office@rockinghamunited.org) with your request.

### CO-OP PLAYGROUP

This lively group of caregivers and preschoolers continues to meet most Friday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. This activity occurs from September to the end of May with an average

attendance of 16 children. We enjoy free playtime and a break for stories and singing. We usually end with a group lunch time and free play with balls. Come and join us in the fall if you have a little one in your care and are looking for a fun social time with other children and adults. Please contact the church for contact information.

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

## **STATISTICS**

### Year Ending December 31, 2017

- ❖ Households under Pastoral Care - 322
- ❖ Households Financially Supporting - 208
- ❖ Number of Baptisms - 4
- ❖ Number of Funerals - 8
- ❖ Number of Marriages - 3
- ❖ Average weekly attendance – 125

..... **END** .....