

**Rockingham United Church**  
**Halifax, Nova Scotia**



**Report of**  
**Joint Needs Assessment Committee**  
**December, 2009**

**Song of Faith**  
**A Statement of Faith of**  
**The United Church of Canada**

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The Joint Needs Assessment Committee opened all its meetings with a reading of a portion of the *Song of Faith*. The following opened the meeting where the Committee reached agreement on the content of its report. We feel it speaks to us and we hope it will speak to the people of Rockingham United.

We sing of a church  
    seeking to continue the story of Jesus  
    by embodying Christ's presence in the world.  
We are called together by Christ  
    as a community of broken but hopeful believers,  
    loving what he loved,  
    living what he taught,  
    striving to be faithful servants of God  
    in our time and place.  
Our ancestors in faith  
    bequeath to us experiences of their faithful living;  
    upon their lives our lives are built.  
Our living of the gospel makes us a part of this communion of  
saints,  
    experiencing the fulfillment of God's reign  
    even as we actively anticipate a new heaven and a new  
earth.

The church has not always lived up to its vision.  
It requires the Spirit to reorient it,  
    helping it to live an emerging faith while honouring  
    tradition,  
    challenging it to live by grace rather than entitlement,  
for we are called to be a blessing to the earth.

We sing of God's good news lived out,  
a church with purpose:  
    faith nurtured and hearts comforted,  
    gifts shared for the good of all,  
    resistance to the forces that exploit and marginalize,  
    fierce love in the face of violence,  
    human dignity defended,  
    members of a community held and inspired by God,  
    corrected and comforted,  
    instrument of the loving Spirit of Christ,  
    creation's mending.  
We sing of God's mission

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# **INTRODUCTION**

This Report of a Joint Needs Assessment Committee is submitted to support a request to the Halifax Presbytery to declare a ministerial vacancy in the Rockingham United Pastoral Charge, in order to initiate the search for a new Minister.

## **Transition Ministry**

Reverend Martin Reid resigned in the spring of 2008. Appointed by the Halifax Presbytery, Reverend Paulette Phillips has been providing interim ministry and leading the congregation through the Transition process since the beginning of September 2008.

## **Joint Needs Assessment Committee**

The Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC) was elected on September 20, 2009, at a Congregational Meeting. It held its first meeting on October 14. Presbytery representatives were Reverend Trent Cleveland-Thompson and Sally Budge. The Committee elected Doug Chaytor as Chair and Kim MacMillan as Secretary. The other members were Andrew Dickieson, Heather McLearn, and Crystal Wentzell.

The JNAC developed a Needs Assessment Survey that was distributed at the November 15, 2009 Church Service and mailed to all other members and known adherents. Returns were accepted up to the second succeeding Sunday. The Committee was impressed with the number of completed surveys and was especially impressed and grateful for the truly significant number of written comments. Additionally, Committee members gathered information individually or collectively from a variety of sources. These included Reverend Phillips, the church treasurer, some committee chairs, the Transition Team and some community sources. The cooperative responses from all these people were indeed gratifying.

## **Recommendation**

The Joint Needs Assessment Committee recommends that Halifax Presbytery declare a vacancy for an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada.



# **ROCKINGHAM UNITED CHURCH: Mission and Vision**

## **Mission Statement**

Rockingham United exists to Gather people of Faith and through God Empower them to Go Forth making our community and the world a better place in which to live.

## **Vision Statement**

We see ourselves as a thriving, welcoming, multi-generational community of disciples, centered on the Word of God, reaching out and positively impacting all of God's Creation.

# **PROFILE 1: Our Community**

## **Halifax**

Rockingham United Church is located in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Halifax is the second largest ice-free harbour in the world and the capital of the province of Nova Scotia. In 1996, Halifax County, Dartmouth, Bedford, and the city of Halifax amalgamated to form the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Accordingly, the population of the HRM was 372,679 and the urban area has a population of 282,924, based on the 2006 census.

## **Rockingham**

The community of Rockingham is located along the Bedford Highway and runs inland from the western shore of the Bedford Basin (see [www.maps.google.com](http://www.maps.google.com)). Rockingham is a short drive to downtown Halifax, approximately 8 km. The area includes several well-established residential subdivisions, as well as the rapidly growing area of Clayton Park West. Through the settlement of immigrants, the whole area of Rockingham has become quite culturally diverse.

## **Health Care**

Halifax has one of the largest concentrations of health care facilities and specialists in Canada. Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre is the province's largest health care centre for adults, and the IWK Health Centre provides care to women, children and youth. Dalhousie Medical School is one of Canada's oldest medical schools, and boasts world-class research facilities, top educators, and investigators. For these reasons and more, the Places Rated Almanac gives Halifax the highest rated health care service in Canada and the fifth highest rated in North America.

## **Education**

Within the HRM, there is a well-established network of public and private schools. In the area served by the church, there are schools providing both English and French immersion instruction for students from primary to grade 12.

The municipality is also home to the following post-secondary educational institutions: Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, Mount Saint Vincent University (located within walking distance to Rockingham United Church), the Halifax campus of Université Saint-Anne, University of King's College, Atlantic School of Theology, NSCAD University, the Centre for Arts and Technology, and the Nova Scotia Community College.

With so many post-secondary institutions, there is a vibrant youth culture. Given the number of universities, teaching hospitals and research facilities, Halifax is also reported to be Canada's second largest scientific community.

## **The Arts**

During the year there are a wide variety of regional, national, and international festivals within the HRM and throughout the province. These include: The Atlantic Film Festival, The Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo, The Halifax Busker Festival, Greekfest, The Atlantic Jazz Festival, The Multicultural Festival, Shakespeare by the Sea, and The Tall Ships, just to name a few. Other cultural venues for the performing arts, namely The Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, Neptune Theatre, Symphony Nova Scotia, provide major cultural attractions for the Atlantic region.

## **Shopping and Recreation**

Bayers Lake Industrial Park, a major retail business park is located near the community of Rockingham.

The HRM is home to a number of outdoor recreational opportunities, numerous ocean and lake beaches, urban and rural parks, and green spaces. The Halifax Mooseheads of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League play out of the Halifax, Metro Centre. In 2011, the HRM will be the host community for Canada Winter Games, as a result, there has been an increase in sports infrastructure. A Fieldhouse, with two 25 metre pools, is currently being built within our district.

## **For More Information**

Rockingham is a vibrant community within the Halifax Regional Municipality for both young and old alike. For further information on Halifax, check the following websites: [www.halifax.ca](http://www.halifax.ca) and [www.halifaxinfo.com](http://www.halifaxinfo.com).

## PROFILE 2: Our Ministry

### Our Mission

Rockingham United exists to **Gather** people of Faith and through God **Empower** them to **Go Forth** making our community and the world a better place in which to live.

### How We Carry Out Our Mission

#### 1) We gather people of faith

We gather throughout the week, month and seasons in a variety of ways:

**Worship.** At Rockingham United we open our worship services and congregational life to all who wish to join us. Attendance exceeds 100 people weekly, and on special occasions (such as Remembrance Sunday) is considerably higher. We have a lay co-president who routinely reads the announcements and prepares and presents the *Prayers of the People*. Members of the congregation routinely read the scripture and lead the children's time. This summer Rockingham had a positive experience of sharing worship with nearby Fairview United Church.

**Music.** We have a long tradition of making music, and are especially proud of our three choirs: a 25 voice senior choir, a men's choir of approximately 20 men, and a youth choir with 8 members. Our choirs are present at services, and they also perform in concert and at other special events at RUC. We also host concerts from other traveling choirs and hold concerts in our sanctuary in cooperation with local musicians.

**Sunday School.** Our Sunday school, though small, meets weekly in the church hall during the service.

**Groups.** Rockingham United Church hosts a number of groups whose purpose is to enhance the spiritual and social life of the community, as well as provide fundraising. These groups include: a Friendly Social, Prayer Circle, three units of United Church Women, Men's Group, and Women's Spirituality, Elderobics. Sparks, Cubs and Scouts also meet in our hall. At this time we do not have our own youth group, however recently Rockingham youth were invited to join the group at nearby Fairview United Church.

**Committees.** We gather monthly, in the official committees of Rockingham United to plan and execute the work of our church within the congregation and in our local and world communities.

#### 2) Through God, we empower them

We empower ourselves to make our community and world a better place in which to live through our worship, and through our friendship and support for each other. We also participate in specialized workshops offered within our church and by Halifax Presbytery.

### **3) We go forth to make our community and the world a better place**

Rockingham United participates in a number of outreach activities, both locally and internationally:

**Pastoral care.** We have a very active Pastoral Care Committee who visit elderly and shut-in members of RUC, contact those in our church family in particular need of support, and take home communion to members who are unable to get to the church.

**Local outreach.** Rockingham United participates in a large number of local outreach activities, primarily for organizations that feed, shelter and support homeless men, women, youth and children.

**Gatherings.** We participate in a number of ecumenical services in our local area throughout the year, including the UCW World Day of Prayer service, Advent and Good Friday services, and the annual Anti-Racism Service.

**International outreach.** Rockingham United supports the United Church of Canada's Mission & Service programs through financial contributions. We also collect bottles for Education Haiti, a project which has built and maintains a school in Haiti. We support the Halifax Grandmothers for the relief of AIDS in Africa, and we have mounted events to help mitigate the effects of global disasters.

### **Demographics of our Ministry**

According to the 2008 Yearbook, there are 336 households in the pastoral charge – with 285 of these supporting the church community. The average attendance at Sunday morning service in October and November, 2009, was 123 and 146 respectively.

### **Recent Ministry Personnel**

This community entered into a time of transition in September 2008. In addition to ordained ministers, we have a long history of staff associates, who were often student ministers. During this second transition year, we have not had a staff associate.

### **Governance Structure**

Rockingham United has adopted the Church Council Model for governance, with the usual committees reporting to an Executive . At the time of writing this report, our governance is under review to bring it into alignment with existing United Church of Canada polity. In general, our committees are adequately staffed.

### **For More Information**

For more information about the ministry of Rockingham United Church, please refer to the website at [www.rockinghamunited.org](http://www.rockinghamunited.org). Specifically, on our website you can find our handbook at the bottom of the page on the Executive Committee, and our Annual Report, which is listed on the sidebar menu.

## **PROFILE 3: Our Resources**

### **Property**

Rockingham United Church is an A-frame design. The sanctuary seats 350 people for church services, as well as a choir of up to 30 members. Downstairs, the building includes:

- 4500 square foot gymnasium
- 800 square foot stage
- Parlour style meeting room with sofas and armchairs
- Meeting room with tables and chairs, and an area designated as the “chapel” for smaller, more intimate needs.
- Nursery
- Choir room
- Fully equipped kitchen
- Offices for the minister, office administrator and the staff associate

There is a 13-passenger elevator that enables access to all of the facilities. We also have a paved parking lot.

The building is 46 years old and well-maintained. It is not in need of any major work at this time. Total estimated replacement cost in 2007 was \$3,300,000. The 2007 Appraisal for Insurance Purposes is available upon request.

### **Manse**

The church does not own a manse, but provides a housing allowance in lieu of.

### **Equipment**

The church is equipped with a variety of modern technologies that enhance our work and worship. There is a high-end sound and audiovisual system in the sanctuary. There is also a sound system for the gym, as well as technology to broadcast the service into the nursery and narthex. The sanctuary contains a well maintained Casavant pipe organ and a piano. There are also two pianos downstairs.

The church does not lack any of the accessories expected to be found in a community of this size. All pews have hymn books and Bibles. New communion ware was recently dedicated. There are ample chairs and tables for special events. We also have a small but nicely stocked library that is not actively in use at this time.

The office has a photocopier, and there are several networked computers throughout the building, including computers for the minister, office administrator, staff associate and video projector operator.

## **Finances**

Rockingham United Church receives income from members, adherents and fund raising activities. The church has a history of successful fundraising to support our income. Ventures such as the Candy Cane Carnival, bake sales, congregational suppers, take-out lunches, concerts, yard sale, etc. are always well attended.

Our congregation also responds well to fundraising for specific needs. For example, the congregation recently raised over \$3000 to assist a parishioner with travel for serious surgery. We have also run successful larger financial campaigns – the most recent being the fundraising for the installation of the elevator.

The congregation has a history of contributing in excess of \$25,000 to the Mission and Service Fund annually.

Annual income to cover routine operating expenses has increased annually over the period covered by the audited financial statements for 2002 to 2008. The church also has some designated funds that experienced income variations over the same period. The net effect was an increase in total income of about 17% even though there was a drop of less than 1% year over year 2007 to 2008. Total disbursements were essentially identical in 2007 and 2008 resulting in a 5% deficit in the operating fund in 2007 but less than 1% in 2008. Both these deficits were covered by the Operating Reserve Fund.

There are several other reserve funds that serve to protect the Operating Fund. These funds are designated for items such as the organ and the building. There is also a Capital Fund and a Manse Fund. The latter resulted from the sale of that property. All together these funds equal about twice the annual operating expenses.

The 2008 Audited Financial Statements are available on request.

## **Communication**

Rockingham United Church has a quarterly newsletter, called Rockingham Reflections, available on the web. Our web presence is updated weekly with the Order of Service and notices. The Church has an archives collection. It also has a photo directory of members.

## **Staff**

The RUC community has been led by an interim minister since September 2008. In addition to the Minister, there are three paid part-time staff:

- Church Office Administrator, accountable through the Ministry and Personnel Committee,
- Caretaker, also accountable through the Ministry and Personnel Committee, and
- Music Director (Church Organist \ Choir Director), accountable through the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

The job descriptions for these positions are available on request.

## **Volunteers**

Rockingham United Church is supported by a large core of hardworking volunteers who attend to all facets of church life. There are always enough volunteers to staff social and fundraising events, as well as Sunday morning services. Additionally, we have many volunteers who prepare our audiovisual presentations and run the equipment, look after the computers, maintain our archives, write the newsletter and maintain the website.

## **For More Information**

For more information about the resources of Rockingham United Church, please refer to the website at [www.rockinghamunited.org](http://www.rockinghamunited.org). Specifically, on our website you can find our handbook at the bottom of the page on the Executive Committee, and our Annual Report, which is listed on the sidebar menu.

## **PROFILE 4: Job Description**

### **Position Summary**

This is a full time (40 hours per week) position for Ministry Personnel Ordained in Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care. It will be of particular interest to Ministry Personnel with strong leadership, educational and development abilities gained through education or experience. The congregation will welcome a warm, caring, outgoing individual of strong faith with excellent preaching skills. The challenge will be guiding the congregation through the completion of a transition to rebuild a stable, positive and vibrant Christian community.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

#### **Worship**

- Plan and lead Sunday worship
- Work collaboratively with the Worship Committee, the Christian Development Committee and the Music Director when planning services
- Include laity in the planning and delivery of services, frequently but not always.
- Include a children's time and other opportunities for young people to participate in worship from time to time
- Balance the need for a variety of service preferences (type, delivery, music, prayers, extent of lay participation in planning and delivery)
- Prepare sermons that are at times thought-provoking, challenging, educational, and socially relevant

#### **Sacraments and Related Duties**

- Administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion in accordance with United Church of Canada policies
- Provide opportunities for accepting new members into the congregation through Professions of Faith and Transfers of Membership
- Perform marriages and funerals for members and adherents
- Meet with parents, couples and families to offer education and guidance related to the above commitments

#### **Pastoral care**

- Develop a co-operative working relationship with the Pastoral Care Committee.
- Provide training, direction and support for the Pastoral Care Committee
- Provide spiritual support for members and adherents who are seriously sick, bereaved or in crisis, as determined to be needed co-operatively with the Pastoral Care Committee.
- Provide spiritual counseling as needed

### **Administration of Pastoral Charge**

- Serve as an ex officio member of all Church Committees with the exceptions listed in the UCC Handbook (By-law 122, p 107, 2007)
- Attend Executive and Worship committee meetings
- Attend other committee meetings as the business of the committee might from time to time require. This is not to be interpreted as an expectation for routine attendance.
- Direct any organizational matters to the Administration committee
- Communicate routinely on matters associated with the position, e.g. responding to enquiries, making enquiries, and initiating activities
- Write general communications including Christmas and Easter letters, and a column in Reflections (quarterly newsletter)
- Participate in Halifax Presbytery and Maritime Conference committees as required
- Inform the Ministry and Personnel Committee when duties requested by the congregation appear to exceed this description

### **Education**

- Develop and support Christian education programs for all ages

### **Transformation**

While carrying out the tasks of running a pastoral-sized charge, this minister will be leading the church out of a period of transition and into a period of stable working relationships. The means of doing this will probably include (but not be limited to):

- Getting to know the people of the congregation,
- Initially having a strong presence with committees and at church events, and
- Providing open communication about priorities and church activities and practices.

There is evidence (revealed by the JNAC survey) that there is strong interest in the congregation to return to its former strength with families and activities. If this is to happen, the congregation will need support to develop the skills, activities and programs needed for growth in the church community. While it is NOT the mandate of this minister to provide these programs, this minister should be aware and supportive of this desire for growth.

## **Time Allocations**

Worship and Sacraments 40%

Administration (including working with Committees) 35%

Pastoral Care 10%

Presbytery 5%

Education 10%

The time allocations recognize that much of the organized transition/transformation activities will be done through groups and committees, and having a presence at church events. As the transition progresses, it is expected that the time required in this activity will be reduced and redirected to other activities. All priorities throughout the transition and thereafter will be set in collaboration with the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

## **Accountability**

The Minister is accountable to the Executive Committee through the Ministry and Personnel Committee. The Minister is a member of the Halifax Presbytery.

## **PROFILE 5: Skills, etc.**

### **Skills**

- Excellent listening, oral and written communication skills
- Leadership
- Pastoral care skills, including the ability to empathize, support, comfort and advise those in need
- Excellent preaching skills including an ability to offer thought provoking and uplifting sermons and superior knowledge of scripture
- Facilitation of group processes
- Mediation skills
- Negotiating and setting priorities, communicating them to the pastoral charge, and following through with ongoing communication

### **Personal Qualities**

- Warm, outgoing, friendly, compassionate
- A good listener for all ages
- Self-awareness – knows strengths and knows when to ask for other leadership
- A strong appreciation for music for worship and a willingness to work with the congregation's music tradition.
- Energetic
- Ability to work collegially with committees, individuals and staff at RUC and ministerial personnel at other churches
- Willingness to work in a community that is undergoing change
- Ability to inspire people to take personal responsibility for their contribution to church community life
- Interest in programs for all ages

### **Qualifications and Experience**

- A minister ordained in Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care
- Experience with a pastoral sized charge
- Training or demonstrated ability in conflict resolution and transformation
- Demonstrated ability in working with a church council and its committees
- Experience providing a variety of worship services
- Experience in supporting growth in a church community

## **PROFILE 6: Terms of Call for Ordained Minister**

Rockingham United Church is committed to honouring the requirements for salary and benefits for Ministry Personnel as defined in By-law 036, Remuneration of Ministry Personnel (P. 64 UC Handbook, 2007). The Pastoral Charge is prepared to negotiate supplementing some of these requirements depending on the education, experience and suitability of a Minister for its needs.

### **1. Hours of Work**

The hours per week will vary throughout the year but should be an average of 40 hours per week. The Minister is entitled to two (2) days (consecutive or separate) off per week. These days are to be decided in consultation with the Ministry and Personnel Committee so that the congregation is aware of the Minister's rest days.

### **2. Vacation**

All vacation dates must be mutually agreeable between the Minister and the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

The Minister is entitled to one (1) month vacation per year. The Minister will notify the Chairperson of the Worship Committee in order for pulpit supply to be arranged. The Worship Committee is responsible for arranging pulpit supply.

### **3. Paid Holidays**

Paid holidays in Nova Scotia are New Years Day, Good Friday, Canada Day, Labour Day, and Remembrance Day. Rockingham United Church will also recognize, Victoria Day, Natal Day, Thanksgiving Day and Boxing Day. When these days fall on a Sunday or another day requiring the services of the Minister, time off in lieu of will be granted on dates to be agreed upon by the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

### **4. Sick Leave**

Up to (2) weeks (maximum two Sundays) absence per year due to illness will be granted without loss of pay. Time off in excess of this will be dealt with as per the Long Term Disability provisions in "The Manual of the United Church of Canada" section 037.

### **5. Bereavement Leave**

Provisions as stated in "The Manual of the United Church of Canada" section 036 (o).

### **6. Leave of Absence**

Leave of absence will be based on "The Manual of the United Church of Canada" section 036 (p).

### **7. Disability/Death**

Disability / death provisions will be based on "The Manual of the United Church of Canada" section 037.

## **8. Pregnancy**

Pregnancy provisions for leave of absence will be based on “The Manual of the United Church of Canada” section 036 (n), and will not be less than provisions of provincial employment statutes.

## **9. Overtime**

Occasionally additional hours of work are required to carry out assigned duties. Such additional hours shall be reasonable and must be approved by the Ministry and Personnel Committee. Overtime hours will be compensated for through equivalent paid time off.

## **10. Remuneration**

Remuneration will be at a category rate established in the “United Church of Canada, Salary and Allowances Schedules and Moving Costs”. **Rockingham United Church is willing to consider supplementing this amount depending on the qualifications and experience and suitability of the Minister for the position.** In addition a performance bonus may be awarded based upon the results of the annual performance review and the financial well being of the Church.

## **11. Benefits**

### **a) Continuing Education**

Study leave of 3 weeks per year is granted as defined in “The Manual of the United Church of Canada” section 039. The dates of continuing education will be negotiated with the Ministry and Personnel Committee. The Pastoral Charge will pay \$1,250 minimum allowance.

A provision for the purchase of books and other educational material related to the position is set at a maximum of \$800.00 per year.

### **b) Housing**

A housing allowance is paid based on the “fair rental value of suitable accommodation” in the Rockingham area according to the “United Church of Canada, Salary and Allowances Schedules and Moving Costs”. The housing allowance will not be valued at less than 20% of the salary paid to ministry personnel. It will be of the order of \$16,000 adjusted if necessary depending on need and availability.

### **c) Travel**

Remuneration will be at a rate established in the current “United Church of Canada, Salary and Allowances Schedules and Moving Costs”. For 2010 the rate is set at \$0.41 per kilometre.

**d) Moving Costs**

When ministry unit personnel move (other than ordinands and commissionands), the moving expenses are the responsibility of the receiving ministry unit. Moving costs also include reasonable expenditures by the ministry personnel and her/his immediate family members for travel, lodging, and food while en route to the new ministry unit. Payment under this provision is subject to prior approval by the RUC Executive Committee after consideration of at least two estimates.

**e) Secretarial Support**

The pastoral charge employs a part time Office Administrator. (23 hours per week).

**f) Telephone**

A communication package is to be negotiated.

**12. Performance Reviews**

The Ministry and Personnel Committee will conduct annual performance reviews of the Minister. A wide range of individuals may be consulted for the review such as committee chairpersons, congregation members, and other staff.

**13. Termination Agreements**

The call may be terminated by either party providing ninety (90) days notice is given in writing to the other party and as defined in “The Manual of the United Church of Canada” sections 040-048, 050, 052-054.

**14, Retirement**

Retirement provisions as defined in the “The Manual of the United Church of Canada” section 364.

## **APPENDIX 1: Resources for More Information**

### **About Rockingham United Church**

For more information about Rockingham United Church, please see our website at [www.rockinghamunited.org](http://www.rockinghamunited.org). Specifically, on our website you can find:

- The 2008 Rockingham United Church Handbook at the bottom of the page on the Executive Committee, and
- The June 2009 Annual Report, which is listed on the sidebar menu.

Other documents such as audited financial statements, insurance appraisals and job descriptions are available on request.

### **About Halifax**

For more information about the city of Halifax, please see the following websites: [www.halifax.ca](http://www.halifax.ca) and [www.halifaxinfo.com](http://www.halifaxinfo.com).

## APPENDIX 2: Survey Cover Letter

### Rockingham United Church Joint Needs Assessment Survey

November 2009

Dear Parishioner of Rockingham United:

The members of your Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC) are pleased to offer you the accompanying survey as a means for you to communicate your views that will be helpful to the Committee in its work of preparing for the call of new ministry personnel for Rockingham United Church (RUC). You will note that it is anonymous and intended to be completed by individuals. To be sure of inclusion you should **return your survey no later that November 25 to Rockingham United Church**. Mark SURVEY on the envelope.

Your response to this survey will influence the position description and skills profile that the JNAC will write for a Lead Minister. This will be a full-time minister ordained in Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care. The JNAC, in preparing this survey, has taken into account the fact that Rockingham United Church is now a pastoral sized charge, meaning that weekly attendance is less than 150 people. The purpose of this survey is to gather information that will help the Committee define the skills and style of ministry that is most desired and needed by our congregation.

The survey is the product of much research and discussion by JNAC. Your response will be appreciated and valued. We encourage you to follow up with Committee members. JNAC members representing RUC are Doug Chaytor (Chair), Kim MacMillan (Secretary), Andrew Dickieson, Heather McLearn, and Crystal Wentzell. Presbytery representatives are Sally Budge and Rev Trent Cleveland-Thompson.

The information you supply will be used collectively. In keeping with good survey policy, your replies will be treated as confidential and will be used for the stated purpose of helping to identify the skills and style of ministry most desired and needed by our congregation. The survey forms will be destroyed after the JNAC process is completed.

On behalf of the Committee and everyone interested in the success of the JNAC process, I thank you for your help in completing and returning this survey promptly.

Sincerely  
Doug. Chaytor, Chair  
RUC – JNAC

# APPENDIX 3: Survey

## Rockingham United Church Joint Needs Assessment Survey

**November 2009**

The purpose of this survey is to gather information that will help identify the skills and style of ministry most desired and needed by our congregation. Please return to Rockingham United Church **no later than November 25.**

**About you:**

1. Please check the appropriate box after the response.

Are you : Male  Female

Your age: 12-19  20-34  35-49  50-64  65-79  80 and up

**Worship attendance and participation:**

2. Do you attend Sundays: Regularly  Sometimes  Not usually  Special Seasons

3. Do you serve on: Committees  Special Events  Other e.g. Usher/Counter/Choir etc

4. Do you have children/youth in your family? Yes  No

**Word and Sacrament**

5. How important are the following preaching qualities? (please check the appropriate box)

<b>Sermons should be:</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>Somewhat unimportant</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
Socially Relevant					
Biblical					
Personal & Reflective					
Challenging					
Informative/educational					
Thought provoking					
Contemporary theology					

6. How often is it appropriate to hold a contemporary service?

Never  Once a month  More than once a month  Special seasons only

7. Please indicate your answer to the following questions by checking the appropriate box.

	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>
During a traditional service, do you like a diversity of musical expression, instruments and vocals?			
Is it important to you that children and youth be part of the service?			
Is it important to you that lay people help plan the service?			
Is it important to you that lay people participate in the service?			

**Pastoral Care**

8. We want to know how much pastoral care you expect from our ministry personnel. Recognizing that we have a pastoral care team, and that the ministry personnel will have limited time for pastoral care, *please prioritize this list of duties in order of importance, 1 to 6, with 1 being the most important.*

**RANK**

- Personally visit every family in the church. .... \_\_\_\_\_
- Personally visit the sick, bereaved and shut-ins. .... \_\_\_\_\_
- Attend church related/sponsored events. .... \_\_\_\_\_
- Minister to / counsel those in crisis. .... \_\_\_\_\_
- Provide spiritual counseling. .... \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact with newcomers. .... \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional roles for our ministry personnel**

9. Recognizing that the ministry personnel that will be called to Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care and duties will be mostly limited to such, *please indicate which other activities you would like the ministry personnel to support, if time permits.*

<b>Additional Roles</b>	<b>Low Priority</b>	<b>High Priority</b>
Bible Study		
Confirmation classes		
Marriage preparation classes		
Attend committee meetings		
Provide guidance and resources to groups and committees		
Sunday school		
Other youth programs		
Educational adult programs		
Social adult programs		
Church sponsored outreach (mission and service)		
Community sponsored outreach		

**Your thoughts on Rockingham United Church (RUC)**

10. What do you think are the unique characteristics of RUC?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What do you think are the unique needs of RUC?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Are there changes you would like to see at RUC (over the next five years) ? Yes  No

If yes, what are those changes and how do you think they could be achieved?

Please use the back of this page for additional comments

## **APPENDIX 4: Children's Survey**

The survey of the children was verbally conducted on a very informal interview basis. There was a consensus that a new minister should be one who would be considerate and interested in children's ideas and thoughts. Ideally, the minister would not just give advice, but truly listen to and understand what each child has to say. He or she would care what the children are involved in during Sunday School and throughout the week. Although the minister does not need to be actively involved or present in the Sunday School, he or she should be willing to partake in and assist in hosting extra-curricular "fun" events.

## APPENDIX 5: Summary of Survey Data

The Joint Needs Assessment Committee conducted a paper survey of all people on the church roster. This included members and adherents. Some of the 303 addresses housed individuals, others had couples and still others had families. 178 survey forms were completed and returned over a two-week period. A major factor in the return rate was the fact that Reverend Phillips allowed ten minutes in the Sunday service for the completion of the survey by those in attendance. The remaining surveys were mailed directly to homes.

The survey form may be read in Appendix 3. The numbers in this summary correspond with the numbers of the items in the survey.

### About the respondent

1. About one sixth of the respondents did not identify their sex. Of those who did, females outnumbered males two to one. Only 22 respondents were under age 50. The largest group were aged 65 to 79 and one sixth of the respondents were aged 80 and over.

### Worship attendance and participation

2. Of the 178 respondents, approximately two thirds indicated that they regularly attend Sunday services. Similarly, over two thirds indicated they serve the church in some manner. Over one third serve on committees, less than one third serve at special events and one half serve in other ways.

### Children

4. About one quarter of the respondents indicated that they have children or youth in their families. However an examination of the ages of the respondents suggests that this question might have been interpreted in the general sense of family and not as intended to refer to children and youth living at home. A lower figure in this category would suggest that the pro-youth responses for attendance and programs were not made from a self-interest position.

### Preferences for Sermons

5. The survey asked respondents to rank the degree of importance they placed on the following preaching qualities: Socially Relevant, Biblical, Personal and Reflective, Challenging, Informative/Educational, Thought Provoking, and Contemporary Theology.

Thought Provoking sermons were identified as *Very important*, with two thirds of the respondents supporting this preaching quality. Challenging received marginally more *Very important* votes than Educational and Socially Relevant. Contemporary Theology was seen to be least important with only about one fifth of the respondents putting it in the *Very important* category.

Combining the *Somewhat important* and *Very important* ratings brought most of the qualities into a middle grouping but Thought Provoking was clearly most important and Contemporary Theology a somewhat distant sixth.

### **Contemporary Services**

6. The possible frequencies of contemporary services were put forward as *Never*, *Monthly*, *More than once a month* and *Special seasons*. A little more than one third of respondents favoured monthly or special seasons. A little more than ten per cent favoured the more frequent category and the same number did not respond to this question. Less than five percent said *Never*.

### **Music, Youth and Lay Participation**

7. Almost all respondents desired diversity of music with a clear majority favouring *Sometimes* but over one third voted for *Always*.

Almost all respondents indicated that having children and youth participate in the service was important. The majority checked *Always* and just over one third voted for *Sometimes*.

A majority of respondents favoured lay people being involved in planning the service sometimes but about one sixth voted for *Not at all* and another sixth voted for *Always*.

Respondents were more positive about lay participation in the service. *Sometimes* outnumbered *Always* by a margin of 2 to 1 but together these categories represented eighty five percent of the responses.

### **Pastoral Care**

8. The survey asked for a ranking of a sample of pastoral care duties. In summary they were visiting every family, visiting the sick and bereaved, attending church sponsored events, ministering to those in crisis, spiritual counseling and contacting newcomers.

In prioritizing these duties, survey respondents showed realistic understanding of the demands on a minister's time. They realized that visiting every family would have to be a low priority but visiting the sick and bereaved would be a high priority with crisis counseling close behind. Visiting newcomers ranked higher than attending events but behind spiritual counseling.

### **Additional roles for our ministry personnel**

9. In preparing the survey, JNAC recognized that the congregation would have interests beyond what would be possible for one ordained minister to accomplish. Accordingly it asked, through the survey, for members of the congregation to rank as *High* or *Low* priority several activities that a minister might support if time permitted.

Consistently about one sixth of the respondents did not place a priority on each of the possibilities. Confirmation classes were placed in the high priority category by the greatest number of people. Providing guidance to committees and groups came next with high priority ratings from two thirds of the respondents. Not far behind this were marriage preparation classes. Slightly more than half of the respondents placed a high priority on Sunday school, other youth programs and bible study. Educational adult programs and church sponsored outreach garnered high priority support from about one third of the respondents. Attending committee meetings and social adult programs received low priority ratings from a clear majority of the respondents. Community sponsored outreach did not receive much more support.

### **Comments**

10, 11, 12 About three quarters of the respondents supplied written comments where asked in specific questions. Over half of the respondents supplied additional comments.

## **APPENDIX 6: Summary of Survey Comments**

The Joint Needs Assessment Committee survey provided the church community with an opportunity to answer some free-form style questions. About 75% of the survey respondents answered some or all of these questions, as well as providing their own additional comments. This report describes the nature of these responses.

### **Overview**

The survey first asked respondents to report on the unique characteristics of Rockingham United Church. In tabulating the results from comments, the answers to this question were considered separately as they were meant to paint a picture of the church community, as seen by the people in that community.

The respondents were then asked in a variety of ways to consider the needs of the church, and changes that they would like to see in the next few years. All percentages and figures shown in this report refer to the body of comments responding to these questions. In summary:

- 80% of the comments addressed needs and changes regarding Membership, the Minister, Worship, and Climate and Organization of the church community.
- 16% of the comments addressed needs and changes regarding Outreach, Finances, Programs, Pastoral Care. In this grouping, there were also a number of stand-alone comments that did not fit easily into any other category.
- The remaining 4% of the comments were mainly remarks on the JNAC process and the survey in particular, and personal reflections on life at RUC.

### **Unique Characteristics of Rockingham United Church**

The number one unique characteristic reported about the community at Rockingham United Church was that we are a friendly, caring and welcoming community. It was also frequently stated that we are strong, close-knit, giving and generous. We have good music, good programs, excellent pastoral care, and a beautiful, well-equipped church building. There were also comments about conflict and dissatisfaction in the congregation, as well as mention of our aging congregation.

### **Membership**

The number one issue on everyone's mind – representing 24% of the comments – was membership. Well over half of the membership comments were simple, general statements along the lines of “we need more members” and especially more families, youth and young adults in the congregation.

Almost all of the remaining comments provided ideas on how we might grow our membership, especially in the area of families, youth and young adults. The suggestion that was made *by far* the most often was to provide programs geared to youth and young adults. Other ideas that were frequently mentioned were to provide a more welcoming atmosphere and have more family-oriented worship services. Many other single (or nearly single) suggestions were made.

## **Minister**

Nearly 20% of the survey comments centered on our need for a permanent minister and issues connected with that. Almost three quarters of the membership comments concerned the qualities that people want in a minister. Two qualities stood out: a minister who can connect with us, and a minister with strong leadership skills.

The comments on the minister's ability to connect used words such as personable, warm, supportive, welcoming, understands us, appreciates us, relates to us, takes an interest in us, mingles, hands-on, inspires us, encourages us, wants to get to know us.

Other qualities that people asked for were a team player, a minister with a family, someone who can help us heal and grow, someone who can create goodwill, a Christian, a good listener, a good speaker, a dynamic person, and someone focused on youth.

The remaining comments recognized that one minister cannot do everything and indicated that some aspects of pastoral care, as well as membership relations and outreach were low priorities. There were also a few comments expressing the need for a staff associate or a youth minister.

## **Worship**

15% of the comments concerned our worship services and were more or less equally weighted across a wide variety of concerns: contemporary versus traditional service, opinions on lay participation in the service, types of sermons, prayers and music, the time of the service and the mood set during the service.

In general there were more comments in favour of contemporary services and lay participation, though there were also comments against both. There were far more requests for contemporary music and diversity in music than for traditional music. Many people commented on how much they enjoyed the Step By Step band that performed the day that the survey was conducted.

Comments about sermons showed a desire for challenging, excellent, in-depth, thought provoking sermons. There was also a desire for sermons based on scripture and on contemporary life. Comments about prayers were mainly about a desire for the minister to lead a prayerful service. In general people expressed a need for a spiritual and reverent service.

There were a few requests for an earlier service, and a couple of comments that Sunday shopping and other youth activities such as sports interfere with families coming to church.

## **Climate**

The comments on climate in the church community were represented just as strongly as those for worship. Well over one third of these comments indicated in general that we should be more welcoming, more Christian and less negative.

Another third of the comments dealt specifically with the ministry and departure of a previous minister. All of these comments touched on the perception that while it is not clear what happened, some segment of our congregation was thought to have not treated this minister well. Along these lines, many of the comments in this category focused on the need for us to have more respect for our ministers, as well as more reasonable expectations of the minister.

The remaining comments touched on the need for us to work together and be more open to change.

## **Organization**

These comments represented 8% of the overall comments. They all pointed to controversy over how our church is run. 40% of the comments referred to a need to improve/simplify our governance and generally expressed dissatisfaction with bureaucracy and how our committees are organized. Another 40% called for new, younger and more volunteers. The remaining comments centered on unbalanced leadership in our church community – in other words “too few people calling all the shots”.

## **Outreach**

Outreach accounted for 5% of all comments received. Almost all of these comments were simple statements along the lines of “we need more community outreach”.

## **Finances**

Finances accounted for 4% of the overall comments. Almost all of these comments focused on the need to improve our financial situation, and over half indicated that in order to do this, we should merge with some other church. Some proposed that we raise more funds by renting out our space when we are not using it.

## **Programs**

3% of the comments pertained to programs and were mentioned outside the context of raising membership. Exactly half of these comments requested bible study. The other half referred to Christian/spiritual education in general, along with requests for discussion groups, book clubs and family nights.

## **Pastoral Care**

1% of the comments centered on the importance of ministerial contact with the sick, bereaved and shut-ins.

### **Stand-alone Comments**

These responses - accounting for 3% of the comments – did not fit easily into any other category. They included suggestions such as take on a theology student, make the church more energy efficient, and have a pulpit exchange. Some other comments would require explanation by the writer to be sure of their meaning.

### **Remaining Comments**

The remaining 4% of the comments covered the JNAC process (mostly favourable, though not entirely), “I don’t know” responses to the survey question about how we might make changes to our community, and personal reflections on the responder’s history and experience with Rockingham.