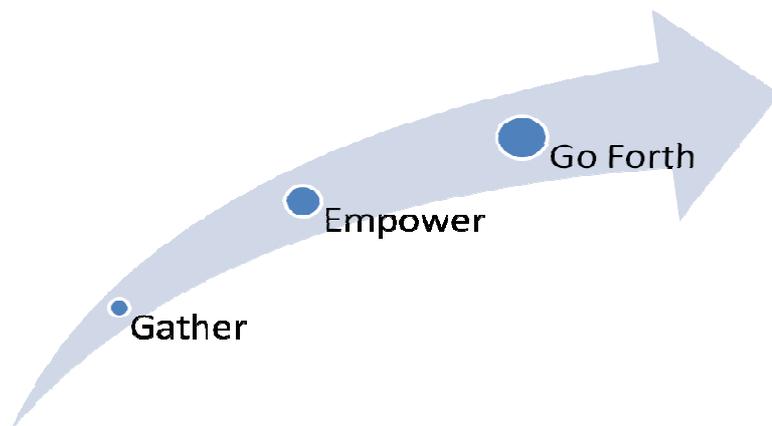
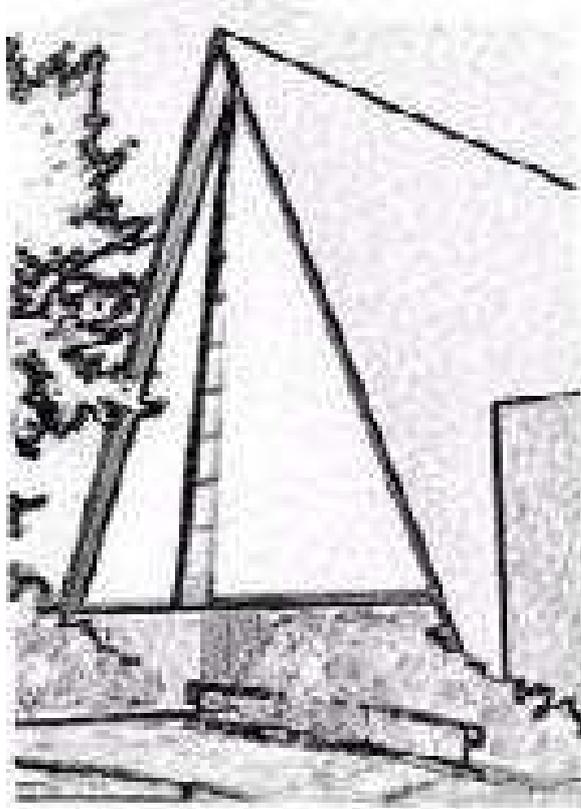


Rockingham United Church



Annual Report

June 2013

(Period July 2012 – June 2013)

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COUNCIL

Members: *Ministry Personnel: Rev. Debbie Aitken, Chair: Bruce Russell, Chair-designate: David Williamson, Secretary: Gaye Wishart, Treasurer: Craig Sutherland, Trustee Chair: Sam MacKay, Presbytery Rep: Ann Collinson, Membership Relations: Noelle Murphy, Ministry & Personnel: Cameron MacNeil, Building & Property: Claude Isaacs, Outreach: Brenda Munro, Pastoral Care: Diane Ward, Stewardship: Reg Ramos, UCW Rep: Helen Sweett, Worship: Kaireen Chaytor*

In the 2012-13 year, the major objectives of the Council were, establish the new Montessori school as a tenant, continue efforts to “ramp up” our children programs, environmentally assess our Church building, address recommendations of our *ad hoc* advisory Long Range Planning Cttee, improve our financial position, and as well encourage friendly contact and follow-up with visitors and new adherents.

In the summer of 2012, Rev. Debbie Aitken, Council secretary Gaye Wishart, Council chair-designate David Williamson and I had a lunch meeting in the Halifax Public Gardens (the same park benches as when we met there the summer prior), to strategize regarding these above-noted major themes, which we could foresee were of importance to the Church and Council for the coming year. Work on these matters has this year been carried on both within and outside formal Council meetings, including in good part through informal discussions and collaboration with our minister.

In late spring 2012 two qualified young women contemplating starting a Montessori nursery school (ages 1.5 to 6), contacted the Church to express interest in the use of our downstairs facilities for their classrooms. Our two downstairs meeting rooms (Sunrise and Rainbow) that are brightly sunlit during sunny days were of particular attraction. They already had had unsuccessful discussions of their proposal with other potential venues. Our preliminary discussions went well and at a special mid-summer meeting, Council approved in principle, subject to specific terms, the leasing of our premises to the proposed school. A municipal application for a zoning permit for operation of the school in our premises was successful. As one aspect of this we had to put someone from our Church on the school's board of three, and our thanks to Mary Lou Isaacs for taking this on.

David Williamson and I drafted (and redrafted) the lease, pursuant to amiable negotiations with the Montessori school's representatives including legal advisor. Claude Isaacs, chair of our Building and Property Cttee, did admirable work in coordinating various adjustments to our physical plant required for operation of the school. Our RUC Trustees approved the long-term lease, as did the Halifax Presbytery, and the lease was signed in October 2012. As well, a favourable legal opinion was provided to the Trustees and the Church as to the suitability of operating a school of this nature in our premises. The Montessori school commenced operations in January 2013 as planned, and now almost five months later continues to run well. It is a treat to be at the Church during weekdays and see and hear little children on the premises. For the most part they sound happy, even though it is school! Of course income from the school's monthly leasehold payments also is a positive for our Church.

At our last Council meeting in the 2011–12 year, Council had approved funds for an environmental assessment of our physical plant. This study by an outside consultancy proceeded during the summer of 2012, subsequently made even more relevant with the development of the potential Montessori school leasehold. The report's major recommendation affirmed our expectation that the flooring of our two downstairs meeting rooms should be replaced. This work was done during early fall of 2012. Other, lesser recommendations have been or are being dealt with by our Building and Property Cttee.

To attract a younger demographic to our Church, it was not hard to realize that a necessary precondition was to offer quality programs for children within our Church. From a formal perspective, Council was disappointed in being unable to attract a chair for our Christian Development Cttee. However, our minister has been fully receptive and supportive of this need, as well as instrumental in putting thoughts into action. Kim Silver, a young mother in our congregation, has risen magnificently to the occasion, in coordinating our re-energized Sunday School. Kim had commenced work during 2011–12 in leading our Sunday School, and during this last year of 2012 – 13 has well added to her initial successes. The number of our Sunday Schoolers has increased dramatically over the last two years, as evident each Sunday now when they walk/skip/run downstairs to Sunday School after Children’s Time during the regular service.

We also have tried to establish an infant nursery downstairs for during Sunday morning services, but that has yet to really get off the ground. We have had difficulty in attracting volunteers to help in such a nursery. Likewise, we continue to seek additional Sunday School teachers. Various members of our congregation who had given of their time in helping to staff our Sunday School have reported this as a rewarding experience. And, we currently have a youth group that is run well through leadership of Claude Isaacs and Brenda Munro.

Our Long Range Planning Cttee (LRPC), established by Council in November 2011 as an *ad hoc* advisory committee, has continued its excellent work. Council is working to have implemented by the time of our June AGM the various short-term recommendations of the LRPC that Council had unanimously adopted in September 2012. In accordance with one of these recommendations we recently removed the back several rows of pews in the sanctuary, to aid fellowship both before and after church services, and to provide needed meeting space during weekdays and evenings. Also the after church coffee and tea reception is now on occasion provided in this space. This space was used to excellent advantage during our recent “Broadway” presentations by directors and performers, as our “Green Room”! We appreciate the congregation’s support for, and cooperation and patience with our proceeding with this long contemplated change.

Other recommendations of the LRPC of a shorter-term nature are also being implemented, including giving music and children a higher profile in our services, and getting to know our neighbours of other religions through a program of short presentations and receptions. Indeed all of these initiatives have been well received. This work is written of in more detail elsewhere herein. On behalf of Council, thanks must go not only to the two very able co-chairs, Sheila McGinn and Alan Schnare, but as well to each member of the LRPC. Our minister commented in a service that in thirty years of ministry she had not worked with a more competent lay group. The work of the LRPC continues, with focus on more long-term objectives slated for later this year. In my view it would be appropriate for the LRPC to become a standing committee of our Church, with representation directly on Council accordingly. The present Council connection, which also should continue, is that both Council chair and minister are *ex officio* members of the LRPC.

Our financial position has improved and seemingly has turned a corner. Through the excellent work of our new treasurer, Craig Sutherland, Council in early 2013 recommended for congregational approval (which was received) a budget for 2012–13 showing a small surplus. This is the first time in several years that the Church has not budgeted for a deficit. At time of writing in mid-May 2013, it is pleasing to note that we are running ahead of that budget, due in good part to increased givings by our congregation (in addition to special events income). Thanks for this as well must go to Reg Ramos, as chair of our Stewardship Committee, who led the effective stewardship campaign last fall, with Craig’s able assistance.

Council has been quite satisfied with the work of our new fully-fledged Membership Relations Cttee (previously a sub-cttee of the Worship Cttee), in focusing themselves and all of us on being fully welcoming to visitors and new adherents, as well as providing, in conjunction with our minister, follow-up contact with new persons. We appreciate the Cttee's active focus, in full cooperation with our minister, on this key aspect for our Church.

At its March 2013 meeting Council approved our Church's Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC) report, including recommendations that a search cttee be established (as Rev. Aitken's three year appointment contract expires October 1, 2013). As well the report recommended that consideration be given to providing for additional ministerial resources. This latter recommendations is in recognition that the work our minister currently does really is too much for just one minister, no matter how well intentioned. Perhaps a part-time additional ministry would be feasible. This is a matter for Council and the congregation to consider over the coming months, after the work of the search cttee has concluded.

At a meeting in April, the congregation accepted the Council's recommendation of the JNAC report and also approved nominated members for the ministerial search cttee, this with the direction that if our current minister Rev. Aitken applies, she is to be interviewed first after which the search cttee will decide whether to proceed with interviews of any further or other candidates. We are optimistic that the search cttee will proceed apace. At the April congregational meeting an experienced Presbytery ministerial representative congratulated our JNAC, chaired by Victoria DeVita, as being the ablest JNAC he had ever worked with.

Our 50th anniversary cttee, headed by the indefatigable Jean (aloha!) Wentzell is doing a marvelous job. Council is not directly involved in this work, other than last summer affirming Jean as coordinator of this important initiative. The anniversary service in February, followed by the "RUC goes Broadway!" productions in March, and then Rev. Sharon Moon's anniversary sermon in April, followed by the Organ Recital also in April, and now the rousing finale of a Carnival in early June ("Rockin'm @ 50!"), are five truly magnificent events marking our Church's 50th anniversary!

In late April, Council members shared in a ¾ day retreat with the LRPC, facilitated by Rev. Moon, arranged by our minister. Emerging from that retreat was a wide range of creative thinking regarding the continued development of our Church, which thoughts will be organized for discussion between the LRPC and Council. At its late May meeting Council will consider a motion approving for our Church the celebration of marriage, regardless of gender. Also, our minister is currently leading Council members on a spiritual discernment exercise to help bring spirituality to the fore in decision-making at Council, as well recognizing Council members' dual role as also elders within our Church.

The foregoing represents highlights of our Council's 2012-13 year as it comes to a close with our 2013 AGM on June 9. As we move toward this date, I express thanks to and appreciation for our 2012-13 Council colleagues who have worked together well on matters central to our Church. I note particular thanks to both Gaye Wishart, who is ending her term as secretary of Council, and David Williamson, who as chair-designate will move to Council chair at conclusion of our AGM. And, a big thank-you goes to our minister Rev. Debbie Aitken for all her dedicated work again this year. It is she who provides the central inspiration, encouragement and co-ordination, as together we all work for the betterment of our Church and realization of its mission.

It has been my pleasure to have served as Council chair for these last two years.

Respectfully submitted, Bruce Russell, Chair

MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT

When invited to lead worship in May, the children of Rockingham United Church choose the image of the kaleidoscope as the focus of their worship preparation. As I sat down to write this report on the year that has been, I found myself sitting with this same image as a way of describing the ministries that we have been about. Kaleidoscopes use beads, pebbles, and bits of glass combined with small light-reflecting mirrors to create a diversity of patterns. As the viewer looks through one end, the refraction of light on the bits of glass, invites the viewer into seven different images of the landscape before them. As I think of the year that has been at Rockingham, I think of the differing ways we have been invited to behold the life and ministry of our congregation.

We have an incredible Pastoral Care Committee who reach out with the light and color of compassion and care on a daily basis. On a monthly basis they connect with at least 30-40 people: those confined to their homes by health concerns; those living in assisted living facilities; those walking with changing life circumstances; those reaching milestone birthdays and anniversaries; and those grieving loss in their lives. A new venture this past year has been the presence of monthly worship at the Parkland Retirement Living Space.

Our Outreach Committee turns our eyes toward the patterns that are those whose life circumstances often leave them feeling quite isolated and alone. With Minutes for Mission they shift our focus beyond the doors of this building to the ministries we as the United Church of Canada support in Canada and beyond with our Mission and Service dollars; to the ongoing presence and nurture of Sunday Suppers at St. Andrew's; to the advocacy and support of youth at Phoenix House; and to the care of Fairview Parent and Tot and Spryfield Family Resource Center responding to the needs and stresses of young parents in Halifax.

The Building and Property Committee are often those quite literally making sure the lights are on so that we may see. Working with the Worship Committee, they ensured the removal of pews at the back of the church opening up space in which we could be present to one another. They scurried through the fall to make ready the space that would welcome the Montessori school and now, as they paint and re-organize, they are shaping new spaces for us to gather.

We are learning how critical the light of hospitality is for the building of a thriving church community. And so it is that we look to our Membership Relations Committee for the lens that shines the light of welcome and inclusion on those who are new to our community. Over Sunday Cup and Conversation we are invited to seek out the stranger in our midst and make him/her welcome. As people seek to become part of the life and ministry of Rockingham, Membership Relations also hosts a Welcome Breakfast.

This past year, the Long Range Planning Committee has helped us to hold a mirror to ourselves, looking back and looking forward. They keep turning the kaleidoscope, helping us to see the not yet, affirming us as we risk into the possibility and promise that is God's call to us.

The United Church Women, the Men's Group, and the Women's Spirituality Group have continued to provide gathering spaces of ministry, care and support, each of them bringing a pattern of colorful vibrancy that speaks to the lives of faith of women and men within this congregation.

As the Long Range Planning Committee Consulted with various groups and committees in the last year, it would be the children in our Sunday school who would articulate very sharp vision of the ministry that

would be theirs. Unafraid to turn the kaleidoscope of their faith and catching a multitude of patterns of color and light, they stated their desire to be part of the worshipping community on a regular basis and as a result the older class has been actively participating in worship at least once a month. The congregational budget decision in January enabled us to hire Katie and give Kim some much needed assistance as she has worked to rebuild our children's programs.

As Church Council approved a list of short-term strategies for this congregation, it would be the Worship Committee who was asked to take the lead on a number of these. With eyes wide open and with a lens of new life, they looked and they looked and they moved ahead. The list of responsibilities that fall to them is long and they have worked hard to grow their committee membership to enable them to exercise their ministries, as well as reflecting on what may yet be. Their dedication and their willingness to risk have enabled us to provide creative spirit-filled experiences of worship.

So often we turn aside from the colors of Stewardship for often we see these as the colors of doom and gloom. Not so this year! As people have stepped forward with gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure, not only is our financial picture improving (I think the last time I checked we had over 125 people on PAR!)...we are also seeing an increased number of people sharing their gifts and abilities.

Our Senior Choir, our Men's Choir, and our Youth Choir have helped us to sing our joys and our sorrows throughout the year. As we have let go...as we have welcomed...as we have marked the seasons of our life and those of the church year, their music has offered us a pattern of colour that is the song of our souls. Thank you to Kathi and Joan for the leadership you have provided our choirs.

As the 50th Anniversary Committee prepares for the Rockin' at 50 Carnival finale, we marvel at the kaleidoscope of colors they have given us. They invited us to risk and try new things as we turned 50 in this building and we discovered it was fun...even in those moments when our joints ached!

As I look back on the last year, I would turn the kaleidoscope to the colours of lives of those who are no longer among us...those whose absence we grieve for they were part of our person and personality as a congregation. We miss them.

The year ahead is one filled with challenge and possibility. We know that a healthy thriving church is marked by a vibrancy of colour, not least among these patterns is holy hospitality and spiritual nurture. We will need to be intentional in the continuing development of these spiritual gifts.

The more I turn the kaleidoscope of faithfulness around the corners of this congregation, the more I see to celebrate. We have such a committed eldership in our Church Council, amazingly dedicated committees and volunteers, a small but strong Ministry and Personnel Committee serving as liaison between staff and congregation, and a staff diligent in their work – thank you Judi, Kathi and Mark for all the tasks you undertake.

There are patterns of faithfulness that God has yet to place before us...colours and images of ministry yet to be created...as we walk the way of Jesus, may the Holy Spirit help us witness to these wonders.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Debbie Aitken

GENERAL STATISTICS

Year ending December 31, 2012

Households under Pastoral Care	311
Households Financially Supporting	221
Received by Certificate of Transfer	5
Received by Profession of Faith	9
Removed by Death	6
Removed by Certificate of Transfer	1
Number of Baptisms	3
Number of Funerals	10
Number of Marriages	4
Average weekly attendance	131

BUILDING AND PROPERTY

Members: The Building & Property committee consists of Bob Rose, Past Chair, Bob Schaffleburg, John Sutherland, Jim Densmore, Sandy Munro and Claude Isaacs, Chair.

The committee met nine times during the year with all members present.

Our biggest project this past year was getting the building ready for the Atlantic Montessori School, which moved in on November 24th, 2012. In connection with this project, a study of Hazardous Materials and Air Quality was undertaken, the flooring in the Sunrise and Rainbow rooms was replaced and new light fixtures installed in both rooms. Other renovations and additions to the building were undertaken at the expense of the School.

A new entrance door was installed at the lower level entrance and new lighting was installed in the gym to improve illumination and save energy. To make space available it was decided to sell some things which were seldom or not being used at all. These included the electric organ, the old broken piano, some stacking chairs and some of the mahogany pews from the narthex and Sunrise Room.

The projector in the sanctuary was replaced when to original one burned out during the summer. Additional lighting was installed on the pulpit lectern and sanctuary lighting was replaced as necessary with new CFL bulbs. Early in 2013 four rows of pews were removed from the

sanctuary as recommended by the Long Range Planning Committee and approved by Council. One of the pews was modified to replace the mahogany one removed from the choir loft, so that the choir loft now has matching oak pews in all the rows.

Recently the choir room was repainted and the furniture replaced with chairs and tables from the Rainbow Room. It is hoped that we will be able to replace some of our lost meeting room space by installing a removal wall and new lighting on the stage. A private and secure meeting room will be created, and the ability to use the stage as it was intended will not be lost.

We are currently looking into the possibility of having our oil fired boiler heating system replaced with natural gas. We have visited other United churches in the area which have done a conversion of this type, and are monitoring their results closely. We are currently receiving quotations from three gas installation contractors and will bring a report forward to Council in the near future which hopefully will allow us to make a decision on how to proceed.

Respectfully Submitted: Claude Isaacs (Chair)

CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

The Christian Development committee performed on an ad hoc basis again this year, with no chair and few members. However, some programs of the committee continued under the leadership of individuals and other committees. Kim Silver managed youth programs overall, and lead Sunday School activities for pre-school to grade 5. Claude Isaacs and Brenda Munroe once again led the youth group (grades 6-12).

For 2012/13, we had approximately 30 students attending Sunday school/youth group with approximately 15 children attending most weeks. The majority of the children were in the preschool to grade 5 group. The youth group had five members, with fairly regular attendance in the first term and low attendance in the second term. Stephen MacMurray led a video production workshop series in the first term which was well received by the youth group.

We had four new teachers this year, and have built up a base of five regular teachers, including two individuals who provide regular (almost weekly) support for the Sunday School. We also appreciate the support provided by the congregation and committees, especially the children's juice and cookies.

We also hired a Sunday School Assistant, Katie Tanner, on a part-time, short-term basis (Feb. to June 2013). She supported the teachers by completing the administrative duties related to Sunday school, and taught regularly. The position significantly reduced the burden on volunteers (especially Kim) and Katie brought forward new ideas, enthusiasm, and practical skills that supported the growth of the Sunday school program this year. It would have been very difficult to meet the increased demands brought about by the growth of our youth programs without the paid assistant position.

We continued to use the Spark Sunday School curriculum this year. This curriculum, based on the lectionary schedule, includes weekly activity sheets (one per child), two different age-appropriate bibles, and a membership for internet-based materials. It continued to be very popular with the younger age

group and was easy for teachers. We continued to use the curriculum with the older children as well, but incorporated more projects.

In a planning session in 2012-13, older children and youth asked to stay upstairs for services once a month. This year, children in grades two and up remained upstairs on the last Sunday of each month. For the first term, a movie was shown downstairs on the last day of each month, to reduce demand for teachers. However, the addition of Katie in the assistant role allowed us to continue the Spark curriculum throughout the second term. Movies were used for special occasions such as holidays.

We will continue to use the Spark curriculum for the 2013/14 school year. Further discussion is required on how to support and grow the youth group. One possibility is to look at the youth group under the adult education model (discussion groups, workshops, special events, outreach, and interfaith activities) rather than the children's model (weekly structured programming).

Achievements for this year include:

- attendance almost doubled from 2012-13
- a part-time Sunday School assistant
- new teachers and greater participation from the congregation in support activities (help for special events, attendance at coffee houses, donation of change for supplies, etc.)
- a well-received Christmas pageant used a purchased script package
- a successful coffee house with participation by the congregation and others
- a well-received youth-led service developed and carried out by all three age groups
- new adult education programs supported by the Long Range Planning Committee and others

Conclusion:

- The youth group responded positively to the video workshops by Stephen MacMurray. Efforts should be made to encourage more members of the congregation to share their unique talents (music, videography, painting, construction, etc.)
- The CD committee will need to continue to focus on adding more new leaders and mentors, engaging the community in family and youth focused activities, and increasing the consistency of attendance.
- The part-time staff position was key to the success of this year's youth programs. Attendance continued to grow throughout the year, but despite a very busy second term, the workload for volunteers was much more manageable. Maintaining reasonable expectations for volunteers is key to avoiding burnout and maintaining a dedicated group of teachers from one year to the next.
- The current youth group model needs to be revisited to determine how to attract new members and keep existing members. Refocusing the youth group to follow a more 'adult' model (discussion groups, workshops, special events, outreach, and interfaith activities) should be considered.
- The CD committee needs a chair and a group of new members with a broader focus to support council reporting, adult education needs and fundraising efforts.

Respectfully submitted, Kim Silver

CHOIR REPORTS

Youth Choir Report

Current Members: Emma Boss, Kassie DeVita, Brynn Ruddick, Jacob Silver, Caroline Steeves, Daniel Sutherland.

Our Rockingham United Church Youth Choir continues to meet regularly on Thursday evenings for practice and giggles. Our aim is to provide fun and spiritually uplifting anthems for worship services twice a month and we have achieved this goal again this year. We provided extra-special music at Christmas with the adult choirs in the Carols by Candlelight event, as well as our annual Mother's Day Medley of all our repertoire on May 12th. (Congratulations to our newest members, Kassie, who had to learn MOST of our repertoire, and Brynn who had to learn ALL of our repertoire, for the Mother's Day Medley.) We enjoyed a night out for burgers in April to celebrate our friendship and our music ministry. Many thanks to all the Youth singers for filling my heart with joy and song this year.

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Stone, Director

Senior Choir Report

Overview: The Rockingham United Church Senior Choir is currently a 26 member four part choir (SATB)

Members

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

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

The Senior Choir practices on Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. The choir also gathers on Sunday Mornings at 10:00 a.m. for a 30 minute rehearsal prior to the morning service.

Review of Past Year:

Choir practices began the first Thursday after Labour Day.

Rockingham United's "Carols by Candlelight Service" was held on December 16th, 2012. The choir was joined by the Youth Choir and Men's Choir for this annual event. The choir was delighted to hear and perform with guest soloist Julia Chen.

Choir member, Beth Wilson, produced "Rockingham Goes Broadway"- a tribute to Broadway music over the years. A large number of choir members participated in this event both on stage and behind the scenes. The production took place to 2 sold out audiences on March 1st and 2nd 2013.

"A Lenten Music Presentation and Tenebrae Worship" service was held on March 24th 2013. Tenebrae refers to a worship service designed to recreate the emotional and spiritual aspects of the passion story. The choir was privileged to have guest soloist Peter Bowden perform as well as the Rockingham United Men's choir.

At the time of this writing, the choir is pleased to note that on May 11th the choir will be singing at the wedding of Marjorie McLearn (former choir member), daughter of choir member Heather McLearn.

Plans for Coming Year:

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 Report

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. We were fortunate this year to have Bob van Buskirk and Peter Bowden join us for our evening or special concerts. Thanks are extended to Rodger Middleton, who continues to organize the printing of the concert bulletins and keeping all the choir members in the email loop.

We were singing an anthem or introit on an average of one Sunday each month and, on two occasions, joined the Junior Choir for a joint anthem. It was very meaningful for us to join forces with them and we trust the same for them as well. December saw us join with the Senior and Junior choirs for the annual Carol's by Candlelight concert. Once again, we hosted a concert on Anniversary Sunday. The Dartmouth Boy's Honour Choir and Peter Bowden also joined us for the evening. The Men's choir, as well as Peter Bowden, took part in the very moving Lenten Music Tenebrae Worship Service during Easter week.

Our traditional season closing concert, at William Black Memorial United Church in Glen Margaret, was held early this year but still provided a great small church setting that seems to bring our voices to great heights. Maybe it is the lobster sandwiches and casual atmosphere that plays a role as well.

We were also invited to participate in a concert at Cornwallis Street Baptist Church the first weekend of May. Two selections were presented and it was nice to be able to participate at the church of one of the choirs (Brotherhood Choir) that performed at Rockingham in several occasions.

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.

On behalf of the Men's Choir, respectfully submitted, Gary Wilson

MEMBERSHIP RELATIONS

Members: Kay Youle, Myrtle Sellars, Ramona McQuinn, Janet Patterson, Gaye Wishart, Jean Wentzell, Mary Lou Evans Isaacs, Sharon Ernst, Joy Corkum, Eleanor King, Jan Mills (Home member), Noelle Murphy (Chair), Roger Middleton (webmaster), Gary Wilson (Reflections publisher).

We hosted the Welcome Back Lunch on October 14th. Over 140 attended. It was nice to have some newer members joining in the social time.

On Friday, November 2, Membership Relations offered its wholehearted support, in the way of refreshments, to the youth Coffee House presentation. The event showcased much of the youth talent at Rockingham United.

December brought two opportunities for fellowship. We hosted the carolers for hot chocolate after Carols at RUC Homes. We also provided a plate of cookies for those we were visiting. There was a wonderful turnout for this event. We always love to have younger members join this important event. The Carols by Candlelight reception was a great opportunity to say thank you to our choirs and their directors. It was a very enjoyable evening.

We hosted the reception for the Tennebrae Service with RUC Men's and Senior Choirs on March 24th. This was an amazing event and we were pleased to help out.

Sunday, February, RUC celebrated its 50th anniversary Sunday with cake and other refreshments by Membership Relations.

Membership Relations provided the refreshments for the two Interfaith Series events:

1. The Muslim faith presented by Syed Mohammed Aqueel Shad of the Al-Rosowl Islamic Society Wednesday March 20. This highly successful lecture was attended by about 100, many of whom were Muslim. One family brought sweets that were gladly served with our own.
2. The Jewish faith presented by Rabbi Ari Isenberg of the Shaar Shalom Congregation Wednesday April 10. This too was very well received by our faith community with about 50 attending.

As well on March 30th MR was asked to be the "Meet and greet" host at the Easter egg Hunt, at Veterans Corner. We helped serve hot chocolate and hand out treat bags. This was a very successful event with many families in attendance and great weather. One of the families who attended was from the Muslim community and attended the interfaith lecture on March 20th.

Membership Relations also provided the refreshments for the Same Gender Marriage education and information sessions:

- a) Rev. Rob Fennell, April 10
- b) Rev. Ivan Ivan Gregan, April 17
- c) Personal stories, April 24

On Sunday, April 14 we wished our AST Field Education student, Susan Gamblin a fond farewell with a cake at Coffee time.

It was our pleasure to host a breakfast on May 5th for those who transferred their memberships to Rockingham United as well as their guests. This event was enjoyed by all present.

We strive to make Rockingham United a welcoming community. We serve refreshments after the worship service three Sundays a month. The first Sunday of the month the Outreach Committee hosts Cup and Conversation with the proceeds going to Brunswick Street Breakfast Program. We would love to have more people join us for Cup and Conversation. We serve Just Us! fair trade coffee. There is tea and juice available as well as sweets. This year we trialed a once a month Cup and Conversation in the sanctuary starting in March. This seems to be working well although we are still working thru little wrinkles. This also proved to be useful in evening events such as the Interfaith Series and the Same Gender Marriage education and information sessions. Another one of our more pleasant traditions is the presentation of baptism cookies to the families welcoming the new addition into our faith community.

We thank Gary Wilson for continuing to publish Rockingham Reflections to keep everyone informed of upcoming events. Rodger Middleton keeps the website www.rockinghamunited.org up to date and this year saw many new changes to the website. The bulletin is posted each week with the announcements. If you are not able to attend church you can always stay current by checking out the website. Thank you to Rodger for all his work.

I want to thank all committee members for their contributions. It has been a delight to work with such a willing group of people.

Respectfully submitted, Noelle Murphy

Rockingham United Website

Rockingham United's Presence on the Internet: Rockingham United has had a website up and running for about 10 years. Recently upgrades were made to the website, making it more informative and interesting to the visitor. Efforts are now being made to market the website as a means to provide present members and adherents and those 'checking us out' with lots of information on Rockingham United. The website is located at www.rockinghamunited.org

Website Contents: There is a wealth of information available on the many pages on the site. The header for each page includes a photo taken at Keji Adjunct in Queens County. The rocks in the photo remind us of the wise man who build his house on a rock (Matthew 7:24), or, that Jesus is the rock of our faith (Psalm 18). The header also includes the new United Church Crest which was launched in the summer of 2012. It acknowledges the presence and spirituality of Aboriginal peoples in our church. The four colours of the Aboriginal medicine wheel and an Aboriginal phrase which means 'all my relations' were added.

In December of 2012 we added a slide show capability to the landing page. It is hoped that eventually we will be able to display photos of events at our church, photos that will include people.

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 Link 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 slide show is another group of buttons. There one can quickly get to our Reflections Newsletter, the work of our Long Range Planning Committee and links to The United Church of Canada's Moderator, Gary Paterson's Blog and The United Church You Tube site.

Finally, the website has a link to a Facebook Page for Rockingham United Church which we hope will see more use in the coming year.

Data on Website Visits: Using Stats Counter.com and Google Analytics we see the average visits to the website each week are around 100 with those numbers higher in the winter months than the summer and, certainly higher during Advent and Easter Week. That number also increases when the notice goes out that a new edition of Rockingham Reflections is on line. We note that there are more visitors Friday and Saturday than most other days of the week. Most of the visitors are from the Halifax – Dartmouth area but we do see visits from Florida which are likely snowbirds checking in and other parts of the country and from other countries around the world, on an occasion.

As Webmaster, it is my privilege to serve my church in this manner.

Respectfully Submitted, *Rodger Middleton*

RUC MEN'S GROUP

Men of Rockingham United: Activities for the men of Rockingham United began on September 28th with a golf outing at Lost Creek. There were four teams of four out for a wonderful afternoon of golf. Lots of prizes were shared and fun was had by all.

On October 2nd a Planning Meeting was held at the church. It began with an opening prayer by Rev Debbie. This was followed by a brainstorming session. Lots of good ideas came forward but few volunteered to champion events. In October the men hosted an evening with a speaker on Mic Mac History Memories. The gentlemen came equipped with artefacts and a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the Mic Mac race in our region. It was open to all in the congregation and community.

On November 16th the men had their "Made by Men" table at the Candy Cane Carnival. It was well stocked with items made by men of the congregation.

In January a group went to a Mooseheads Hockey Game. It was organized by Sandy Munro and Ken MacLeod and included dinner first. The game was against Moncton and was well enjoyed by all who attended.

On February 12th, Shrove Tuesday the men once again hosted the Pancake Supper. It was well attended by members of the congregation and the local community. Thanks to Claude Isaacs and Ken MacLeod for championing that event.

The men will host the Mother's Day take home Lobster Lunch again this year. There have been 125 tickets printed for this event which consists of fresh lobster from Argyle in Yarmouth Co., Potato Salad, Coleslaw and roll and cookies.

Our closing BBQ will be held in June.

In addition to these activities the Men have contributed to maintenance of the John Turner Memorial Gardens Shrubs and the Shrubs and trees on either side of the entrance to the Narthex. It is hoped that this will be an ongoing project.

In December the men met for lunch on a Wednesday at a local pub. It was meant to be social but had a caring side to it. Each man attending was asked to bring socks for The Men's Turning Point Shelter. This was a well-received event and so it's been carried on each month since then with the monthly price of admission socks, mittens and used clothing for The Men's Turning Point Shelter, The Out of The Cold Shelter and the Brunswick Street mission. We have had as high as 19 attendees for this event. It is our intention to continue this event.

Here is the financial report of the men's activities:

Rockingham United Men's Club Financial Report 1 May 2012 – 30 April 2013

Balance 1 May 2012	\$ 694.14
<u>Receipts:</u>	
Lobster take out	\$ 836.60
Pancake Supper	1,173.90
Interest	<u>.34</u>
	<u>\$ 2,010.84</u>
<u>Disbursements:</u>	
Rockingham United	\$ 836.60
Dalhousie Campus Ministry	<u>200.00</u>
	<u>\$ 1,036.60</u>
Balance 30 April 2013	\$ 1,668.38

Respectfully Submitted,

Rodger Middleton, Chair

MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Members: *Cameron MacNeil, Chair; Brant Wishart Secretary; Doug Chaytor; Shirley Nicholson; Fred Snyder, Presbytery Representative.*

Role: The Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee is responsible to the Congregation of Rockingham United Church through the Church Council for four primary roles, namely, supervision, consultation, education, and conflict management. The Committee strives to provide a consultative and supportive agency for the staff of the Pastoral Charge and for members and Adherents of the Congregation.

It is also responsible for the general management of human resource matters within church such as conducting performance reviews, coordinating vacation and study leaves and training, and addressing concerns of the congregation. . The Committee is also charged with providing a mechanism for liaison between the congregation and staff and between the RUC and the Halifax Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee

Activities: This was a steady year for the committee with all members noted continuing into the coming year. All issues brought to the Committee were addressed to the satisfaction of all concerned. Fred Snyder continues as the Halifax Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee representative to the Committee. This appointment is part of the Presbytery review process that Rockingham United underwent.

Committee members met with and conducted annual performance reviews of staff with input from relevant congregation sources, met with the church treasurer, and continued working toward taking a more active role in the church on behalf of both staff and the congregation.

Coming year: Over the coming year the Committee will be reviewing all staff job descriptions to ensure they are current and reflect the new governance model of the church, will formalize and publish procedures to proactively address issues and provide ongoing information to the congregation on its activities within the confines of the requirement to maintain confidentiality on some matters.

Respectfully submitted, Cameron MacNeil

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Members: *Lori Corkum, Fran Paton, Margaret Stewart, Len Sweett, and Brenda Munro.*

Outreach's mission statement is striving to ensure that the congregation is active in examining the needs of the local and global community and to design plans and programs to enable the congregation to minister to the needs of those people outside the congregation in a Christian perspective. A few times a year, a member of the committee will speak a "Minute for Mission" to highlight an upcoming Local, National or International event. More than ever, the small committee needs the support of our congregation to engage in meaningful Outreach efforts.

The Outreach Committee, using Just Us Fair-trade coffee, makes coffee regularly once or twice per month and coffee funds collected are donated to the Brunswick Mission Breakfast. Rockingham is a longtime supporter of the Mission Breakfast's biggest both financially through these funds and physically at the serving of breakfast. The chief cook, Eric, brings his chef training and with a heavy dose of compassion to the Mission community. When a meal is not served unless it is steaming hot a reciprocal respect between volunteers and the guests is generated.

Rockingham's Chair of Council, Bruce Russell, sits on the Brunswick Street Mission Board and last October, he championed several members of the congregation to attend the 6th Annual Fundraiser Breakfast. Participants heard the life story of hockey great, Theo Flurry, and his experience of abuse received from coaches in junior and national league hockey. Awareness of abuse was raised at the same time as funds were generated for BSM programs:

Breakfast: 7 AM - 9 AM Monday through Saturday
Clothing Bank: 9 AM - 11:30 AM, 12:30 PM - 2 PM Monday and Wednesday
Food Bank: 10 AM - Noon Thursday (call 423-4605 to pre-register on Wednesday)
Benevolent Support: 9 AM - 2 PM, Tuesday and Thursday
Tax Returns: By appointment

During the Christmas Season Outreach championed our congregational support of Shoebox donations. Over 80 Shoe Boxes were given to support Out of the Cold, Phoenix House, ARK Youth Centre and the Nova Scotia Aids Coalition. Sox and underwear were gathered for those in need especially during the winter months and delivered to various charitable organizations. And members' were encouraged to provide a Christmas meal via Feed Nova Scotia or Parker Street Food Bank.

The practice of bottle collection to support Education Haiti changed in 2013 when for the first time in a decade bottles are no longer collected at the Sweett home. However, the need to support Rockingham's Haitian students and their school continues! Members are encouraged to continue recycling their bottles; the profit collected may be turned in to RUC for forwarding to Education Haiti. The donation is include among member's annual charitable giving's. Thank you Len and Helen and to Fran for championing Education Haiti for so many years. Updates on the students and school are posted in the Church Hall.

Spearheaded by member Len Sweett The Rockingham Men's Group has turned an enjoyable monthly social lunch event into an opportunity to contribute to the needs of the homeless at Brunswick Street Mission, Metro Turning Point Shelter and ARK Youth Drop in for Street Kids by establishing an admission "fee" of a pair of new socks, gloves, underwear or used men's clothing in good condition. This outreach activity has resulted to date in the collection of over 100 pairs of socks, gloves and underwear and 30 bags of clothes and will continue through the summer. All men of the congregation and their friends are invited and welcome

Easter was celebrated with donations for young children and parents by filling a crib with donations for children under a year. The donations were divided and gratefully received equally between Spryfield and Fairview Family Resource Centre.

We lift up Rockingham as an Outreach Church! Our congregation is thanked again for your interest and support in the Library, Shoeboxes, drinking fair trade coffee, supporting Easter babies and parents, donations to Phoenix House and Brunswick Street, Grandmother and GrandOthers, Sunday Suppers at St. Andrews and all the other invisible things you do to promote Outreach from our congregation. New members are always necessary and welcomed! ☺

Abundant blessings, Brenda Munro

PASTORAL CARE

Members: Diane Ward (Coordinator), Joan Aitken, Gerry Butler, Barb Lall, Doreen Martin, Jean McIntrye, Janet McMurtry, Jan Mills, Joan Munro, Charles Murphy, Bev Pierce, Ruth Sutherland, Helen Sweett, Len Sweett, Jean Wentzell & Rev Debbie Aitken.

The Pastoral Care Team provides support to members of our church community, especially in times of difficulty, illness and death. We make hospital, nursing home and home visits as needed. We offer home communions to shut-ins. Cards, notes and telephone calls are also an important part of the support we offer. We assist Rev Debbie with worship at Parkland Clayton Park on the 4th Tuesday each month. On an average we offer our support to 35-50 members of our congregation each month.

Our team meets once a month, with the exception of July and August, and this is done, as always, in a confidential setting. The work of pastoral care is ongoing throughout the year.

In the fall we were invited to St Paul's United & honoured to do a presentation on Pastoral Care. We had two workshops 1) St John Ambulance on First Aid/choking and 2) Dan Steeves on Mental Health. These were very informative and excellent presentations.

We are pleased to welcome Charley Murphy to our team this year and sorry to have Sandy Munro move to Building & Property. It is a privilege to be coordinator of this amazing team. We are a team and work well together and I thank you all for your caring, support, and dedication to this important ministry. Our job is made easier with the blessing of our minister Rev Debbie, who is always there to support us.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Ward, Chair/Coordinator

PRESBYTERY

Members: Ann Collinson, Bill Dodsworth, Anne Forbes

During the year there were six full court meetings.

- Cole Harbour Woodside United September 11,2012
- Forest Hills United November 13,2012
- Bedford United January 8,2013
- Fairview United March 5,2013
- Knox United May 14,2013
- St Johns United June 11, 2013.

Camp Kidston has had another successful season and is getting ready for 2013 with a camp cleanup on may 25. The board is in need of a chair as Joyce Wylies' term is up.

Christian life and growth committee; a workshop on Children's Spirituality took place in Sackville, New Brunswick in November 2012.

A Healing Pathways Workshop took place in April 2013 at Woodlawn United Church.

The church in action; a presentation at Fairview United in March offered insights on the economic scenario in Nova Scotia as it pertains to poverty issues. The speaker was a retired Dalhousie professor Michael Bradfield from the department of economics.

Fairview United Church offers a Parent n' Tot meeting place.

Runners United participated in the Bluenose Marathon raising funds for mission and service. A total of \$13,000 was raised in 2012 and that figure will be higher for 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Collinson

ROCKINGHAM UNITED CHURCH WOMEN - PRESIDENTS REPORT

This was a special year as it marked the 50th Anniversary of United Church Women, and like UCW across the country we celebrated with a special service in May entitled "Our Tapestry of Love", the national theme for the event.

Most of the active members took part in the service in which we reflected on the 50 years at Rockingham. Our Life Members and 10 Charter Members were recognized and the Charter Members presented with their anniversary pins by Rev. Debbie Aitken. (We have recently found out that we have another Charter Member in our congregation – Janet McMurtry). During the service a Bible was dedicated in memory of Alice Ernst.

We were saddened again this year by the death of two long time active members. Alice Evans, a charter and life member, died in March. She was Treasurer of her unit for many years and a Member of the Membership Relations Committee of Rockingham. June Dickie, a Life Member, died in July. She was President of her unit and the General, and was a member of the Christian Development and Worship Committees of Rockingham, and loved to organize the Children's Activity Room at the Candy Cane Carnival. Both members are missed by us all and especially by Laura Wright Unit friends.

The Food Bank continues to be promoted regularly and the collection of various items for worthwhile causes, in the Narthex. This year we have started saving milk bags to make mats for Haiti. The kitchen was repainted by Brian Martin this summer and an extensive inventory taken of kitchen items and items in the storage areas, and several items were taken to Adsum House and Brunswick Street Mission. The Sunrise Room was also repainted and drapes were donated by Kathy Stone to complete the make-over.

One new Life Membership was given to Heather McLearn, our Treasurer and a member of the Laura Wright Unit. We appreciate the support of our active and home members for special occasions. My thanks to the Executive for their commitment to their various positions year after year. I wish Mary Lou and the Executive all the best in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted, Helen Sweett, President

ROCKINGHAM UNITED CHURCH WOMEN - SECRETARY' REPORT

Rockingham United Church Women's Annual Meeting January 16, 2013

There were three General meetings held in 2012 as well as three Executive meetings.

The Candy Cane Carnival representatives met with the Executive in a planning meeting in November.

Officers for the year were:

President	Helen Sweett
Vice President	Mary Lou Evans Isaacs
Part President	Avis Densmore
Treasurer	Heather Mclearn
Secretary	Donna Schnare
Stewardship	Diane Ward
Church in Society	Eve Tupper
Kitchen	Avis Densmore and Joan Aitken
Finance Committee	Kay Youle, Heather Mclearn, Diane Ward

The three units continue to meet monthly with the exception of the summer months. There is a membership of 26 active and 27 home members.

We held a bake sale and sale of Eugenie Perry's items in conjunction with the Men's club pancake supper in February.

On March 2nd we took part in the World Day of Prayer service held at St. Benedict's Church.

In April we held a workshop to prepare food for the deli sale which we held at the Church. At our Pot Luck supper May 9th Allison Wood was our guest speaker and spoke about the Reproductive Mental Health Service. Items were collected for women involved with the law.

On May 11th we catered the Bridge Luncheon held in the Sunrise Room. The Candy Cane Carnival took place November 16th. We served ham, mashed potato casserole, vegetables and pickles with carrot cake for dessert. The net total was \$5,794.31.

The Christmas fellowship was held December 5th and items were collected for homeless men.

Financial Donations were given in support of:

Rockingham united Church
Dalhousie Campus Ministry
Atlantic Ministry of the Deaf
Camp Kidston
Tatamagouche ACTC Centre
Brunswick Street Mission.

We continue to support the Prayer Shawl Ministry as well as the Food Bank and Fellowship of the least coin. We care for the planter under the church sign and clean the

Kitchen monthly. The congregation collects pull tabs from cans, soup labels and used Postage stamps.

Respectively submitted, Donna Schnare

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Members: *David Carmichael, Barrie Fraser, Santosh Lall, Reg Ramos, Chair*

Ex-officio: *Craig Sutherland, Sam MacKay, Rev. Debbie Aitken*

The Stewardship Committee had an excellent year.

We can communicate the following:

1. We had a successful Stewardship Campaign in 2012 and managed to attract new PAR donors as well as having many existing PAR donors increase their monthly givings. We did this by communicating to the church members that we needed to increase the givings in order to continue with our church activities.
2. We sent envelopes to members informing them of their current givings and asking them if we could have them increased and received a great response.
3. David Carmichael provided the list with the new counters until the fall of 2013
4. We provided tax receipts to the congregation for CRA purposes
5. We had a meeting with the counters, office administrator, treasurer, and power church plus inputters, to review our processes. Len Sweet provided excellent feedback and made a few changes to the current process in order to make it better.
6. Craig Sutherland is our new treasurer.

The stewardship committee is looking forward to continuous improvement for the benefit of our congregation.

Respectively submitted, Reg Ramos

TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT

Members: *Sam MacKay (Chair), David Martin, Kay Youle, Hugh Macdonald, Don Laing*

During the year the Trustees met twice. The only business conducted was the Board's approval of the new Montessori School rental of the Rainbow and Sunrise rooms.

Respectfully submitted, Sam MacKay Chairman.



Members: Rev. Debbie Aitken, (ex-officio) Kaireen Chaytor, (chair) David Clare, Anne Forbes, Sheila McGinn, Barry Mills, Dianna Prest (Secretary), Kathy Stone. Shirley Williamson

Membership Change: Louise O'Shaughnessy left the worship committee after many years of dedicated service. Janet Patterson felt the need to resign to attend to family demands. We thank both Louise and Janet for their wonderful contributions. We were pleased to have David Clare, Shirley Williamson, and Shelia McGinn join the worship committee. They have instantly gotten involved in various projects and we value their contribution. We thank Susan Gamblin for her presence with the Worship Committee and contribution to worship. While all members of the worship Committee worked hard this year, recognition goes to Dianna Prest for her superb job taking and distributing minutes. Judi Goodwin Kedy has been a very important support to the committee, especially with the need to educate a new chair of worship.

Meetings and Accomplishment:

The Worship Committee met the first Tuesday of each month. Attendance and participation was amazing. Meetings began with a short meditation bringing our strengths to a quiet place where we could focus on our roles. Meetings included a reflection on the worship services and related events. Members reported their response or reactions passed along from the congregation. While feedback was very positive, we tried to learn from the responses. The following is a partial list of the services and activities to which the worship committee gave support.

- Coordination of services over July and August with Fairview United
- Name Tag Sunday on Sept 30 combined with the Welcome Back lunch.
- Drumming Workshop on October 19 followed by Chris Kennedy's participation in the service on October 20.
- Special services such as Remembrance, Scouting Sundays and now a service for Seafarers.
- Initiated worship services at Parkland Estates – directed for seniors resident there. These services are now supported by the Pastoral Care.
- Christmas services including laity doing Lessons and Carols in a snowstorm
- Meeting of those involved with the audio/visual support was great progress in solving issues. A good beginning to integrate the A-V services.
- Anniversary Sunday
- March 24th 7:00 pm – Tenebrae Service; Peter Bowden was soloist.
- Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday & Easter Sunday (Sunrise service and Easter service)
- Laity Sunday and seeking and working with supply ministers when Rev. Debbie was away

It is a challenge to mention the details of each service. We feel all our services are special or contain some very special elements. Our music is a gift from all our choirs and soloists under the able leadership of Joan Munro and Kathy Stone and delivered to us beautifully each week. We thank the scripture readers and Barry Mills who organizes the readers weekly. The increased involvement of children is very encouraging. Their involvement has been creative and meaningful to all. Thank you to the instructors and the parents who make this possible. The help from the ushers and greeters is very important. Anne

Forbes is working to include a greater number of the congregation in these roles. Thanks to Anne for her many hours on the phone and her convincing people it will be fun. On behalf of the worship committee Anne also looked after the communion, recruiting and instructing members of the congregation who participated. Care of the chancel has a number of angels who take great pride in the appearance of the chancel and quietly carry out important duties. On special occasions, another group of angels decorate.

Coordination with other Committees

The worship committee reviewed the items from the long-range planning committee which were directed to Worship and the committee engaged in several discussions on the items. Two members of the long-range planning committee (Victoria DeVita and Alan Schnare) met with the worship committee in the fall to encourage the worship committee to engage the congregation in the various suggestions that involved leadership from the worship committee. Our committee actions involved:

- Support for the removal of the pews and congregation use of the space
- tidying up of the narthex
- cleaning up the chancel
- a facilitated discussion on the role of music in worship
- a facilitated discussion on the role of alternate forms of worship
- support for worship services involving guests and children in the service
- support to the events of the Anniversary Committee

We also worked with other committees such as the Stewardship Committee to promote the collection of pennies and to put visitor envelopes in the pews. We worked with the anniversary committee in the organizing of an organ concert by guest organist, Dr. David Peters.

We are working on our terms of reference to ensure our role and our duties fit properly with other committees to carry out the work of the church. We have had several conversations on the mandate of the Worship Committee.

Funeral Reception Policy

We are pleased to have finalized and received approval for a funeral reception policy. Rev. Aiken and others inquired about the practice in several other churches. Arrangements were drawn up, agreed upon by the worship committee, and approved by Council. *Hallelujah!*

Our Leadership

The contribution of the committee to worship is dependent on the efforts and coordination of many. However, one person stands out for her leadership, encouragement and belief in a better tomorrow. This is, of course, Rev Aiken who worked closely with the Worship Committee to give us the strength and commitment to carry out our supportive roles.

Please engage

Like all committee meetings, our meeting is open to any member of the congregation. Please come and join in on our conversation.

Respectfully submitted, Kaireen Chaytor (Chair)

Long Range Planning Committee

Members: Brenda Munro, David Martin, Doug Chaytor, Fran Paton, John Dow, Kim Silver, Lynn Knapp, Victoria DeVita **Co-Chairs:** Alan Schnare and Sheila McGinn

Ex-Officio: Rev. Debbie Aitken and Bruce Russell

The work of the Long Range Planning Committee in 2012-2013 commenced with the development and presentation to Council of a proposed short term strategy.

In 2011-2012, Council decided to undertake a long range planning process, and established the LRPC. The first phase of the process focused on understanding ourselves as a congregation – who we are, and what we value. Background research was conducted, and consultations were held with small groups from within the congregation, followed by a congregational workshop in April where participants considered the questions “Who are we?”, “Who is our neighbour?”, and “What has God called us to do and be?”

Drawn from this research and these consultations, the short term strategy sought answers to some key questions that would have to be addressed before we could decide on a long term direction. Given the changes in the size and demographic composition of our neighbourhood, and the age of the church, can we continue to thrive and to do what we are called to do in our current location and building? Can we return to financial viability as a congregation? Will we need to consider options such as amalgamation with another congregation? The answers to these questions would determine the overall direction of the long range plan.

The proposed short term strategy approached this challenge through three main thrusts – revitalizing our programs, services and ministries; building capacity to manage change; and reaching out into the community and inviting them to share in our revitalized programs, services and ministries. It also addressed some preliminary steps that would begin the transition to the development of the long range plan.

The second phase of the long range planning process began with the acceptance by Council of the proposed short term strategy at its September 2012 meeting. The actions comprising the strategy fell within the responsibility of committees and groups within the congregation, and were to be undertaken during the period from October 2012 to September 2013. Some highlights of those activities:

1. Revitalizing our programs, services and ministries

One of the first steps was beginning to make the church more welcoming and inviting. The end wall project was necessary to maintain the structural integrity of the building, but left us without the glorious light that illuminated the original design. Small steps have been taken, including removal of some pews at the back of the sanctuary to create a welcoming space, and a general ‘sprucing up’ of the interior of the building.

Strengthening the worship service, including the music, is essential to revitalization. The Worship Committee has been actively exploring options, and reaction has been positive to changes like the introduction of youth-led services. An organ recital was well attended, leading to offers from other musicians to perform next fall and winter.

The question of same gender marriage was addressed through a series of public discussions, and a decision by Council on this subject is imminent.

Christian Development was strengthened by the addition of an assistant to support our creative and successful Sunday school program.

2. Building capacity to manage change

A leadership workshop was held on October 13, 2012, open to Council and Committee members as well as the general congregation. In addition to an outline of the governance structure of RUC and an overview of the year ahead, the workshop addressed Spiritual Leadership, Change Management, and Managing Difficult Conversations. A review of committee mandates is underway, but additional work will be needed in this area once the long term Vision is established, in order to ensure that we are structured to support the overall direction we will have chosen to undertake.

3. Reaching out to the community and inviting them to share in our revitalized programs, services and ministries

Using information from the Environics Report commissioned by the LRPC through the National UCC office, flyers were distributed to increase community awareness of RUC and its upcoming programs and activities. The website is being updated. An Easter egg hunt was organized for Easter Saturday at Veterans Memorial Park on Parkland, and was very well attended by both congregational children and grandchildren, and children from the neighbourhood.

An interfaith lecture series has been established, and was well attended and warmly received. Members of the Al Rasoul Islamic Society attended the first lecture, and stayed for coffee afterwards in the new welcoming space in the sanctuary. We have been invited back to visit their congregations by both Imam Shah and Rabbi Isenberg.

4. Beginning work on the development of the long range plan

A discernment and visioning event was held on April 13, 2013 for Council, the LRPC, and some additional participants invited to ensure a broad representation of the congregation. The event was facilitated by the Rev. Sharon Moon of the Edge Network, who was also the guest Minister the following day, drawing the congregation into the visioning process. This work was fundamental to casting our long range Vision, which will be the foundation for the long range plan.

The implementation of the short term strategy is still in progress, but the results so far have been encouraging. The decline in church attendance seems to have been stayed, and there even appear to be some small gains. Our financial situation is improving. There are comments about how meaningful our services have become, and about the energy level associated with them. The community has responded enthusiastically to our outreach efforts. The evidence is preliminary and anecdotal, but there appears to be room for optimism.

Work is starting on the development of the long range plan. This may require some restructuring of the committee's activities. One of the most common failure points in any planning exercise is the hand-off process. To ensure that the hand-off is seamless and successful, we will need to ensure that the LRPC's activities over the next year are closely integrated with those of Council and its committees.

It is important at this point to recognize that our work has just begun, and to maintain our focus and momentum. While we have made the sort of gains that may reveal to us the direction our long range plan should take, we must remember that some of the most difficult work still lies ahead to ensure that the positive change that has started can take root and hold for the long term.

The Long Range Planning Committee has outstanding support throughout the year from Council, from the committees of Council, from the congregation at large, and most especially from our minister, Rev. Debbie Aitken.

Respectfully submitted, Alan Schnare and Sheila McGinn, Co-Chairs

50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE REPORT

A committee was formed in June 2012 to focus on celebrating 50 years as a congregation in our present building. Our theme became DISCOVERING 50 - AN EXPLORATION OF NEW VENTURES. An invitation was put out to the congregation for suggestions of events that would highlight our past and explore new avenues of community and fellowship. We were pleased with the number of responses and suggestions that came forward, and after much discussion and thought, finalized a schedule of events to recognize this significant year.

The events recommended were spear-headed by the individual/ individuals who proposed them, and as a committee we were able to help with several wonderful projects. In the process we also found our congregation is open to trying new things. It is not easy to rework or set aside familiar traditions and celebrations in this time of significant renewal, but based on the support of anniversary initiatives, RUC stepped up to ensure its continued health and vitality. We want to sincerely thank the many people who made these events such a success. Their generosity and positive spirit made the effort and hard work worthwhile for both the committee and our church.

TAKE A LOOK AT OUR YEAR---

- OCT 19 Drumming Workshop by Chris Kennedy
(Rev. Debbie Aitken / Long Range Planning)

- OCT 24 50 Years of Stories in Storage
(50th Anniversary Committee)

- OCT/NOV RUC-TV Youth Video Project
(Kim Silver / Stephen MacMurray)

- NOV 2 Coffee House - Proceeds to Wadeng Wings of Hope
(Scott Kedy / Just Us Group)

- NOV 24 Pre-Christmas Movie Night

- (Kim Silver)
- FEB 10 Anniversary Sunday Service - Looking Back
(Rev. Debbie Aitken / Worship Committee)
- FEB 10 Men's Choir Anniversary Concert with Halifax Boy's Men's Choir
(Joan Munro)
- MAR 1/2 Rockingham Goes Broadway
(Beth Wilson)
- MAR 30 Easter Egg Hunt @ Veteran's Corner
(Kim Silver / Long Range Planning / Membership Relations Committee)
- APRIL 13 Sharon Moon-Workshop on Visioning
- APRIL 14 Sunday Service Sharon Moon - Looking Forward
(Rev. Debbie Aitken / Long Range Planning)
- APRIL 19 Organ Recital with Dr. David. Peters - Proceeds Donated to Organ Fund
(DRS?? Doug & Kaireen Chaytor)
- JUNE 2 Rockin'm@50 Anniversary Carnival
(Kim Silver / 50th Anniversary Committee)

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL FROM YOUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Sandra Allen, Scott Kedy, Jan MacDonald, Stephen Mac Murray, Dianna Prest, Jean Wentzell

And a big, big thank-you from our committee to Rev. Debbie Aitken, who so patiently and diligently attended all our meetings and gave us wonderful support and guidance.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Wentzell & Stephen MacMurray, Co-Chairs