



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

# Rockingham United Church Annual Report



**July 2022 – June 2023**

**12 Flamingo Drive  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3M 1S5**

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## COUNCIL REPORT

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As the Chair of Council, I am pleased to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to each and everyone of you for your dedication and invaluable contributions throughout the year. Together, we have faced the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and fortunately are starting to witness a gradual return to normalcy in our church services and events.

I would also like to take a moment to extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to Reverend Sarah Raeburn, who recently retired from her position as our beloved minister. Reverend Sarah's leadership was instrumental in shaping our congregation and nurturing our faith.

As we bid farewell to Reverend Sarah, let us celebrate her legacy and the impact she has had on our congregation. We are grateful for her service, her dedication to fostering a nurturing and inclusive community. While Reverend Sarah's retirement marks the end of a chapter, it also signals the beginning of a new one as we embark on the search for a new minister. The process of finding a spiritual leader who will guide us in our continued growth and uphold the values that define us as a congregation is of utmost importance. The search is well underway.

Over the past couple of years, our congregation showed remarkable resilience and adaptability as we navigated the uncertainties of the pandemic. We adjusted to offering virtual worship services. While we missed larger gatherings in person, we remained steadfast in our commitment to keeping our community safe and delivering our weekly message. It is nice to see the gradual increases to the number of people attending our Sunday services. Our church services and events have gradually become more normal, allowing us to reconnect, support one another, and deepen our faith in a shared physical space.

However, amidst these positive developments, it is important to address the loss we experienced with the departure of the Montessori School as a tenant in our church building. The Montessori School has been an integral part of our community, bringing life and energy to our facilities while also providing financial support. We recognize the impact of their absence and the financial strain it has placed on our congregation. We are exploring various opportunities that align with our values and mission. Rest assured that we are committed to finding a tenant that not only provides financial stability but also contributes positively to the vibrant atmosphere of our church.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each council member for your dedication, resilience, and adaptability throughout the challenges faced during the year. May we continue to support one another, celebrate our return to normalcy, and remain steadfast in our commitment to the values that define us as a congregation. With a shared vision, we will navigate the road ahead, secure a new tenant, and continue to grow and thrive as a congregation.

**Respectfully submitted, Craig Sutherland**

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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The Board of Trustees (BOT) met in January and October during this report period. The BOT follows the United Church Trustees Handbook of Accountabilities (2013), for items that are relevant to Rockingham United Church (RUC).

Donna Richards completed her final Term on the Board. We welcomed Heather Britten and Alan Schnare in 2022 and John McLearn in 2023. Each term is five years renewable once.

Gary Wilson (second term expires June 2024) chairperson  
Santosh Lall (second term expires June 2024) recording secretary  
Doug Chaytor (second term expires October 2026)  
Heather Britten (first term expires June 2027)  
Alan Schnare (first term expires June 2027)  
John McLearn (first term expires June 2028)

A final installment from a bequest was received; the insurance was reviewed and increased due to the solar installation and audiovisual upgrades; an updated inventory of the contents was completed; Alan Schnare agreed to represent the Trustees on the Finance Sub-committee.

All information related to bequests, investments, taxes, insurance, risk assessment, repairs and congregational property and related matters were reviewed.

**Respectfully submitted, Gary Wilson, Chair**

## COMMITTEES

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### BUILDING AND PROPERTY

The Building and Property Committee had a busy year. The altar flooring project was finished; it went over budget but thanks to large donations, majority of the project was paid for. The lighting in the sanctuary has been solved and the lights in the fireside, kitchen and offices were all replaced with LED lights.

We still have not been able to find a fulltime tenant, but we still have some in the works. There have been issues with the cameras and FOB system but after calling in a company, we are hoping it is all working correctly now. The only other large expense was to replace the sump pump in the elevator.

The members of the Building and Property Committee include Mark Thornton, Sandy Munro, Doug Redden, and Chris Bona, and Colleen Rollings.

**Respectfully submitted, Mark Thornton, Chair**

### Technology Sub-Committee

**The Committee's Mission:** The Technology Sub-Committee of Rockingham United Church seeks to adhere to our church's mission to worship God, share Christ's teachings, welcome all with love, reach out, work for social justice and to care for God's creation. (Paraphrased) This is done by promoting the use of technology to assist the operations of the church office, provide technological tools for our minister, council and all volunteers which will assist them to

communicate with members/adherents, the wider church community and to reach out to the community around us. The committee supports the use of technology in the sanctuary to enhance the worship experience; supports the enhancement of our church web page and expanding the use of social media.

**Sanctuary Lighting Improvements:** In August of 2022, Geoff Doane and Steve MacMurray collaborated on the install of lighting to enhance the viewing of what takes place in the chancel area. Two racks of lights were hung from beams on both sides of the sanctuary, providing controllable lighting on the chancel area. These lights can be controlled from a special board mounted in the loft along with the audio and video equipment. The mood of the lighting can be altered for different events including plays, live concerts etc. We appreciate the work and knowledge of both Geoff and Steve in bringing this much needed enhancement into being in our Sanctuary.

**PowerPoint Preparation & Booth Video Operators:** In September we began having a rotation of five people who took on the task of preparing the PowerPoint for each Sunday's service. They received from Sylvia in the Church Office, what was known as a Tech Bulletin for the Sunday they had agreed to look after. The Order of Service had been roughed out by Rev Sarah and passed to Sylvia for the inputting of the lyrics for the selected hymns. Sylvia also went thru all the music and got the licensing information that is added to the end of each hymn or choir piece. The PowerPoint is what is shown on the screen and in the livestream during worship. I need to offer a 'great big Thank You!' to Kate Brown, Helen Doane, Dianna Prest & Doug Chaytor, each of whom have prepared for and ran the video based on an agreed schedule from September 2022 to July 30, 2023. We look forward to working with our new Minister.

**RUC on YouTube:** Our YouTube Channel seems to be watched by a number of people, both, members and non-members. We get between 50 to 100 on a regular basis, and, on Easter Sunday 2023 we had over 300 watching all or part of the service. The YouTube Service on Sunday is watched at Parkland Seniors Complex on Parkland Drive each Tuesday morning. Not only have we streamed weekly Worship, we have on more than one occasion streamed Memorial Services so distant loved ones can view the Memorial.

**Computer Network and Church Office Automation:** We have come to the realization that an out-of-date network server is not the answer for our environment. Sylvia received a donation of a used desktop computer which better than her old one. With some minor updates, Sylvia will be able to produce Givings Tax Receipts in .pdf format and email them to the bulk of the congregation at yearend.

We have received a federal Grant for a Summer Student for the summer of 2023. We are focusing on a student that is studying IT to help us clean up our network as well as refresh our webpage presence.

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

Geoff Doane - Sound Specialist

Don Hailstone - Networking, wired & wireless

Shawn Silver - Computer Maintenance

**Respectfully Submitted, Rodger Middleton, Chair**

## CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

### Sunday School Programs

Since covid Sunday School participation has gone down in numbers but we are slowly building back up. We have 7 regular participants, 4 new children that came a few times throughout the year. They are a small but mighty group.

Sunday School continues to be held each Sunday (starting in September) after Time of Wondering and finishes with a Youth Led service the first Sunday of June. During that service the Sunday School plans and does the whole service.

Since covid, 'youth in service' Sundays have not started again but I think this Fall we could look at this resuming as some children have shown interest. 'Youth in service' Sundays were typically the last Sunday of each month and children were given the opportunity to stay upstairs for the service to help with prayers, readings, etc. (whatever help the minister would like).

During Sunday School we loosely follow the Spark curriculum. After doing this for a few years and having most of Year A, B and C Spark curriculum and with limitless online resources, I have not purchased new curriculum for the Sunday School as the church year goes in a cycle and Bible stories and lessons repeat themselves.

While in Sunday School children hear a Bible story that follows the United Church lectionary calendar and then do various crafts and activities that follow the theme.

**Respectfully submitted, Wendy Hawley, Staff**

### Youth Group

The Rockingham Youth Group continues to grow on a regular basis. With new participants joining at almost every meeting. There are around 40 youth registered currently. Around 25 youth are present at each meeting.

Youth Group continues to be held every two weeks and each meeting has a new and exciting theme. This year we had a candy bar Bingo, a paint night, movie night, scavenger hunt, bowling night, craft night, game night, and more. The youth group also participated in February Fun, the Pancake Supper and the Earth Day clean up.

Amber Thornton has been a great help during the meetings and typically attends so I have a second adult present at all times. When Amber is not available to attend, I have had a parent stay to help.

Youth Group typically started mid September until early June each year and meets on Saturday evenings in the church hall from 6-7:30pm. Due to the nature of different meeting themes the time and location may change. For example, the year of year bowling party will be at Bowlarama. Youth Group provides a wonderful, welcoming, inclusive, and safe space for youth of the church and community.

The Sunday School and Youth Group have a Gmail account that I use for corresponding with parents and families ([youthrockingham@gmail.com](mailto:youthrockingham@gmail.com)). I also use a Facebook page (Youthof

Rockingham) for keeping parents and families connected with the groups and receive information about the programs, meetings, and events happening in the church.

**Respectfully submitted, Wendy Hawley, Staff**

## **Adult Education**

The Readers Circle met in November to discuss the book “This Is How It Always Is” by Laurie Frankel.

Rockingham United hosted a book launch in November for Cindy Tingley’s latest children’s book in the Lily the Donkey adventure series, “Lily’s Egypt Adventure”, where Lily goes with the Holy Family to Egypt. It was well attended, and the excerpt read was well received.

In the Spring during Lent, once again Rockingham and Fairview joined up for Lenten Conversations. They alternated locations each week and discussed passages from “Faith on the Move: Daily Reflections on Hope and Change” edited by Julie McGonegal.

**Respectfully submitted, Jennifer Robbins, Chair**

## **MEMBERSHIP RELATIONS**

*Committee Members are Terri Billard, Eleanor King, Heather McLearn, Noelle Murphy, Gaye Wishart and Sharon Ernst, chair.* Rockingham United Church Webpage and Rockingham Reflections newsletter fall under the umbrella of Membership Relations. Thank you to both webmaster Rodger Middleton and editor Gary Wilson for keeping us informed of all that happens at Rockingham United. We appreciate your work.

With COVID-19 restrictions easing, the activities of our committee started again on Sunday October 23, 2022, with the committee providing tea and coffee after church. Most Sundays Cup and Conversation is hosted at the back of the sanctuary.

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, Remembrance Sunday, Cup and Conversation was moved to the church hall to accommodate a larger gathering. Cookies were provided.

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, the committee hosted a reception following the Carols by Candlelight concert by our choirs. Thanks to all who helped setting up and cleaning up.

On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, Cup and Conversation was held downstairs in the church hall in conjunction with the Soup Luncheon. On January 28<sup>th</sup>, Rev Sarah’s birthday was celebrated with a Birthday Cake along with coffee and tea.

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, Cup and Conversation was held downstairs with the Worship committee supplying cake to celebrate Rockingham United’s anniversary.

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, a Memorial Hymn sing was held with a reception following in the church hall. Members of the committee helped serve tea and coffee. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, a retirement reception was held for Rev Sarah Reaburn. The congregation assisted the committee greatly to provide food for the luncheon, to set up, decorate and clean up afterwards. A slide presentation, special speakers and

singing by the choirs added greatly to this celebration. Thank you to all who helped make this a memorable day.

The committee works to help make Rockingham United a welcoming community. Cup and Conversation is a great time to welcome newcomers, to reconnect and get to know other members a little better.

The committee always welcomes new members. We would love to hear from anyone who would like to join us.

Thank you to the committee members for their years of dedication to the hospitality ministry at Rockingham United Church.

**Respectfully submitted, Sharon Ernst, Chair**

## **Website – Social Media**

**RUC's Website:** Rockingham United has had a website for about 20 years. Work is done on the site on a weekly basis, to bring the weekly e-updates, order of service and any other news to our wider church community. Feel free to visit our website at [www.rockinghamunited.org](http://www.rockinghamunited.org) and take a look around at all the information available.

**Website Traffic:** Over the years the average annual traffic has remained steady. We use Stats counter and Google Tag Manager to track stats on use of the website. Most visits happen on Friday or Saturday of each week and are higher in the Fall to Spring months than in the Summer. Whether or not cookies were placed on the visitor's system when they were on our site depends on whether they have cookies enabled on their computer. Therefore, the First Time Visits and Unique Visits can be higher than Returning Visits. Beginning April 6, 2023, as Webmaster, I have not been able to gain access to the website using software to do upgrades to it. We have had several conversations with Eastlink on this matter and on Wednesday of last week, they admitted the problem was on their end. We are monitoring this situation and are hopeful that we will have the website updated on a weekly basis once again very soon.

**Social Media:** Rockingham United has accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These social media sites are maintained by the church office and Dianna Prest. Dianna looks after Facebook on a weekly basis and events that are occurring at Rockingham United get posted to these programs as well. Facebook has become a popular source for information on happenings at Rockingham United. Just prior to September 2020, our loft configuration was changed allowing us to livestream worship to our YouTube Channel. Our worship services have been a combination of streaming live and recorded videos as well as PowerPoint screens of words for hymns, prayers, etc. Our website, YouTube Channel and our social media posts serve our congregation well, getting our message out to the church and wider community.

**Respectfully Submitted, Rodger Middleton**



## MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL

**Members:** *Kate Brown, Kaireen Chaytor, Barb Lall, Lynda Phelan, Doreen Martin (Chair)*

- The committee welcomed two new members this past year. They are Lynda Phelan and Doreen Martin.
- The Minister and Staff received economic adjustments to their pay rates effective January 2023. All performance reviews will be completed by June.
- We were sorry to say goodbye to Rev Sarah Reaburn at the end of April. We wish her well in her retirement.
- We continue to offer support to our other four staff members and enjoy working with them.

**Respectfully submitted, Doreen Martin, Chair**

## OUTREACH

The Outreach Committee was reconstituted this spring and new Committee members are: Brenda Munro, Daniel Sutherland, Rachel Sutherland, Judy Whiteway and Gaye Wishart. Gaye will take over as Chair this coming fall.

We have met monthly and have been busy planning activities. We met with Rafah DiConstanza, our MLA, to hear about the most important needs of our community and to discuss activities we could support or partner in providing. A few of our members also attended the JustFOOD Halifax event to hear about the HRM Food Strategy and attended the Bridge the Gap event held at Bedford United to hear about housing and homelessness in the Cobequid Region. Brenda presented to the children on BrainFood Friday, a community program run in Spryfield.

We helped coordinate the Easter egg food campaign this spring and proceeds of those donations went to Bayer's Westwood Food Bank. We coordinated a visit to Mission Mart for a tour and sorting of clothes, a very interesting morning.

Earth Day Cleanup was held again this spring with Beth Wilson, Jenalle & Tommy Butcher as coordinators. It was a great success!

A garden tour and fundraiser are scheduled for June 24th and ticket holders will have the opportunity to tour five gardens in our area. A campfire is planned for Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> in our parking lot and will have games, songs and smores for the community.

Our Sunday Suppers continue to be well supported by the congregation and we are thankful for their commitment to this outreach mission.

This summer we plan that the food bank donations will go to the Fairview Food Pantries. We anticipate participating in the annual Pride Parade this July.

This fall we hope to implement a monthly afternoon card game in our church hall. If people want to help out with this, we would welcome your support.

If you would like to become more involved as a member of our Committee, please do not hesitate to contact us!

**Respectfully submitted, Gaye Wishart, Rep**

## PASTORAL CARE

**Members:** *Ann Collins, Heather Coady, Eleanor King, Barb Lall, Doreen Martin, Hazel MacLeod, Janet McMurtry, Jan Mills, Joan Munro, Lynda Pentz, Rev. Sarah Raeburn, Donna Richards, Terry Shaw, Diane Ward, Jean Wentzell*

The Pastoral Care Committee provides support to members of our church community especially during difficult times such as illness and death. We make home, nursing home and hospital visits as needed. We also offer communion at home for shut-ins. Telephone calls, cards and notes are an important way of supporting our church family. We celebrate those with birthdays 90 and over with tea, flowers, and treats, 17 celebrating this year and one celebrating 100 years. Cards are sent to those celebrating 80-90 years. Cards are also sent to those celebrating 50 years of marriage and then annually after 60 years. We assist Reverend Sarah with worship at Parkland in Clayton Park. The services have been sporadic this year due to closures to visitors resulting from covid and other infections within the facility. The services usually occur once a month, September-June.

The Pastoral Care team meets once a month from September-June.

This year Eleanor King served as chair, September-December and Donna Richards started as chair in January 2023 with Eleanor graciously filling in for Donna during her absence. A big thank you to Eleanor for continuing beyond her term as chair as well as providing backup to Donna as needed. Thank you to Reverend Sarah for all the support and guidance she has given the team during these past 4 ½ years.

Thank you to every member of this team for all you do to support members of our church family.

**Respectfully submitted, Donna Richards, Chair**

## REGION 15

Three separate Regional Council meetings are scheduled for this year.

**First Dawn Eastern Edge** (Newfoundland / Labrador) **Regional Council Annual Meeting 2023.** Themed “Created in God’s Image” took place from May 12-14, 2023 (Virtual Meeting). It was held in the 5th Annual Meeting of FDEE Regional Council office.

**Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters** (NB and PEI) Annual Meeting takes place May 26-28, 2023, at University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI). It is the 5th FSLDW’s Annual Meeting.

**Regional Council 15** (NS and Bermuda) annual meeting takes place June 9-11, 2023 at Mount Saint Vincent University. Brenda Munro may attend if a seat is available from Rockingham as well as Suzanne Edgar’s seat.

### **Youth @ Region! (Formerly I@C and YF!)**

Registration for Youth @ Region is now live! Please make this link <https://ucceast.ca/77882-rc15-youthregion>

available to the youth, grades 6-12 in your community of faith. Note – that the registration cost has changed to \$100 per youth! Have questions? Email Catherine Stuart, Regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults, [cstuart@united-church.ca](mailto:cstuart@united-church.ca).

### **Region 15 Annual Meeting Webinar Date Change**

We have had to change the date of the third Annual Meeting webinar to Tuesday, June 6. Please see below for the updated webinar schedule. On Monday, May 15, we will be sending the webinar Zoom link memo to all those who have registered for the meeting (using your registration confirmation email), please ensure to check your junk/spam folder if you do not receive the email in your inbox.

#### **Webinar #1: Orientation, Remits and Proposals**

Date: Tuesday, May 30, 2023 at 7:00pm-8:30pm (ADT)

#### **Webinar #2: Division Reports and Strategic Plan**

Date: Thursday, June 1, 2023 at 7:00pm-8:30pm (ADT)

#### **Webinar #3: Budget 2024 and 2022 Audited Statements**

Date: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 7:00pm-8:30pm (ADT)

**Respectfully submitted, Brenda Munro**

## **STEWARDSHIP**

In September, we found ourselves in need of a committee Chair. Jennifer Thornton became Acting Chair, with the assistance of Sandra Taweel (Sept – Dec) and Lynn Knapp (Jan – March) at Council meetings. Other Committee members include Jack Rilett (who has also filled in at Council meetings), Santosh Lall and Beth Wilson. Our small committee has been very busy this year and are appreciative of the help received from individuals and other committees for their help with events throughout the year.

Fundscrip continues to be a great fundraiser and runs smoothly under the direction of Beth and Lynn. In the Fall of 2022, it earned \$1621.67, and to date in 2023 we have raised \$1621.67, with one more order to go in May.

In October, we saw the return of our popular Oktoberfest event and it was very successful. This was the first event where we could have alcohol, and that was well received as well. Our total revenue was \$1950.80. Many thanks to Sandra Taweel, who spear-headed this event and donated much of the meal items.

November saw the creation of a Rockingham United Cookbook, with recipe contributions from the Congregation. This was edited by Jennifer Thornton, and formatted by Sylvia Thorne, and netted a profit of \$690.

Stewardship Sundays were held in January and February of this year. We thanked the Congregation for all their gifts and later asked them to prayerfully consider increasing their givings (results below).

February Fun took place on Friday, February 3 and in addition to the fun that was had by all, they also raised \$188 for the general fund. Thanks to Beth Wilson and Kate Brown for organizing this event.

The Stewardship committee also brought forward the idea of raffles as a fundraiser. This was received with mixed reviews by the Congregation but was passed with a majority of votes. Any

committee wishing to hold a prize raffle must get permission from the Church Council before applying for a lottery license.

### 2023 Stewardship Campaign Results

Many thanks to our Office Administrator, Sylvia Thorne, who provided the following data as a result of our Stewardship Campaign:

Number of letters sent: 187

Number of responses: 115 (approx. 61% return rate)

Number who increased their givings: 34 (approx. 30% of respondents)

#### Per month:

Local increase	\$484.28
M&S increase	26.60
Building increase	\$136.18
Pastoral care:	\$10.00

#### Per Year:

Local increase	\$5,811.36
M&S increase	\$319.20
Building increase	\$1,634.16
Pastoral care:	\$120.00
Other – donations via cheque	\$1,200.00

Respectfully submitted, Jennifer Thornton, Chair

## WORSHIP

**Members:** Brenda Munro, Anne Hache, Terry Shaw, Heather McLearn, David Clare, Kathy MacNeil (Director of Music), Rev. Sarah Reaburn, Anne Forbes (Chair)

The Worship Committee is responsible for Sunday worship as well as special services and events of a spiritual nature that take place in the sanctuary of Rockingham United Church. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month from September to June. New members are always welcome.

The following is a review of a memorable year in worship at Rockingham United:

Significant work to refinish the flooring and enhance the lighting in the Chancel area was undertaken in the summer of 2023. This would not have been possible without generous donations from Claude and Mary Lou Isaacs, and Kathy MacNeil and an anonymous donor who supported upgrading the chancel lighting. The projects were supported by Mark Thornton, Geoff Doane and Steve MacMurray who lent practical and technical support. This work has beautified the sanctuary and contributes to our worship experience.

In July we welcomed our friends from Fairview United for worship who reciprocated by hosting us for worship in August. We also welcomed AST student Tamsin Robson for pulpit supply for two weeks in July.

In the fall, we returned a regular worship format, encouraging masking as a precaution following the easing of COVID restrictions. We witnessed with joy the gradual increase in attendance each week while continuing to have the service livestreamed. We joined Fairview United for a “Blessing of the Pets” service on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Worldwide Communion was observed by offering the elements ‘picnic style’ in small paper cups. Thanksgiving Sunday worship was especially moving as several

congregation members shared symbols and spoke of life experiences for which they were most thankful. The Worship Committee planned and led the Remembrance Sunday worship on November 6<sup>th</sup> with the participation of several veterans. On November 20<sup>th</sup> a well received “Singing Our Faith” service was held featuring hymns selected by individuals who also shared the significance of their choice. In the fall of 2022, we were saddened to learn Rev. Sarah would be retiring at the end of April 2023 due to health concerns.

Throughout the year Rev. Sarah recruited amazing lay teams from the congregation to lead worship, using a theme for each season and great creativity. The Advent and Christmas season included the greatly appreciated Choir Carols by Candlelight Service and reception and the wonderful Sunday School Christmas Pageant and White Gift service. The Christmas Eve Candlelight Family service was well attended with a return to ‘coming forward’ communion serving over 140 people. The Worship Committee led worship on New Year’s Day presenting a service of Readings and Carols.

Our new worship year began with Rev. Sarah planning a January “by request” worship series on topics contributed by the congregation. We also hosted a successful ‘by donation’ Soup Lunch. Unfortunately, winter conditions forced the cancellation of services on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and February 5<sup>th</sup>. Two committee members completed “Worship 101, a Training Program for Lay Worship Leaders offered by region 15. Our 168 years as a congregation was celebrated with Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell from AST as guest speaker followed by a cake reception on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Scouting Sunday was observed on February 26<sup>th</sup>. We thank Scouter Mark Thornton for organizing the colour guard, promoting the special Sunday event and for the Guide leaders who came in uniform. The Worship Committee planned and led worship on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. We were very grateful for the skill of Jennifer Robbins who presented a monologue by Rev. Bev. Brazier telling the biblical story of the Woman at the Well assisted by our youth on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The season of Lent began with Ash Wednesday worship at Fairview United. “Seeking” was the theme for Lent led by Rev. Sarah and a worship team. Holy Week included sharing Maundy Thursday worship with ritual foot and hand washing with Fairview United joining us. Rev. Sarah planned and with a lay team led a moving Good Friday service and a joyful Easter Sunday Communion service. We are grateful for the loan or donation of a variety of spring plants for the Easter Garden and the treats that were shared following Easter Sunday worship. A Memorial Hymn Sing service and reception was held on April 16<sup>th</sup> as the season Easter continued to be celebrated through music and praise. The efforts of the choirs and their directors Kathy MacNeil and Joan Munro are to be lauded for planning and leading this special service in this busy season. We were heartened by the excellent attendance through Holy Week and Easter.

The Road to Emmaus, the topic of Rev. Sarah’s last sermon on April 30<sup>th</sup> was a poignant reminder we never walk alone as we bid farewell to a much-loved leader. Our committee and church were blessed. Rev. Sarah’s support of lay leadership, wonderful sense of fun and creativity was infectious, and it was an honour to serve with her.

As we search for a new minister, the Worship Committee will work closely with our summer pulpit supply student and will plan a laity service for June 18<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Gloria Churchill has been appointed by Region 15 to supervise our pastoral charge during this time of transition. We will join with Fairview United for the month of August. As we go forward, we give thanks worship is supported by many and here are some of the things they do:

- The Senior, Men’s, and Youth choirs who share the gift of their beautiful voices directed by Kathy MacNeil and Joan Munro,

- The Audiovisual teams who livestream our services weekly,
- Our Youth who enthusiastically lead worship, sing in the choir, do the pageant, and help in many ways and Wendy Hawley who so skillfully guides them,
- Rodger Middleton who compiles slide shows and visuals for worship and coordinates the AV group,
- Anne Collinson who coordinates hanging the banners and maintains the Christ Candle,
- The Funeral volunteers Noelle Murphy and Barb Lall who organize hospitality; David Clare, Sandra Allen and Bev Andrews who greet and usher,
- David Williamson who shares his photographic talent providing overhead pictures and bulletins,
- John McLearn who welcomes outside at the door on Sunday mornings no matter what the weather,
- Sylvia Thorne, our Administrator extraordinaire who shares her many talents including pulling the bulletin together, keeping everyone informed, scheduling, tracking down supplies, producing posters and graphics and solving all manner of problems to name a few,
- Steve and Wallace MacMurray who play the bag pipes for special services including Remembrance Sunday,
- The Scripture Readers, Ushers, and Counters who are needed every week,
- The Membership Relations group who prepares refreshments after worship and promotes fellowship,
- The people who help with the seasonal decorating and know where things are stored,
- Evan Thorne who keeps things ship shape and prepares the building for worship,
- Karen Middleton who makes sure the pilot light is lit on Sunday morning,
- The folks who come to church and follow online worship.
- Our friends and neighbours at Fairview United and Rev. Angela McLean for welcoming and supporting us in sharing so many worship endeavors. The Worship Committee is most grateful for your support and participation this year.

**Respectfully submitted, Anne Forbes, Chair**

## GROUPS

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### CHOIRS

#### Youth

I am pleased to report that the Youth Choir has been able to resume faithful, musical participation in Rockingham worship this calendar year. We began with a few mighty voices, just three. As the year progressed, we doubled our numbers to six, but have settled in at a consistent five. We began slowly, only singing once a month, but the enthusiasm of the three girls was difficult to ignore and we began singing more often, resuming our traditional schedule of every-other-week. We contributed enthusiastically to our Carols By Candlelight concert on December 11th, joining with the Seniors and Men. We also sang joyfully for Rev. Sarah's final service and reception on April 30th. We will begin wrapping up our season with the traditional Mother's Day Medley, though it would seem we are still in demand; we have been summoned to sing again at the Youth Led service on June 4th, and perhaps even on Father's Day, June 18th, another lay-led service.

**Members:** *Emily Brown, Rebecca Brown, Tommy Butcher, Aren Lirette, and Noah Murphy.*

**Respectfully submitted, Kathy MacNeil, Choir Director**

## Senior

I am delighted to report that the Senior Choir resumed its full duties in the choir loft this church year. It has been a turbulent few years of on and off group singing, interspersed with solos, duets and small group singing. I am also pleased to report that all choir members have returned with great enthusiasm. The Senior Choir has maintained a steady presence during morning worship, offering hymn leadership, thematic anthems as well as other usual service music. We were even able to offer our traditional Carols By Candlelight service on December 11th, joining with our Men and our Youth.

Services were only cancelled once this year for a storm, January 15th, 2023. I was actually able to travel twice this church year, missing October 30th for a trip to Churchill, Manitoba, and May 21st, for a trip to Phoenix, Arizona. Charlene Cable-Lloy handily played in my place. Our singing year will continue until June 25th, but we felt a regretful sense of closure on April 30th when we sang, both in the service and at the reception, for the retirement of our dear friend, Rev. Sarah Reaburn. It continues to be my privilege and joy to lead these faithful folks in musical rehearsal and service to the congregation of Rockingham.

**Respectfully submitted, Kathy MacNeil, Choir Director**

## Men's

The Men's Choir has a membership of 12 and they have had a very successful year. These guys are so keen to sing together that they get out of bed every Sunday morning to be at rehearsal at 8:30AM. They really seem to "have fun", singing together. They presented an Anthem 14 times this season, in Worship Services, between October 22 and May 23. RUC is one of a very few Churches in the Halifax Presbytery area to have a Men's Choir. We are so very fortunate to have the Music Ministry these dedicated Men provide. Kathy & I now "free them to the Golf Courses, and Cottages" for the summer season, and look forward to another year of music in October.

**Respectfully Submitted, Joan Munro**

## MEN'S GROUP

The Men of RUC is an opportunity for all men of the congregation to gather, through service to our church, Outreach to those in need and social activities. We focus on the spirit of friendship of men involved in our church. While we have 40+ men on our email distribution list, we typically have 10 – 15 ready and willing to participate in our various activities each year. Our active numbers dwindle each year with an aging population.

### Outreach Projects:

**Monthly Lunch Meetings:** Our monthly lunches continued this year from September to May and possibly June. Our lunches focus on supporting the **Brunswick Street Mission** which now has a food bank on premises. Each month we gather foodstuff as an admission to the lunch and deliver it to the mission to help stock their Food Bank. We thank all participants of this Outreach project which is also a social activity for the men of RUC. We also thank Freeman's on Dutch Village for their kind hospitality during these monthly events.

**Fund Raising Projects:**

**The Charlie Murphy RUC Memorial Christmas Tree:** We were able to carry on with the Memorial Christmas Tree again in December. We had a good level of participation in this project again this year.

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper:** Our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was a hit again this year, after a hiatus due to COVID. 148 meal tickets were sold. Most were adult tickets by some were family and children. We did a soft price increase this year, and we put out a call for the donation of raw materials. We had no expenses for this event in 2023. The **Women of RUC** hosted a bake sale, and the **Youth of RUC** had a table with assorted items for sale. Thanks to all who participated in the preparation for, and the carrying off of this event this year. We especially thank Sharon Ernst for coming into a mostly male kitchen staff to ensure quality control and timely preparation took place.

**Mother's Day Lobster Lunch:** The Mother's Day Lobster Lunch was cancelled due to the high cost of Lobsters at the wharf.

**Oscar:** Our **2022 Oscar Campaign** began early in the year and ended the Sunday following Thanksgiving. It too was a great success. Our **2023 Oscar Campaign** began on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and will end after Thanksgiving. **Oscar** is an acronym for **Our Spare Change Aiding Rockingham**.

**Projects around the Church:**

**Church Property Clean Up:** The Building & Property Committee requested a trimming of the rose bushes along the walkway leading to the lower entrance to the church hall. We wish to thank Ron & Joanne Tanton for their clean up of these bushes.

**Provide support for Property & Maintenance Committee:** The Property & Maintenance Committee continues to rely on support of the men of RUC on an as needed basis for projects around the church facility, inside and out.

**Finances:****Men's Group Financial Report July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023**

<b>Opening Balance July 1, 2022</b>		<b>\$1,120.49</b>
<b>Receipts:</b>		
Oscar 2022	\$4,903.05	
Memorial Tree 2022	\$1,351.25	
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 2023	\$1,519.50	
Lobster Takeout*		
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>\$7,773.80</b>
<b>Disbursements:</b>		
Transfer to Church Operating Fund 12/31/22	\$6,635.09	
Damage Ck returned by CIBC Env#1	\$200.00	
<b>Total Disbursements</b>		<b>\$6,835.09</b>
<b>Closing Balance May 13, 2023</b>		<b><u>\$2,059.20</u></b>



**\*Accounting Notes:**

- a) *The above receipts and disbursements are recorded in the over all church financial statements. They are not kept separate but included as a line item for **The Men of RUC**. Funds get transferred from The RUC Men's Line item in the church's General Ledger to the Operating Line Item at the fiscal year end which is December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.*
- b) *There were no expenses associated with The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper in 2023 as all the raw ingredients were donated.*
- c) *The Mother's Day Lobster Take Out 2023 was cancelled due to the high cost of lobsters.*

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

Respectfully Submitted

**Respectfully Submitted, Rodger Middleton**

**ROCKINGHAM CO-OP PLAYGROUP**

The Co-Op playgroup consisting of care givers and preschoolers continues to meet on Friday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to noon from mid-September until the end of May. These meetings take place in the church hall and The Fireside Room. As well as free playtime with toys and ride-on cars, we offer story time and singing and occasionally do seasonal crafts organized by the caregivers. We also celebrate Hallowe'en, Christmas, Valentines Day, Easter and an end of year party with special food and Treats. This year we have had an average attendance of 20 children weekly.

If anyone is interested in joining this lively and fun loving group, please contact Karen at 902-443-0580 or by email at [karenlm5@icloud.com](mailto:karenlm5@icloud.com)

**Respectfully submitted, Karen Middleton**

**RUC BRIDGE GROUP**

Jamie Turner, Eve Tupper and Bev Andrews got together last fall to encourage people to join us for a fun year of Bridge, no fees, just fun and friendship. Our group totaled 19, including Reg Crick. We also want to thank Kay Strange for recording scores.

We decided to have a windup on May 4<sup>th</sup> in the Sunrise Room at Rockingham United Church. Sunrise room was so bright and cheerful! This was our first get together since the "Pandemic".

We had great fun singing Happy Birthday to Doreen Crick, it was her 90th!! After some fun bridge we enjoyed Jamie's wonderful Carrot cake and Tea and Coffee. There were also some lucky prizes! Thanks to Sylvia and her son for the help getting set up and to all who made it so much fun.

**Respectfully submitted, Eve Tupper**

## STATISTICS

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Year ending December 31, 2022

Households under Pastoral Care – 317  
Households Financially Supporting – 173  
Number of Baptisms – 2  
Number of Funerals – 3  
Number of Marriages – 0  
Average weekly attendance – 160