

2023 CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH
PORT COLBORNE
ANNUAL REPORT



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AGENDA

Words of Welcome,

Territorial acknowledgment (was read during service)

Opening Prayer Rev Dr. Diane Walker

In Memoriam (was read during service)

BUSINESS MEETING

Call to Order

Election of Chair and Secretary for meeting

Meeting procedures for voting

Approval of the Agenda

Acceptance of the minutes of the last Annual Meeting, February 26, 2023 as printed

Approval of Annual Reports

Motion: All 2023 reports, except the Treasurer's Report be accepted as printed.

Treasurer's Report Gloria Simon

Presentation of the 2024 Budget Chris Wilson

Approval of Proposed Budget for 2024 Chris Wilson

Nominations for Trustee positions Chris Wilson

Report from the Nominating Committee Barclay Walker

Election of Council Members Barclay Walker

Resolution re Borrowing

Appointment of Auditors for 2024

Other New Business

Closing Remarks

Adjournment Motion: "That this meeting adjourn, and the Church Council and its Executive be given power to act in all necessary matters until the next Annual Meeting to be held early in 2025, date to be set by Church Council.

**CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2023**

Outgoing Council Chair, Barclay Walker welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the meeting to order following our "Soup Sunday" luncheon.

The 2022 Memoriams had been read and acknowledged by DLM Heather Filson during the morning worship service.

BUSINESS MEETING

Lesley Rickard moved that Barclay Walker and Bev Roseboom fill the positions of Chair and Secretary respectively for this meeting. Seconded by Paul Rubocki. Carried.

Moved by Amanda Bell and seconded by Chris Wilson that adherents be allowed to vote on the business of this annual meeting. Carried.

Moved by Donna Tuck and seconded by Cathy Rubocki that the agenda for this meeting be approved as circulated. Carried.

Hendrika Black moved, seconded by Marilyn Robinson, that the minutes from our 2021 annual meeting held on Sunday, February 13, 2022, be accepted as printed in the annual report. Carried.

Cathy Rubocki moved that all 2022 reports with the exception of the treasurer report and the addition of a Soup Sunday report be accepted, seconded by Lesley Rickard. Carried.

Due to the absence of Treasurer Jayme-Lynn Lilley, Chris Wilson presented the treasurer report. Chris pointed out a few items of particular importance in the report. Some accounting practices have been changed and any revenue that has been considered deferred revenue in the past will now be shown as revenue. There have been some difficulties with CIBC recently regarding a change in signing authority on the UCW accounts and all of the church accounts were frozen. These problems have been resolved. Chris pointed out that the future of our church is dependent on the people attending and that there needs to be a considerable increase in our offering. The local outreach cheques will be dispersed as soon as Jayme-Lynn is available to do so. For this year, the deficit can be covered by the capital funds. There was some discussion as to whether the United Church of Canada should be mandating that small rural congregations amalgamate with larger churches. This would be very difficult to accomplish as people are "attached" to their local congregation and don't want to change to a "city" church. Chris Wilson moved that the treasurer reports be accepted

as presented, seconded by Amanda Bell. Carried.

Chris Wilson presented the 2023 budget as printed in the annual report. He reiterated how important it is that the givings increase. The only large expense that is anticipated at this time are the repairs to our elevator. Church council has already authorized the funds for this work. The expected deficit for this year is \$30,000.00. Jim Brown questioned whether we should start redirecting some of the funds donated to the church for a specific cause and not follow the individual directions. This may be possible for some of the funds but not for all of them. Some have very specific directions that cannot be changed. Chris Wilson moved that the budget be accepted, seconded by Marilyn Robinson. Carried.

Barclay thanked Chris Wilson and Terry Sues for their continued hard work on our finances and budget.

Darlene Sherk was thrilled to announce this year that people have answered the call when asked to serve on committees and there are very few vacancies. We are still in need of a vice-chair of council and a chair of Worship committee. Darlene asked three times if there were any additional nominations and seeing none moved that the nominations be closed and that the slate of council members and volunteers be accepted. Seconded by Barclay Walker. Carried.

Lesley Rickard, the new chair of council, took a moment to thank Barclay Walker and Amanda Bell on behalf of our council and congregation for their work in leading us through the Covid challenges.

Chris Wilson moved that church council be authorized to borrow up to \$50,000.00 for the operation of the church if and when this becomes necessary. Seconded by Jane Danch-Roy. Carried.

Chris Wilson moved that Marilyn Robinson continue as our auditor. Seconded by Gail Etling. Carried. Marilyn has agreed to remain in this position.

DLM Heather Filson asked that anyone on our auction facebook page please remove their name. She is having to individually remove names as our page has been hacked.

In his closing remarks, Barclay Walker thanked everyone for their hardwork and dedication to the success of our congregation. He specifically mentioned all the work done by DLM Heather Filson, Donna Tuck and Darlene Oord for organizing our Soup Sundays, Darlene Sherk for her dedication to the nominating committee, Carrie Dunn and Steve for their upkeep of the Church, Ron Jackson for stepping into the role of chair of Property after the passing of Kurt Rauscher, Darlene Oord for the gift of music, Bev Roseboom as council secretary and Lorne Kembley for his work with the sound system.

Barclay then read the words of Hymn #424 in Voices United, May the God of Hope Go With Us.

Chris Wilson moved that this meeting adjourn and the church council and its executives be given power to act in all necessary matters until the next annual meeting to be held early in 2024, the date to be set by church council. Seconded by Cathy Rubocki. Carried.

PASTORAL CHARGE SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

A pastoral charge supervisor is appointed by the local Regional Council when a congregation or pastoral charge is without an appointed or called minister. Since taking on this role in the spring of 2023 I have been impressed by a hard working and faithful congregation served by an effective and cohesive church council.

Of particular note is your manifest willingness to try this experimental ministry team with Rev. Cathie Ellarby as minister of worship, Heather Filson covering pastoral care, children and youth ministry, administration and some preaching, and me preaching monthly and attending meetings of congregation, council and trustees. My official role at meetings is to make sure that United Church policies are honoured.

We are experiencing an acute shortage of ministers in the United Church and in the years to come it might be seen that Central was ahead of the adaptation curve. I am enjoying being part of the experiment and the experience and I thank you for the warm welcome I've encountered among you.

My God bless you all as you serve and love Him,

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Walker

COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT



As I sit here and reflect on the past year, I am amazed that although we may feel the entire world has gone off its axis, we here at Central United have continued to grow and flourish under God's watchful eye. There is an expression my dad used often, "God helps those who help themselves." I believe that our church lives by that. We have been given opportunities to offer hospitality, to practice generosity, and we are all willing to help in fulfilling God's plan to do what we can when we can and for whomever needs it.

Our 2023 started off a bit shaky but through many blessings we now have a "united" church once more. With the guidance of Rev. Dr. Diane Walker I feel we are on a new adventure and when you add Rev. Cathie to the mix...well need I say more.

I look forward to continued growth, even though it may look a bit different from what we are accustomed, but when circumstance change, we are willing to adapt. I am please that our church family understands and accepts new ideas. We are indeed again a "united church."

Respectfully,
Lesley Rickard
Chair of Council

DESIGNATED LAY MINISTER REPORT

2023 seemed to be busier than ever for our community of faith. In February we celebrated the retirement of our minister, Rev. Alison Nicholson. As you will read, various groups were busy all year long. If you were to just see the calendar laid out from January 1st to December 31st, I think you'd be shocked at how much our community accomplished. Please take a few moments to read the following reports. If you aren't already volunteering with a committee, perhaps you'll see one that aligns with your passion. Let God lead you. Become part of this volunteer group here at Central. It's fun and rewarding.

As we maneuvered through the year, we were blessed to have Rev. Dr. Diane Walker be assigned as our Pastoral Charge Supervisor. Not only did she mentor, suggest and encourage our council throughout the year, she has also preached when asked. The biggest gift Rev. Diane gave us was introducing us to Rev. Cathie Ellarby, our new Minister of Worship. Rev. Cathie brings a refreshing approach from the pulpit, new ideas to the table and a listening ear. Rev. Cathie's husband Fred, can be seen in the back row of our Senior Choir which has brought our numbers of male voices up to 3. Their talents abound and Central is thankful for these wonderful additions to our church family.

As Central's journey continues, I hope everyone feels the positive energy within the building and the community of faith. Our community of faith continues to be busy and we are making a joyful noise. May the work we continue to do within our church and in our local community be a blessing to God and may continue to let God lead us to areas that need compassion, encouragement and love.

Respectfully submitted
Heather Filson, Designated Lay Minister

PASTORAL CARE & VISITATION REPORT

Pastoral Care and visitation is always ongoing and very much needed. With church members now in various LTC or retirement homes, some people still living in their homes but not getting out as much as they use to and people just feeling unwell, this part of my job is always busy. If you know of someone that may be ill and would like a call or a visit, please call the church office 905-834-4533. It's surprising how many people think I've been told of a situation and I'm totally in the dark.

Respectfully submitted

Heather Filson

Designated Lay Minister

REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE FOR 2024

Election of Trustees

Motion:

Moved by Chris Wilson, seconded by

Be it resolved that the Congregation of Central United Church appoint Sandra Frame, Darlene Sherk and Donna Tuck be appointed as trustees.

Church Council and Committees

Thank you to the members of our congregation who volunteer to serve in lay leadership. Leadership is not just about holding a position; it's about service, dedication, and a commitment to our shared vision. It's about fostering an environment of unity, growth, and spiritual nourishment for all who walk through our doors. We extend our invitation to join one of our committees and to consider one of the key leadership positions in the future with the Executive Committee. You might be thinking, "Why me? Why now?" But we challenge you to consider, "Why not me?" Each of us has the capacity to lead in our own way, contributing to the collective strength of our church.

We thank Wendy Davies, for her work and leadership with the Mission and Outreach Committee. Wendy is stepping down as leader and looks forward to continuing to work with the group and their outreach. We welcome Laurie Haley as the leader for the Mission and Outreach committee.

The Worship Committee Leader position was vacant in 2023. We are excited to welcome Joanne Acocella to the committee and her taking on the leadership role. Joanne is an active member of the choir and we have enjoyed her children's time in the worship service.

For more than twenty years, Sandra and Doug Frame have faithfully served as lay leaders in our congregation. They have guided our community and generously shared their gifts, talents, and experiences. Their perspective, skills, and passion have been invaluable assets that have shaped our church and helped us to navigate through celebrations and challenges.

Today, with the approval of the congregation, we would like to honour Doug and Sandra for their work and appoint them as Life Members of Council.

Motion:

Moved by Chris Wilson, seconded by Barclay Walker

Be it resolved that the Congregation of Central United Church appoint Doug Frame and Sandra Frame as Life Members of Council.

Motion:

Moved by Barclay Walker, seconded by Lesley Rickard

Be it resolved that following members of Central United Church be appointed to lead and serve the committees of the church for 2024.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

Chair..... * Lesley Rickard
Vice-Chair vacant
Past Chair * Barclay Walker
Secretary..... * Bev Roseboom
Treasurer..... * Gloria Simon

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Committee Leader..... *Chris Wilson
Member *Gloria Simon
Volunteers Marie Feduck, Tony Roy

WORSHIP Committee

Committee Leader..... *Joanne Acocella
VolunteersBrandee Oord, Emily Wilson, John Wilson

MISSION & OUTREACH

Committee Leader..... * Laurie Haley
Volunteers Rhonda Bilodeau, Judy Brennan, Wendy Davies,
..... Heather Orosz, Barb Parsons,

PROGRAM & FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Committee Leader.....*Marie Feduck
Volunteers Wendy Davies, Linda Doan, Carrie Dunn,
..... Gail Etling, Darlene Sherk, Linda Traver

PROPERTY

Committee Leader..... * Ron Jackson
Volunteers Ray Audette, Rick Bilodeau, Darin Hemauer
.....Michael Oord, Jim Orosz, John Simon

UCW.....*Vicki Fretz

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL

Committee Leader.....Barrie Wilson
Members Brian Haley, Jill Jackson

PASTORAL CARE & VISITATION

Cookies & Christ Coordinator.....Carrie Dunn
Portal VillageJennifer Parker
Northland Pointe

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE vacant
.....

Note: *Denotes member of council. Committees may consist of additional appointed members who are members at large and who may serve for an indefinite term of office.

TRUSTEES

ChairChris Wilson

..... Terry Suess
 *To be elected in 2024 – Sandra Frame*
 *To be elected in 2024 – Darlene Sherk*
 *To be elected in 2024 – Donna Tuck*

MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE

The Chairperson of Council..... Lesley Rickard
 The Chairperson of Property Ron Jackson
 The Chairperson of Worship..... Joanne Acocella
 The Chairperson of Finance..... Chris Wilson
 Two Members of the Board of Trustees..... To be named

MINISTRY & PERSONEL COMMITTEE REPORT

All contracts and evaluations were completed.
 Confidentiality agreement were all signed, along with one police background check.
 Welcome Cathie Ellarby as our new part-time minister.

There were no complaints this year.
 The M/P committee would like to thank:
 Reverend Dr. Diane Walker & Lay Minister Heather Filson, for their support, along with
 all committees and volunteers that keep the church running very smoothly.
 Congratulations to Leslie Richard for chairing the council for another year, we all know
 she will continue to do a great job.

M/P Committee
 Chairman Barrie Wilson,
 Jill Jackson, Brian Haley

2023 CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS REPORT

Baptisms

Cody Michael Kohut – January 29th
Tanner Ross Schwartz – January 29th
Graham Michael Koeber – December 3rd
Hailey Koeber – December 3rd
Jesse Miniou – December 3rd

Deaths/Funerals

William Macdonald – January 14th
Irene Barnai – January 18th
Dorothy Dayboll – January 18th
Thomas Roesch – March 1st
Stephanie Koeber – March 9th
Elsbeth Rasch – April 6th
Evelyn Fox – April 7th
Don Bull – May 23rd
Joan Koudijs – June 2nd
Tony Koudijs – June 9th
Reta Pilot – June 11th
Colette Woolley – June 20th (service on August 26th)
Patricia Hebert – July 21st
Julia Gibson – August 3rd
Stephen Crowe – August 31st
Robert Wood – September 22nd
Ann Elise Bull – October 14th
Dolores Shibley – December 11th

Transfer of Membership

To Central

Joanne Acocella – December 3rd

From Central

MUSIC MINISTRY 2023

How wonderful to hear the musical messages from our church ministry each Sunday morning! The Covid break has certainly changed many aspects of our choir work, however the thirty-plus members remind us that through dedication and service we have hope and promise.

The three choirs---Youth, Teen With Kin, and Senior Choirs bring happiness with a sense of willingness to do their best work for our church.

I am thankful to be part of this ministry. I am fortunate to have Erin Schisler as our Youth Choir Mom, who so kindly does a diligent job.

Sadly, we are so often reminded of the members we have recently lost. Our choirs have become a type of family.

In community spirit the Senior Choir invited the congregation to share Hot Cross Buns and fellowship after the Good Friday service. Several members participated in the Annual Mariners' Service held at St.James/St.Brendan's Church, prior to the opening of the Welland Canal season. The Senior Choir participated in the annual Port Colborne Festival Of The Arts in May.

Individual choir members cheerfully carry special solo parts of many anthems. They all are dedicated, sincere musicians. Summer soloists volunteer to enhance these services. John Wilson has been a support in Organ/Piano duets with myself at the beautiful Casavant organ, as well as his willingness to take the helm when I am absent. So fortunate for us!! In October, the Senior Choir, Teen With Kin Choir, and Youth Choir invited area choirs and our entire Community to a "Celebration of Choirs". The church sanctuary was filled, while music relaxed and encouraged everyone. A Free Will offering was donated to "Food With Friends".

Remembrance Day service was so meaningful, and a Piper enhanced the service. On Christmas Eve, all three choirs culminated the season of Hope and Joy with a combined effort to the glory of God.

Our Handbell Choir is searching for members to help us get back into Ministry. Please consider this. Everyone can learn.

Please know that we welcomed two new members into choir this year---with open arms!!! Would you know of anyone from the community that is missing this music role in life? Please send them our way. They will be glad.

Thank you to our ministers and congregation for encouragement and support.

--Darlene Oord
Director of Music and Organist

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Catherine Street Parking Lot

We received a letter from a member of the Harbour Light Singers, who tripped and fell after dark in our Catherine Street parking lot after the Harbour Light's concert in December. As requested in the letter, we will be making some improvements to safety in that area; including better lighting over the Catherine Street entrance, reflectors or reflective tape on the concrete parking barriers, and possibly painting lines to better mark the parking spaces.

2. Boilers

Our new boilers for the hot water heating system have recently had a maintenance inspection and cleaning and are in good working order.

3. Heaters in Sanctuary

The valve which controls the hot water flow through the north side bank of radiators in the sanctuary was found to be "stuck" in the open position in late January. That old valve will be replaced with a new one. In the meantime, turning the heat down in the sanctuary can only be accomplished by manually shutting off that bank of radiators.

4. Snow Clearing and Salting of Steps

K M Jones Landscaping has been rehired to clear the snow and salt the ice at the church whenever there is a significant snowfall or there are icy conditions. The rate this season is \$380.81 (including GST) per month, due on the first of the month, December through March.

5. Sidewalk and Parking on Delhi St.

There are several areas along Delhi Street where the sidewalk has cracked and heaved, making it potentially unsafe for walking. This has been reported to the City of Port Colborne (Public Works – Ref. No. SR-29334) requesting that they do some repair work.

As always, please be careful whenever entering or exiting the church.

6. Doorbell

A Ring doorbell was purchased and has been patiently waiting (since late November) for Property to install it at the Delhi Street entrance.

7. Fire Detection and Alarm System

Annual issue:

The required annual inspection of the fire detection and alarm system was performed on November 6th. Some minor issues were discovered and have been rectified. Some of the fire extinguishers required testing to maintain their certification. This was completed as of mid December. Subsequently, one more extinguisher was found to be slightly low on pressure and was sent out for testing.

The next annual inspection will be due in October/November of this year.

8. Elevator

The hydraulic pump set, which powers and controls operation of the elevator was replaced with a new unit in the spring of last year. However, in the fall, we did have an issue where the control for the door latch malfunctioned, and people were trapped in the elevator until the special maintenance manual door key was used to free them. That key is available for use in such emergencies, but ONLY for use in such emergencies. It is stored on top of the emergency light on the ground floor across the hall from the elevator.

9. New Flooring in the Sanctuary

No change in status:

The assessment is that the condition of the existing carpet should be good enough to stay in place for another year and any soiled spots can be cleaned by a professional cleaner.

10. Microphones

No change in status:

One or more of the microphones hanging down above the choir is not working, there would seem to be a disconnected (possibly chewed) wire in the attic. We need to assemble a small team to inspect and repair the wire(s) ... and schedule a day and time to do this.

11. Miscellaneous Items

Miscellaneous items (dripping taps, rocking toilets, burnt out lightbulbs, etc.) will continue to happen and be dealt with as simply as possible on an "as needed" basis.

Ron Jackson – Property Committee Chair

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

Program committee had a busy year with several successful fundraisers. We had our spring pasta and meatball dinner, Maundy Thursday eat in/takeout soup lunch, the ham/scalloped potato/pie auction in the fall, Christmas cookies and another soup lunch in December. As well as these fundraisers we are in the rotation to host Sunday morning coffee hour. When Soup Sunday takes a break we provided the last Sunday of the month lunch in May and June. Due to scheduling conflicts the lunch the last Sunday of September was not held. We look forward to offering a similar schedule of events for the upcoming year.

With the exemption of Mary Jane Bankes who has resigned as co-chair but will continue to help out for now, our committee members will remain for another year.

The committee consists of Marie Feduck, chair, Mary Jane Bankes, Linda Traver, Gail Etling, Wendy Davies, Darlene Sherk, Carrie Dunn, and Heather Filson. We welcome new member Linda Doan to the committee this year.

FLOWER & DÉCOR COMMITTEE REPORT

The Flower / decor committee keeps busy with placing flowers in the sanctuary each Sunday. The memorial flowers are our thank you to those who have supported our Poinsettia Memorial Flowers at Christmas time.

This year we had a very successful display of poinsettias with 60 memorials.

The sanctuary flowers match the current season as well as the decor in the banquet room and the office stairway. Our busy time is Christmas when we all gather to decorate our church home for the Christmas season and then gather to put it all away. It is a big job but many hands help.

In years past we also had memorial Easter lilies. For many reasons we discontinued the sale of real plants (the strong scent of the lilies) and have substituted with silk Easter lilies. We place the display in memory of all those from our church family that have passed away in the past year.

In the past few years we have lost many of our devoted members....Darlene Tuck, Stephanie Brown, Joan Koudijs, Ann Elise Bull. Thus we are in need of more help. All of our flowers etc are kept up in the bell tower. Each helper takes a month or two when they will place new flowers in the sanctuary. Anyone interested in joining our group feel free to contact Cathy Rubocki. 905 8351327.

We are thankful for the support of our church family.

Regards ...the floral/decor team

Cathy Boggio, Cheryl Bull, Cathy Rubocki, Linda Traver, Cheryl Brown, Connie Ford

'NOT SO' SILENT AUCTION REPORT

The Team held 2 successful auctions this year, one for Spring and Summer and another for Fall, Winter and Christmas and are now busy preparing for the 2024 Spring Auction. We have a lovely variety of spring items and indoor/ outdoor decor. The Team is truly appreciative for the ongoing support from our Church Family and community members for their lovely donations. Enjoy the fun-filled shopping experience and thanks again for participating.

Darlene, Jan, Cheryl, and Hammie

COOKIES & CHRIST REPORT

Cookies and Christ is Central's seniors day program. We bring the seniors at both Northland Pointe and Portal village a short devotional service, hymn sing, fellowship and goodies on alternating Months. I have an amazing team of volunteers who donate their time, musical talents and/or bless everyone with their wonderful baking when we visit Portal Village. The seniors truly enjoy us being there and definitely rave about the goodies! All seniors are always welcome to attend. If you would be interested in volunteering your time or your baking to this wonderful outreach program you can contact me at carriedun8@hotmail.com.

-Carrie Dunn

(Seniors Day Co-Ordinator)

PRAYER SHAWL GROUP

The Prayer Shawl Group continued to work at their homes, knitting and crocheting beautiful shawls for Central's family. Many shawls are given out annually and we will continue to support all who need comfort through this project. For knitters and crocheters in our midst, if you would like more information on this group, please contact the church office 905-834-4533. Donations of yarn, bags and tissue papers continue to be dropped off and the group is thankful for the support.

CENTRAL CASTING

If you ever want a boost of energy, please join us downstairs for Central Casting. Our group is young and full of energy. They listen well to the stories taught and LOVE to do a craft to reflect the day's lesson. These young people are being mentored and trained and have very giving hearts that are full of God's love. It takes a village and Central should be proud that we are part of each of these children's lives.

Respectfully submitted by

Heather Filson, DLM

CENTRAL'S YOUTH

2023 saw a decline in numbers for Central's youth group. We had people move away and older teens committed to part-time jobs. We were able to visit Bird Kingdom in Niagara Falls and that was a lot of fun.

We hope that 2024 brings more young people out to connect with other like-minded, Christian young people, to share in fun and fellowship. Please contact the office if you have a teen that would like to take part in Central's Youth.

Respectfully submitted

Heather Filson

Designated Lay Minister

2023 SUMMER ADVENTURE CAMP REPORT

2023 Central United Church Summer Adventure Camp ran from August 13 until August 18. The theme of this year's camp was 'Bug Safari'. The camp had a focus on youth Christian education through interactive lessons, teaching biblical stories while encouraging engagement through the dramatic arts. The camp was split into two parts, the morning camp and the afternoon camp. The morning camp focused on Christian education, which ran from 8:30 until 11:30 a.m. the afternoon camp focused on making new connections, running from 11:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Roughly 40 children registered for the camp, with more than half staying for the afternoon.

In the morning, the day began with daily Bible stories. The five main stories that we focused on were Samuel 16:1-13, Samuel 17, Samuel 18-20, Mark 15:1-16 and Samuel 25:1-35. Next, there was a transition into songs to have the campers moving, connecting and engaging with one another. After songs it was snack time which was provided by the church and donations. Once snack was over the groups would rotate through the science, craft and game activities that were entertaining, exciting and related to the daily lesson. At the end of the morning, campers reunited in the Sanctuary for a review of what they learned that day. This concluded the morning camp.

The afternoon camp began with lunch then time at the park. Once back from the park, there was a movie with activities spread out to ease transition. Activities such as camouflage, dancing, duck-duck-goose, chocolate royal and more are all ways that we had fun in the afternoon camp.

Thank you to all volunteers and donors to Central United Church's Summer Adventure Camp for giving their time and support to help make this camp possible. A special thank you goes out to Designated Lay Minister Heather Filson and Technology Supervisor Ava Laurin for all of their help setting up, creative ideas, and production of the camp prior to

the camp beginning. It was a pleasure to work with all of you and provide this experience to the campers.

Samuel Tonnies, Camp Supervisor

HOLY HANDS PUPPETS

The Holy Hand Puppets have had a slow year. Between us re-grouping as we lost our older teens to school and moving away and welcoming new puppeteers and organizations re-tooling their events calendars, the Holy Hand Puppets were only out a couple of times in 2023. We were invited to Morgan's Point United Church for their UCW's annual family dinner in September, and this event was really well received. We were also back at Portal Village for their family day in September, which was a lot of fun. At the end of September, we were once again at The Wainfleet Fall Fair on the Friday morning when W. E. Brown. St. Elizabeth and Winger Elementary schools send their students over to the fair to check out all the entries. The Holy Hands Puppets sing during the morning whenever the arena is full of students and we are rewarded with large crowds. We closed out the year at the Christmas Eve service singing our signature songs We Three Camels and Christmas Hallelujah.

Looking forward, the puppet team hopes to be seen more this year than last.

Respectfully submitted

Heather Filson

Designated Lay Minister

SOUP SUNDAYS 2023

It was wonderful being back to having Soup Sundays in 2023. This event happens 6 times a year, the last Sunday of the month from January to April, October and November. We all enjoy sharing our lunch together, and we pass the basket, raising a bit of money for the church at the same time. A huge thanks goes out to those who create and donate pots of delicious soup, contribute rolls/breads, or bake up some goodies for dessert. We couldn't do it without you. In 2023, that basket that we passed brought in \$1,771.35.

Darlene Oord

Donna Tuck

MISSION & OUTREACH REPORT

The Mission and Outreach team has had another busy and productive year. Our committee would like to thank the many helping hands, donations and support, for making all of these outreach activities happen! Each and every one of your contributions helps our local and global communities. Please see the 2023 Financial Summary below for more information on what we've been up to. We are always looking for new ways to support our community and are always open to suggestions! If you have any outreach ideas that you think we should consider, please let us know!

M & S FUND

M & S continues to be promoted in the weekly bulletin. Donations can be made through weekly offerings or online @ <https://united-church.ca/donate>.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Special offerings were collected at Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The Easter offering went to McKay School's breakfast program, the Thanksgiving offering to Port Cares (for seniors in need) and the Christmas offering to Central's general operating fund.

WORLD VISION

Central continues to sponsor Rahim, from Bangladesh. Rahim is a healthy 11 year old boy who is in grade six. He has been learning about his community and places and traditions to enjoy. His favourite place in his community is a tourist spot called Bisnakand. He likes to visit it to see the hills and stones. One of the activities that take place in his community is Jolsa, a religious gathering. Donations from the used book sales help to fund Rahim's sponsorship. Here is a recent picture of Rahim:



FOOD WITH FRIENDS

The Food with Friends (FWF) team continues to be busy. Our group consists of about 10 people. We are a team that provides a hot nutritious meal monthly (usually the second Tuesday of the month) to folks in our community needing such support. Currently we prepare about 120 meals each time, provided in a take out style. The weekly program is administered by the St. James and St. Brendan Anglican church, out of the guild hall, and includes other church teams.

Aside from planning and preparing a monthly meal, we also had some highlights during the year that should be mentioned. A wonderful afternoon of music held at our church, organized by Darlene Oord and supported by local choirs. The concert was enjoyed by a full house. A goodwill offering was taken and generously donated to the FWF team. The funds help offset rising costs and provide special treats to our guests. Thanks to Darlene and the choirs!

At Christmas time, sock donations from the congregation, combined with chocolate and candy cane treats were given to our guests. They were well received, and produced many smiles.

Julia Gibson organized and ran our team for many years. Sadly, we had to say good bye to her after a courageous battle with cancer. Julia was our friend, mentor, and passionate supporter of the dinner program since its inception. Our team will continue the FWF meals with the same sentiments that she guided us to, and we hope to honour her memory in this way as we make plans for the 2024 year.

A thank you goes to our congregation for their support through kind thoughts, interest, and actions.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Roseboom and Carol Suess

HARVEST FEST

Central set up a booth again this year at Harvest Fest.

This was a good opportunity to engage with the Port Colborne community, and increase community awareness of church's initiatives.

GARAGE SALE

Under Kathy McQuire's dedicated leadership, another successful garage sale was held on July 15, 2023. This was a good opportunity for community members to see the church in action! Proceeds from the sale went to Central's General Operating Fund. Thanks to everyone for the generous donations and all the volunteers who organized, set up, worked, or took down the sale.

CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

Kathy McQuire and her team of hardworking and dedicated volunteers again hosted the clothing boutique the last Saturday of April and September this year. Thank you to everyone who donated, sorted and worked at the boutiques. The people who attend really appreciate this much needed outreach initiative.

CHOCOLATE FUNDRAISERS

In the Spring of 2023, 105 pounds of chocolate were used to HAND MAKE solid molded Easter and Spring shapes, suckers, our foil-wrapped peanut butter filled eggs, and 4 kinds of bark.

In the Fall, another 105 lbs. of chocolate were made into our popular barks, suckers, molded miniatures, chocolate dipped pretzel rods, and more eggs with peanut butter centers.

Our dedicated group of "chocolatiers" enjoys this activity and the time we spend together in our church kitchen. We are grateful for the continuing support of the congregation and our community at large in their purchases of our "church made" chocolates.

We are pleased to report that the profit generated from our activity for the year came to \$3,450.20.

These proceeds go to the Mission and Outreach Committee to help fund their yearly projects.

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN (UCW) REPORT

With the exception of July and August, the UCW met during 2023. We meet for social time, sometimes we have speakers. In the winter months we talk about how we can raise money to support our community and our church. We gave 3 Baptism Bibles this past year. We catered to funeral receptions, to two Harbour Lite Singers luncheons and to the luncheon for the Retired Nurses. We celebrated the Advent season by going out for lunch ourselves in December.

We have already started to plan out events for the coming year. Our Christmas Bazaar is back!! The date is set for November 9, 2024.

Thank you to all who supported us with the Christmas Ornaments. Greatly appreciated. Yes! We're in the planning stage for the 2024 ornament so stay tuned!

God bless and keep you.

Vicki Fretz - President

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT 2023

As Christians we are called on to spread the Good News of the resurrected Christ. It has been many years since our annual financial report has had good news to share. What a difference a year makes!

We started 2023 with our new Treasurer Jayme-Lynn Lilly suffering from a serious injury and then serious medical complications after that. These ultimately required her to resign and we thank Jayme-Lynn for her work for us. The good news is Gloria Simon stepped up and volunteered to assume the Treasurers position and has put in many hours getting up to speed and putting our books in order. I want to thank her for her efforts and acknowledge Sandra Frame who has also assisted in bringing Gloria up to speed.

Our financial circumstances at the start of the year were quite grim and a special appeal to the congregation did meet with a wonderful response so that our givings increased for the year, a number of wonderful fund raising projects were undertaken and we ended the year with a surplus. We made up much of the loss from the prior year.

This is not the end of the story. Our staffing has stabilized for the short term and we welcome Rev. Cathy Ellarby to the pulpit for Sunday worship and thank her for her willingness to undertake this position. This is temporary and we must continue to build on the success of 2023 to keep our finances in order as we go forward. There is a new spirit of action among our congregation. Attendance at worship has increased since the pandemic shut down, many outreach ministry projects are being pursued and the congregation is having an impact in our community notwithstanding the loss of many long time members. Share in this success.

I want to thank the many people who undertook to lead and participate in the fundraising events which provided so substantially to our financial success. We also need our donors to keep up their commitment and perhaps consider an increase in givings coincident with the current inflation rate as all of our expenses are rising.

Marie Feduck deserves our thanks as she has served for many years as our Envelope Secretary and dutifully ensures our givings are recorded and receipts issued.

Thank you.

Christopher Wilson, Finance Chair.

CAVE SPRINGS CAMP LETTER TO CONGREGATIONS



2023 was a great year for all of us who love Cave Springs Camp and its enduring ministry. Our Program Director, Lance Wright reports that we hosted 2798 students on school field trips. Our summer camp registration increased to a total of 814 campers. Attendance at our summer overnight camps increased by 177 campers, compared to 2022.

Our staff is busy in 2024, with many groups renting our year-round building. I want to commend Ryan Anderson, our property manager with many improvements around the site. If you want to hold an event at camp, please contact Anita Philpott at 289-501-3743.

With our year-round Conference Centre and newly heated cabins, we have significantly expanded our year-round ministry. We ran a March Break Camp, a Youth Halloween event, a Theatre Camp, and an event for local Youth Groups. Our partner groups have included Community Associations, Church Groups, Scouts, Knitters, and Sports Teams. After spending time at Cave Springs, we often hear guests say the noise of the busy day decreases while the voices of nature and Divine Spirit increase.

These are ways you and your congregation can support Cave Springs Camp.

- You can sponsor campers up to age 15, for a week at camp.
- You can encourage youth to apply as counsellors for a summer of teamwork, fun and growth. Our counsellors grow even more than our campers.
- We also offer the Servant Leadership Program for a small number of young leaders who might be counsellors next year.
- Your congregation can name two members to our Corporation. Our Corporation AGM is in April. The corporation elects up to 20 volunteer board members who meet all year.
- You could also choose to serve on a committee without being a member.
- You may book a UCW visit, church picnic, Board retreat or family retreat or community event, or join the Mindfulness Retreat, Feb 17.
- You could arrange monthly donations by emailing donations@cavespringscamp.on.ca
- You could name camp as a bequest in your will.

If you would like to have a Camping Sunday for morning worship, with leadership from camp, please contact Lance Wright at 905 563-8487.

Cave Springs is a place where children and youth overcome fears, grow in faith and thrive in an outdoor environment. They discover that they CAN spend a day or a week without a screen and they discover that they are capable of more than they thought. With your support and investment, thousands of lives have been enriched and strengthened at Cave Springs Camp.

We thank you for your support, as Camp cannot happen without you.

Camp is a growing youth program in the United Church of Canada.

Your servant,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Duffus".

David Duffus,
president of the board

www.cavespringscamp.on.ca

905 563-8487.