



Runnymede United Church

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Runnymede Campus
432 Runnymede Rd.
Toronto, ON M6S 2Y8

Windermere Campus
356 Windermere Ave.
Toronto, ON M6S 3L3

Our Mission Statement

So that Christ's healing grace may reach a hurting world, we are committed to seeing that all who seek are: welcomed into community, equipped with faith, and supported in finding and following God's call in our lives



REVEREND TED GRADY

Welcome to the Annual Report of Runnymede United!

Runnymede continues to grow and stretch as a congregation and our Annual Report reflects our changing world. This is more than just a report of the year that was, it is a story of our shared ministry, its challenges, and celebrations.

Take time to read this report, take note of the names of the people who offered their gifts in so many ways, and recall your part in our shared story. Remember the story of 2023 and the amazing things we have done together. Celebrate our merger with Windermere United to become a two-campus congregation with unique heritage and common vision that continues to reach further and imagine new possibilities.



LAURA GALLAGHER-DOUCETTE

Dear Runnymede United,

It is difficult to capture the life and work of a church. I often feel this difficulty in leading worship: how can I convey the love I feel for and from this community? How can I hold up a mirror, so that the congregation can see what a wonderful place they are now and are becoming together as they grow? In these pages, you will find something of a snapshot of Runnymede United this past year. We all know that the spirit of a place is deeper and wider than what can be conveyed on paper. And yet, in the words that follow, there are glimmers of this congregation's spirit. The joys and hard work of being the church, of building a spiritual home together, are outlined here. This report is part of our story, and I pray that you will find God's presence in these pages, as I know I do.

Thank you for being here and joining this story through your presence.

Yours,
Laura

2023 at a Glance

COMMUNITY MEAL

Relaunch of Community Meal after pausing during the pandemic, the monthly Community Meal was restarted on February 25th.

AMALGAMATION

After discussion, town hall meetings and voting, Runnymede United became a two campus church, welcoming Windermere United formally on June 1.

PIE DAY

Our Affirming service, celebrating the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit People's in faith was held on March 19th followed by pie, made by our Youth Group, at Coffee Hour.

BEES FOR PEACE CAMP

From July 3 through 7 (children ages 6 through 12) enjoyed many activities, games and spiritual experiences at our Windermere campus.

RIDHA FAMILY ARRIVAL

After many years of work, hope and prayer, our sponsored family arrived safely in Canada in March 2023.

PANCAKE TUESDAY

Our famous community pancake meal was held as part of the Ash Wednesday events.

HOLY BLOCK PARTY

On September 23rd, our community was invited to both campuses for many events: games, activities, refreshments. There was a terrific turnout for this inaugural celebration of family, church and community.

COMMUNITY BBQ

The Board of Runnymede United sponsored a community BBQ following an outdoor worship service on September 24th.

ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

On November 11th, the 40th craft show was held at the Runnymede campus featuring 85 vendors and our famous baked and deli goods.

ADVENT

Our calendar year concluded with many Christmas events and activities: special services, our choir, our pageant inviting our community to share in this wonderful time of the year.



Annual Highlights

AMALGAMATION OF RUNNYMEDE UNITED WITH WINDERMERE UNITED

In early 2022, our neighbours at Windermere United Church started a process to discern their future as a faith community. In January 2023, Windermere United decided to seek to merge with another church and, after much prayerful consideration, voted on March 5th to enter into dialogue solely with Runnymede United as a potential amalgamation partner.

Windermere United had deep roots in our west Toronto community since 1912, became an Affirming congregation in 2019, and had a legacy of strong support for Truth and Reconciliation, social justice, and community outreach. Runnymede United was also an Affirming congregation, was active in social justice and outreach, and shared a neighbourhood with Windermere. Our joint amalgamation vision was to create a two-campus church, with greater critical mass, a single Community of Faith, and a goal of community outreach and social justice in west Toronto.

The congregations of both Runnymede United and Windermere United voted in favour of the Amalgamation Agreement that underpins our shared commitment to sustain and grow United Church ministry in west Toronto. On May 17th, the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Region provided its final approval of the Agreement. The effective date of the amalgamation was 1 June 2023.

Post-amalgamation, dedicated volunteers from both congregations formed an Integration Working Group reporting to the church Board. This group shepherded the integration during the first six months of intensive transition to amalgamate our two churches into one community of faith in our worship and work as followers of Christ.

The Integration Working Group was composed of the following people: Alex Cruickshank, Brenda Lien, Brian Traquair, David Allen, Debra Horsfield, Don Dewees, Doug Blackburn, Ian Gilmour, Janet Petrie, Jeff Horbal, Jocelyn McLean-Tharp, Laura Gallagher-Doucette, Mara Nickerson, Robin Pilkey, Tara Yelle, and Ted Grady. We want to thank those who participated in the Integration Working Group, as well as the many other people who contributed their gifts of time and talent to ensuring a successful amalgamation.

AMALGAMATION OF RUNNYMEDE UNITED WITH WINDERMERE UNITED - CON'T



Left: "Blessing of the Windermere Quilt" with Kristine Greenaway, Sunday, May 28th, 2023.
Right: On Sunday, May 28th we celebrated Pentecost and the amalgamation of Windermere United and Runnymede United churches. Following service was a celebratory lunch served in Memorial hall and a chance for people to mingle, chat, and get to know one another as one church with two campuses. This picture is of the celebratory cake!

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE

There was great joy when RUC finally greeted our long-awaited newcomer family from Iraq on 14 March 2023! As we welcomed two adult sisters, Nawal and Feryal, and Nawal's three sons Basheer, Baraa, Sudad, and her daughter Rafal, under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program, our church finally began its one-year commitment to help them settle in Toronto.

After RUC agreed to sponsor this family in 2014, the vagaries of war in Iraq and Syria, as well as legal obstacles and other unpredictable developments delayed their arrival in Canada for several years. The family endured hardship and separation during this time, but eventually they were all reunited and waited for the final documentation to come to Canada. RUC remained steadfast in its support of this sponsorship through all its many challenges, and is grateful for the pro bono legal assistance provided by two compassionate immigration lawyers.

The family was welcomed to RUC at a worship service and reception in early May. The children are all in school and one has a part-time job. The adults attend English classes. They have all made new friends at their schools and mosque, and travel independently by TTC and bike. They have been up the CN Tower, and had picnics at Centre Island and Niagara Falls. There is still a lot to learn but they are all happy to be in Canada and grateful for the help they have received from RUC.

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE - CON'T

Prior to the family's arrival, RUC raised over \$82,000 and received many donated items for the newcomers. Thirty volunteers from the church and wider community were organised into teams to help with education, finance, shopping, technology, transportation, recreation and more. They continue to meet bi-weekly to review the family's progress and increasing independence. While the financial support for the family will end in March 2024, the friendships and special connections will continue to grow.

We wish the family continuing success as they become Canadians!



Left: Feryal, Nawal, and Canadian sister Amal, with Rafal in front
Right: U18 High Park Soccer Champions! Baraa, Sudad and Basheer (coach)

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE - CON'T



Refugee Sponsorship Committee Volunteers



Ridha family with volunteers at their welcome reception at RUC, May 2023



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The 2023 year marked our continued emergence from the strict protocols of the pandemic and the ability to resume our monthly Community Meal, lessen mask requirements, renew socialization in our church community and in-person services and events. This return to normal included not only the Community Meal but also the Bloor West Arts and Crafts Show, Pancake Tuesday, the inaugural Holy Block Party, our annual fall BBQ, book studies, Lemonade on the Lawn, Coffee Hour, a game night in support of the Village of Love, special Lent and Advent activities and so much more. We also continued to evolve our online church services, social media and general communications in support of our congregants and community. None of this could have been accomplished without dedicated staff and volunteers who ensured incredible successes. And while there is not enough room to list all of these people with all of their talents, they are all appreciated for their energy and devotion.

We welcomed the Ridha Family after many years of volunteer work in ensuring not only the immigration of the family but housing, furniture and other requirements to make sure their lives in Toronto would be welcoming and supported. Regular updates from the core volunteer team assure us that the family is settling in and enjoying their new lives. Thank you to this diligent and supportive volunteer team for their work.

This year was also one of opportunity for growth, not only in new members but also the amalgamation with Windermere United Church and welcoming their congregants into the Runnymede United family. We are, after much integration work completed by staff and volunteers from both churches, a two campus church which affords us with new church members and volunteers, an enlarged library, increased rental opportunities and the chance to widen our engagement with a larger community. We are thankful for this incredible opportunity and for the expertise of staff and volunteers in making this happen in an incredibly short time period.

We continued to live into our commitments to be an Affirming congregation with activities and communication to increase awareness and participation in community events, such as the Pride Parade, the Pie Day service, a library cart to support increased education and awareness and speakers. Everything we do focuses on the importance of inclusion and create a safe place for all to worship and socialize.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD - CON'T

We took steps to expand our abilities to increase our engagement in the community particularly around food insecurity support and increased abilities for people to get involved with others. To this end we engaged a consulting firm to provide some research and recommendations for actions going forward. There is now an established committee to support this outreach process - Community Outreach Development and Engagement Committee (CODEC) that will be actively looking for volunteers in the new year.

And, let me take a moment to congratulate Laura Gallagher-Doucette, Engagement and Growth Leader, in passing her ordination interview. Thank you to the Lay Supervision Team that supported her in this process. We look forward to her ordination at the Shining Waters Region's Celebration of Ministries Service on June 9, 2024.

Looking Ahead to 2024:

In 2024, we will be increasing staffing to support key initiatives; a full-time leader for community outreach and two ministers to support a two campus church. This staff expansion will ensure our growth needs and post amalgamation plans. There are many opportunities for volunteers to get involved and we welcome you to join in based on your interests and time.

Robin Pilkey, Chair

Table of Contents

WORSHIP	11
LIVING OUR FAITH	20
COMMUNITY COMMITMENT	24
SUPPORTING THE MISSION	32
LIFE PASSAGES	46
STAFF/BOARD/COMMITTEES	47
TESTIMONIALS	50



Worship

A MESSAGE FROM REVEREND TED

The past few years were continued reminders of the resiliency and strength of Runnymede United Church. We have navigated much learning to stay connected online, trying new ways of gathering and doing so much to care for one another. Imagine, that after so much change and growth, 2023 would be an unprecedented year for this congregation.

We had no idea as the calendar turned, we would soon be engaged in a project that merged two congregations, increased our physical space, and doubled our immediate community to include the Swansea neighbourhood! It has been a year of conversations and discernment as we opened ourselves to the Spirit's leading to guide us on a new and exciting path.

I am grateful for the leadership and courage of the people from both Windermere and Runnymede who have worked together to risk a new way of being church. We put much time and energy into faithfully leading our congregations through this process. We are truly blessed by the gifts of many that enliven our ministry.

The merging of the two congregations was exciting and required a lot of time commitment from a few people. That was not our only celebration of this year. We welcomed many new members to our congregation in April and October, we had a wonderful Bible Camp in July, there were many special services, and we filled the front lawn for a barbeque and outdoor worship in September after a Holy Block Party that welcomed our community to our buildings! March was a special time as Runnymede welcomed a family from Iraq and helped them to settle into life in Canada. Runnymede United is an exciting and fun place to be these days as we continue to grow and stretch as a congregation and reach further in our welcoming and care for all.

I offer deep gratitude for my colleagues and the many people who offer leadership in our congregation. This time of positive transition was made possible by the willingness of many to adapt and take on new and different roles. It is a blessing to work with such a flexible, supportive, and diverse staff team. We have worked together to lift and encourage each other to give our best in support of the congregation. I am grateful for the encouragement of the Board and the many people at Runnymede who support, inspire, and challenge me to grow and stretch in my leadership and following.

Through many challenges and celebrations, Runnymede United has remained steadfast in being an Affirming place of welcoming and inclusion where all God's people are free to be their authentic selves. This past year had many unexpected challenges and celebrations, helping us to grow and open ourselves to what the years ahead might hold. I look forward to the journey with you.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Ted

ENGAGEMENT & GROWTH REPORT

What a year 2023 has been for engagement and growth at Runnymede United!

The amalgamation between Windermere United and Runnymede United, documented more fully elsewhere in this report, stands out as a new and exciting chapter in our church's life. In addition to the historic Windermere members who have joined our congregation, we had twenty-nine new official members become part of this community of faith last year. We are often graced with the presence of new faces on Sunday mornings and other gatherings beyond worship. Thanks be to God for all of these blessings! In a time where there is so much difficulty in the world, this church is a place of hope and sanctuary – and each one of you plays a part in making it the special place it is.

We have experienced spiritual growth together through worship and faith formation offerings, and growth in discipleship through our service to one another and our community. This congregation's famous Community Meal was relaunched this past year and continues to nourish people in more ways than one. Alongside the relaunch of the Community Meal, this congregation has discerned a call to deepen its commitment to feeding one another and our neighbours, and so has launched the Food Hospitality Committee, a group that continues to plan how we can live our faith in tangible ways that make a real difference in peoples' lives.

Our Bees for Peace Summer Camp, held at our Windermere Campus, was a success. The camp, along with the Christmas Pageant, was a wonderful opportunity for me to spend time with some of the younger members of the community. This was my first chance to spend consistent time at our Windermere Campus, which I have continued to enjoy through my monthly offerings in our "Seeking the Spirit" service there.

On a personal note, my time with you continues to be a time of growth and much learning. I am deeply grateful for the ongoing support this congregation has offered me in my candidacy pathway and am glad to report that I am now officially approved for ordination on June 9th , 2024. Thank you for journeying with me in this time of my formation as a minister!

Many blessings to you all,
Laura Gallagher-Doucette
Engagement & Growth Minister

FAITH FORMATION, ADULT REPORT

The Faith Formation & Christian Education Committee strives to provide annual adult learning opportunities during the fall, winter, and spring seasons. Sessions are led by both lay people and ministers. Depending on the study, participants are able to meet online, in-person or both (hybrid).

WINTER BOOK STUDY: Based on results from the Faith Formation congregation survey the previous fall, Winter 2023 session saw Brenda Lien and Karrie Phair-Harvey, with tech support from James Lien, lead a study of the book 'The Meaning of Mary Magdalene: Discovering the Woman at the Heart of Christianity' by Cynthia Bourgeault. Offered over 9 weeks starting mid-January with both evening and morning hybrid time slots, this was our most attended series to-date with 27 regular attendees.

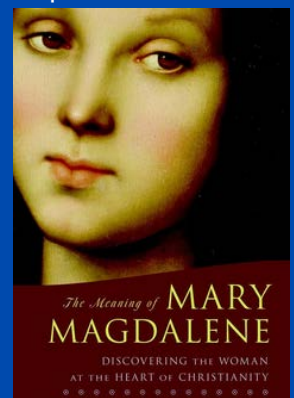
AMALGAMATION WITH WINDERMERE UNITED FAITH FORMATION: Spring & summer were occupied with meeting Windermere volunteers, learning about their on-going adult Faith Formation projects, and supporting their integration into Runnymede. Members of the committee met with Janet Petrie, David Allen, Kristine Greenaway, Christine Hughes, Jane Clendening, Jennie Keating and Kendra Oneson to understand what groups were offered at Windermere and how they wanted to move forward after amalgamating with Runnymede. Windermere's weekly reflection group, "Conversation and Contemplation," which takes place online on Tuesday evenings, and a Thursday evening online book study group, both continue to meet and have been promoted in the weekly bulletin to encourage participation beyond the original groups.

FALL ADULT LEARNING: In October 2023, Debra Horsfeld, Brenda Lien & Karrie Phair-Harvey offered a study of C.S. Lewis' classic 'The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe'. This was followed by a gathering to watch the movie, where Sunday School families and participants of the book study and others were in attendance.

MINISTER-LED FAITH STUDIES: Our ministerial team of Reverend Ted Grady and Laura Gallagher-Doucette continue to offer studies during Lent & Advent and weekly lectionary discussions.

There is clearly a thirst for knowledge and a desire among many to explore various aspects of faith. Runnymede was blessed to offer many opportunities for faith study in 2023, including the exploration of women in Christianity, Indigenous studies offered by the Affirming Committee and the continuation of established programs from Windermere United.

The committee was delighted to see that breadth of offerings attracted a variety of people who had not attended the more strictly faith focused studies in the past. Both the topics and the diversity of gathering options drew participation among long-time members of Windermere and Runnymede, as well as providing a safe place for newcomers from across the country to join in the discussions. We are grateful for the multitude of adult education offerings, the extension into new topics and areas of learning, technology and its support, and we are blessed to have an expanded cadre of volunteer leaders. It has been a good year!



FAITH FORMATION, NURSERY REPORT

The nursery is a dedicated space for 0-2 year olds, located at the bottom of the south-east stairs beside Memorial Hall. It is available Sunday mornings from 10:15am onward so children have time to settle before parents head upstairs for the service. Julia Prieswerk (paid staff) is there to provide a consistent friendly, familiar face to families. She is helped each week by an adult volunteer so that care is always 2 people deep. We expect up to 6 kids every Sunday, with the usual number being 2 or 3.

The nursery was re-opened in late 2022 after closing due to Covid. Attendance has grown since then, with most weeks in 2023 seeing 2 or more children playing happily in the space. Parents stay to help settle their child(ren) and enjoy chatting with Julia and the warm, welcoming adult volunteers. This seems to be a system that works well and helps newcomers to feel comfortable and connected.

There was some upheaval in the space this year due to the discovery of rotting floorboards. Thankfully, Property Committee oversaw their replacement with a concrete floor and new carpet tiles. We look forward to selecting paint colours and refreshing the space to make it more gender neutral and affirming in 2024. The toys have been reviewed and cleaned, a Pack'n'Play is now available for babies if needed and we are in the process of culling and updating the selection of Christian themed books with a view to changing them seasonally, thanks to the influx of wonderful books from the Windermere library.

The nursery is one of the first and arguably critical places of contact for many young families new to Runnymede. It is an essential hub of care and connection and plays an important role in welcoming them into community. Regardless of family composition, parents, grandparents and other caregivers find an affirming, safe space for their children.

Along with other initiatives and connections at Runnymede, the nursery is key to developing relationships that have resulted in a number of child baptisms and new adult members. Furthermore, many of these families have also indicated a willingness to volunteer at Runnymede, indicative of their commitment to the church and its mission. Young families are crucial to the on-going health of the congregation and church. We are blessed to have a growing number attending regularly at Runnymede.



Two photos of the Nursery

FAITH FORMATION, SUNDAY SCHOOL REPORT

Runnymede offers Sunday school to children from pre-school up to Grade 6 (and beyond) in a single classroom style environment. Lessons are organized by committee co-chair Brenda Lien and delivered by our paid Sunday school teachers, Amelia Dekker and Madeleine Reed.

Lessons continue to be customized from a variety of sources to ensure they include diversity, affirming, progressive & age-appropriate messaging that kids find engaging!

Using the planning tool our team created last year, this year's Sunday school themes followed the church calendar:

Kindness (Jesus' life is our example) – Valentine's gifts for the Grenadier Retirement Residences

Remembering Jesus (The Easter Story) – understanding & practicing communion

Mindfulness (Mary & Martha) – with fitness/yoga instructor Emily Mather

Pride (diversity in people & families) – bulletin board in Jewitt Hall stairway

Work/Rest balance (The Creation Story) – incorporating latest scientific discoveries and lots of fun!

Thankfulness (indigenous teachings) – land acknowledgement, thankful tree bulletin board in Memorial Hall & baking apple cake for church social time

Peace (including a discussion about war and a tie-in to Kenya with the story of Wangari & the foundation of the Green Belt Movement) – 'peace' bulletin board outside nursery at bottom of south-east stairs

Giving (The Christmas Story) – Christmas gifts for the Grenadier Retirement Residences & baking cookies for church social time

Sacraments (Baptism & Communion) as relevant throughout the year

The Sunday school hosted a 'Munch & Mingle' event for caregivers in April to discuss curriculum, meet the teachers and help families get to know each other. It was well attended and more ways to connect were requested.

Considerable time was spent over the past year focusing on outreach, starting with the creation of a Sunday school bulletin insert for Easter, a 'December Faith Practices' brochure highlighting Christmas activities, Sunday school and adult faith building opportunities that was handed out at the November Craft Fair. Both are available at the Welcome Table and in the Runnymede campus foyer. A fun gift for children and a bulletin insert outlining Sunday school and adult opportunities in 2024 was offered for Christmas Eve attendees.

In November, Brooke Richards was welcomed as interim Family Faith leader. To facilitate her overseeing Sunday school lesson planning, curriculum was purchased for use in 2024. Brooke will also focus on planning family 'socials' and an education series of events.

Parents who come to Runnymede with young children are looking for connection for themselves and quality programming for their children. They are interested in lessons that include Bible stories but also morals and practical ideas. By moving to a customized curriculum, we have been uniquely able to craft these experiences that are so valued by families in our West Toronto community and to hopefully have an impact on young hearts & minds.

Connections between families are happening. Community is being built – children & parents are becoming friends and look forward to seeing each other on Sundays. A number have become members, had children baptised and have signed up to volunteer. This is the future of the church!

FAITH FORMATION, SUNDAY SCHOOL REPORT - CON'T

Children learned not just Bible stories, but ideas and concepts that will hopefully remain with them throughout their lives – we are all connected, we are all unique, we are all of value, we are all loveable and loved. And church is fun!

Similar to 2022, regular Sunday attendance continues to vary significantly from week to week (typically 3 to 10 children). Turnout was highest during the pageant rehearsals in December (14) and lowest (0) on the long weekend in August. Note that other than that particular Sunday, there were children in Sunday school every week, including throughout the summer. We have added a number of new families to our roster and look forward to moving back to weekly communication with the Sunday school.



Sunday School Bulletin Board showcasing a collection of arts and crafts

PASTORAL CARE REPORT

Pastoral Care is an important ministry, serving many in the community, including: the elderly and shut-ins, and those who feel isolated. Care is extended to those who are struggling with illness, those who are experiencing hardships such as losing a loved one, and anyone who may need care and companionship.

At Runnymede United Church, we are truly blessed to have a wonderful Pastoral Care team who, regardless of circumstances, selflessly share encouraging thoughts and anecdotes across the life of our church, supporting the connection to our church and faith, and enriching our sense of community.

Pastoral Care team members treat each encounter with dignity and respect, offering hope, faith, prayer, compassionate care, and encourage a sense of belonging and connection to our Church. We are grateful for the service of the Pastoral Care team at Runnymede United as they continue to provide comfort and companionship to those in need. The team meets regularly, to share their experiences and identify individuals in the community who may be in need of outreach.

PASTORAL CARE - CON'T

Throughout the year, the ministry at Runnymede United Church held services on the second Sunday of each month at the Grenadier Retirement Residence. Seniors look forward to hearing Rev. Ted and Laura's sermons, and particularly enjoy singing along to well-known hymns, thanks to the piano accompaniment provided by Gary Norris and others. We appreciate all the support we've received from volunteers who offer their time and service to this important initiative and going forward, we welcome anyone to join us for this heart-warming celebration of faith.

Every year, the Pastoral Care team purchase Poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary during Christmastime and Tulips in Spring, to brighten our chancel during Easter. Runnymede receives donations in memory of loved ones. After services, flowers are delivered to seniors and shut-ins. Runnymede United Church had not had an updated version of its Directory since 2015. With the welcoming of new families and friends to our church and the merger with Windermere United, we decided that it was time to reinitiate this project. Thanks to Gary Norris and Sandi Dunn, we gathered 115 photos for the gallery, as well as contact information of those who completed a release of private information form. We are excited to have an updated directory which we anticipate delivery in early 2024.

MUSIC

Another year has wound to a close and the members of the music program ended it exhausted and elated at the outcome of their hard work and worship of the last 12 months.

In our first full year of activities since the pandemic, we enjoyed every aspect of our varied musical program. The choir has expanded to almost 30 regular members and our Carols By Candlelight choir was more than 40 strong! It's both exciting and inspirational to have so many voices and people join together in such an uplifting way.

We were excited to present Dan Forrest's "Requiem for the Living" as the centrepiece of the Good Friday service with chamber orchestra. This incredibly powerful work had a dramatic impact and had a lasting impression on both the choir and congregation. Easter Sunday was filled with celebratory music and finished with the massed choir singing the Hallelujah Chorus.

Our Runnymede Kids Choir provided music leadership at our Christian Family/Mother's Day service in May, delighting the congregation with their sound and their enthusiasm. This pick-up choir rehearses for several weeks during Sunday School before presenting their anthem in service. They also participated in the Christmas pageant in December – another crowd-pleaser!

The fall and early winter saw more engaging and exciting music in the church services, along with an extra "gig" – celebrating Walter Donovan's 85th birthday! Our choir "angel" Walter has been a tremendous supporter of our music program over the past few years, financially sponsoring our orchestras for both Good Friday and Carols By Candlelight. We were delighted to put together a fun program of songs to entertain his guests – everything from "New York, New York" to "Bridge Over Troubled Water". The opportunity to perform this fun music and to celebrate this generous and caring friend was a special highlight of the year.

MUSIC - CON'T

December was another exceptionally busy month with all of the extra services, including the traditional Carols By Candlelight service. This year we welcomed back our friends the Strad strings of Etobicoke School of the Arts under the leadership of Pamela Bettger for another wonderful evening of music, scripture and prayer in the glow of candles. We were also graced with a string trio on Christmas Eve at our late service, which following our morning service, marked a 14 hour day for our choir members!

At the end of 2023 we took some time to thank two of our section leads for their years of service. Sabrina Santelli-Perez stepped down as Alto section lead after a wonderful 10 years to have a little more time for family and her other work pursuits. And Don Tripe finished a quarter of a century as our Bass section lead, but thankfully Don is not going far! He will continue as a choir member and still offer occasional self-composed solos, which have become a cherished Runnymede tradition. We thank both Sabrina and Don for their many years of service, along with their care and humour that they brought to every choir rehearsal.

As always, there is much for which we are grateful:

- Thank you to our staff team – Ted, Laura, Jim, Eva and Pat – for their ongoing support and collegiality
- Thank you to our tech and sound team who support all of our regular and special services
- Thank you to the congregation musicians who have participated this year – Paul Widner, Janie Kim and the Withnell family
- Thank you to Carl for the incredible artistry he brings each week to our congregation
- Thank you to our section leads/soloists Pat, Sabrina, Devin and Don for their leadership and their wonderful singing
- And finally, thank you to our Chancel Choir for their perseverance and determination to continue making music for our Sunday worship



Chancel Choir at the Carols by Candlelight service, with the Strad strings of Etobicoke School of the Arts

SPECIAL SERVICES

Worship is central to how we gather as a church. In addition to our weekly Sunday morning worship, we hold monthly services at the Grenadier Retirement Residence, special services included weddings and funerals, and our new monthly "Seeking the Spirit" service at our Windermere Campus.

Our special services from 2023 include:

- Ash Wednesday
- Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday Services
- Easter Sunrise Service & Easter Communion Service (New Members Sunday)
- PIE Day with guest preacher Jeffrey Dale
- Amalgamation Celebration of Windermere United & Runnymede United on Pentecost Sunday
- Indigenous Day of Prayer with guest preacher Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo
- Pride Sunday
- Summer Guest Preachers: Jennifer Henry, Michelle Voss, and Don Tripe
- Outdoor Worship Service & Board BBQ
- Orange Shirt Day
- Annual Christmas Pageant
- Carols by Candlelight
- Christmas Eve Services
- Longest Night service at Windermere Campus

At our weekly services and special services, worship at Runnymede is lifted by many special musicians. There were many soloists, instrumentalists and accompanists who shared their gifts. Music is an important part of our worship and we are grateful for the leadership of the choir in our weekly worship service.

We are blessed by a dedicated group of greeters, ushers and coffee hour hosts that make the worship experience welcoming and comfortable for weekly worshippers and visitors. The live stream of our services connects us to a whole other community and we are blessed by the tech team that facilitates our stream and enhances the audio in the sanctuary.



Living Our Faith

AFFIRM COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee was focused in 2023 in realigning and prioritizing goals to drive specific activities and even participation. The scope for the Committee has expanded beyond LGBTQ+ and Indigenous awareness and education to also include disabled persons and accessibility, ableism and social justice.

We have had an exceptionally busy year. Our work this year has included the following areas, including several key activities accomplished in 2023:

- PIE Day service and celebration
- Pride month activities, service and participation
- Welcome table, table set-up and staffing to ensure a welcome for all congregants at Coffee Time and to manage Affirm inquiries
- Launch of our Library cart
- Introduction of Four Seasons Indigenous Online Learning Series (2023-2024)
- Orange Shirt Day
- November 26th Trans Day of Remembrance Service
- December 3rd introduction - in-service - of Disability Pride flag and education

The committee has been involved with 4 services this past year: Pride Service in June; Orange Shirt Day in September; Trans Day of Remembrance, and, International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The library cart has been available at coffee hour each week since September, and there is a strong uptake in congregants borrowing from the cart. A second cart is scheduled to be available at coffee hour starting in January 2024. Our committee has also provided input on musical selections that reflect an affirming congregation.

The committee's work this coming year will focus on rolling out an affirming scholarship; continuing our affirming speaker series; developing a Q&A to support congregation understanding of affirming work; and the implementation of a Suggestion Box for congregants to provide input to the affirming committee.

KENYA AIDS ORPHAN REPORT

The Kenya AIDS Orphans Program supports the mission of the Obara family in caring for and educating AIDS orphans.

Since the early 2000s, Leonora and Andrew Obara have adopted 10 children whose parents died of AIDS, in addition to the 5 children born to them. In 2011 they started the Village of Love Program in Kibera, Kenya, the largest "slum" (informal settlement) in Africa, with funding from a separate organization www.villageoflovecanada to which RUC contributes. This program helps adoptive mothers to care for orphaned children in loving families and helps to educate the children.

KENYA AIDS ORPHAN REPORT - CON'T

This is an Outreach Project to assist the vast number of children orphaned by AIDS in Africa. In Kenya, there are more than two million children whose parents have died of AIDS. Not only have the children lost their parents, they also live with the high level of stigma and possible rejection associated with this condition. Leonora and Andrew Obara have devoted their lives to caring for as many children as possible, with support from Runnymede United Church, to provide loving families and educate the children. Through this, we recognize the need to care for vulnerable children, giving them love, opportunities to live full lives and contribute to their communities.



L to R: Leonora, Zac at graduation, Andrew. Andrew, Lauryn and Isabella at graduation, and Leonora. Deborah working at a desk.

We are so proud of everything that the members of the Obara family have achieved. Since 2005, all 15 children have graduated from high school and developed careers. On November 19, 2023 at the Runnymede United Church service, we celebrated 18 years of the Kenya AIDS Orphans fund and all we have accomplished together. We saw photos of Obara family members and watched a video from Leonora. Thankfully Andrew and Leonora could watch the service on-line to be with us. We heard from Ian Gilmour, who visited the Obaras in Nairobi in September 2023. He saw first hand what they have accomplished in the Village of Love Program.

Since 2005, all 15 children have graduated from high school and developed careers. Among their professional accomplishments are: chef, mason, driver, technical repair person, business developer, mechanic, beautician, two lawyers, teacher, nurse, medical engineer and electrical engineering student.

On Nov. 19th, we also celebrated the recent accomplishments of the 6 youngest members of the Obara family:

Isabella: Human Rights Lawyer

Patricia: special needs Teacher

Deborah: Nurse - she obtained a paid position in community nursing; immunizations, prenatal/maternity nursing, care of infants and people with HIV.

Zac: graduated from Medical Engineering in July and will pursue further training to work in health care.

Regina: Lawyer - graduated with her Law degree, was admitted to the Bar and is actively seeking legal work.

Lauryne: continues 4th year of a 6 year program in design Electrical Engineering.

KENYA AIDS ORPHAN REPORT - CON'T

For more information on the Obara family and the Kenya AIDS Orphans Program please visit:
<https://www.runnymedeunited.org/kenyan-aids-orphans>

Thank you to everyone for your ongoing support for 18 years! Robyn Salter, John Rossall, Laura Rossall, Lynne Salt, Tom Axworthy, and the Kenya AIDS Orphans Project Council.



Photo from the Nov. 19th service where presenters gave information about the 6 youngest members of the Obara family. L to R: Lynne Salt (Deborah, Nurse), Mara Nickerson (Regina, Lawyer), John Rossall (Lauryne, Electrical Engineering Student), Laura Rossall (Isabella, Lawyer), Robyn Salter (Patricia, Teacher), Ian Gilmour (Village of Love), MaryAnne Jansen (Zac, Medical Engineer)

Not pictured: Robyn Salter and John Rossall who also spoke about their involvement in this project for 18 years.



Andrew and Leonora Obara, smiling side-by-side

MISSION & SERVICE FUND

United Church people across the country join together to share what we can with people and places in need through a unified United Church fund called Mission & Service (M&S).

From serving a hot meal at a local community kitchen, to visiting a lonely neighbour, to financially supporting those in need in our local communities and around the world, the people of the United Church are committed to turning compassion into action. The three goals of the M&S Fund are: to help transform lives, to inspire meaning and purpose, and to build a better world. RUC has always been a strong supporter of the M&S Fund and is one of the strongest contributing congregations in the country.

The M&S Fund supports both local projects (homeless shelters, food banks, community kitchens, refugee programs, campus ministry, camping outreach, addiction and mental health) and global projects (clean water, food, medical care, skills training, disaster relief, peace-making, sustainable agriculture). These are all answers to the question, "What would Jesus do?" In 2022, we had 84 families contributing to the M&S Fund. In 2023, we had 104 donors. Our overall target for 2023 was \$65,000 and the donations amounted to \$75,223. The Arts & Crafts Show contributed \$8,000 to that goal.

Community Commitment

In the Bible it is written,
'Come, you blessed of My Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you
from the foundation of the world:
for I was hungry and you gave Me food;
I was thirsty and you gave Me drink;
I was a stranger and you took Me in;
I was naked and you clothed Me;
I was sick and you visited Me;
I was in prison and you came to Me.'
... Assuredly, I say to you, in as much as you did it
to one of the least of these
My brethren, you did it to Me.'
Matthew 25:34-36, 40



Left: Group of Volunteers at a Community Meal
Right: Gary playing piano at a Community Meal

COMMUNITY OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT (CODE) TASK GROUP

Background & Context:

In the Amalgamation Agreement between Runnymede United and Windermere United, we committed to a shared vision of continuing and expanding social justice initiatives in west Toronto, and we set out to explore a new vision for community ministry.

To help lead this exploration, a Task Group was formed of members from both Windermere and Runnymede, reporting to the Runnymede United Church Board. And to support this work, an external consulting firm, BGM Strategy Group, was engaged over the summer and early fall to help us ask the hard questions, and come up with practical recommendations, for sustainable and effective outreach. Included in this discernment were volunteers in existing ministries, members of the church, and organizations outside of the church doing similar work.

Key Outcomes from the Discernment Process:

A Vision for the Work: Our vision is to build community, reduce social isolation, and advance social justice in our west Toronto neighbourhood through the identification of needs, and the development of community outreach initiatives. We will do this in partnership with community stakeholders and partners to ensure we are meeting real needs, doing so inclusively and without duplication. We will foster volunteerism and reciprocal giving to create sustainable organization and impact.

Stone Soup Network (SSN): Prior to the amalgamation, the local SSN project was paused as we considered the best way forward for our outreach ministries. We decided not to restart the local Stone Soup Network project because the costs of a stand-alone program were not justified by the foreseeable impact, and an integrated set of initiatives would be more sustainable. It was strongly agreed that we should build on the many positive attributes of SSN in our community programs, including:

- A focus on community participation.
- A strong network of people, businesses and service providers working together.
- The many faithful people who expressed their passion for helping others in generous gifts of time and financial support.

New Team: A Community Outreach Development and Engagement (CODE) Committee is being formed to support existing community ministry activities and nurture future initiatives that seek to build a stronger, more caring community here in west Toronto. Once constituted, the CODE Committee will become a standing committee reporting to the church Board, and the Chair (or Co-Chairs) of the new committee will become member(s) of the Board.

New Hire: To support the implementation of our vision, we are hiring a full-time CODE Programs Leader for our initiatives. We believe dedicated leadership and experience to work with our ministers, staff and volunteers is vital to bring our vision to life.

The Path Forward – Community Outreach and Engagement!

Our goal is to have the CODE Committee in place and our new staff member hired in the new year. A key element of their mandate will be to reach out to church, community, and SSN volunteers to engage and support volunteers in building this vision.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT (CODE) TASK GROUP - CON'T

The first focus of our community outreach will be food security and hospitality initiatives. Research and work have been underway in this area for some months, identifying that:

Food security is a major issue facing our community. Coming together to share food has long been a way to help nourish families, spread kindness, and strengthen community by helping to break down the barriers of isolation and loneliness. Church member support, momentum, and a volunteer base are already in place. Our commercial kitchen is an important asset and presents opportunities for further community impact.

We want to thank the Task Group members (Alex Cruickshank, Anna MacDonald, Brian Traquair, David Allen, Doug Blackburn, Ian Gilmour, Laura Gallagher-Doucette, Robin Pilkey, and Ted Grady) for their gifts of time and talent in helping to discern a path forward for community outreach and engagement as an amalgamated congregation at Runnymede United Church. We also want to thank those who will continue to provide leadership under the auspices of the new CODE Committee.

Our journey will be ongoing to help build a stronger, more caring, and more inclusive community! We are truly excited about what blessings this next phase of ministry will bring to our community.

FOOD HOSPITALITY REPORT

The Food Hospitality Committee (FHC) was formed in early 2023 at Runnymede United Church. Our purpose is to 'Create connection, support our community, and our ministry through food.' Today, the work of the committee focuses around two key pillars: Addressing food insecurity - by providing outreach in our community to help serve unmet needs for food, with a focus on low-income individuals and families, elderly, newcomers and school children and Building Community Engagement and Relationships – by supporting and creating programs around food that build community within and beyond the walls of Runnymede United Church.

The Food Hospitality Committee Priorities for 2023/34 are:

1. Prepared Food Distribution through Community Partners; 3 specific areas which are underway:
 - Schools – focus on Runnymede Public School
 - Seniors
 - Food Banks/Pantries – initial focus on Bloor West Food Bank
2. Building Community
 - Focus on Sunday after service
 - increasing volunteerism for internal food-related events

FOOD HOSPITALITY REPORT - CON'T

In early 2023, as part of our Food Community Ministry journey, we witnessed the growth of food instability within our community. The most visible sign has been the growing line of people each Friday at the Bloor West Food Bank in Bloor West Village. You can see the number of people served since 2020 on the Bloor West Foodbank website (<https://bloorwestfoodbank.ca>). These numbers continue to grow.

Runnymede United Church has a full commercial kitchen on site which is not used to full capacity. The Community Meal had been relaunched but there was interest in doing more with this resource. At the same time, Windermere United Church merged into Runnymede United Church on 1 Jun 2023. One of the joint goals was to continue to expand our outreach work in the Swansea/Bloor West neighbourhood.

Laying the Groundwork:

Team members carried out an extensive community audit to investigate, research and meet with many non-profit organizations on local food insecurity needs and solutions. This provided us with an outside-in and community-based assessment of the real gaps in food security in our community. Concurrently, in May, the team carried out a twenty-question survey of the RUC congregation to better understand the interests and energies around the criteria for a food ministry and volunteer interest. We had a 25% response rate.

Equipped with the input from our congregants, and the needs criteria from the community audit, we identified several recommendations around food insecurity.

The other pillar identified by the congregation and by community organizations was the interest and need to engage in Community Building. In many respects, this goes hand in hand with food security as we engage in providing food for others both inside and outside the church walls. This pillar also includes internal church events where food acts as a builder of community, so the Food Hospitality Committee is working to support those events as well. Based on this extensive groundwork, we are focused on the FHC 2023/24 priorities outlined above.

Volunteerism:

Participation will be paramount to making a meaningful difference in our community. In September, we invited members of the congregation to take part in an information evening for volunteers. There we reviewed the work to date, our go-forward plan to begin frozen food preparation early in the new year and discussed the necessary logistics required to put our plan into action. An online volunteer information form was designed for both internal and external parties to capture information, time and interests from potential volunteers. A small campaign was launched in the Bloor West/Swansea community to gauge initial volunteer support beyond RUC. To date, 46 volunteers (29 congregants, 16 community) have indicated interest in volunteering.

FOOD HOSPITALITY REPORT - CON'T

Today we are excited and encouraged by the support and energy from outside and inside the congregation!

Recent meetings with the Bloor West Food Bank and the TDSB Nutrition team have progressed our plans in determining more specific needs. Volunteers continue to express interest. Plans are underway to provide food safety training in January. RUC kitchen times have been blocked based on volunteer feedback. Our community will begin providing frozen meals to food bank clients in coming weeks.

As the work of the Food Hospitality Committee began to take shape, FHC provided input and actively participated in the work of the RUC Outreach Task Force, which was working to create a greater overall outreach identity for Runnymede United Church in the Bloor West / Swansea neighbourhoods.

The Food Hospitality purpose is anchored in outreach work and community building. Our goal is to provide a positive impact to those affected by food insecurity and to further address this issue through active advocacy as part of the work of RUC and the United Church of Canada.

For more information, please visit the News, Updates & Happenings section on the [website](#).

CHRISTMAS ADVENT SHOE BOX & GIFT CARD OUTREACH PROJECT

Runnymede United Church has been involved in the filling of shoe boxes during the Advent season for over 20 years. On the first Sunday of Advent, members of the congregation and the Sunday School children bring their filled shoe boxes to church for blessing during the service. Others who cannot fill a shoebox but want to be involved, know that their financial donations will be represented in Walmart gift cards worth \$25 where recipients can purchase food, medicine or larger clothing items that they may need. Delivery of the gifts is made during the following week to Unison Health and Community Services on Keele Street just north of Rogers Road.

Initially we supported Samaritan's Purse, a project of Franklin Graham, where the shoe boxes were prepared early in November and shipped to Calgary to be flown to various parts of the world for distribution. After a couple of years supporting Samaritan's Purse, it was agreed that we should adapt the program to celebrate those in need in our local communities, and we found a welcome recipient in the King-Dunn Ministry in the Parkdale area. We called our project "Parcels for Parkdale" and we filled many shoeboxes for children and moms in need over the next few years. When the King-Dunn Ministry folded, we set our sights on the Davenport-Perth Community and The Stop Food Bank. For many years we filled large numbers of shoe boxes for the children and Moms in that area of our city and relied on The Stop for distribution. When The Stop indicated that they were not capable of continuing to distribute the shoeboxes, we found a new and enthusiastic partner in Unison Health and Community Services (formerly York Community Services), located at Rogers Road and Keele Street in west Toronto—one of the poorest areas in the GTA. Their staff was very keen to partner with us and we found Unison Health to be very effective in distributing our Outreach gifts to their clientele.

CHRISTMAS ADVENT SHOE BOX & GIFT CARD OUTREACH PROJECT - CON'T

Then COVID hit in 2020 and we had to accept the reality that the lockdown prevented families from putting Christmas Shoeboxes together. Rather than abandoning our disadvantaged neighbours, we encouraged the congregation to make financial donations so that we could purchase gift cards of \$25.00 to give to Unison Health to give out to their clients. This plan proved to be well received as many of the families needed to purchase food, medicine or larger clothing items and a gift card worked well.

Now in 2023, we as a congregation, are back on track with both filled shoe boxes and gift cards which we bring to the church on the first Sunday of Advent for blessing prior to delivery to Unison Health. This project marks the first of many outreach projects during the 4 weeks of Advent.

Through this Advent project and many others, we as a congregation stand as one to support those in need, those struggling and those hurting in this world. By making a child's Christmas a little brighter and thereby his family's circumstances a bit better, we make a difference for them and honour Jesus' direction to us to support those in need. Through sharing and caring, our congregation demonstrates that we are "love" through what we do and say and how we treat others less fortunate.

The need is great and according to our Unison Health contact, Erin Shaw, she indicates that their clients are experiencing the greatest economic challenge that she can ever recall. People are struggling and our Christmas shoe box and gift card project does make a difference for their children and families.

This year, 188 shoe boxes were filled for women and children from ages 0-12 years old. Of this total, sixty-three shoeboxes were filled for women, often forgotten in the busy-ness of Christmas. Financial donations enabled us to buy 126 gift cards worth \$25 each. In the end, our outreach has reached over 300 people through this Christmas Shoebox Advent program.

Thank you for your generosity and kindness in supporting this project! Special thanks to the Girl Guides who meet at our church for their donation of filled shoe boxes for 9-12 year old girls.

Thanks to Sue Poole who wrapped over 80 shoe boxes on her own. Thanks also to our drivers, David Whitfield, Sue Poole, Chuck Ainslie and Neil Mather for efficiently delivering the boxes to Unison Health without any fuss. Thankfully we did not have to contend with any snow this year.

In speaking with Erin Shaw a few days later, she indicated that her staff was already picking up the boxes and gift cards and beginning to distribute them. Unison Health's clients have come to anticipate our Outreach and had been asking as early as October, if there would be any "Shoe boxes" to help their families this Christmas! They were so happy that Runnymede had come through again this year.



ANGEL TREE CHRISTMAS GIFT OUTREACH PROJECT - PRISON FELLOWSHIP CANADA

This Advent project supports children who have a parent or guardian who is in jail. The Angel Tree Christmas program allows incarcerated prisoners to identify their children ages 18 and under and suggest a Christmas gift for them which is then purchased by a supporting church or community group or individual. Delivery is made before Christmas to the caregiver of the named child(ren).

Children can be living in the city or in an area further afield, even in another province. Caregivers are contacted to confirm addresses and to help determine the appropriateness of the suggested Christmas gift valued at \$35.00. The gift shopper buys the gift and then delivers the present before Christmas. This opportunity to make a child feel good at Christmas and to allow the parent to feel engaged through the identification of a particular gift for their child is a win-win situation. Some children open their gift with their parent on the phone or on FaceTime watching them. Our church has been involved with Prison Fellowship Canada since 2003. In 2022 we were one of 113 sponsoring churches across Canada.

Our connection with Prison Fellowship Canada came about after a tragic murder of one of our key church members by her own son in 2000. Gloria Fell was a retired school teacher who supported Rev Linda Levin with many projects and activities in the church. Sadly, her son Bill Fell, who suffered from mental issues, killed Gloria and the church reached out to Prison Fellowship Canada to support Bill and ourselves through his trial and subsequent imprisonment.

One of the programs that we engaged with was the Angel Tree Christmas project which we have been supporting for 20 years. Congregants are encouraged to donate money to help cover the costs of the Christmas gifts for the children that the church has been assigned. Being in contact with the caregiver, doing the shopping and delivering the gift has fallen to a small group of folks, as confidentiality is most important in this program.

In 2023, Runnymede supported 5 children who live locally as well as 5 children who live in rural Ontario. In 99% of all cases the contact is well received and the gifts are most welcome. Gifts in rural Ontario or out of province (as in past years) are shipped by local carriers to the hometown where the child lives. In previous years, if the donations were significant, our church also has made a lump sum donation to Prison Fellowship Canada to support its programs, including sending a child of a prisoner to summer camp or supporting adult programs within the prison system to engage the prisoners in Bible study or Faith and Justice programs.

Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree Christmas program connects church communities and individuals with the families of prisoners through the delivery of a Christmas gift on behalf of the incarcerated parent. Through this program, children not only receive a gift under the tree at Christmas but maintain connections and bonds with their incarcerated parent.

In our involvement with the Angel Tree Christmas project, we continue to support those struggling with incarceration and those children who are the collateral damage of having a parent in jail. Through our love and kindness, we hope that families will be positively affected by the efforts of our congregation to make a difference in a child's life at Christmas time. Making a difference for those in need underpins this advent outreach project.

ANGEL TREE CHRISTMAS GIFT OUTREACH PROJECT - PRISON FELLOWSHIP CANADA - CON'T

Overall, the involvement of Runnymede in this Advent outreach project over the years has allowed our congregation to turn a tragic heart-breaking event into one full of promise and caring for others. Prison Fellowship Canada is well aware of our commitment to their Angel Tree program.

There are always heartfelt thanks given by the caregiver or relatives when the parcels are delivered. The children are almost always too young to really understand where the gifts are coming from. However the messages in the cards are from the parent and that is meaningful to many. Caregivers are often grandparents, mothers or even great aunts and they almost always understand the thought behind the gift-giving and underline for those children in their care who the gift is from and the love wrapped within it.



Judy delivering a gift to the front door of a home



Supporting the Mission

BLOOR WEST VILLAGE ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

In its 40th year, the Bloor West Village Arts and Crafts Show is held annually on the second Saturday in November at our Runnymede campus. Beginning back in the 1980s, the United Church Women of the day decided to combine a bazaar and rented craft tables to address the challenge of the younger working women not being able to manage a full-blown bazaar on their own. Therefore, the craft show was born and over the years, the number of crafters has increased to the point where in 2023, we hosted 85 crafters in 7 rooms of the church. The members of Runnymede ran a snack bar, lunch room area and an amazing bake and deli table in Memorial Hall. This year after a soft reintroduction of the show in 2022 (closed for two years due to COVID), we reintroduced Trijnie's Treasures as well and thanks to donations from the congregation, this table was popular with those who love a vintage piece or a unique piece of antique jewellery. Every available space was filled with returning artists and new crafters whose crafts are unique, decorative or one of a kind. There was something for everyone. The success of the shows over the years is due mainly to the leadership and coordination of Judy Whitfield, ably supported by David Whitfield, who liaises with the many crafters, and the support of many volunteers, including the 85th Scouting troops as well as many men, women and teens over the three days of set-up and the sale itself.

The sale is twinned with the annual Pie Making event that expanded into an afternoon session as well as an evening session in 2023, where Janet Mather took the leadership to prepare pastry dough, along with others who donate significant amounts of pastry for the events that occur about two weeks before the craft show. Volunteers join together in our kitchen to peel, core and slice apples for the filling of the pies. In 2023, we added a few cherry pie and strawberry-rhubarb pies to the mix, but the overall favourite is still the apple pie. The pies are frozen until the day of the show. So successful are these pies that they all sell out by 11:00 a.m. on the day of the sale.

The Craft Show and the pie-making supports two strong pillars of Runnymede United Church's outreach--that of building community within our congregation and secondly, reaching out to invite our neighbours and those from the wider community to attend this event in our church. Over the years, it has been a gathering place for many neighbours to meet, shop, have lunch or a coffee and visit with friends. The crafters have all come from different parts of southern Ontario, drawn by the numbers of shoppers, the friendly atmosphere and the organization of the show itself. This show continues to attract topnotch artists and crafters and we have a lengthy waitlist every year for those intent on finding a spot in this show. Most importantly, the Craft Show generates money to support the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada, a commitment that the women of the church made 40 years ago. Additional dollars support the Current Fund of our church. In 2023, \$8,000 will be donated to the M&S Fund and \$6,500 will be assigned to current operations (fund-raising).

BLOOR WEST VILLAGE ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW - CON'T

Over 800 people paid the \$3 admission at the door and when we add in our volunteers and the crafters themselves, we can confirm over 1000 people in attendance at the show this year. Please refer to the testimonials in this report for feedback from our crafters.

Our volunteers were also very happy with how the day unfolded. Particular thanks to Joan and Tom Howard and Brian Traquair for their support in dealing with the finances over the course of the day and prior to the show itself. Finally, a huge thank you to Ruth Caspell and her team that ran the kitchen and lunch area, to Teres Edmonds and her team who managed the burgeoning Bake Table with grace and smiles and Colin Dekker and all the volunteers who helped set up or clean up at the end of the show.



Volunteers making pies

MCGREGOR MEAT FUNDRAISER

Sandi Dunn successfully ran the Spring Meat Fundraiser from April 25th through May 27th with product pick-up on June 3rd. This has been a popular fundraiser in the past. In fact, this year's fundraiser was the best ever with 57 participants and 222 boxes ordered.

Thanks to Sandi for all her efforts.

PROPERTY REPORT

The Finance and Property Committee met monthly. Its primary responsibility is to oversee and approve major operating and capital expenditures on the church properties as well as operational issues including rentals so that the property supports the worship and work of the Church. The Property Committee group typically met with the Property Chair weekly and completed prodigious work including maintenance, repairs, improvements, yard work and advising and deciding on project priorities and execution.

We appreciate the dedication of Gary Norris, David Wilcox, David Whitfield, Chuck Ainslie, and new member Wang Chow. Custodian Jim Lien has been versatile, dealing with tenants and contractors, handling IT issues supporting on-line worship and dealing with the Windermere Campus after merger in May of this year. We appreciate his work for our church and its members.

Major 2023 projects:

In March, the United Church of Canada Faithful Footprints grant program approved an energy conservation grant of \$30,000 to assist us in replacing the old failing ceiling fans in the sanctuary and installing heat pumps in Memorial Hall to avoid using the steam heat in that room, and to provide summer A/C. Belyea Brothers installed two heat pumps in March at a total cost of \$23,000. The heat pumps provided new comfort all summer. Through early December one heat pump alone provided sufficient heat. Temperature control in Memorial Hall is better with the heat pumps and we are using clean electricity while burning less natural gas.

In mid-May our electricians, working with a scaffolding team, installed four new ceiling fans in the sanctuary using the old fan hangers. The fans cost \$13,300 while installation on our 41-foot high ceiling cost \$16,100. The fans provided cooling air movement during the summer with much less noise than the temporary stand fans in the aisles. We will run one or two fans on low speed during the winter to bring down warm air from the ceiling, saving energy. We are working out some early operational problems.

In March we installed an EcoBee programmable, wi-fi-enabled thermostat in the sanctuary, saving energy during the 90% of the time when the sanctuary is not in use.

In May, Heritage Tree Services planted an Autumn Blaze Maple tree and two serviceberry trees south of the sanctuary to replace the ageing Blue Spruce tree removed in 2021. PropCom fenced and watered the trees diligently during the summer and they have thrived. The Maple will be spectacular in the fall; the serviceberries will feed the birds.

The wood floor under the nursery room east of Memorial Hall was found to be rotting as were several other basement floors. In June, Astoria Construction Group ripped out the rotting floors at the bottom of the southeast stairs, the nursery, the Revealed Word closet and the Community Meal closet and poured concrete floors. We finished with vinyl tile in the SE stairwell and carpet tile in the nursery. Total cost about \$20,000.

A Beresford neighbour complained that runoff from our parking lot was flooding her new shed behind the gym. After a failed fix by her contractor, we hired Water Dynamik, our snow clearing firm, to install a French drain from the southwest corner of the parking lot to the southwest corner of the gym. The work was done in September. Cost: about \$6,000.

PROPERTY REPORT - CON'T

During the summer we contracted with PureClean Janitorial, who have been cleaning at Windermere, to clean the Runnymede church every week. This has improved the cleanliness of the building and freed up some of Jim's time for work at Windermere and for IT work.

The steam boiler at Windermere Campus failed last March and was finally repaired and put into service at the end of October. After several burner failures in November, the technician tightened a loose wire and it has operated reliably for over a month. Jim and Don are studying the heating and cooling systems at Windermere to improve our ability to operate and maintain them. Jim installed a wi-fi enabled temperature sensor in the WC sanctuary, so we can monitor the steam heating performance remotely.

Rental activity post-COVID has mostly returned to normal, but some tenants have reduced their time commitments. Brian negotiated a new contract with Windermere Kids Daycare at WC for five years with renewal for another five years, giving us assured rental income for a decade. We have signed some new tenants including Rooks to Cooks in the kitchen and Memorial Hall for nine weeks in the summer, followed by after-school sessions two days a week plus day camps during Christmas-New Year and Spring break.

Property Committee Highlights

Plaster repair in Bloor West Nursery School and northwest stairwell basement. Rebuilt wood doors on the shed under the Kingsbury exit. Fixed minor electrical problems, replaced lighting fixtures, repaired gym light fixtures. Repaired and adjusted doors, windows, toilets, taps, thermostats, and pumps. Monitored and maintained the boiler and heating system at RUC. Maintained equipment including the lawn mower, snow blower and weed trimmer. Struggled with the forces of drought and kids' feet to nurture and maintain a green lawn. Mowed, raked, watered many, many times, planted and fertilized as needed. Cleaned or replaced heating and cooling air filters. Switched banners on the front of the sanctuary with the ecclesiastical seasons. Installed and updated signage around the building. Special cleaning of entryways and carpets when needed.

Property and Utility Costs at RUC Campus

The cost of maintenance and repair of the RUC building, the heating system, equipment, elevators and organ plus custodial supplies, utilities, insurance and workers' compensation was slightly higher than 2022 through the end of October. See the Treasurer's financial statements for end-of-year details.

Our annual electricity usage through the 220-volt meter at the end of November was 34.3 MWh, 28% more than 2022, but only 13% more than 2019, the last pre-COVID year. The increase is probably due to more activity, more air conditioning and the heat pump heating in 2023. Gas use through the end of November was 1.36 million cubic feet, 13% less than the same period in 2022. The reduction might be associated with weather and the use of heat pumps in 2023. Water use averaged 3.27 cubic metres/day, 11% more than the 2022 average and about 50% more than the decade average pre-COVID. We think the increase is related to lawn watering, Angelgate, and other tenant usage.

PROPERTY FINANCE REPORT - CON'T



Left: Chuck and Gary installing a solar panel for the security camera at southwest door.
Center: Wang, Gary and David with Sandra scrapping old boards from Kingsbury shed doors.
Right: Contractors building the scaffold to replace a sanctuary fan.



Left top/bottom: Demolishing the rotten wood floor in RWBA closet/ New concrete floor
Center: Boiler technicians Sean and Dave re-assembling the Windermere steam boiler.
Right: David Wilcox securing the new library shelves.

MINISTRY & PERSONEL COMMITTEE

The Ministry & Personnel Committee (M&P) is a confidential, consultative committee that is responsible for the clergy and lay staff of the church. This volunteer committee supports the Church Board, the church community, and church staff on personnel matters. The committee also serves as a confidential forum for the church community to provide input from the congregation on staff related issues.

M&P conducts formal and informal individual reviews with ministers and staff, the purpose of which is to ensure that the mutual needs and requirements of ministers, staff members and of the Runnymede congregation are being met. This is an ongoing, year-round process. Feedback received from members of the congregation is incorporated into these reviews and held as confidential.

Some highlights of 2023

The over-arching event shaping the lives and work of our staff was the amalgamation of our congregation with that of Windermere United Church. M&P worked with individual staff members to ensure their concerns were addressed as to how this merger would affect their workload and how the changes, if any, would be handled. We continue to support staff as they adjust some duties as a result of the amalgamation.

Some of the challenges surrounded Property issues (security, site supervision, rentals, tenant handling) for the Windermere campus. To that end, Jim Lien was offered and accepted a new job description and title (Custodian and Dual Campus Superintendent), to reflect his new duties in overall site supervision for both campuses and increased security and internet issues. An expanded contract with the cleaning company was applied to the Runnymede Campus to support Jim with these additional responsibilities.

M&P worked with our Family Outreach and Education Leader as she took personal leave early in 2023, doing a search to temporarily fill her position. The search yielded an excellent candidate, but the offer was turned away prior to acceptance. A subsequent search found us another great candidate who started in November. We work with Brooke Richards to acclimatize her to Runnymede and ensure a smooth placement.

M&P supported the hire of a Canada Summers Jobs student, Faith Regan, to help with records merging between the two congregations. The student also worked on the RUC/WUC Outreach Integration Project. This was a successful hire for the summer, one we hope to replicate next year.

In anticipation of Oskar Preiswerk's departure to start university, in September we hired Colin Dekker as the new Sunday morning Custodian. Colin has settled into his new duties and is actively supporting the congregation before, during and after our Sunday services and at other times as called upon. We also added Trevor Lightbody as an Events Site supervisor (on call) to our roster this summer.

Our Office Administrator was on personal leave between September and November 2023, and we were fortunate to enlist the skills of Pat Campbell to fill in for her temporarily. Pat brings along with her accumulated knowledge and understanding of RUC functioning when she assists us this way.

MINISTRY & PERSONEL COMMITTEE - CON'T

We hired a part-time Communications Lead during the summer, Jodelle de Jesus-Alonza. M&P worked with Jodelle and the Communications Committee to support Runnymede's growing congregation and need for clear, concise and timely communication to our community and beyond. This person left in November, and a temporary replacement, Stephanie Fischer, was hired to support our Communications efforts during the Advent and Christmas seasons. A new search will be launched to replace this vital member of our staff team.

M&P spearheaded the writing of a job description for a new Outreach staff member as a result of the study completed by BGM Strategy Group. It is anticipated that the search for a Community Outreach Development and Engagement Leader (CODE) will commence in January 2024. This will be a full-time position.

M&P continues to work closely with the team of Reverend Ted and Laura as Laura completes her studies and we support her quest to become an ordained Minister. M&P is supporting the Board as we consider embracing a Team Ministry to help us achieve our Mission in the community.

M&P also supports our exceptional Music leaders, David Ambrose and Carl Steinhauser, along with the section leads/soloists in our Chancel Choir.

The combined efforts of the minister, full- and part-time staff and active, dedicated volunteers ensure RUC is a strong, faithful, active and caring community of believers.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Communications Team oversees two streams of work; the day to day processes required to create and post information for our Tuesday Email Bulletin to over 620 subscribers and Sunday Service emails, website and social media updating church and community events; and and facilitating and implementing special communication projects such as the Annual Report and Amalgamation support.

It has been an exceptionally busy year for the Communications Team beyond the day to day work stream. We were very focused in the early part of the year on supporting the Amalgamation with Windermere United. We also focused on upgrading our website and social media presence and supporting major campaigns such as Annual Giving, Bloor West Arts and Crafts Show, the Holy Block Party and other community and church events. Communications has also been a key support for celebrating accomplishments such as the Ridha Family arrival and the Outreach project. We will end the year with the implementation of a modernized annual report that will tell our story and highlight all the events and activities that make Runnymede a special place to worship and belong.

Our intent is always to ensure we inform our congregation and community of all the key activities, perspectives and forward thinking plans.

Between March 12 and April 23, 2023 Communications created six Q & A documents for distribution to support the Amalgamation process to achieve the congregational vote and to meet the deadline on June 1st, achieving the official blending of both churches into a two campus Runnymede United Church. Support also included information postings regarding town hall meetings, meeting follow-up and small group after service discussions to ensure all congregants had the opportunity to have their concerns and questions addressed.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE - CON'T

Communications has also provided support for key events such as the Holy Block Party with social media postings, posters and community advertising ensuring attendance at a first ever event on September 23rd at both campuses.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

There are two main goals that are top of mind for the members of the Stewardship Committee. The first is to develop and implement a fall Annual Giving Program that inspires members of our faith community to pledge financial support to Runnymede United for the coming year.

The second goal is to keep the work of this generous financial gift alive in the minds of the people of our community. We do this by sharing brief stories throughout the late winter and spring focused on how the pledged funds are used by staff, by the property committee, by the musical team, and by many other people in our church who invite people to our community, welcome them when they come, connect with them in different ways, and develop programs and events to grow in faith together.

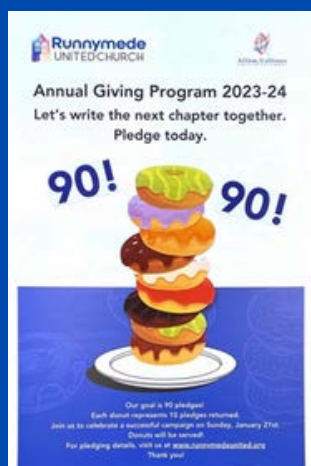
We were successful in both goals in 2023. The theme of the 2023-24 Annual Giving Program was: Let's write the next chapter together. Pledge today.

The goal of the program was to receive 90 pledges -- compared to 84 pledges received last year -- and that goal was reached! A special coffee hour was planned for January 21st, 2024 -- complete with donuts -- to celebrate and recognize this success.

Specifically, this success includes an increase in pledged dollars over 2023. This is good news, as we did lose some significant donors during 2023 and their contribution will need to be replaced. As well, the addition of six new PAR donors (monthly pre-authorized remittance) is a very good result.

In addition to the goals and results noted above, there was work completed in 2023 to support the merger of Windermere United and Runnymede United. The Stewardship Committee is delighted to welcome new friends and neighbours to our shared faith community.

The Stewardship Committee thanks David Wilcox for his significant contribution to the work of this group.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees met regularly through 2023 to ensure the Property and Assets of Runnymede United are prudently administered. During the year Joan Howard retired as a Trustee after several decades of dedicated service. We welcomed Ann Mowat and Bart Egnal to the Trustees during the year. The Trustees are broadly responsible for four main areas within Runnymede, and these are described in greater detail below.

Investments

The main focus in 2023 for the investment portfolio was the impact of the merger with Windermere United Church. The holdings at Windermere's investment manager (Echelon Partners) were transferred to Runnymede's investment manager (RBC Dominion Securities). Due to the complexities of the transition (which went smoothly!), it was better to liquidate the WUC securities and simply transfer over the cash. This methodology was also advantageous as we then invested the cash into higher yielding GICs and bonds as rates had climbed significantly. We also took the opportunity to invest some of our equities into the US stock market. We bought an Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) which simply replicates all the securities in the US stock market index.

Overall, the RUC investment portfolio posted a gain of 6.25% in the year 2023. The Canadian stock market was up 11.75% and Canadian bonds were positive with a gain of 6.69%. The poor economic conditions in 2022 and 2023 (sharply rising inflation, geopolitical uncertainty with war in Ukraine, and slowing GDP growth) were somewhat mitigated in the final months of 2023. Continued strong economic growth in the US, the perception of an end to interest rate hikes and positive employment numbers provided a buoyancy to the market.

Our current asset allocation is in line with our Investment Policy:

Asset Type	Policy	Actual
Cash	10%	13.5%
Bonds	20%	24%
Equities	70%	62.5%

Our Equity weighting at 70% is appropriate and is invested in high quality companies that pay dividends, which can be used as a source of cash.

The entire RUC portfolio is managed holistically across all funds. There is a fund structure which evolved in 2023 with the Windermere amalgamation, as described below:

The Manse Trust Fund

The Manse Trust fund is money set aside in a restricted fund to contribute income toward housing costs for our minister(s). It was increased in 2023 with a contribution from the Windermere Manse Fund after our amalgamation. The 2023 contribution to operations was \$18,000. It has been increased to \$24,000 in 2024.

The Estates Trust Fund

The Estates Trust Fund is unrestricted monies held by the Trustees for the long-term support of the church. We received a bequest of \$20,000 from the estate of long-term member William Sargent. As a result of the amalgamation with Windermere in June 2023, we added \$339,000 to the Estate Fund and used \$300,000 to create the Runnymede Building Fund – see below.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES - CON'T

Runnymede Building Fund

We created the Runnymede Building Fund in June 2023, with an initial balance of \$300,000 from the Estates Fund. The purpose of the fund is to support any necessary maintenance, renovations and improvement of the Runnymede Campus.

Windermere Building Fund

We created the Windermere Building Fund in June 2023, with an initial balance of \$300,000 from the trust funds of Windermere United Church. The purpose of the fund is to support any necessary maintenance, renovations and improvement of the Windermere Campus.

Planned Giving Funds

The Planned Givings funds were created in 2020 as a result of a bequest and are described in more detail below. These funds both receive and dispense funds for four areas of interest: Outreach and Justice, Congregational and Spiritual Growth, Building and General Planned Giving.

Insurance

One of the responsibilities of the Trustees is to ensure appropriate insurance coverage on church property. Brian Traquair is responsible for liaising with our insurance provider. We rely on the services of the United Church of Canada to obtain coverage and it is expected that insurance premiums will rise in 2024 for both campus locations due to inflationary pressure.

Property

The Trustees are kept informed by the Property Committee of all current repair work as well as any concerns they have regarding future repairs, security initiatives, or other property-related areas. The Trustees liaise regularly with the Chair of PropCom and with other members of that committee to keep up-to-date on current and future property needs.

Planned Giving

Julie Lee heads up this subcommittee (along with Jeff, Brian and Cheryl) which operates in conjunction with the Stewardship Committee. Planned Giving is an initiative that was conceived some years ago, was sidelined during the first couple of years of the pandemic and in 2022 started to move forward. In essence, Planned Giving represents larger financial gifts and bequests that are often (although not always) donated through one's Will. As well, there is a spending aspect as our Funds grow in size and we begin to assess potential areas for Runnymede to launch new projects. The Souster bequest in 2019 was the impetus to create 4 new Funds under this Planned Giving initiative: Outreach & Justice Fund, Congregational & Spiritual Growth Fund, Building Improvement Fund and Planned Giving Fund (this last Fund being a catch-all fund if a donor's wishes are not specified).

Following the establishment of these Funds, the subcommittee developed an application form and held a couple of grants seminars in 2022 to acquaint interested members of the congregation about the purpose and availability of the Funds. The first applicant for funding was the Affirm Committee. Their successful proposal centred around a lending library of books and other materials, housed on a rolling book cart, on a range of topics essential to that Committee's mandate. Funding from the Congregational & Spiritual Growth Fund enabled the Affirm Committee to implement this initiative in 2023. The congregation is now enjoying the fruits of the Affirm Committee's project, which has been expanded to include an online course on Indigenous topics.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES - CON'T

The Trustees have gratefully received a bequest from the Folkes Family that they have asked be applied to improving accessibility at the church. Options for a suitable accessibility project is being explored. In addition, the Trustees received an unrestricted bequest from the estate of William Sargent, a longtime Runnymede congregant.

With the amalgamation of Windermere United Church and Runnymede United Church this year, the subcommittee's work on Planned Giving/Spending has taken a pause while the Church Board considers the future path for our combined congregations. Nonetheless, funding applications for worthy projects are welcome anytime!

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Finance and Property Committee reviews revenues and expenses, approves or rejects expenditures, oversees the integrity of the financial affairs of the church and reports our financial situation to the Church Board.

Our Treasurer, Brian Traquair, devotes significant time and skill in managing the books, payment of expenses and presentation of our financial position in thorough, clear and understandable reports. Manages all invoices and expenses, handling also, online donations and payments. This work is in addition to his many other duties for the Church including supporting our online worship capability and helping to manage the merger with Windermere this year. We are grateful to Brian for the dedication of his talents and time to the church. Eva Havill, and Pat Campbell when Eva was off, have been envelope secretary, working with David Wilcox to produce the financial analysis and reports from ServantKeeper. Judy has served as secretary to the Committee. Dwayne and David Kenny have made major contributions to the work of the Committee including serving as Acting Secretary as needed.

The Finance Committee reviews EFT payments the same way that it reviews cheque payments and it reviews the addition of new EFT payees. We continued a process whereby Brian uses one of his own credit cards for payments where this is more convenient than EFT. The Chair reviews and approves the list of credit card payments quarterly and approves Brian's reimbursement, keeping a full record for review by the Committee. This is similar to the process for approval of cheque and EFT payments.

The major event for our finances and financial reporting was the amalgamation with Windermere on June 1. Brian created a new set of accounts for Windermere Campus that is consistent with our Runnymede accounts, keeping both separate and combined records for this transition year. We secured approvals from banks, governments and the UCC for closing and opening accounts, changing names on accounts, and many other details. We have trustee funds for both campuses and their status and details are included in the regular monthly financial reports. By year end, the changeover is essentially complete.

The Treasurer's Financial Report later in this document present our financial performance in 2023 and financial plans for 2024. It was another unusual year, with staff changes and with the Windermere merger. Our donors have continued to shift to PAR and online donations, so loose collection remained modest. We now count and deposit donations received in worship services twice per month, relying largely on Finance Committee members but with frequent assistance by Pat Campbell.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT - CON'T

Beyond changes in revenue, rent and expenses arising from the merger, our regular donors have been steadfast this year. Almost everyone who is on PAR has maintained their giving level this year and many have increased their pledges for 2024. Most members met their 2023 pledge commitments, some despite significant sacrifice.

The members of our congregation have been generous in supporting the work of our church, financially and through their time and talents. As a church, we have much to be thankful for.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The amalgamation of Windermere United Church with Runnymede United Church creating a two-campus church on 1 June 2023 was the most material financial event in our history. The success of this merger impacted every aspect of our financials, making us larger, more complex, more balanced in sources of income and more financially sustainable.

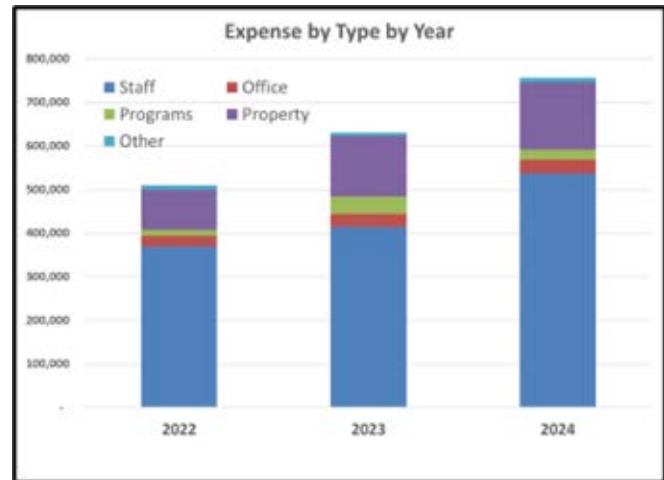
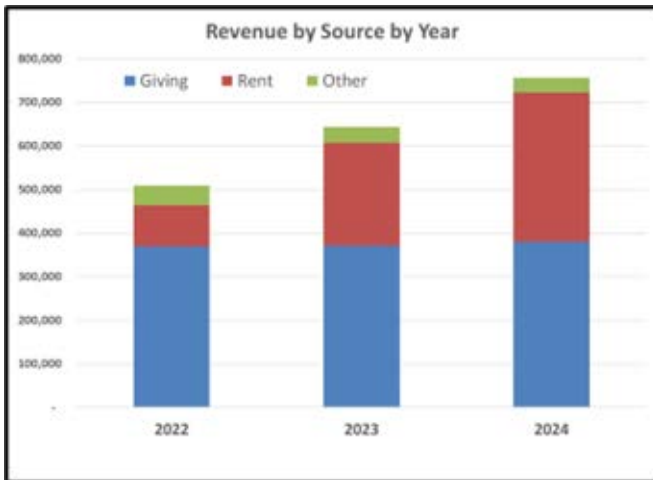
Results - We ended 2023 with an operating surplus of \$13,579. Our intention is to transfer \$5,000 of the surplus to the Refugee Fund, which will otherwise be in deficit by the end of our one-year commitment in March 2024, and to transfer the remaining \$8,579 to the GI&C Fund. The table below shows our pre-merger 2022 financials, our results for 2023 (with 7 months of amalgamated operations) and our budget for 2024. Our budget is break-even on \$756,000 in revenues. Please see comments by area.

Runnymede United Church 2023 Results and 2024 Budget	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	Notes on Budget (Merged 7 months 2023 and full year 2024)
Income		0.4%	2.6%	Percent increase for donations to Current
Current Operations	368,849	370,338	380,000	Increase from full year of WUC, plus uplift
Rent - Anchor Tenants	44,033	161,449	258,000	As agreed in term leases
Rent - Regular and One-Time	50,150	74,516	84,000	Growth in rentals with some price increases
Trustee Manse Fund Income	18,000	18,000	24,000	Increase in 2024 to post-merger level
Fund Raising	27,344	9,715	10,000	MacGregors Meats and the Craft Show
Trustees / Transfers	0	8,750	0	No transfers planned in 2024
Total Receipts	508,376	642,768	756,000	Material growth in income
Expense				
Staff Expenses	369,403	414,423	536,500	Two f/t Min + Cust'n,+Comms '23, +Outreach '24
Office Expense	23,998	29,365	31,000	WC additional costs (limited) plus inflation
Program Expense	13,719	39,432	23,000	\$15K BGM project in '23; added outreach in '24
Property Expense	91,995	139,288	155,000	WC additional costs; inflation; no capital projects
Regional Assessment	21,459	25,047	27,500	Assumed increases from SWRC
HST Refund	(11,166)	(18,366)	(17,000)	Based on expenditures
Total Expenses	509,408	629,189	756,000	Material growth in expenses
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(1,032)	13,579	0	Surplus in 2023 and breakeven in 2024
Transfers (to)/from Operating Funds	1,032	(13,579)	0	\$5,000 to Refugee Fund; \$8,579 to GI&C Fund
Transfers (to)/from Trustee Funds	0	0	0	Transfers to Trust Funds
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	0	0	0	Results after any transfers

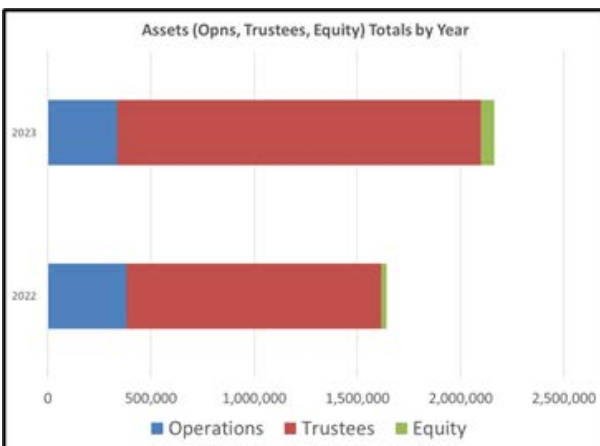
Revenues – As a result of the merger and growth in membership, our revenues grew in 2023 and will grow again in 2024. We only took ¼ of the intended budgeted 2023 Trustee transfers. By 2024, our revenues will be up 50% from 2022. Our donations have risen in 2023 from existing members, joiners from Windermere and new additions to our congregation, and we see another 3% growth in 2024. Our rental revenue will have grown from \$95,000 in 2022 to \$236,000 in 2023 and then to \$342,000 in 2024. We have a minimal need for fund raising of \$10,000 in 2024.

Expenses – We have higher expenses in property and operations due to our second campus. We have four full-time employees and eleven part-time employees. With the addition of a cleaning service, Jim and Eva are now managing two campus locations, and a much larger rentals operation. Ted and Laura are engaged in activities at both locations. We are investing in Outreach in 2024 with a new full-time position, while maintaining a break-even budget.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT - CON'T



Assets – Our church assets increased from \$1.7M to \$2.2M as a result of the amalgamation with Windermere. All restricted funds at Windermere were transferred and are protected in our books. Our Manse Fund was increased with Manse funds from Windermere, and we created two new building funds with the Trustees. Trustees held \$1,763,000 at the end of 2023. In Operations, we also have a set of funds such as GI&C, M&S, Music and Musicians, Pastoral Care, Memorial, Kenya, Benevolent, Community Meal, Refugee and Youth Funds, totalling \$321,000 at the end of 2023. Combined, these are the \$2.2M in assets of Runnymede United Church, of which about \$1.4M is restricted by purpose of use.



TRUSTEE FUNDS	End 2022	End 2023
Estate Fund	694,254	516,998
Manse Fund	402,783	503,796
Runnymede Building Fund	0	315,666
Windermere Building Fund	0	292,610
Planned Giving Funds (below)		
Outreach and Justice Fund	40,060	27,668
Cong. and Spiritual Growth Fund	48,826	51,988
Building Fund	50,000	54,804
General Planned Giving Fund	0	0
Total Trustee Funds	1,235,923	1,763,530

Investments – Our assets are invested with RBC Dominion Securities, managed by the Trustees and the Trustee Investment Committee. Our asset allocation target is 70% equities, 20% fixed income and 10% cash, with primarily Canadian stocks and bonds. We had an overall gain of 6%+ in our portfolio in 2023 plus \$60,000 in dividends. We spent \$41,000 from the Building Funds and \$17,000 from the Planned Giving Funds in 2023.

Outlook - We are fortunate at Runnymede United Church to be in a position of financial stability and sustainability. The generosity and efforts of our congregation and the hard work of our staff over the years laid the foundation, and the stewardship of the Windermere United Church congregation that enabled an amalgamation with Runnymede strengthened our finances while extending our reach.

Thanks to Don Dewees and the Finance Committee, and to Jeff Horbal and the Trustee, for their advice and support of the financial matters of our church. We look forward to greater community and creating the opportunity to do more for those who have less.

Life Passages



BAPTISM

5 children and 2 adults were baptized; 2 of those children were done at Windermere before the merger was official.



WEDDING

4 weddings in total; all at RUC



IN MEMORIUM

5 funerals in total; 1 at Windermere before the merger was official.

Memoriam:

Audrey Bunston

Donald Foster

Brian Gibbons

Richard Lacey

David Charles Skelton (from Windermere)

Staff

Lead Minister:	Reverend Ted Grady
Engagement & Growth Minister:	Laura Gallagher-Doucette
Office Administrator:	Eva Havill
Custodian, Technical Support:	Jim Lien
Music Director:	David Ambrose
Organist:	Carl Steinhauser
Soprano Soloist:	Pat Ainslie
Alto Soloist:	Sabrina Santelli-Perez
Tenor Soloist:	Devon Herbert
Bass Soloist:	Don Tripe
Family Outreach & Christian Education Leader (interim):	Brooke Richards
Communications, Interim Position (interim):	Stephanie Fischer
Sunday School Teachers:	Amelia Dekker Madeleine Reed Julia Preiswerk
Nursery:	

Board Members

Chair of Board:	Robin Pilkey
Secretary:	Lynne Salt
Treasurer:	Brian Traquair
Past Chair:	Derrick Hempel
Members at large:	David Allen, Dwayne Benjamin, Alex Cruickshank, Jennifer Cruickshank, Ian Gilmour, Debra Horsfield, Bart Leung, Elizabeth Mohler

Committee chairs attend board meetings and are represented in board voting.

Board Ex-Officio Positions, Committee Chairs & Members

Clergy, Lead Minister:	Reverend Ted Grady
Clergy, Engagement & Growth Minister:	Laura Gallagher-Doucette
Board of Trustees, Chair:	Jeff Horbal
Regional Representative:	Robin Pilkey
Ministry & Personnel, Co-Chairs:	Jocelyn McLean-Tharp, Tara Yelle
Members:	John Hogarth, Gillian Horbal, Julie Lee, Mara Nickerson, Brian Traquair
Stewardship, Chair:	Jeff Horbal
Members:	Alex Cruickshank, Jenn Cruickshank, Steve Hill, Paul Stenton
Pastoral Care, Chair:	Karren Phair-Harvey
Members:	Sandi Dunn, Jan Killey, Neil Mather, Ann Mowat, Gary Norris, Janis Traquair
Faith Formation & Christian Education, Co-Chairs:	Stephanie Fischer, Brenda Lien
Members:	Urszula Jambor, Jennie Keating, Janet Petrie, Karren Phair-Harvey, Brooke Richards
Affirm, Co-Chairs:	Walter Donovan, Greg Philip
Members:	Sue Cameron, Debra Horsfield, Elizabeth Mohler, Paul Stewart, Barb Williams
Finance & Property, Chair:	Don Dewees
Members:	Chuch Ainsley, Dwayne Benjamin, Wang Chow, David Kenny, Judy MacPherson, Gary Norris, Brian Traquair, David Whitfield, David Wilcox

Board Ex-Officio Positions, Committee Chairs & Members

Communications, Chair:

Members:

Debra Horsfield

Stephanie Fischer, Eva Havill, Mara
Nickerson

Food Hospitality, Co-Chairs:

Members:

Heather Crawley, Anna MacDonald

Ruth Caspell, Chris Henderson, Gillian
Horbal, Greg Philip, Judy Whitfield

Board of Trustees, Chair:

Members:

Jeff Horbal

Bob Cossitt, Bart Egnal, Cheryl Farrow,
Rev. Ted Grady, Julie Lee, Ann Mowat,
Brian Traquair

Special thanks to the following teams for their time, talent and commitment:

Sunday Worship Welcome Team Lead: Laurie Tripe

Community Meal Team: Suzanne Advani, Ruth Caspell, Chris Henderson, Greg Philip

Church Librarian: Jennie Keating

Lay Supervision Team: Ken Dekker, Paul Fischer, Gail Hutton, Urszula Jambor, Monica
McGlynn-Stewart, Elizabeth Mohler

Testimonials

A 1 year old with an older brother who attends Sunday school, first visited in the summer, he was not very excited about staying in the nursery without at least one parent. Recently, he was comfortable enough to stay in the nursery while his parents enjoyed the service upstairs. He had a lovely time playing with toy trains and 'feeding' the rocking horse.

– A NURSERY STORY

"For Leonora and I, it is very satisfying to see our children's successes. Also gratifying is that our friends in Canada, who provided help in all forms, celebrate with us. The Obara family thanks you so much for your support in making these young people attain their dreams and we pray that you will be blessed abundantly."

– ANDREW OBARA, KENYA AIDS ORPHAN PROGRAM

"I have attained a valid practicing license from the Nursing Council of Kenya and after working as a volunteer, earlier this year, I started a paid nursing position in my chosen field. Once again, I want say thank you for the financial support you offered to me. Without you, this journey would have not been successful. Thank you."

– DEBORAH OBARA, KENYA AIDS ORPHAN PROGRAM

"I trust this message finds you well, and I extend my deepest gratitude for your invaluable support throughout my medical engineering education. Your generosity has been pivotal in helping me achieve my academic goals. As I transition into my career, I'm grateful to be able to pursue a Healthcare Assistant course to meet the exacting standards set by Kenyan hospitals. Once again, thank you for your unwavering support, and I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead."

– ZAC OBARA, KENYA AIDS ORPHAN PROGRAM

Testimonials – con't

"I had the pleasure of working with Laura Gallagher-Doucette on the 2023 Christmas Pageant service. I had heard tales of marvelous enactments of the beautiful story of Jesus' birth done in past years at Runnymede. During the pandemic, I understand things were scaled back somewhat. Being a tad daunted by the prospect of matching the productions of the past, Laura and I decided to do something a little different. We wove the story of the nativity into a service of gift openings – advent candle, bible, hand bells, nativity set, objects representing offerings, and a newspaper. I was most impressed by the willingness and the presentation skills of all who volunteered or were invited to take part. The children sang so spiritedly under the direction of David and Carl, then took their parts in the nativity story. Being involved was a chance for me to get to know more members of this new church family of which I'm now a part. And it was a thrill have to glimpse inside the enchanted costume cupboard upstairs."

– JANET PETRIE



Group picture of the Christmas Pageant 2023 cast!

Not pictured: Carl, David, lighting and tech crew, and all those who were involved behind-the-scenes to help make this years play a success!

Testimonials – con't

“Thank you so much from the staff at Unison. The gift boxes and Walmart vouchers make a huge difference for our clients. When the holidays are over, the leftover vouchers are used to help people purchase medicine, diapers, food, winter clothing, and many other necessities which we sometimes take for granted but are out of reach for many. The need is great and your help has really gone a long way. The holidays were brighter for many because of your contributions.”

– ERIN SHAW, UNISON HEALTH, SHOEBOX PROJECT

Here are a few stories shared from Unison Health Staff:

“I gave one box to a boy and another box to a girl. Both boxes were the children’s Christmas gift. The families are low income, and they were very happy to put the boxes under the Christmas tree. The happiness was palpable; they were both very grateful to be able to gift a gift to their children this Christmas.”

“One woman who is new to Canada was given some boxes for her two older children. She was so happy she cried. She could not afford anything for her children and she was happy she could give them something.”

“Families and women of low income were happy to have a little something to open for Christmas, especially single moms who have little ones. Having something to give to their kids this holiday made a difference since many could not afford gifts. For those women who live by themselves, having a gift for Christmas made them feel special.”

“The Walmart vouchers were really helpful so that some of the parents could buy gifts for their older kids, so they wouldn’t be left out. One woman told me she planned to buy new winter boots for her daughter as she had outgrown ones from the previous year and they didn’t have the money to spend on new ones without the gift card.”

Testimonials – con't

“One client was so happy to have a gift for her son. He received a shoebox gift last year and there was a little sweater inside. He loved the sweater so much that he still wears it this year, although he is at the point of outgrowing it.”

“One of the boxes for men was given to a senior who lives alone. He was so deeply moved by this gesture. He has no family and the kindness meant a lot to him.”

“I shared a gift box to a mother and her 8-year-old daughter who were not expecting any gifts during this holiday season. The exhilarating scream from the little girl was so endearing, and the tears of joy running down her mother’s face were such a fulfillment that I believe this program was designed to achieve.”

A special note directly from a recipient:

“I would like to thank the donor for making Christmas brighter for me and my kids. Christmas is a very well celebrated and important holiday for us and being able to open presents from the donor has warmed our hearts. My 10-year-old daughter loved her gift from the donor, my 3-year-old son was very happy with his gift. We are grateful and are happy in times like this we have people who care to make our Christmas special.”

Testimonials – con't

Here are a few stories shared from Bloor West Village Arts & Crafts Show:

It is often the feedback of the crafters that clearly underlines their happiness with this Bloor West Village Arts and Crafts show. For example, one first-time crafter writes: "I wanted to thank you for including me in such a wonderful event. I had a great time. I hope you have a good rest after such an amazing amount of work putting on this successful event."

Another writes: "I just wanted to thank you for all the effort you must put in to make the craft show such a success. I had a wonderful day and hope the church did well too!"

And a third returning crafter stated: "I just wanted to say thank you so much to you and your dedicated team for a wonderful show this year. Truly, it is the only show I would even consider doing on Remembrance Day due to the high regard and reverence with which all of you have for the day. I was raised to respect and reflect on that day, and your staff truly made it "sacred" if I may. Thank you. Thank you too for the team of volunteers who were helpful, impeccably polite, and saved my back!! Hats off to all of you, and much appreciation for the opportunity to bring my craft to your loyal community of spectators. See you next year!"

'All are welcome at Runnymede United!'

– REV. TED



Ted and Zach