



A Congregation of the United Church of Canada, Horseshoe Falls Regional Conference

Annual Report for Maple Grove United Church

July 1st, 2023, to June 30th, 2024



Our mission as the congregation of Maple Grove United Church is to be a vital, active, caring Christian community.

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INTRODUCTION

I invite you to read the submissions in this Annual Report to learn about the amazing ministries of Maple Grove United Church. Doing so filled me with both wonder and gratitude! I am constantly in awe of the contributions of time, talent and treasure by so many people who make up the community of faith that is Maple Grove. We are indeed a congregation that lives out the calling of Jesus known as The Great Commandments: to “love God and to love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:36-40, NRSV, paraphrased). It is a privilege for us to serve as God’s hands and feet in caring for each other and creation!

Cornerstones of Maple Grove United are inspiring Worship and Christian Education, through which we learn about the word of God – during worship, bible studies and other opportunities offered during the year. We are blessed with a vibrant music program and an active Chancel choir (always looking for more voices!) We are pleased to offer many opportunities for fellowship, including hosting coffee and treats after Sunday worship, the monthly Men’s Breakfast Group, and numerous special gatherings throughout the year.

We are very grateful to support several active outreach ministries. Our Caring Team reaches out to members of our local congregation who experience health challenges and the loss of loved ones. The Outreach Committee supports various needs in the Oakville community, and the world beyond. We are well known for our work with refugees. Many of our members are involved in working actively both within Maple Grove and through other organizations. For example, Maple Grove has a long history of partnership with Kerr Street Mission, supporting people in the local community through the Neighbour Care Network and Christians Against Poverty.

Maple Grove is a very welcoming community and if you have not already done so, I invite you to join us any Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. for worship. If you can’t make it in person, consider watching our services online, which you can access through our website at mguc@cogeco.net. We would love to have you join us.

With best wishes for the peace of Christ!

Ross Gilmour
Chair, Maple Grove United Church Council



Maple Grove United Church - “Where the Spirit Soars, and the Heart Finds a Home”

MESSAGE FROM REV. JESSICA MCCRAE

Minister's Report

There is no question that this is both a challenging and an exciting time to be church in our world. Challenging because everything is changing around us at a rapid pace, and the church is changing too. But these are also exciting times, because the hope, compassion, and love that is at the heart of our faith is so needed in our world today. It is exciting because we are open to exploring ways to share resources, work together with partner groups and other churches in new ways, and use our building in new ways. We are responding to the climate crisis, gathering to learn and laugh together in ways we missed so much during the height of covid. We are finding hope and joy in our faith and our worship.

We know that even in these changed and changing times we are called to share the good news in new and creative ways. In the words of Winston Churchill, we are called to "Take up the mantle of change, for this is our time." And we are doing just that. As you read through this report you will see how we have pulled together to address the challenge of keep our building in good repair and how we have responded to the needs in our society through our work with food banks, welcoming refugees, and supporting those seeking new beginnings. You will see the ways we came together to learn, to worship, to celebrate, to strengthen community and support one another.

I want to thank all of you for reminding me every day how God is using what we offer to bring hope into our world and to reveal love in our community. Your work and passion for this community is what enables us to live out our calling as a community of faith. I look forward to travelling forward together into our shared future, grateful for our blessings, and hopeful about where God will take us next.

Rev. Jessica McCrae

Christian Education

There were several events offered at the church for learning, study, fellowship, and different expressions of worship.

- Booked for Lunch continues to be very popular with a large and steady group of women (though the group is open to anyone). We have explored several novels that generated great discussion.
- There were several study groups including one on the book “How to Live in a Chaotic Climate”, as well as a group for Advent, Lent, a 3-week study on 1 Peter, and another on “Tricky Texts of the Old Testament”. Attendance ranged between 6 and 12 people.
- Arnaud Painvin and I started a weekly Contemplative Prayer group at the church and Arnaud and I are available before each session to answer questions and help people learn more about this style of prayer.
- I led two small group worship and learning sessions in the chapel, one for Ash Wednesday (which included imposition of ashes) and one for Maundy Thursday (which included a guided meditation and communion).
- We had 2 midday Inquiring Minds events. Many thanks to Peter Drake for coming to share his expertise on inflation and the economy and to Dorothy Gartshore for organizing a session about charitable givings and investments.
- This year I began conversations with Rev. Deborah Laforet at St. Paul’s United about sharing our gifts and resources for a joint confirmation program for the next coming year. There is good interest in this.

Thank you to Pat Thomson who often stepped up to take children to a lesson during worship. As that slowed down I created new and fun activity packs for the chapel area and refreshed the children’s books in that area, for any young people who might join us in worship. You will notice some of the art that has been created and left for us, on the bookshelf.

I am always open to the gifts of leadership or ideas that are brought forward! Thanks to all who participated in these events, and who shared their thoughts, gifts, questions, and knowledge!

Rev. Jessica McCrae

Worship and Music

Worship Service Review:

A ceremony was held on September 17, 2023, to dedicate the new More Voices hymn books and acknowledged the gift of the Craig family toward the books and the live-streaming project. It was well attended and well received.

The services over the holiday season were very well attended. These included the Longest Night service, the Christmas Eve Pageant service and the 9:00pm Christmas Eve service. The Committee discussed ways to increase advertising efforts for 2024 services and discussed options for live streaming the Christmas Eve Pageant service.

The Blessing of the Pets service was held on July 14, 2024, on the front lawn and was well attended by both pets and their owners and included a turtle and a caterpillar, amongst many other pet varieties.

Summer Service planning was complicated due to the scarcity of pulpit supply and lack of music coverage. MGUC decided to participate with the other Oakville United Churches in summer worship from July 28th through August 25th, 2024, following receipt of full support from Council and in the interest of sharing and creating relationships with Oakville United Churches. A notification and a schedule of the host United Churches was posted in the E-news and on the MGUC website for the congregation and an announcement was made in church on Sunday, June 16th and 23rd. On September 1st Maple Grove will host and Ian Sadler will be our organist/musician.

We are planning on displaying a banner for special services and special events, specifically Easter and Christmas, to better advertise these services within the community. These banners will say, "Join us for Advent & Christmas Services. Please see our website for details www.maplegroveunitedchurch.org" "Join us for Holy week and Easter Services. Please see our website for details www.maplegroveunitedchurch.org" We expect to design and purchase the banners in the fall 2024.

Accompanist/Pianist Replacement:

Eran Rosenzain resigned his position as accompanist in April 2024 due to personal reasons. Mary Bell stepped in to replace Eran on a temporary basis until the end of July. We are extremely grateful to Mary for her efforts.

A search committee was formed in April 2024 to find an accompanist/pianist, consisting of Cathy Dodge Smith, Deborah Henry, Barb Duffin, Bruce Tanaka, Peter Drake, and Laura McLaughlin. The committee received 22 qualified applications and of these, five (5) were interviewed. Following these in person interviews, a further audition was offered to two (2) candidates and conducted with choir members present. This process provided Deborah with a sense of the individual's capabilities as an accompanist and pianist. Following the auditions, one candidate was preferred, his references were checked and were overwhelmingly positive. A motion was then sent to Council requesting we offer the part-time position of accompanist/pianist to Miguel Brito-Lopez, effective September 1, 2024. After receiving Council approval, Miguel was offered the position, and he has accepted. We are all very excited and are looking forward to working with Miguel.

Sound System and Live Stream Update:

Over the past few years there have been more and more challenges in using the current analogue sound system from a sound quality and user perspective, particularly now that we have integrated live streaming. A committee was formed to investigate the possible implementation of a digital sound system, and it was determined that this would best meet our needs.

The new sound board has been ordered. Price, including training, is quoted as \$3,819.40. This includes two hours of training. If more is required, which we expect it will, it will cost \$250.00 per hour.

Advantages of the new system include:

- An easy-to-use system that can have pre-set settings so volunteers can quickly and easily return to our Sunday morning requirements if someone has changed the settings.
- Microphones that provide optimum sound in the sanctuary and on livestream with as little intrusion into the space as possible. The hanging microphones will be moved so they are in front of the choir and pointing in the correct direction. No other microphones would be required for the choir, which would allow us to consider returning to receiving communion at the front of the church rather than in the pews.

The consultant also suggested:

- The monitors behind the choir could possibly be moved to moveable ones on the floor in front of the choir.
- For best sound, the piano should be moved to the same side of the sanctuary as the organ.
- For the bell choir, a standing microphone in the centre of the U shape of tables would provide the best sound.
- Two large monitors on the front wall would be better for our slides than the projection system we currently use.

We are very thankful for our dedicated sound volunteers and to Charlotte, our live stream technician, for the work they do week after week. However, given everyone's busy lives, vacation time, family needs, etc., there are times when we fall short and do not have volunteers available to assist with our sound. Charlotte was trained on the sound system and is able to manage sound but unfortunately, she is not able to manage both sound and live streaming. This is a two-person job. When our sound volunteers are unavailable, Charlotte can run the sound equipment, and the live stream is set on the pulpit. There were a couple of Sundays in June where this situation occurred, and Charlotte had planned on running the sound equipment with a static live stream on the pulpit. However, JC Berube stepped in to assist with sound and Charlotte was able to run the live stream equipment. Manty thanks to JC for his assistance.

For the month of July, we had sound only and no livestream, again due to lack of volunteers. For the July 14th service, Blessing of the Pets, the service was conducted outside, and Charlotte took photographs and later posted them.

Hiring of a Worship Technology Supervisor:

W&M still requires a Worship Service Technology Supervisor to manage and oversee the sound and livestream equipment in order to maintain consistency and know-how week to week by sound and live stream personnel. It has been difficult to hire for this position so it will be put on hold until we install the Digital sound system and see what our needs are following that.

Configuration of the Chancel Choir:

A great deal of thought and consideration has gone into the configuration of the Chancel Choir. For a number of reasons, the Choir will remain sitting in the pews on the right side of the Sanctuary and will process to the stairs to sing the anthem. This will continue indefinitely as it provides the best acoustics, the best communication for the conductor and the accompanist, is very desirable by choir members who are able to sit with family members for the duration of the service or for those choir members who sit amongst the congregation to assist with singing of hymns and is most desirable for Jessica to engage the congregation.

Communion:

Communion was served in the pews on Easter Sunday with no concerns. W&M are discussing the best way to serve communion going forward. Using the disposable cups is not optimal due to their cost and waste. Serving at the front of the church is ideal but the microphones need to be managed. This may be doable given the work being done on the sound system as mentioned above.

Fundraising:

- Silent Movie Event – November 17, 2023: *The Gold Rush*, presented by Ian Sadler. It was very well attended raising \$1,314.96 for the church. We are looking forward to another Silent Movie Event in the fall of 2024.
- Classic Composers in Crime - April 6, 2024: This event was very successful, raising \$1,931.15 for the church. The event was organized and presented by Dr. Deborah Henry and supported by Eran Rosenzain and three guest musicians: Krishan Gelda (oboe); Dr. Heather Olaveson (piano); and Klaudia Thibault (violin).
- Songs of Praise – April 14, 2024: Eight Oakville United Churches came together to put on a concert – Songs of Praise at St. John's United Church. Approximately 60 choir members from the eight churches participated, including members of MGUC. A free will offering was collected and proceeds went to Restorations Second Stage Homes to support local anti-human trafficking efforts and support Nancy's House.
- Halton Regional Police Choir - April 27, 2024: While this presented itself as a good fundraising opportunity for the church, as MGUC received half the proceeds from the event, only 67 tickets were sold, which was unfortunate as the concert was excellent. Our share of the proceeds came to \$366.80 (50% of net revenue). It was decided it is not something we would participate in again.

Future Events:

- October 25, 2024 – Silent Movie with Ian Sadler on the Organ
- December 7, 2024 – Singalong Messiah

Respectfully submitted
Cathy Dodge-Smith and Laura McLaughlin
Co-Chairs, Worship & Music Committee

CHANCEL CHOIR

Our Chancel Choir continued to practice and sing enthusiastically during the past 2023 -24 year. We enjoyed learning and relearning a variety of musical pieces and singing them along with accompaniment from instruments. Again, Pat and Ron McKee played guitar and trumpet, and Patty Wanless played the Dejembe drums, enhancing the hymns and anthems.

Some special events included Ian Sadler who presented the silent film “The Gold Rush” with tremendous organ accompaniment. A fun musical evening!

Dr. Deborah Henry and Eran Rozen presented an evening of “Classical Composers and Crime” which was very entertaining and informative. The MGUC Memorial Bell Choir (Jan Beddoe director), Krishna Gelda (oboe), Heather Olaveson (piano), Klaudia Thibeault (violin), Deborah (organ) and Eran (piano) all added their talents to the concert.

In the Spring, Eran resigned to concentrate on his teaching career. We appreciate Eran’s role as pianist over the years and wish him well in the future. Mary Bell offered her talents to accompany the choir during rehearsals and to play for Sunday morning services. We all appreciate Mary’s kindness and help. We look forward to working with our new pianist this September.

Our thanks go to Jim Lilly, who for many years has been the choir librarian. Jim’s help in getting out music for practices and filing it again, is a huge task and we all appreciate his diligence. Also, thanks to Dorothy Gartshore, choir treasurer, for keeping track of our funds.

Respectfully submitted by:
Carol Gilchrist (Chancel Choir President)

MEMBERSHIP

The membership team saw a few changes this year, starting with Jean Ann Davis leaving the committee.

This year we continued our focus on identifying newcomers, updating our name tags and generally just welcoming everyone. We also tried to reach everyone possible by phone at least once. This has become exceedingly difficult as most people have transitioned from land line to cell phone. If you are one of these people, please contact Daniel in the office so that we can continue our calls. Don't waste your chance to let us know how you are doing and what your church can do for you. This was my last year as chair of the Membership committee. I will, however, continue to oversee our after-service coffee time. As of July 01st, Sue Newman has taken over the role of Membership Chair. I look forward to working with her.

Respectfully Submitted- Dorothy Gartshore
Outgoing Chair- Membership Committee

OUTREACH

Our priorities as defined through a Congregation survey are to focus on poverty reduction, including food security, as well as greening of the environment.

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

Refugee Program: To sponsor new families and provide support to local private sponsors and assist in the settlement upon their arrivals to Canada.

MGUC acts as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) within the Federal Refugee Program. There are two ways in which we help refugee families come to Canada. In some cases we work with a family member who is already in Canada and has been able to raise some or all of the monies required to bring that family into Canada. In the other cases we take on all of the responsibilities of bringing in a refugee family. In either case we are ultimately responsible for that refugee family for their first year in Canada. This involves fundraising whereby the monies required for the family need to be raised up front and held by the church. We help in a number of areas including working with the refugee family to file the necessary government applications, and once accepted, finding the family a place to stay with the appropriate furnishings and initial supplies. We help the families become integrated into the community including help with signing the children up for school, help with any language requirements, signing up for various relevant government programs and providing ongoing support as needed.

Our focus this year has been on helping our Afghani refugee families start their new lives in Canada. All three families that we helped sponsor, along with Munn's United Church and Knox Presbyterian Church and a local community group, have now arrived.

Each family is at a different stage of their journey as our first family has now been here for over one year and our formal commitment to support them has ended. We continue to keep in touch with these families as they are also being supported by other family members who were already in Canada. Much thanks go out to Sandra Onufryk and Katy Joaquim for their help with the families being sponsored by the two other churches, as well as Vanessa Barr and others in her community group who were the prime supporters of our first family.

Support for relatives of one of our refugee families living in Jordan as their refugee application has stalled: We continue to support relatives of one of our refugee families who are currently living in Jordan as their government-sponsored application has run into delays. We had initially raised some money to support this family prior to their application being accepted as government-sponsored refugees, and we are now sending that money to the family on a monthly basis to help them out as they await clarification on their government application.

Modern Miracle Dinner: Maple Grove United Church has a long history of holding a great community dinner in support of Canada Foodgrains Bank (CFGB). During Covid-19 we did not hold the in-person dinners however the congregation continued to support this cause through donations. This year marked the return of the dinner held in the gymnasium. Old Spaghetti Factory and the Hnatiw family provided the spaghetti and lasagna dinners along with all of the fixings. This was complimented by salads and desserts of ice cream and baked goods. Thanks to Kim MacKay, Bill Bremner and the members of the Belle Choir for their generous contributions.

Over 90 meals were served and we were able to raise over \$3000 for Canada Foodgrains Bank. Lorne Underwood, a representative from CFGB, attended the event along with his wife, and he provided some insight into how the organization works around the world, and specifically how it supports those in need in areas of conflict that we are seeing in the daily news. The organization's goal is to work toward ending worldwide hunger. He highlighted that the organization raises funds, and then works with local organizations in or near these areas so that the local organizations can be built up, rather than shipping food overseas from Canada.

The dinner was spearheaded by Patty and Hugh Wanless, along with Marylyn Chamberlain. In addition, over 20 volunteers helped out leading up to, and on the day of the dinner, to provide this wonderful experience. The McKee family provided some musical entertainment and led the group in several singalongs. Everyone in attendance remarked that it was great to be back at the event in person, and that the food was fantastic and the fellowship much appreciated! Thanks to those as well who were unable to attend but did provide a financial donation. Looking forward to another great event this coming year!

Sculpture Sale: To support a Zimbabwean-Canadian stone sculptor whose exhibit supports a number of sculptors in Zimbabwe.

Chaka Chikodzi is a Zimbabwean-Canadian stone sculptor. We support the sale of his works by showcasing them on the church grounds. Through his sales he is able to support a number of sculptors in Zimbabwe and some of his proceeds are shared with the church to support our various

Outreach projects. His signs are placed throughout the area and help draw in the broader community as well as MGUC congregation members.

Monthly ‘Minute for Mission’ readings: To help keep us centred on the work being done by the United Church Mission and Service fund which the congregation supports through their givings.

Various members of the Outreach Committee provided these readings highlighting many of the causes supported by the Mission and Service fund.

LOCAL OUTREACH

Kerr Street Mission (KSM) NCN and CAP:

We provide outreach support through Neighbour Care Network (NCN – Paula DaRocha) and Christians Against Poverty (CAP – John King), two specific programs sponsored by Kerr Street Mission.

Several members of Maple Grove United Church are supporting individuals in our community through these two programs which in total consists of 90 volunteers through 18 churches.

Clients have been assisted in finding new jobs, and accessing community support for housing, food, clothing and financial aid.

Clients are very appreciative of the Neighbour Care Network and Christians Against Poverty programs and the support they receive from Maple Grove United Church. There are always clients awaiting the support of these programs and they can use additional volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering we would put you in touch with Paula and/or John at Kerr Street Mission for the required training.

NCN:

- +90 trained volunteers
- 18 participating churches

CAP:

- Helps families become debt free
- Works with families to provide budgeting expertise

Maple Grove does provide funds from our NCN benevolent fund in response to specific requests.

Bruce Tanaka is now heading up MGUC’s NCN/CAP program and can be contacted for more information. (c.bruce.tanaka@gmail.com)

Submitted by John Berg
(Outgoing)NCN/CAP Co-ordinator
Maple Grove United Church

Kerr Street Mission – Meals: Maple Grove United Church has been a long-time strong supporter of this program and this year continued the commitment. With Covid-19 restrictions now behind us, we were back to preparing and serving the meals to those in need at the KSM facility. We have a strong ‘bench’ of volunteers eager to help. Thanks to Wendy Duff and Carol Heimbach for taking on the leadership role and thanks to all of our volunteers!

Kerr Street Mission – Adopt a Shelf: Kerr Street Markets has taken a new approach for food donations. In addition to regular donations made throughout the year, they have created the ‘Adopt a Shelf’ program where major donors, like the various churches, commit to providing certain high demand foods for a specific month. This helps KSM not only ensure that they have a sufficient supply of these key foods, but it also helps in their management of Market. In November Maple Grove United Church committed to providing 350 cans of canned meat. We were able to exceed these targets.

We also collaborated with St. Cuthbert’s Anglican Church, in a food drive in support of KSM as well as other food banks in the community.

Kerr Street Mission – PJ drive: Once again this year, Maple Grove United Church was able to support Kerr Street Mission in this program leading up to Christmas. We had a very special promotion of this program as Rachel Onufryk provided leadership again this year, and Leslie Gilchrist, along with her young children Brianna and Ian, as well as a friend made an impassioned plea to open the PJ drive by donning their pyjamas for the kick-off announcement. The event was a great success with over 60 pajama sets and over \$1,500 donated to this cause. We continue to support this worthy cause and help less fortunate families over Christmas.

First Nations Awareness: A reconciliation event was held at Knox Presbyterian Church and was attended by several of our congregation members. The ‘A Good Way: Learning and Taking Action on Reconciliation’ was led by Sherry Saevil, an Indigenous Education Advisor for the Halton Catholic District School Board. Those who attended felt that the event was informative.

Advocating to Abolish Human Trafficking: Several United Churches in Oakville came together to support Restorations Second Stage Homes (www.RestorationsCanada.org). The campaigns are intended to increase awareness of Human Trafficking, and it’s happening right here in Halton region. Restorations Second Stage Homes supports survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking by providing long term residential housing, survivor-led peer programming and holistic care. Building on several events last year, we continued to support this cause through a fundraiser held at St. John’s United Church. The ‘Songs of Praise’ event brought together choir members from each of the United Churches in Halton in October for a combined choir. The event was a great success and raised monies for Restorations Second Stage Homes.

Combined United Church picnic: In June, a combined picnic was held, hosted by Trinity United Church. Maple Grove United Church was well represented. Thanks to the planning team from the Combined Outreach committees, and to Trinity United for a warm welcome and for pivoting quickly to get everyone indoors from the rain! Great music, great conversation, and lots of fun!

GREENING OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Improve Biodiversity – Pollinator Garden: We continue to support our pollinator gardens and value the assistance provided by Aki and Bruce Tanaka along with other volunteers. In addition, this year, through the kind generosity of Oakville Ready, we were able to plant several Pollinator trees on the church grounds. As these trees mature, they will provide a supportive environment to birds and other wildlife in the area.

Supporting the community while increasing food security – Community Garden: Maple Grove United Church, along with several other churches in the community, have created community gardens on each of the church properties and the vegetables grown in these gardens help local charities both by donating the food as well as donating proceeds of the sale of these vegetables. We have been growing and donating baby garlic, garlic scapes, okra, cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes to Kerr Street Mission, Fareshare Food Bank, and Salvation Army Lighthouse. This project could not have happened without the support of Ali Golandamian, a member of St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church as well as many volunteers from each of the churches. A great community effort.

Earth Day Activities: Maple Grove United Church celebrated Earth Day with two events. The first was to participate in and make a small financial contribution to a one-day cleanup blitz of local parks and green spaces. This event is organized by the Oakville Community Centre for Peace, Ecology and Human Rights (OCCPEHR) as well as local ratepayer groups. Our cleanup in the Joshua Creek area near Maple Grove Arena. Once again, this event was a success, and overall 67 sites were cleaned up through the efforts of over one thousand people.

For the second year in a row, we hosted a Forest Bathing event lead by Ruth Silver an accredited Forest bathing leader. Our turnout was less than last year, however those who attended experienced much better weather than last year and had a great experience. We were able to do this close by in the Iroquois Shoreline Woods Park on Joshua Creek Drive. Ruth kindly donated her fee to support Outreach projects at Maple Grove. Why don't you give it a try this upcoming year!

Submitted by Hugh Wanless, Chair

Members of the Committee: Carolyn Cohen, Heather Donaldson, Carol Heimbach, Reverend Jessica McCrae, Sandra Onufryk, as well as John Berg (NCN leader)

CARING TEAM

The Caring Team continues to provide support for members of the congregation by means of cards, phone calls or visiting.

The team assisted with the all Saints Service on October 29th where we remembered those that had passed away in the previous year.

In December we purchased and delivered 16 poinsettias for shut ins and bereaved members of the congregation. In the spring we delivered 10 spring flowers to those unable to no longer attend church on a regular basis.

We assisted in three funeral receptions held at the church.

The Prayer Shawl group disbanded as a group that meets monthly. The few knitters that are left will continue to contribute but there is a large stash of shawls and children's quilts available for distribution.

The Prayer Group, coordinated by Liz Bryant, offered prayers on a weekly basis. We thank Liz for her weekly emails and the cheerful attachments.

We welcomed 2 new members this year, Carol Gilliam and Brenda Williams. The other members are Brenda Lewis, Judy Lilly, Liz Bryant, Eydie Koopman, Shelagh Leitch, Daphne Tonellato, Rev. Jessica McCrae, Mary Lloyd and Jane Moffatt.

Respectfully submitted,
Co-chairs Mary Lloyd and Jane Moffatt



MEN'S BREAKFAST

Men from Maple Grove United Church have been meeting for a simple breakfast and fellowship once each month since October 1998. Our mandate is to provide a forum for men to discuss Christian values as they relate to families, business, and themselves. By agreement we are organized but unstructured, and we are not part of any organized United Church groups.

Breakfast Meetings are held on the “second Wednesday” of each month, except July and August. Ownership of our meeting venue changed hands in the fall of 2023 and our meeting space went through a major renovation changing the premises into a Peruvian restaurant. We are fortunate to continue to meet in this new very accommodating space. Food is always good, plentiful and affordable. Service is assisted by some members gladly helping to keep coffee cups full. Lively discussions arise on many topics and always in the spirit of good camaraderie.

Our invite list has holds steady with attendance averaging between 18 and 24 members each month. Once again Peter Drake held the group’s full attention in February when he presented his view on Canada’s economic landscape and Rev. Jessica McCrae joined us in June to update the group on her ministry at MGUC.

Each year the group looks for an improvement project to support at Maple Grove United Church. In the past, they have provided funding to install awnings, replace tables and chairs, and add new stair railings throughout the church. For 2024, the group supported the creation of Wheable’s Way.

One of our dear church congregants and group members passed away earlier this year. Al Wheable, and his wife Lis who passed in 2015, maintained for years an inventory of accessibility equipment in their garage and loaned wheelchairs, walkers, rollators, crutches and various bathroom accessories, for free, to members of our congregation and close friends in our community. It was suggested by a group member that we not let this service cease. With the groups immediate and generous support, we purchased a shipping container to place at Maple Grove United Church. The Wheable family donated all the equipment which we moved into the container in April. Wheable’s Way was born.

If you would like more information about the Men’s Breakfast Group or Wheable’s Way please call the office: 905-845-5721 or email: mguc@cogeco.net.

Submitted by:
Tom Warden

Building & Property

As usual a thank you is owed to the many people who contribute to the ongoing maintenance of the church. Judy Lang, J C Berube, John Hamilton, and Tom Warden are often seen at the church working on various things. And we get a lot of support from others such as for the spring and fall outdoor cleanups organized by Judy and John. When we ask for volunteers, you always step up. The building and its various mechanical systems are in good condition. This year we accomplished many things.

1. The roof project as originally planned is completed and it came in under budget, although we spent much more money than we raised. While doing the main project, we added extensive repairs and extended the project to include the two flat roofs over the friendship room and the gym storage room. These tasks were not included in the original budget. It was good that we did as the sheathing under these two roofs was wet and moldy. The five most expensive words in any project are *'and while we're at it'*. But often that makes a lot of sense. The recent heavy rain was a good test of workmanship. At one point there were inches of water on the gym roof, but there was only minor dripping from the gym AC unit. It was determined that the ductwork was leaking which has since been fixed. Adjustments were made to the large drains on the roof to allow the water to be removed more quickly. I also engaged the roofer to re-caulk all our windows.
2. Since the leaks had been addressed, we did drywall repairs to the photocopier room, and the accessible washroom on the lower level. We also replaced the old ceiling tiles in the lower classrooms with drywall.
3. We tiled the accessible lobby washroom. We painted this room and the stairwells.
4. For the past three years, we have been fortunate to receive Anit-Hate security grants from the province. We used this money primarily to upgrade our locking systems and install security cameras. We now have cameras recording all movement 24/7, covering all major interior and exterior areas. We do not actively monitor these cameras but are able to go back in time and review any incidents. We also did some seemingly minor things such as installing a small window in Rev. Jessica's office door, so she can look out before opening it. We installed a steel entry door in the reception area, and that will have a deadbolt. We removed the old metal fire escape that kids were using to climb up on our roof, and two fire alarm pull stations. This was done with the blessing of the Oakville Fire Department. In all, we have received \$40,000 from the provincial government to do this (and other) security-related work over the past three years.
5. We installed more motion sensors in our lighting. Now the main floor lobby lights come on automatically whenever movement is detected. Since the lights are all LED, energy consumption is already low, but now they also switch off when there is no one there.

6. We made the necessary changes to the Friendship Room to allow it to be leased to the daycare as a classroom. We replaced the heavy sliding closet doors and added storage shelves to the Friendship Room. We painted the closet, and the daycare painted the room. We also added shelves to the gym storage room.
7. We were given a gift of forty blue banquet chairs which will allow us to retire the old purple ones, many of which were broken. The broken ones are gone, and we are looking to get rid of the rest of them, after we complete a needs assessment for the quantity and location of chairs.
8. The daycare slightly enlarged the main playground at their expense. This was accomplished by squaring up the edges of the playground to the parking lot. We did not lose any parking spaces.
9. I compiled a list of all the contracted services at the church, with the vendor names and the prices. Most of the B & P budget goes to these contracts. The two largest ones are the cleaning, and the snow plowing.
10. We had professional arborists in to remove dead trees, and trim many of the others. We also planted several trees in the garden by the traffic circle.
11. With an idea from JC, about a storage container for the mobility aids collected over the years by Al and Liz Wheable, Tom contacted a company to install a container in the area outside the gym. This was funded by the men's breakfast group.

Future needs include the following:

1. We need to conduct a review of all the significant contracts with outside vendors to ensure value for money.
2. We need parishioners to sign up and take ownership of some simple outside maintenance tasks, like cutting some of the grassy areas not under contract or weeding specific gardens.
3. We need a fixed ladder from the Friendship Room roof to the upper roofs so that the maintenance of the rooftop HVAC units will be safer. This will be under \$4000.
4. We need to replace most of our thermostats with ones that can be programmed from the office computer, and still allow some limited yet easy local control. This will be about \$1000 each.
5. We are looking at replacing the projectors in the sanctuary with a large ~100" flat panel monitor. This will greatly improve readability. It will be about \$6000 for one monitor including custom mounting. With careful placement, we will likely only need one.

Respectfully submitted by Peter Williams, B&P Chair

LONG TERM RENTALS

Our long-term tenants this year were:

1. Western Heights Montessori
2. MGUC Manse
3. Elite Volleyball – EVP
4. Little Kickers Milton
5. Oakville Youth Soccer Association (OYSA)

1. Western Heights Montessori

In terms of revenue, Western Heights continues to be our largest tenant. Their license comes up for renewal in April 2027, and we are fortunate to have a co-operative working relationship with Western Heights.

In 2024, Western Heights asked if they could rent the Friendship room beginning in the fall of 2024, for weekdays over the school year. An agreement was approved by Council in the spring of 2024. It takes a village to manage all the needs of a major tenant, and special thanks goes to Peter Williams and the Building and Property team for quickly responding to their maintenance and repair requests, Daniel Duffin – our church Administrator, and to Gord Penley, our Treasurer, and Bill Kerr, our church Lawyer and Trustee, for assisting in dealings with Western Heights Montessori this past year.

2. Manse Tenants

Our Manse family – Pankaj, Priya, and sons are a lovely family. They have been renting the Manse since June 2016 and never miss a payment. The annual Lease was recently renewed for another year, with the Ontario Annual Residential Rental Increase Guideline built in. Thank you to Peter Williams and the Building and Property team for quickly responding to ongoing maintenance and the odd repair needed at the Manse.

3. Elite Volleyball – EVP

Elite Volleyball is a highly competitive league for mostly teenagers, with multiple locations throughout the area. They have been our tenant since October 2015, and most recently renewed their License in 2022 with a two-year prepayment. They are Licensed to use the Gym three nights per week.

4. Little Kickers Milton

Little Kickers is a soccer club for kids and the organization has been a long-time renter for many years. They rent the Gym on Saturday mornings and have recently renewed their License for another year starting in the fall.

5. Oakville Youth Soccer Association - OYSA

OYSA is a soccer club for kids and has been renting here since September 2021. They rent the Gym on Sunday afternoons and have recently renewed their License for another year and are adding Tuesday evenings to the rental agreement.

Kim MacKay
(905)599-9745
Chair, Long-term Rentals
Maple Grove United Church

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS - Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2024

BEQUESTS:

Carol Kennedy \$41,531 (to Operating Fund) – Al Wheable \$50,000 (to Capital Replacement Reserve)

CHURCH OPERATING REVENUE:

Offerings were below budget by \$15,000 and slightly above prior year. Offering levels remain a concern we must address for the coming year. Rental revenues were consistent with budget. Fund raising activities, including the annual Fertilizer Sale, raised revenue of \$19,900, below budget by \$10,000. Operating revenues include Carol Kennedy's bequest of \$41,531 which had not been budgeted. Total operating revenue was \$478,200, which was better than budget by \$25,200 and \$49,600 above the prior year.

CHURCH OPERATING EXPENSES:

Operating expenses were \$19,500 more than budgeted, despite staff vacancies. Property maintenance expenses exceeded budget by \$32,000 due to the increased maintenance and repair activity at the church. Significant major repairs also continued at the church but have been accounted for as asset additions rather than as Operating Fund expenses.

OVERALL RESULTS OF CHURCH OPERATING FUND:

2024 operations, before amortization of property and equipment, reflect an operating surplus of \$7,100.

SPECIAL PURPOSE FUNDS:

Contributions and fundraising for our Internally Managed and Donor Restricted Funds totaled \$90,500. Disbursements were \$237,700 including significant support to outreach, security improvements and continuing roof repair expenditures. Total Special Purpose Funds amounted to \$180,500 on June 30, 2024. Our annual appropriation from the Operating Fund to our Capital Replacement Reserve has been deferred by Council to 2025.

MISSION AND SERVICE:

During the year, members of the congregation contributed \$41,100 (2023 - \$53,100) to the United Church of Canada Mission and Service Trust Fund.

CASH AND BANK LINE OF CREDIT:

Total cash resources on June 30, 2024, were \$213,200 of which \$32,700 related to the Operating Fund. Our bank continues to provide us a line of credit with a \$260,000 limit at an interest rate of bank prime. As at June 30, 2024, the Church was debt free.

CHURCH OPERATING FUND BALANCE:

The balance of the Church Operating Surplus as at June 30, 2024 was \$8,300.

MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL

Committee Members: Vanessa Morrison, Chair, Judy Bridges, Secretary, John Buchanan, David Freeman, Bruce Tanaka

Personnel Changes:

- Alex Hayes resigned as Youth Leader September 30, 2023.
- Pam Johnson-Smyth finished as Church Administrator August 3, 2023. Daniel Duffin started officially as Church Administrator January 1, 2024.
- Kathy Dou resigned as Worship Service Technician (Live Stream) August 2023 to attend University. Charlotte Taylor started as Worship Service Technician September 2023.
- Eran Rozenszain resigned as Accompanist/Pianist April 14, 2023.

Committee Changes: After many, many years John Buchanan has retired from M&P. David Freeman resigned from M&P. The M&P Committee welcome Peter Drake and Dora-Lee Pope.

Process Changes: The M&P Committee met six times this year. The Annual Christmas Staff Supper was held December 5, 2023. Christmas cards were distributed by committee members. No other changes in remaining staff, all contracts have been renewed. Any increases were based on UCC guidelines.

Respectfully submitted,
Vanessa Morrison
Chair, M&P

Stewardship

Items:

- For the 2023/2024 Stewardship campaign we ran a short campaign of about 3 weeks in November to fit in our fall Church schedule.
- We had an initial Stewardship message made by Rev. Jessica.
- We emailed the Stewardship package (Stewardship Letter, Narrative Budget and Commitment Pledge sheets) to all congregation for whom we have an email address. We also printed some packages for pickup for those who do not have an email address.
- We also inserted a number of Stewardship messages into the News from the Grove newsletter throughout the fiscal year.
- We had 2 very special "Why I Give" messages provided by Al Wheable and Bill Bremner during the campaign.

Results:

Looking up to the end of June, 2024, the total number of pledges received year over year were as follows:

	Total Amount Rec'd	# Donations	# Donors
2020	\$259,500	1775	197
2021	\$233,585	1174	153
2022	\$245,735	1357	168
2023	\$253,551	1568	164
2024	\$265,054	1577	176

Summary: we had some growth in the total amount received in 2024 as well as growth in the number of donations and donors. However, taking inflation into account, we still have not reached our pre-pandemic total donation levels. Nevertheless, it was the best annual outcome we have had

We are ALWAYS looking for fresh ideas and energy to add to the Stewardship committee and campaign – anyone interested? If so, talk to Cameron Serles. Thank you.



64th Annual Maple Grove United Church Fertilizer Sale!

Maple Grove United Church Fertilizer Committee held its 64th annual fertilizer and lawn care products fundraising sale Saturday April 13th 2024. Weather was good for our curbside pick-up sales. Walk-in sales did not turn out as we hoped and no delivery in Oakville since Covid has reduced our customer base.

Nonetheless, we are very grateful for our volunteers who helped deliver sale flyers, make phone calls, posted announcements to Maple Grove’s Enews and promoted our sale through social media accounts. We again had the benefit of mobile signs in all the Oakville wards two weeks prior to the Sale Day.

This dedicated activity by our eager volunteers generated \$49,106 in sales from 278 customers in 54 territories throughout Oakville. Sale Day yard workers moved 1,648 bags of fertilizer and other lawn care products. That’s 17,100 Kgs of product put into customers’ trunks.

Our partnership with Green Horizons Big Yellow Bag sales and hosting the Big Yellow Bag drop-off depot was again beneficial to our fund raising. We have received our first cheque of \$1,790. Thank you Green Horizons and customers who use our promo code **MAPGROVE24** when ordering Big Yellow Bags of soil or mulch from Green Horizons and then returning the empty bag to our drop-off bins at the church.

The MGUC village pulled together again to make 2024 a profitable success. Thank you to all the volunteers and to all new and returning customers.

See you in 2025 for our 65th!

Maple Grove United Church Fertilizer Committee.

Submitted by Tom Warden

MILESTONES

IN MEMORIAM

Carol Kennedy – Barry Howie – Ian Stanner

Al Wheable – Margaret Johnson

Weddings

Janet Walley & David L. Gould

Steve Turvolgi & Katy Board

