

Building Community Together

2023



Islington United Church
Open Hearts Open Minds Open Doors

Annual Report 2023
July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023



Message from the Lead Minister

This past year was a time of in-person reconnecting as a Christian community. In so many ways, we were called upon to have buckets of grace with one another. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus gives us the key to sustaining and growing our community of faith: *Love God with all your heart, and soul and mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself.* Mark 12:29-31

When we focus on loving God, and then receive God's love in return, that love naturally overflows to others, thus leading us to share Christ's love with the world.

Another way we sustain this community is by giving of our time and serving others with compassion and hope. This past year one way I gave of my time was by serving as part of the Futures Planning Group lead by chair Steve Tower and members Jackie Carter, Heather Childs, Randee Marquez, Leslie Molin and Brian Struthers. The group met weekly to explore and pray about future possibilities to sustain this community and its ministry presence in our neighbourhood.

One of the most important endeavours of the group was hosting two community roundtable events. These brought together business, political, not-for-profit, social service, education and local leaders to share information, build connections and identify appropriate actions in response to future development and community needs. Through these successful events, Islington United Church positioned itself as a leader in the community, bringing people together so we all become stronger.

Coretta Scott King wrote, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." This Annual Report 2023 is a testimony to those actions. We may not always think the same, vote the same, love the same or pray the same but are trying our best to follow Jesus in our place in time; for the world needs this community of faith more than ever.

Rev. Maya Landell

Lead Minister

Message from Church Council

When I was first approached about considering the role of Chair of Church Council I took time to reflect, meditate and pray before responding. I can honestly say the Spirit intervened and it became clear to me I was being called to serve.

I want to sincerely thank Rev. Maya Landell and all members of Church Council – particularly Carole Bennett, Past Chair – for giving of their time and skills over the past year. I also want to extend my gratitude to the many committee leads, staff and members and friends of our congregation who have shown support and patience as we returned to our in-person faith family following the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022/23 we continued to reach out into the community with upgraded technology, improved communication, and broadened online services and events. We got to know more people and groups in the surrounding neighbourhood and invited them to join our worship and programs. Post-pandemic, committees and teams slowly began to return to in-person work, although Zoom continued to be a welcome friend on several occasions. And through it all, the Spirit never ceased to fuel us with new energy, ideas and commitment to grow our faith community while we also listened to discern God's plan for us.

Here are a few highlights:

- New paint and upgrades of the Sanctuary, main floor hallways, and Church Office to improve ambiance and enhance safety
- A growing volunteer team to tend the Giving Garden, thus helping to feed more people (including many children) in our neighbourhood
- Equinox and solstice meditation sessions in the Sanctuary to quiet our minds and to pause, mark and prepare for new seasons
- The launch of the first Walk the Walk for Social Justice initiative, to help meet the many and diverse needs of those struggling in our community
- An Advent Retreat to prepare our hearts and minds for coming close to the mystery of Christmas
- A Light Up the Night Community service to celebrate the peace, joy, love and hope of the season to come

- A Blue Christmas worship service to offer comfort during a season of mixed emotions and recalling the loss of loved ones during Advent
- An Out of the Cold evening to offer food and warmth and companionship for those experiencing homelessness
- The delivery of two Community Roundtable events to show our leadership in ministry and presence in the community
- A Week of Guided Prayer experience of prayer companionship, shared scripture reading, and growth of a personal relationship with God
- A Summer Music Camp for children in the community to learn to play an instrument, sing in a choir and build relationships with new friends
- The outside installation of a rainbow Pride Bench as a public, intentional, and explicit statement of our commitment to providing a safe space of inclusivity

These are just a few of the ways we serve God in our faith community and beyond. They are expressions of “love in action” as together we try our best to follow In the ways of Jesus. I look forward to continuing to serve with you into the next year.

Peggy Sheffield

Church Council Chair

Church Council

Peggy Sheffield, Chair;
Chair, Communications Committee

Steve Tower, Vice-chair

Reverend Maya Landell (non-voting),
Lead Minister

Vacant, Secretary

John Leavitt, Treasurer

David Allen, Chair, Ministry and Personnel
Committee

Carole Bennett, Past Chair

Isla Grady, Chair, Hospitality Committee
Representative, United Church Women

Jack Grady, Chair, Pastoral Care Committee

Jason Locke, (non-voting) Minister of Music

Laurie Lyle (non-voting), Manager of
Operations

Randee Marquez (non-voting),
Communications Ministry Specialist

Catherine McPherson, Chair, Worship
and Music Committee

Jill Stewart, Representative,
Board of Trustees

Sandra Tully, Chair, Faith Formation
Committee

Janet Wells, Chair, Facilities Committee

Carol Wilson, Lead, Social Justice Network

2023 Highlights

Staff Updates

In 2022/23, we said goodbye to Operations Staff members Leslee Armstrong and Lorraine Fait. We also welcomed new staff team members: Erin Pellow, Finance and Facilities Coordinator; Brianna Raakman, Children, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Lead; and Scott Robertson, Ministry Support Coordinator.

Music

Summer Music Camp hosted 46 children and youth for two full weeks in August. The Senior and Junior Choirs continued to grow in numbers, and our four staff singer soloists enjoyed a busy and successful year. Concerts, Light Up the Night community event, and five Christmas Eve services were all well attended.

Online Outreach

In 2023, the Communications Ministry saw great results. Facebook page “likes” increased 15%; Instagram page reach increased 1.8k%, a mix of organic and paid posts. Our YouTube channel clocked more than 29,000 views, and our YouTube subscribers increased by 91 people, reaching viewers in 13 countries.

Sanctuary Project

The Facilities Team worked to update several spaces within the building: installation of a new technology ‘light beam’ for the fire and smoke alarm, energy efficient ceiling lighting, and light filtering blinds over the Sanctuary south facing upper windows, and painting in the Sanctuary, Narthex and corridors.

Social Justice

The Poverty Awareness and Anti-Racism Working Groups expanded. The Mabelle Food Program served 85% more clients than the previous year. The Affirm Team held its second Pride BBQ and Celebration and unveiled the Pride bench. The Right Relations Circle began research for an Indigenous Peoples mural.

Program Highlights and Growth

Our Staff Team

Maya Landell

Lead Minister

James Aitchison

Pastoral Care Ministry Lead

Jason Locke

Minister of Music

Laurie Lyle

Manager of Operations

Randee Marquez

Communications Ministry Specialist

Erin Pellow

Finance and Facilities Coordinator

Brianna Raakman

Children, Youth and Young Adult
Ministry Lead

Scott Robertson

Ministry Support Coordinator

By the Numbers in 2023

93 *people attended
in-person worship*
hundred+

41 *people reached on
social media*
thousand+

18 *and nine
weddings
celebrated*
baptisms

60 *participated in
Community
Roundtables*
influencers

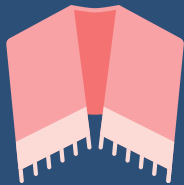
89 *engaged in
worship and
programs*
children

16 *meeting weekly
in person*
meditators

24 *participated in
Walk the Walk
for Social Justice*
walkers

17 *joined worship
services online*
thousand+

Community Care



30

prayer shawls distributed to those in need of comfort, hope and healing

12,394

individuals supported through the Mabelle Food Program -- an increase of 85% over 2021



229

flowers delivered and 72 cards mailed to those needing a reminder of our love and caring

800

volunteer hours offered by those helping in the Giving Garden, indoors and outdoors



1

refugee individual from Saudi Arabia sponsored and settled in Canada

140

people of all ages attended the Affirm Team's Pride Sunday BBQ and Celebration



Hospitality

- 12 memorial celebrations
- 150 people offered refreshments each Sunday following worship
- 70 dinners served each week at children and youth programs
- 240 meals served at retreat workshops
- 225 people served at Rummage Sale BBQ
- 400 people served at Christmas Eve reception after 7 pm and 9 pm services

2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

OPERATING REVENUE \$1,110,759

Regular Givings & Appeals	671,721
Fundraising	57,515
Other Income	3,062
Faith Formation	12,314
Worship & Music	36,206
Pastoral Care	8,241
Social Justice	37,600
Hospitality	7,154
Communications	248
Rental Income	290,468
Facilities	6,230

OPERATING EXPENSES \$1,183,821

Governance	152,283
Fundraising	19,397
Other	7,537
Faith Formation	10,330
Worship & Music	83,412
Pastoral Care	4,071
Social Justice	35,385
Hospitality	10,521
Facilities	235,615
Communications	29,141
Ministry & Personnel	686,129
Interfund Transfer	(90,000)

Audited Financial Statements prepared by Raskin and Associates, CPA, are available from the Church Office.

Updated: November 27, 2023

Message from the Board of Trustees

Rev. Maya Landell (Chair), Ian McPherson (Vice-chair), Jackie Carter, Joan Hunter, Laura Johnston, John Leavitt, Jill Stewart, Paul Summers. Honorary Trustees: Fred Leslie, Don Hunter. Secretary (non-voting): Laurie Lyle

On behalf of the United Church of Canada, the Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing our financial investments and holding the church property in trust. We are offering leadership on the the current Property Working Group comprising Paul Summers (Chair), Carole Bennett, John Handiak, Laurie Lyle and Jill Stewart. This group has had numerous meetings with the Rockport Group that is developing land to our south. The working group is also keeping abreast of all other local development and fostering relationships.

In 2023, the Board undertook a formal review of its external financial advisor and selected Fiera Capital to manage our investment portfolio as of June 1, 2023. Fiera manages approximately \$150 billion of client money and is also the financial advisor to the United Church Foundation and the United Church of Canada's investment portfolio.

Also in 2023, trustees took a leadership role when Islington United Church was invited by Windermere United Church to consider an amalgamation. A proposal was put forth by Islington United in March 2023. The congregation of Windermere United reviewed two proposals and elected to join with Runnymede United, a neighbouring church.

In fiscal year 2022/23, following many years of dedicated service, Ted Wilson stepped down as a member of the Board of Trustees. We are grateful for his years of counsel and will miss his presence.



Legacy of Faith

Carole Bennett, Rev. Maya Landell and Ian McPherson

We are grateful for Legacy of Faith gifts to Islington – bequests that will support the life and work of Islington United Church – from the estates of

Vera Kircheis

Betty MacGregor

Many were remembered at their passing with Memorial Gifts from family and friends:

Gretta Anema

Bob MacKenzie

Peggy Carr

Mary McCann

Carrie Chenier

Norma Olver

Murray Duncan

Doug Peter

Grace Garbutt

Marilyn Skowron

Frank Grandy

Joan Elizabeth Smith

Carol Laughton

Jerry Toczylowski

Celebration Gifts to Islington mark special occasions for special people. This year we received Celebration Gifts in honour of

Jack Grady

Terry Michael

We also recognize the families who suggested a gift to Islington United Church in funeral notices:

Family of Carrie Chenier

Family of Doug Peter

Family of Frank Grandy

Family of Jean Roberts

Family of Carol Laughton

These gifts enable the faith of these women and men to live on in the ministry of this congregation for generations to come as we continue “building community with compassion and hope.”



Legacy of Faith
Burs to give

In Memoriam

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

Dorothy Bow
Carrie Chenier
Thomas Eadie
Frank Grandy
Laura Kennedy
Vera Kircheis
Carol Laughton
Robert Leavitt
(Jane) Annette Lindsay
Anna Mosley

Luna Pagano
Karen Patrick
Douglas Peter
Barbara Reason
Jean Roberts
Alda Robinson
May Swan
Archie Watson
Gary Williams



Closing Prayer

The Lord's Prayer of the New Millennium - May It Be So

Janis Constable, *Random and Nebulous - Nuancing the Psalms*

God of all life and being,
Your name is Sacred.
You are Holy. Beloved. Cherished.
Your Presence nurtures us – here and now.
Your Way is our way – may it always be so.

Through each and every day, let no being live in hunger or in thirst,
as You feed and strengthen their souls with Your love.

Please grace our hearts with Your forgiveness –
and then open up our hearts, to forgive.

Please guide us on our journey, in our discernment of right and wrong.
And help us to step out of our own darkness,
that we may come along to live in Your light.

For You are The Light of Life –
The Light of the World –
The Holy Lovelight in all our hearts.

In gratitude, in reverence,
in mystery, in delight, in wonder and in awe – Amen

This prayer, this plea, this intention –
May it be so. May it be so – for always and forever. Amen.



Who We Are

Call

Building Community with Compassion and Hope

Call

Building Community with Compassion and Hope



Vision

Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.

Vision

Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.

Values

We, at Islington United Church, are an Affirming congregation of the United Church of Canada. We are committed to including everyone: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two- spirited persons and others (2SLGBTQ+); those who are marginalized for any reason, including race or age; economically disadvantaged; developmentally or physically challenged.

We stand in solidarity with Black and Indigenous communities and all people of colour in our community, our country and throughout the world. We acknowledge that racial injustice is pervasive throughout society. We oppose all forms of racism and racialized violence.

About Us

We are a Christian intergenerational community of faith that doesn't think the same, vote the same, love the same, or pray the same, but we are trying our best to follow in the way of Jesus.

An active presence in the Village of Islington for more than 200 years, we offer community, compassion and hope. We believe we strengthen one another by working together through God's grace for a better world.



Islington United Church

Open Hearts Open Minds Open Doors

ISLINGTON UNITED CHURCH

25 Burnhamthorpe Road
Toronto, Ontario, M9A 1G9
416-239-1131



islingtonunited.org



[@islingtonunited](https://www.facebook.com/islingtonunited)



[islingtonunitedorg](https://www.youtube.com/islingtonunitedorg)