

*Blenheim United
Church
Annual Report
2023*



“Care and Compassion for All”



OUR MISSION

We, the people of Blenheim United Church, being part the United Church of Canada, are a family that is committed to the ministry of Jesus Christ and the mission of care and compassion to people everywhere at all stages of their lives.

Table of Contents		Page
Baptisms		None to report
Budget 2024		18-19
Communications Message		11
Congregational Meeting Minutes		5-10
Council Message		4
Financial Reports	Benevolent Fund	13
	Coatsworth Fund	14
	General Fund	18-19
	Investment fund	15
	Manse Fund	16
	Mission & Service Fund	11
	Property Sale Fund	17
Marriages		11
Memorials		11
Minister's Message		3-4
UCW		12

AGENDA FOR THE 2024 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Election of a Secretary for this Annual Meeting

Election of Chairperson for this Annual Meeting

Motion re Voting privileges

Agenda approval

In Memoriam

Consideration & Adoption of the October 22, 2023 Congregational Meeting Minutes

Business arising from the 2022 Congregational Meetings

Consideration and Approval of Reports found in the 2023 Annual Report

2024 Budget Recommendation from Council

Mission and Service Fund Target Recommendation from Council

Motion to Appoint Auditor for 2024

Board of Trustees Resignation/Nomination

Nominating Recommendations from Council

New Business

 Policy change

Date of next annual meeting – February 23, 2025

Adjournment

Ministers Message

June 1, 2023, marked the beginning of my two-year appointment with Blenheim United Church. Prior to July 1, 2008, I had been a member of the church and then a candidate for ordination from Blenheim United Church. The opening words of Genesis 12 were important for me as I travelled to Toronto for my theological education and then ventured to Saskatoon for an eight-month internship (as it was called then). These words continued to ground me as I left the familiarity of Blenheim United Church and went on to serve at the Guilds Pastoral Charge and Rural United Pastoral Charge. And now God has guided me back to Blenheim United.

When faced with uncertain times or uncharted territory, these words have been foundational:

*“Now the Lord said to Abram,
“Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house
to the land that I will show you.
I will make of you a great nation,
and I will bless you, and make your name great,
so that you will be a blessing.”*

Genesis 12:1-2 (NRSV)

Our lives are a series of “uncertain times” and “uncharted territories.” We leave home to go to school, we move to new locations that become our home, we enter the world of earning a living and frequently change locations and/or change jobs. All the while, we remember Abram and his wife, Sarai, who had the courage to step out in faith and to be guided by God’s call.

Change, while always with us, can be beneficial. We certainly have a challenge before us – how to be Blenheim United Church without a church building. Abraham embraced the change that God proposed– leave what you know and go to the land that I will show you. Perhaps, Abram had doubts, but he followed God’s instruction.

Blenheim United Church has embraced the new reality (even if we doubt it from time to time). We have dedicated people working to keep our church functioning and serving our community. The biggest challenge is to communicate with the wider community that Blenheim United Church is still central to the faith of this community. Our restructured website and our Facebook page are letting the community know that we are still a vital part of Blenheim.

We have taken the Frank and Bernice Coatsworth Fund, which has not been utilized to its potential, and donated the money to Kenesserie Camp for leadership training. During Advent we collected clothing, toiletries, and children’s toys to support the Chatham-Kent Women’s Centre with their “I Believe” campaign. The refurbishing of the Comfort Room at Blenheim Community Village has begun and is progressing slowly. Look forward to hearing more about that project soon.

As we continue to live into who we are as Blenheim United Church and what our purpose is in the community, let us not forget the words of our creed: "We are not alone. We live in God's world." Let us journey forth grounded in our faith and trusting in the movement of the Holy Spirit to guide us, to energize us, and to equip us for the journey.
May God's richest blessing be with each of you.

Rev. Wanda Burse

Dear Congregation of Blenheim United Church,
The year 2023 brought continued progress. At the last annual meeting it was decided that we revisit our budget in October to review our viability as a congregation. Unfortunately, during this year, Rev. Bruce Cook's time with us came to an end. He was an integral part in working through our grief and we are very thankful for his and Donna's help. As we move past our grieving stage and toward rebuilding BUC, Rev. Wanda Burse has agreed to join us as our quarter-time minister. Rev. Wanda jumped right in and is working hard to reconnect and rebuild our ties to the community. With backing from regional council, we are considered viable at this time and therefore it was voted to approve the proposed budget at the October 2023 Congregational Meeting.
As a church we are working on giving back to our community. We donated the remainder of the Frank & Bernice Coatsworth fund to Kenesserie Camp to further their leadership training. We are helping to refurbish the comfort room at Blenheim Community Village. We also collected donations for the Women's Centre throughout the Christmas season.
I'm very proud of the generosity of our congregation and can't wait to see how else we can support our community this year.

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

God's Blessings

Kary Oliver

Council Chair



Council Members for 2023

- Kary Oliver, Council Chairperson
- Michael Berry, Communications Committee
- Laura Koehler Trustees Representative
- Scott Patterson
- Kathryn VanderPryt
- Kelly Wright, Secretary

March 26, 2023

Attendance (Appendix C2023-03-01 – 1 page)

In person 20
Zoom 3

Welcome

Rev. Bruce Cook

Adoption of Agenda/Establishment of Quorum (Appendix C2023-03-02 – 1 page)

Memorials and Celebration

We remembered and acknowledged the passing of those connected with Blenheim United

We remembered and celebrated our days at 49 George St. The stories shared invoked both laughter and tears. It was healing to reminisce and learn about everyone’s memories.

Voting Procedure

Rev Bruce explained how the voting would work for both the in person and online participants.

C2023-03-01 “that all those in attendance would be given voting privileges”

MOVED Kelly Wright
SECONDED Jim Berry CARRIED

Election of Chairperson and Secretary

C2023-03-02 “that Rev Bruce Cook chair the meeting”

MOVED Roger Kellam
SECONDED Jim Berry CARRIED

C2023-03-03 “that Kelly Wright be the secretary for the meeting”

MOVED Kary Oliver
SECONDED Scott Patterson CARRIED

Appointment of Trustees

C2023-03-04 “that Laura Koehler, Shirley Green and Erin Berry be the Trustees going forward”

MOVED Kary Oliver
SECONDED Scott Patterson CARRIED

Regional Council Representative

C2023-03-05 “that Michael Berry be our Regional Council Representative”

MOVED Roger Kellam
SECONDED Shirley Green CARRIED

Council Vacancies

C2023-03-06 “that we empower Council to fill vacancies as needed”

MOVED	Shirley Green	
SECONDED	Erin Berry	CARRIED

Reports (excluding Trustees, General Fund, & Budget)

C2023-03-07 “that we approve the reports as presented”

MOVED	Roger Kellam	
SECONDED	Donna Cook	CARRIED

Trustees Reports

C2023-03-08 “that we approve the Trustees reports as presented”

MOVED	Roger Kellam	
SECONDED	Roberta Dickson	CARRIED

C2023-03-09 “that we approve the Benevolent Fund and the Frank & Bernice Coatsworth Fund

reports as presented”

MOVED	Roger Kellam	
SECONDED	Anne Nanni	CARRIED

General Fund

C2023-03-10 “that we approve the General Fund report as presented”

MOVED	Michael Berry	
SECONDED	Ada Wright	CARRIED

Pastoral Charge Profile (Appendix C2023-03-03 – 1 page)

C2023-03-11 “that we approve the simplified Profile as presented”

MOVED	Donna Cook	
SECONDED	Scott Patterson	CARRIED

Options

Approach New Scotland Ridge about a Partnership

Bring on Rev Wanda Burse

Partner with South Buxton Pastoral Charge

C2023-03-12 “that we direct the Council to pursue a relationship with Rev Wanda Burse”

MOVED	Kelly Wright	
SECONDED	Anne Nanni	CARRIED

Secretary duties were handed over to Anne Nanni for the Budget presentation and discussion.

Budget 2023

Presented by Kelly Wright

C2023-03-12 “that we approve the 2023 Budget as presented”

MOVED Kelly Wright
SECONDED Kary Oliver

Roger Kellam voiced his concerns about our viability based on the fact that our givings do not cover our expenses and we are drawing on reserves to fund our day to day expenses.

Discussion about the financial viability of Blenheim United Church. Roger Kellam says we are not financially viable.

Partnering with another Congregation would leave us in the same financial position.

Roger Kellam requested an amendment to the motion

C2023-03-12 “that we approve the 2023 Budget as presented subject to another Congregational Meeting being held by October 29, 2023 at which time an income/expense statement for the period of January 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023 is to be presented to review the ongoing viability of Blenheim United Church”

MOVED Roger Kellam
SECONDED Roberta Dickson CARRIED

Adjournment

MOVED Anne Gammage
SECONDED Jim Berry

Rev Bruce Cook, Chairperson Kelly Wright, Secretary Anne Nanni, Secretary

Congregational Meeting
 October 23, 2023

Attendance (Appendix C2023-10-01 – 1 page)

Establishment of Quorum

Voting Procedure

- Rev Wanda explained how the voting would work for both the in person and online participants.

C2023-10-01 “that all those in attendance would be given voting privileges”

MOVED	Jim Berry	
SECONDED	Kary Oliver	CARRIED

Election of Chairperson and Secretary

- Kelly Wright volunteered to be the secretary

C2023-10-02 “that Kelly Wright be the secretary for the meeting”

MOVED	Jim Berry	
SECONDED	Kary Oliver	CARRIED

2023-10-03 “that Rev Wanda Burse chair the meeting”

MOVED	Kary Oliver	
SECONDED	Laura Koehler	CARRIED

Adoption of Agenda (Appendix C2023-10-02 – 1 page)

C2023-10-04 “that we approve the agenda as presented”

MOVED	Scott Patterson	
SECONDED	Jim Berry	CARRIED

Minutes of the March 23, 2023 meeting (Appendix C2023-10-03 – 6 pages)

- Rev Wanda read the minutes

C2023-10-05 “that we approve the minutes of the March 23, 2023 meeting as presented”

MOVED	Erin Berry	
SECONDED	Kary Oliver	CARRIED

Financial Report (Appendix C2023-10-04 – 1 page)

- Displayed on the screen

C2023-10-06 “that we approve the financial report as presented”

MOVED	Kary Oliver	
SECONDED	Jim Berry	CARRIED

Regional Report – Viability of Blenheim United Church

- Rev Wanda contacted Lynne Allin and Micol Cottrell at Regional Office to discuss the two camps within Blenheim United.
- The fact that Region has awarded Rev Wanda a two year appointment, in itself, shows their support for us continuing.
- Region looks at five areas to determine viability
 1. Are we paying the wages of our minister?
 2. Are we paying our Regional Assessment?
 3. Are we paying our building costs?
 4. Are all our mandatory positions filled?
 5. Do we have a vision?
 and Region is confident that we are doing all of them.

New Business

How do we be the body of faith without the building? We are not “closed” and need to get the word out to the public. Church is not just a building; it is also the life within.

- **Worship Wishes** - discussion about including a blend of new and old hymns. The only way we will learn the new hymns is to keep singing them
- **Projects in Process**

Blenheim News

1. after a discussion with the family of the creators of the Frank and Bernice Coatsworth Fund (monies to be use in leadership training), Council decided to close the fund and donate the total amount to Kenesserie Camp to be used for training of their leadership. We will ensure that we get our photo in the Blenheim News. We want the community to know we are still here and “alive”.
2. Rev Wanda is writing articles for View from The Pulpit as Minister of Blenheim United Church and Chaplain of Blenheim Community Village

Blenheim Community Village

1. Council has decided to assist with the refurbishment of the Palliative Care Room. This will get us a plaque and an additional photo opportunity. Blenheim and District Ministerial Association is donating various different types of Bibles to the room, as well.

Quarterly Sessions

We would like to be able to partner with other community groups to offer information sessions to the community. The first one we are pursuing is “How to avoid SCAMS” that is put on by the local police service.

- **Fundraising**
 1. Region suggested the possibility of hiring a shredding truck to come and charging people to have their outdated documents shredded
 2. Fundscrip- we already have this program and need to be using it regularly and letting others know about it.

- **Other**

Remit – Council will be voting at their November meeting on a remit that will allow the Indigenous Church, part of United Church of Canada to use their own ways and models of governance.

Communications – Our Communications Committee is working very hard on updating our website so people know what we are doing and where we are.

Video – Rev Wanda has been asked by Region to produce a clip to let others know what we are doing and how Blenheim United Church is alive and well!

Viability

In view of all we are doing and the fact that we meet the criteria set out by Region to be viable

C2023-10-07 “that we approve the continuance of Blenheim United Church”

MOVED	Shirley Green	
SECONDED	Jim Berry	CARRIED

Adjournment

C2023-10-08 “motion to adjourn”

MOVED	Kary Oliver	
SECONDED	Jim Berry	CARRIED

Rev Wanda Burse, Chairperson

Kelly Wright, Secretary

Marriage

Edward Sullivan to Elizabeth Jean Van Haren November 10, 2023



Memorials

Jack McKillop	Feb 1, 2023
Lorna McDougal	April 2, 2023
Doris 'Jean' Parkhouse	July 1, 2023
Norma Pickering	October 6, 2023
Nellie Russchen	Oct 22, 2023
Gary Fraser	November 29, 2023

Mission & Service

Total Donations for 2023 \$ 1,847.50
Target \$2,500.00

Communications Committee

As we close out another fiscal year of Blenheim United Church and look ahead to the next fiscal year, we look back on 2023 and the accomplishments that were made. In 2023, the communications committee strived to expand our digital presence and condense information in the online space. We worked to update our website to more current standards and summarize the information into more manageable chunks. The website has a new fresh feel that is easy to navigate and find exactly what is being looked for. Our business Google listing was also updated during this process.

Another task of 2023 was to compile all the online services into one storage space for future use and reference. All the hymns, slideshows and edited services have now been stored on one external hard drive for ease of use. So, as we continue to the next year, services will continue to be archived on this hard drive. Our mission for 2024 continues to be to expand our digital presence with our primary focus being on our social media accounts. Thank you for the continued support from the congregation as we work to update our online presence.

Michael Berry

UCW

To unite women of the congregation for the total mission of the church and to provide a medium through which we may express our loyalty and devotion of Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship and service.



The UCW's mission is to love God; foster Christian commitment, faithfulness, and spirituality; and promote respect and love for all God's creation. Any woman "willing to contribute her prayers, gifts, and services for the work of the Church" joined the United Church Women (UCW).

Blenheim UCW held monthly meetings throughout many years to promote this mission. These women were instrumental in providing countless luncheons for weddings, funerals, and other important occasions, several fundraisers, bake sales, emotional and financial support for several organizations in our church, community, regionally, nationally and globally, and so much more.

Unfortunately due to declining membership the decision to disband was made in spring of 2023. the funds remaining in our back account were distributed as follows:

Chatham Kent Hospice Foundation	\$ 232.90
United Church Mission & service	\$ 232.90
Kenesserie Camp	\$ 232.91

Closing Prayer And now, go with us, God into the days ahead. Strengthen us for peace. Give us wisdom, keep us humble, and may we live and work together, And so striving, build a new and better world for tomorrow. Amen.

Benevolent Fund
Kids At Risk

The Benevolent Fund of Blenheim United Church is a fund to assist persons and families in particular need. Specific details of this Fund and its operation are generally maintained confidential. However a portion of the balance was donated in Memory of David Cook and is dispersed under the name "Kids at Risk". Our fund at Blenheim United Church is administered by Shirley Green, Erin Berry, Laura Koehler and overseen by the Church Council.

Financial Reports

Benevolent Fund

Balance January 1, 2023			\$2,662.69
Deposits	\$40.00		
Interest	\$13.36		
Total			
Income	\$53.36		
Expenses		\$251.81	
Balance Dec 31, 2023			\$2,464.24

Kids at Risk

Balance January 1, 2023			\$4,437.61
Deposits	\$90.00		
Interest	\$0.81		
Total			
Income	\$90.81		
Expenses		\$0.00	
Balance December 31, 2023			\$4,528.42

Board of Trustees

Coatsworth Fund

The Frank and Bernice Coatsworth Fund was established in 1974 to assist related expenses incurred by members of Blenheim United Church who participate in leadership training and development programs available through church related organizations. All funds are controlled by the Church Council. The trustees, Shirley Green, Erin Berry and Laura Koehler administer the account on the Council's behalf and direction.

Financial Report

Balance as of January 1, 2023		7,367.02
Investment Interest Income	157.95	
Service Charges		27.50
Kenesserie Camp		7,497.47
Total Expenses		7,524.97
Balance November 15, 2023		0.00

The account was closed November 15, 2023 with the balance of \$7497.47 and a donation was made to Kenesserie Camp with approval from the Coatsworth Family.

Board of Trustees

Investment Fund

Investment Fund of Blenheim United Church is a fund that resulted from the various donations and gifts given to the church over the years. The Fund is managed by your Board of Trustees and the elected members include Shirley Green, Erin Berry and Laura Koehler.

Financial Report

Balance Forward as at January 1, 2023	Investment	\$82,756.72
	Bank Balance	732.82
		\$83,489.54
Income		
Investment Gain	\$3,092.18	
Donation- Rooke	\$10,000.00	
Total Income	\$13,092.18	
Disbursements		
Transferred to BUC General Fund	\$10,000.00	
	\$25,000.00	
Total Disbursements	\$35,000.00	
Balance December 31, 2023		\$61,581.72
Libro Bank Balance	\$10,732.82	
Edward Jones Investment	\$50,848.90	
Total	\$61,581.72	

Board of Trustees

Manse Fund

The Manse Fund of Blenheim United Church is a fund that resulted from the sale of the Church Manse in 2012. The net proceeds from that sale are restricted in its use as per United Church of Canada guidelines. Any income from the restricted funds can be used to subsidize the Minister's housing allowance. The fund is managed by your Board of Trustees and the elected members include Shirley Green, Erin Berry and Laura Koehler.

Financial Report

Balance Forward as of January 1, 2023		172,947.66
Income		
Investment Market Gain	9,818.57	
Disbursements		0.00
Frontier Capital Balance December 31, 2023		182,766.23
Libro bank account balance		567.79
Balance as of December 31, 2023		183,334.02
Funds invested with UCC Foundation through Frontier Capital *** Restricted Funds***		123,678.43

Property Sale Fund

The Property Sale Fund of Blenheim United Church is a fund that resulted from the sale of the church property February 3, 2020. The net proceeds from that sale are restricted in its use per United Church of Canada guidelines. Any income earned from the restricted fund can be used to supplement the general operating expenses with approval from UCC Antler River Watershed Regional Council (ARWRC). The fund is managed by your Board of Trustees and the elected members include Shirley Green, Erin Berry and Laura Koehler.

Financial Report

Balance forward as at January 1, 2023		262,920.23
Income	-	
Investment Portfolio Market Gain	14 423.67	
Disbursements	-	
Balance December 31, 2023		277,343.90
Investment with Frontier Capital Funds		
Restricted Funds amount		183,412.48

Board of Trustees

GENERAL FUND	ACTUAL 2020	ACTUAL 2021	ACTUAL 2022	BUDGET 2023	ACTUAL 2023	PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET
Receipts						
Envelope Givings & Donations	25,724.20	19,683.20	16,273.60	17000	17,108.65	17000
Loose Offerings	747.00		140.00	500	56.00	
Use of Facilities	750.00					
Transfer from Investment Fund			5,000.00	4375	35,000.00	
Fundraising - Net	2,669.96	148.74	126.24	150	42.43	150
Miscellaneous - Funerals and Weddings	145.00				850.00	
Interest from Sale of 49 George St		6,638.00				
GENERAL FUND TOTAL RECEIPTS	30,036.16	26,469.94	21,539.84	22025	53,057.08	17150
Expenses						
PROPERTY						
Utilities - Gas	1,583.98					
Utilities - Hydro & Water	2,447.54					
Utilities - Telephone	541.02	526.90	516.77	525	523.84	525
Utilities - Internet	878.12	748.23	800.20	825	810.60	875
Insurance	1,716.62	1,024.20	1,536.36	1550	1,536.36	2160
Repairs & Maintenance	230.44					
Fire & Safety	9.52			50	8.28	50
Groundskeeping & Landscaping	67.04					
Janitorial Supplies				50		50
Office Equipment, Maintenance & Upgrades	806.56	118.00	511.99	500	14.04	500
Post Office Box Rental	211.94	179.81	183.97	200	189.17	200
Storage Rental	1,159.83					
Office Rental	4,967.04	4,967.04	4,967.04	5000	4,998.09	5500
TOTAL PROPERTY	14,619.65	7,564.18	8,516.33	8700	8,080.38	9860

WORSHIP & FAITH FORMATION						
Worship Supplies	267.78	224.15	214.41	200	10.00	100
Music Licenses	337.00	337.00	337.00	350	361.12	350
Bulletins	70.63					
Pulpit Supply	5,489.00	658.00	1,794.00	5568	5,568.00	7279
TOTAL WORSHIP & FAITH FORMATION	6,164.41	1,219.15	2,345.41	6118	5,939.12	7729
MINISTRY & PERSONNEL						
Staff Salaries & Expenses	12,934.27	23,545.57	25,292.76	29250	28,463.05	33532
Staff Training & Gifts				1000	100.00	1000
TOTAL MINISTRY & PERSONNEL	12,934.27	23,545.57	25,292.76	30250	28,563.05	34532
COMMUNICATIONS	-	475.65	1,503.82	2176	954.84	2000
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE	350.00	100.00	227.36	400	16.58	400
FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP						
Denominational Assessment	2,359.00	2,579.43	1,968.00	2000	1,553.00	2293
Bank Charges	1,278.23	1,072.74	1,245.89	1250	1,681.77	1250
Office Supplies	536.25	172.49		250	451.03	500
Professional Fees	1,039.39	1,039.39	1,039.39	1100	1,247.27	1500
Contributors Envelopes & Par Fees	90.50	48.00	38.27	50	26.75	30
Postage & Courier Fees	86.07	30.87	57.37	100	97.20	200
TOTAL FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP	5,389.44	4,942.92	4,348.92	4750	5,057.02	5773
BCV Comfort Room					993.32	
GENERAL FUND TOTAL EXPENSES	39,457.77	37,847.47	42,234.60	52394	49,604.31	60294
NET	-9,421.61	-11,377.53	-20,694.76	-30369	3,452.77	-43144

SUMMARY OF GENERAL FUND				
BALANCE FROM 2022				5,876.82
2023 INCOME				53,057.08
2023 EXPENSES				(49,604.31)
YEAR END GENERAL FUND BALANCE				9,329.59