

Community Profile of Faith

St. Paul's United Church — Dundas, Ontario

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Who We Are

St. Paul's United Church, located in the verdant Dundas Valley at the west end of Hamilton, Ontario, is a vibrant congregation whose mission is "to grow in faith, in love of God, all human beings, and the world God created." We value all people and see all as the beloved children of God. "Love Has a Home" at St. Paul's. The congregation of St Paul's is remarkable for the depth and breadth of talented and engaged members and volunteers. Through intentional programming for all ages—in worship, pastoral care, education, and outreach—we seek to love our neighbours, steward the environment, care for our local and global communities, and be the hands of Christ and God's love in action.

Administration & Governance

St. Paul's operates under the Church Board model of the United Church of Canada (please access [The Manual](#) for more information). Governance details are set out in the By-laws (available from the church office); the organizational chart appears there.

Church Board (~20 members): Has effectively led the church without a settled Minister since December 1, 2023. Board membership, elections, functions, and jurisdiction are in the By-laws.

Executive Committee: Officers of the Board and the settled minister.

Standing Committees (10): Christian Development; Communications; Finance; Ministry & Personnel; Nominations; Outreach; Pastoral Care & Membership; Property; Stewardship; Worship.

Working Groups/Task Forces: Struck as needed (e.g., Search Preparation Working Group).

Trustees: Seven members elected by the congregation hold and administer property under the Trusts in Model Deed (with exceptions as in The Manual); a Trustee serves on the Board.

UCW: Elects a representative to the Board annually.

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council: We have three lay representatives to Horseshoe Falls Regional Council who review agendas in advance and report to the Board. While we do not currently have a General Council representative, we follow its deliberations and guidance.

Congregational Oversight: Occasional general meetings and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) guide the Board; minutes are available from the office. The Annual Report and financial statements (preceding calendar year) are presented at the AGM and posted on our church website: <https://stpaulsdundas.com/>.

Office & Operations: The church office is the administrative hub, led by a full-time Church Administrator and supported by volunteers. A financial office is adjacent; two ministerial offices are on the floor above. The office uses up-to-date software/hardware and maintains video security at all entrances. The Administrator, volunteers, and committees prepare weekly bulletins, announcement inserts, regular newsletters, and email/e-blast communications to "Family and Friends" of St. Paul's.

Strategic Priorities

St Paul's underwent a comprehensive strategic planning process, with strong participation from the congregation and the community. From this work, there arose five thematic priorities, which the Board and its committees have taken up for implementation. Annual workplans are used to track progress. Our priorities include:

Priority #1: Nurture the spiritual and religious growth of our diverse congregation. Meet the diverse spiritual needs of the present and potential future congregants through:

- Worship that is meaningful, engaging and challenging

- A vibrant music ministry, building on our strengths
- Opportunities for spiritual growth and discovery, including education and arts
- Interfaith relationships

Priority #2: Foster a healthy, vibrant, and compassionate community by:

- Creating a welcoming space
- Providing outstanding pastoral care
- Becoming a compassionate community
- Appealing to youth and young families
- Reaching out to our local and broader community

Priority #3: Achieve financial sustainability and strong stewardship of church resources:

- Create a plan for the financial sustainability of the church with a timeline, with urgency
- Develop a risk monitoring process with risk mitigation strategies
- Maximize opportunities presented by our building and our church's many physical and human resources
- Celebrate and applaud our volunteers

Priority #4: Strive for excellence in governance and leadership. Employ best practices in governance at Board and committee levels:

- Provide training and education
- Follow well-developed and communicated decision making processes
- Ensure ongoing measurement and performance management
- Develop a risk monitoring process with risk mitigation strategies

Priority #5: Develop a strong communication and marketing plan -- internal, within our congregation and externally to the community at large. See Communications (Technology & Communications) below.

Progress to date includes pastoral care training and hiring a part-time Pastoral Care Minister (Rev. John Adeyami). Our tagline "Love has a Home Here" guides an intentional welcome—especially for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, disadvantaged and/or marginalized people, and newcomers—through words, actions, listening, learning, and change. We draw on United Church of Canada resources, reflected in the work of board development, our Affirming Subcommittee and our Youth & Young Families programming.

Property and Facilities

St Paul's Dundas is blessed with a beautiful building with [historical designation](#). Our facilities provide ample space for programs and community activities. We also have a very active and skilled

Property Committee that has maintained and enhanced the building, allowing us to expand what spaces we can offer both our congregation and the community for their use

With a focus on environmental sustainability, the Property Committee oversees the maintenance and use of the facility and grounds. Recently, a major investment was the installation of heat pumps throughout most of the building (with the notable exception of the sanctuary), resulting in minimal use of the boiler and a reduction in both energy and maintenance costs. Our natural gas supplier has formally notified us that our energy conservation has moved us from an M2 to an M1 user, leading to further savings. These savings in fuel and maintenance have now recouped the costs of the heat pumps.

Our goal is that our investments, made to reduce maintenance and fuel costs, attract rental income, which will keep the church and its facilities buzzing with activity. While we continue providing services and a place for our community and congregation to use, we will have a facility that pays for itself through programs and rental income. We are very close to achieving this goal.

Our facilities include:

- A well-maintained stone sanctuary with stained glass windows and a magnificent pipe organ
- An attached “Jubilee” building dating from 1897, the original Sunday School Building, is now a nursery, a multipurpose space used by youth and young families, a labyrinth for meditative practice, a library, a kitchen, choir rooms and practice space, a parlour (used for meetings, social gatherings or events), the church archives, and office space for partners and tenants
- An attached gym hosts sports activities for youth and seniors, as well as a day program for adults with disabilities
- A commercial-grade kitchen and dining room
- Ministers’ and administrative offices
- Barrier-free access with ramps and an elevator

Our tenants and partners include:

- The Dundas Valley Orchestra
- Two theatre companies
- Dundas Valley Adult Day Program
- The Scouts, from Beavers to Rovers, who have been with us for 100 years
- The Girl Guides, from Sparks to Rangers
- Several counsellors and therapists who occupy newly renovated office space in the Jubilee Building, which is now at full occupancy with long-term tenants

Communications (Technology & Communications)

Strategic Priority # 5: Create a Communication and Marketing Plan. This work is underway.

Website & Social Media: Website at <https://stpaulsdundas.com/>; Instagram and Facebook pages. Our church administrator maintains our social media under the guidance of the Communications Committee, who leads all our communications activities (e.g., maintenance of the church website).

Live-Streaming: Weekly worship and other events are streamed by a dedicated volunteer tech team (some honorariums provided). In-sanctuary screens support visuals (e.g., hymn lyrics). Hearing support systems are available to enhance accessibility.

Youth Involvement: Youth contribute to the IT subcommittee and streaming operations.

Financial Administration

The Finance Committee: Church finances are overseen by a Finance Committee, which is made of members of the congregation with backgrounds in finance, accounting, compliance and risk management.

Processes: Volunteers handle givings data and bookkeeping (contracting out bookkeeping is under consideration). Payroll is managed via ADP by the Finance Chair. The Treasurer reviews finances continually and reports at each Board meeting. Financial statements from the last AGM are available on request.

Position & Reserves: St. Paul's is financially secure with approximately 2.5 million dollars in reserve funds, accumulated since our roots in 1797.

Structural Gap: In recent years, givings + fundraising + rentals are approximately 20% below expenses; a portion of investment income has been directed to the shortfall. The trend since COVID has been to steadily close the gap between revenues and expenses. By the second quarter of 2025 we posted our first operating surplus since COVID. The Board has authorized capital and facilities investments, which have reduced maintenance and utilities expenses and have increased rental and event revenues.

Capital Investments: Heat pumps, accessibility upgrades, and gym/kitchen improvements have increased tenant and event rentals and revenues.

Affirming & Inclusive Ministry

The Affirming Subcommittee (working with the Worship Committee) supports our process toward becoming an Affirming Community of Faith (designation by Affirm United in partnership with the UCC). Contributions include education, liturgy, music, guest speakers, bulletin inserts/boards, the "Two Cents Table," and distribution of 100+ rainbow lanyards bearing "Love Has a Home" and "St. Paul's United Church".

Worship & Spiritual Life

Our worship is "innovative traditional". Services typically include an order of service with hymns, scripture, reflection, and prayers—led by clergy with lay participation. Hymnody draws from *Voices*

United, More Voices, and other resources. Services are intergenerational, with a time for the “young at heart”, after which children join age-appropriate programming; nursery care is available.

Music Ministry: Known as “the music church”, St. Paul’s is blessed with a skilled Minister of Music, Chancel Choir, and Joyful Voices. Additional ensembles and instruments include guest vocalists and ensembles, handbells, Holy Ukuleles, guitar, saxophone, trombone, trumpet, violin, flute and brass instruments.

Special Services: We address reconciliation, diversity, and justice in worship, including services on Indigenous issues, Black History Month, poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, and Affirming themes.

For the celebration of the United Church of Canada Centenary, five churches gathered at St Paul’s, and the occasion was marked with a specially commissioned musical orchestral composition.

After worship, the congregation gathers for fellowship (coffee/tea/juice, including gluten-free options). Lunch & Learn events extend learning with invited speakers.

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Committee (volunteers) and the Pastoral Care Minister provide spiritual and practical care through:

- Ministerial hospital/crisis visits; lay visitation (LTC, retirement homes, housebound)
- Prayer Chain (confidential requests via office/team/minister/pew forms)
- Transportation to services/events
- Maundy Thursday communion and hot chicken lunch (with rides for housebound participants)
- Casserole Ministry (supported by Dundas Community Services freezer)
- Prayer Shawl Ministry (bereavement, hospitalization, and milestones)
- Annual projects (e.g., hats/mitts/scarves to elementary schools; 2025 blankets for Ronald McDonald House)
- Funeral receptions; milestone/birthday cards; poinsettia deliveries
- Home communion by lay visitors
- Exploring Teleministry (in contact with Port Nelson U.C.)

Records & Archives: Membership rolls (including a historic roll) are maintained by a volunteer Membership Secretary; records of baptisms, marriages, and burials are kept in the office. Church records are catalogued, preserved, and stored securely; archives are on the 4th floor.

Christian Education & Youth

The Christian Development Committee is rebuilding. It promotes formation through education, study, fellowship, and leadership development.

Programs & Activities:

- Annual Christmas Pageant; Advent events; retreats; Bible/book studies (including exegetical study)
- Youth Group (11–16); Young Christian Community (Sunday School); Vacation Bible School
- Family/community-building events (e.g., Welcome Back BBQ; picnics; trivia nights; Lunch & Learns; spaghetti dinners; movie/game nights)
- Conferences and courses for Christian education

Leadership & Delivery: The Coordinator of Youth and Young Families (with in-class volunteers) delivers age-appropriate biblical lessons via story, play, music, and craft. Youth aged 11-16 are involved in a bi-weekly Youth Group. These youth are engaged in service (e.g., food drives), technology (e.g., live-streaming), and leadership (e.g., strategic planning; lead minister search). We are considering the addition of a summer day camp, with guidance from the UCC.

Outreach & Community Engagement

The largest committee at St. Paul's is The Outreach Committee. This committee plays a vital role in connecting St. Paul's with the wider world by raising awareness of societal needs and encouraging the congregation to respond in a Christian spirit. Its work encompasses education, mission promotion, and community engagement.

Programs & Service:

- Saturday Breakfast (a dedicated team of between 30 and 40 volunteers come together to prepare and serve breakfast to, on average, 120 guests each Saturday morning, 42 weeks a year; we have served more than 60,000 breakfasts served since 2003)
- Café 55+ weekly drop-in for vulnerable seniors (co-launched with the Salvation Army)
- Support for Wesley Urban Ministries (e.g., general needs, Case for Kids, Christmas & Holiday Program)
- Routes Youth Centre support and program launch
- Weekly free hot dinner in partnership with four local churches
- Refugee Outreach Group (e.g., supporting a Syrian family's reunification)

Advocacy & Partnerships:

- Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters (HATS): fundraising and letter-writing to all levels of government on homelessness and housing affordability
- Association of Dundas Churches and Dundas Community Services participation
- Community celebrations (e.g., UCC Centenary joint service; commissioning a young composer)

Leadership, Development & Well-Being

Leadership is shared among the Board, ministry personnel, committees, and volunteers.

Board Development: Two recent Board retreats focused on the implementation of the strategic plan, collaboration, reducing duplication, communications strategy, and annual workplans—creating space for generative work.

Training & Leadership: Board/committees completed UCC modules (conflict, diversity, respectful congregations). Professional development is built into ministerial compensation and extended (upon request) to committees/lay leaders (e.g., palliative care training). The Board is committed to ongoing learning and development. Using our strategic plan as a guide, we have annual workplans and goals, we are developing a board orientation package, we are offering fiscal management mentorship, and we require HR training through the UCC for individuals in M&P or Search Committees. We are aware of UCC workshops that could be helpful in the successful settling of a new minister.

Volunteer Sustainability: The Board recognizes burnout risks and seeks to reduce governance burden while increasing opportunities for creativity and impact.

Communications Capacity: Our Chair of Communications is advancing a comprehensive communications strategy; the website will be redesigned to expand functionality.

Clergy Support: A Supervising Minister supports and guides Board work; a part-time Minister for Pastoral Care contributes leadership; retired clergy offer valued assistance. The search for a lead minister is our current priority.

Self-Care & Community Care: Courageous Conversations, Tuesday Lent communion & breakfasts, occasional Taizé worship, coffee fellowship after services, games nights, and retreats foster spiritual and social well-being.

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee nurtures a culture of giving—time, talent, and treasure—through education, campaigns, and events.

- Quarterly newsletter updates; special appeals at Easter/Christmas and throughout the year (emails/e-blasts)
- “Status of Givings” pulpit updates and bulletin notes
- January “Stewardship Awareness Month” with guest speakers and Estimate of Givings (PAR emphasis)
- Lunch & Learn events after worship
- “Previously Loved Art Sale” and “Coffee Challenge” (Brown Jug Adventure)

Recent Results:

2025: 52 pledges, totaling \$142,310 (~30% fewer returns than 2024; 88 pledges, totalling \$204,876). This underscores the value of a formal annual campaign with a guest speaker and celebration luncheon.

Goals: A new Chair for stewardship will be talking over the position and will:

- Develop a work plan in line with the Strategic Plan.
- Recruit additional members
- Run a late-Fall Estimate of Givings Campaign
- Offer education on wills and bequests
- Collaborate with the new Senior Minister to implement UCC programs (e.g., Called to be the Church)
- Continue successful events and explore new initiatives

What We Seek in a Minister

We seek a lead minister who will embrace and expand our community work. They will value and make use of the talent, experience, and willingness of our community to set and achieve ambitious goals. Being guided by what unites us and inspires us will help our church to grow in strength and numbers. We seek a teacher who can deepen our understanding and learning, helping us to use the teachings of our faith to face the challenges of today, a spiritual leader who can provide support and/or lead where and when needed, and a facilitator who would foster unity and guide us as we strive to be Christ's hands in action. As a church, we value cooperative, collaborative relationships among ministerial, staff, lay, and volunteer leaders where each role is valued and appreciated. We seek a lead minister who will work well as part of a dynamic team. With compassion, we seek our lead minister, knowing that we will need to learn about each other as we build a relationship over time; we are committed to this work of building a strong relationship to take us courageously into the future together.

Appendix: Where to Find More Information

By-laws & AGM Minutes: Available from the church office

Annual Report & Financials: <https://tinyurl.com/mt4vbak8>

Strategic Plan: <https://tinyurl.com/3jc49jak>

