



***“Vibrant church.
Compassionate
community.”***

ST. PAUL’S UNITED CHURCH

Strategic Planning Report

September 13, 2023

Introduction

St. Paul's United Church has emerged successfully from the pandemic by adapting to the new, changing realities of our world, and post-pandemic we realize the way forward cannot simply be an extension of our past. It's a time for visioning and planning a bright new future. As Paul said in Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

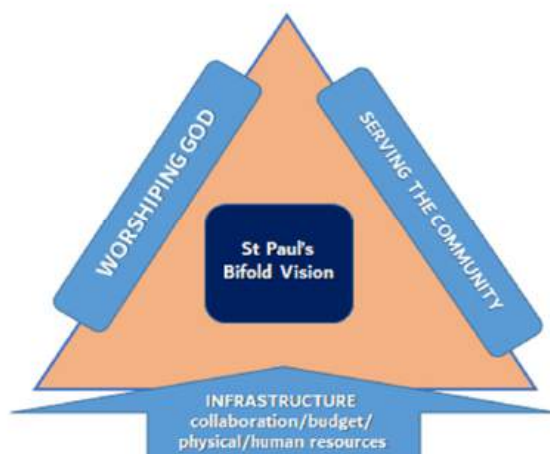
It takes many minds to discern a renewed way forward as "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. (Proverbs 15:22)." In this spirit, the Strategic Planning Committee is pleased to present this draft plan for the next 3–5 years and beyond, as the culmination of input from many minds within the congregation and our larger community.

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Vision

It is 2030. St. Paul's United Church is known across Dundas and the Hamilton area as among the most inclusive, welcoming and vibrant spiritual communities in the city. We nurture the spiritual and religious growth of our active congregation while fostering a healthy, compassionate community.



Executive Summary

Facing the challenges of a community of faith in the early twenty-first century, St Paul's Church in Dundas has embarked upon a strategic planning process, preparing itself for the next five - and possibly fifty - years. The challenges are numerous: a post-Covid economic and healthcare crisis; economic uncertainty; an aging congregation in an era of increasing secularism; and other difficulties common to all similar communities. We are buttressed however, by the realization of the many strengths of St Paul's: its longstanding and durable place in the Dundas community; its physical resources and capacity; its congregation and volunteers; and of course its spiritual traditions -- all supported by a strong and experienced ministerial team and a tradition of excellence in worship and music.

The process, occupying much of the past six months, has focused heavily on eliciting ideas and directions from the congregation. We conducted focus groups, internal interviews, surveys, workshops and panel discussions. As a result of this extensive process, two major directions for the future of St. Paul's can be clearly seen: expanding and enriching our spiritual and worship

activity; and expanding the scope and reach of our community engagement. These are captured in the diagram below as “Worshipping God,” and “Serving the Community.”

Although we are awaiting further external input and leadership, the first direction includes the vision of a more welcoming, inclusive and vibrant church, a wider variety of worship and fellowship opportunities, and a sustained and growing emphasis on our music programs.

The second direction relates to our awareness of community needs: poverty, loneliness, ageing, among many others. In our desire to be the living expression of a compassionate community, we envisage broadening programs and offerings to meet these needs -- in collaboration with other churches, groups and organizations as appropriate.

Finally, none of this can be accomplished without what the diagram terms “infrastructure” -- not strictly of the mechanical or engineering kind, but also that related to the structure and function of St Paul’s. This includes strengthening communication capacity, building fiscal resources (including grant development), and heightening our support for volunteers and others. Importantly, St Paul’s vision for its future cannot be accomplished without extensive and mutual support from its community: groups, individuals, organizations and religious institutions. Equally important, this vision requires more generous use and maintenance of the physical resources of the church.

Background

There is no doubt the COVID pandemic impacted the size, attitude, and ministry at St. Paul’s United Church in Dundas. We were thrown into a panic over safety protocols, scheduling changes and learning new technology. It was a wake-up call. However, it also proved to be a valuable teacher.



We learned that our time together in meaningful worship and ministry is valuable. We learned that what had “always been done” was no longer good enough. We learned how to conduct worship and ministry in unconventional ways.

As the pandemic restrictions eased, the Board of St. Paul’s reflected on all that had been learned. It was understood the church would never return to its previous experience. Yet, there was a silver lining to this dark cloud. Over the course of the pandemic, St. Paul’s connected with believers in new ways, expanding beyond the physical confines of what we call church. Those who eagerly returned to church were genuinely desperate for community. They understood that community is essential to the Christian walk.

What does it mean to walk together as Christians in today’s world? How might we ensure St. Paul’s continues to be relevant and vibrant -- well into the future?

To help answer these questions, the Board of St. Paul’s initiated a process of strategic planning. An ad hoc committee of the Board was formed and asked to identify, and facilitate, a series of activities that would elicit input from members and friends of St. Paul’s. The committee recommended the process outlined in Appendix I. The outcome, or result of this process so far, has been to integrate the wisdom of the community input in such a way as to identify and prioritize a vision and future for the church going forward.

Our Approach to Strategic Planning

A strategic plan helps us clarify where we want to go, and how to get there. It must give our church a clear, aspirational vision of who or what we want to become and provide a roadmap of the long-term priorities and concrete actions we need to take.

A strategic plan must be actionable and easy to understand so that we can implement it. The plan shouldn’t be academic. It must be boiled down to the basics, so it is very clear to everyone what our goals are and what actions are needed from each staff member and committee. Think of all these individuals being in the middle of Lake Ontario in a boat, each with an oar. If we each try to row to a different shore, we will remain in the middle of the Lake. But if we coordinate our strokes towards a shared destiny on the horizon, we will reach the shore.

The Strategic Planning Committee of the Board was composed of the Vice Chair of the Board, the Lead Minister, the Chair of Nominations, the Treasurer, and two non-Board serving members of the congregation. The Committee met every 1 – 2 weeks, sharing the work between themselves, and reported to the Board monthly. With the oversight of St. Paul’s Board, the plan to elicit feedback from our community was approved January 20, 2022, and revised February 15, 2023 (Appendix I).

Analysis of Input

By the conclusion of the engagement process in June of 2023, we had collected and analyzed 50 separate questionnaires -- roughly half in print format, half done on-line. In addition, we had summarized and reviewed the transcribed notes of six focus groups comprising 21 adult congregational members and 5 children attending church, and a dozen separate interviews. We conducted a dozen separate one-on-one interviews and undertook a field visit to Wellington Square United Church in Burlington to view its outreach activities.

It is impossible in this document to share all the detailed results of each question asked. There were hundreds of individual comments, rich and varied, and - in the focus groups at least - often modified by other participants' comments and input. As an example of the kinds of responses to one question, the word cloud above represents what we heard when we asked the question, "what is your most memorable experience at St Paul's?" In this image, it is easy to see that music and fellowship rank highly among our members, followed by pastoral outreach and worship. Full results are available on request.

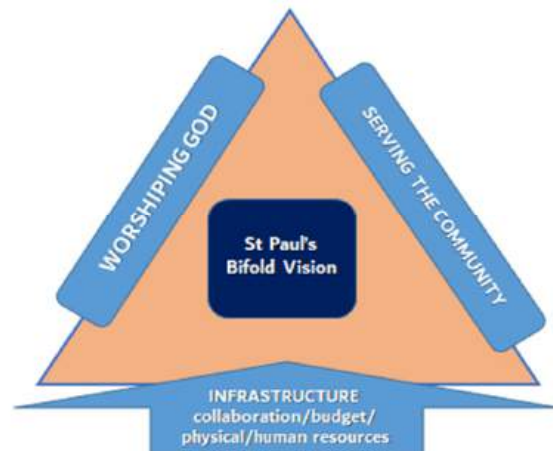
One way to analyze these results is to categorize them into a SWOT analysis, a process undertaken by the strategic planning committee to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to St Paul's. The overall results of this exercise are displayed in the tables below.

On the negative or cautionary side of the ledger, some of the issues raised by members included: an aging congregation; volunteer fatigue and burnout; financial instability; declining membership, often without follow up; and a more secular, busy society, often geared to the activities of younger people. The tables provide a more complete listing of concerns and issues raised.

There was however, in contrast, a very large list of issues raised of a positive or optimistic nature, boding well for the church and its future. These included strengths such as our music and ministry, both at traditional worship and in its outreach forms; the physical facility itself; our on-line presence, particularly notable during Covid; fellowship and our strong community orientation. Members also saw a large number of opportunities, growing out of the notion that St Paul's is, and is seen to be, a compassionate community center. These opportunities included: a concentration on the elderly, and on children and families; collaboration with other churches; more secular activities; and social activism.

STRENGTHS • Music • Ministry – in church and pastoral outreach • Fellowship • Community orientation – meals, social activism • Physical Facility • On-line presence • Volunteerism • New approach to Saturday Breakfasts • Motivated, talented individuals (including retirees) in congregation • Outreach and advocacy, e.g., tiny homes • History of Church • Christian identity – people of faith	OPPORTUNITIES • SP as a compassionate community center • Increase opportunity for fellowship & volunteerism • Music, traditional, more modern “vibe” • A more secular ministry (for some) • Concentration on children/ youth & middle aged, and elderly • Collaboration with other churches, organizations, and other partners • Social activism • Educational programming grounded in Christianity, music, choir, arts, food classes • Meeting spiritual needs, “hunger for understanding the world” – addressing meaning, purpose, providing a spiritual home (a “uniting church”) • Financial sustainability • Creating a welcoming space • Marketing & Communication (internal/external) • Uniqueness • Maximize unique talents of individuals • Facilities & financial plan
WEAKNESSES • Aging congregation • Staff turnover • Missing members w/out follow-up • Marketing & Communication (internal, external) • (Some) negative interactions • Inadequate number of volunteers • Inadequate needs/resource assessment • Relationship with Dundas Association of Churches • Perception as unwelcoming • Governance & leadership (prioritizing, measurement, accountability) • “Old church”	THREATS • Financial sustainability • Aging, homogenous, self-absorbed congregation • Competition for time and interest (especially younger members) • Relevance of traditional religious experience for some • Volunteer fatigue • Complacency! • Increasing move toward secularism – what is our message? • Overlap in responsibilities (such as food bank, metro cards etc.) • Being everything to everyone, lack of focus • Wanting “to keep our hands clean”

Broad Directions



St. Paul's United Dundas has a strong congregation that is diverse, talented, progressive and committed to be a meaningful member of the community. But we recognize that it will take a focused, living plan to achieve its potential. This is captured in the following vision of how St. Paul's would like to be viewed in future.

Our Vision

"It is 2030. St Paul's United Church is known across Dundas and the broader Hamilton as among the most inclusive, welcoming and vibrant spiritual communities in the city. We nurture the spiritual and religious growth of our active congregation while fostering a healthy, compassionate community."

This vision can be summarized as...

"Vibrant church. Compassionate community."

To bring this vision to life for current and future generations there is strong consensus that we must address five broad directions or strategic priorities.



1. ***Nurture the spiritual and religious growth of our diverse congregation.*** Meet the diverse spiritual needs of the present and potential future congregants through:
 - a. Worship that is meaningful, engaging and challenging;
 - b. A vibrant music ministry, building on our strengths;
 - c. Opportunities for spiritual growth and discovery, including education and arts;
 - d. Interfaith relationships.



2. ***Foster a healthy, vibrant and compassionate community.*** Make meaningful and measurable contributions to our own congregation and the broader community by:
 - a. Create a welcoming space;
 - b. Provide outstanding pastoral care, becoming a compassionate community;
 - c. Appeal to youth and young families;
 - d. Reach out to our local and broader community.



3. ***Achieve financial sustainability and strong stewardship of church resources.***
 - a. Create a plan for the financial sustainability of the church with a timeline, with urgency.
 - b. Develop a risk monitoring process with risk mitigation strategies.
 - c. Maximize opportunities presented by our building, and our many church physical and human resources.
 - d. Celebrate and applaud our volunteers.



4. ***Strive for excellence in governance and leadership.*** Employ best practices in governance at Board and committee levels.
 - a. Provide training and education
 - b. Follow well-developed and communicated decision making processes
 - c. Ensure ongoing measurement and performance management
 - d. Develop a risk monitoring process with risk mitigation strategies



5. ***Develop a strong communication and marketing*** plan -- internal, within our congregation and externally to the community at large.

Recommendations

Board Actions

To guide the next steps, and to successfully meet the agreed-upon and measurable goals within these priorities it is recommended that the Board:

1. Consider which priorities can be assigned to an existing committee(s), and whether a new working group is needed to take on a priority that is not currently well situated within a committee.
2. Ask Committees to review stakeholder suggestions from the retreat to set goals that can be measured and achieved, celebrated and advanced within each of the next three years.
3. Request reports back from Committees no later than the November Board meeting, and an action plan for year one goals ratified by the December Board meeting, for presentation to the AGM.
4. Actively manage the implementation of the strategic plan, holding ourselves accountable for results. This might include an audit of current activities to determine which fit the strategic plan, and which do not contribute.
5. Build on the good will and engagement of the congregation in the work of this plan, by continuing to collaborate and meet with the congregation to report on progress, seek feedback, try out innovative solutions to complex problems and celebrate success and impact.

Proposed Next Steps

1. Endorsement by the Board of the penultimate draft
2. Committee assignment of priorities from draft report
3. Consult with external stakeholders and request response to the draft report
4. Schedule a Board Retreat to:
 - a. Finalize the plan, and consider the input from committees and external stakeholders
 - b. Agree on an implementation and accountability plan
 - c. Identify immediate actions that can be taken that are within the mandate of the Board and its committees
5. Present to the 2024 AGM for formal adoption

Summary

We are not finished yet: we still have a ways to go in creating a plan that becomes a “living” document. This new vision and plan needs to become the benchmark that guides every plan, every process, major decision and committee activity. It will need to be led by the Board as champions on behalf of the congregation, ensuring processes are in place to integrate this thinking into all we do.

We are optimistic this will result in a bright future for St. Paul’s and the community we serve.

“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.”

Proverbs 16: 1-3.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Strategic Planning Overview



Appendix II: The United Church of Canada Strategic Plan 2023-25

https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/2022-12/strategic-plan-final_nov-2022.pdf



UCC Strategic Plan/November 2022

Issued by	United Church of Canada General Council
Purpose	-To develop a common mission and vision for the UCC -Establish clear priorities for the national work of the church and General Council Office -Develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the General Council Office for 2023-2025
Focus	Aims to reflect what the church aspires to be within a 5-10 year span
Primary data sources	Relevant denominational reports, reflections, and statements were reviewed. A joint reflection was completed by the National Indigenous Council and the General Council Executive
Key findings	That the new "Call" of the UCC is summarized as: Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice. The approach involves the General Council Office supporting the regions, which support communities of faith as the primary locus of ministry. That the UCC objectives are laid out in a priority plan as follows: Growth (Leading priority) accomplished through Renewal of the UCC brand, Creation of new congregations and Invitation to join the work and community of the UCC (100 th anniversary of UCC in 2025), Justice, Leadership, Common Good, Climate, Indigenous Pathways
Strategic priority	(may be filled in as priorities are identified)
Relevance	High

Appendix III: Dundas Asset Mapping: Community Profile

<https://sprchamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SPRC-Hamilton-Dundas-Asset-Mapping.pdf>

**DUNDAS ASSET MAPPING:
COMMUNITY PROFILE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING
FOR OLDER ADULTS AND YOUTH**

Prepared by
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May 2017



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Document Title	DUNDAS ASSET MAPPING: COMMUNITY PROFILE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING FOR OLDER ADULTS AND YOUTH
Date written	May 2017
url	https://sprchamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SPRC-Hamilton-Dundas-Asset-Mapping.pdf
Authors	Social Planning & Research Council: S Bokhari, Social Planner Assistant C Borstad-Klassen, Social Planner, D Jaffray, Executive Director, S Mayo, Social Planner, Geographic Information Systems
Reviewer(s)	Dave
Date of review(s)	Feb 10-15, '23

Appendix III: Dundas Asset Mapping: Community Profile

Authority	Hamilton Family Health team
Objective	To better understand one of the communities served, to help inform potential projects that will better integrate community services and primary health care with the goal of improving population health, specifically for youth and older adults in Dundas.
Inputs	
Key documents	Stats Can; Social Planning & Research reports of 2013 and earlier; 2011 Census; National Household survey, 2011 (NOTE: dated, some data sources over ten years out of date)
Key informants	Interviews with students, seniors' center resources, other agency leads
Process followed	
	Document review, summary Informant interview, summary
Summary	
Findings	Two major areas: children and seniors CHILDREN: reasonably well off financially, but challenges in a significant proportion related to mental health issues, substance abuse, home resources. Routes has played a key role, mostly accessed by <12-year-olds, less by teens OLDER ADULTS: reasonably well off financially compared to Hamilton as a whole, but challenges in a significant proportion due to isolation, poverty, lack of mobility, resources. NOTE: geo/demographic maps very helpful
Recommendations	None specified, though areas of need identified
Relevance	Geographic relevance: higher density of children and seniors (especially at risk) in the King Street corridor Demographic relevance: direct relevance to Saint Paul's for seniors (note lack of easy access to senior centers); collaborative opportunities present themselves with regards to children (such as Routes/Saint Paul joint program for teens)
Lead reviewer	Dave Davis

Appendix IV: Joint Needs Assessment Report (JNAC)

Document Title	Joint Needs Assessment Report (JNAC)
Date written	October 2018
url	https://stpaulsdundas.com/ 
Authors	JNAC Committee: St. Paul's Members: Lynne Calnek (chair), Sharon McKay, Win Czum, Pat O'Hara, Steve Raymond, Jennifer Bruce, Winston Lindsay and Charles Couch. The Hamilton Presbytery Members: Claudia Adams and Norene Anderson
Reviewer(s)	Jennifer Blake
Date of review(s)	1/27/2023
Authority	St Paul's Church Board requested Hamilton Presbytery to form the JNAC
Objective	"To consider and review ministry and mission in both the pastoral charge and the wider community served. It can also consider future ministry needs. The process does not need to result in a Joint Search Committee." "To determine the ministry needs of a congregation and create position profiles that could be used to renegotiate ministerial positions or by a Joint Search Committee to seek new ministry personnel."
Inputs	
Key documents	Civic Documents: City of Hamilton ward profiles Hamilton Social Planning and Research Council Our Mission as a community of Christ's disciples is to grow in faith, in love of God, all human beings, and the world God created. Our Goal: To reach out to all with the love of Christ through our worship, teaching, pastoral care and service in the community of Dundas and in the world. Historical Documents: In the last 20 years, St. Paul's has engaged in a variety of re-visioning exercises/times; NOVA in 1998/99, Mission Statement in 2000, Exploration of re-missioning the Jubilee Building 2000/17, Inclusion in 2002/03 SPACE in 2000/03, Callahan Twelve Keys in 2006 Presbytery Promoted Visioning in 2010/11, World Café 2012/13 and Restoration Vision 2015/17.

Key informants	JNAC met with seven committees of the Church Board, held individual interviews with each member of staff, held a Town Hall style congregational meeting on November 12, 2016, and invited all members of the congregation to contribute their thoughts and feelings by completing a survey designed to meet JNAC's objectives.
Process followed	
Key findings	Community demographics • In 2018 Dundas was approaching the planning target for intensification of 100 persons/hectare • Comparison of population statistics between the 2006 and 2011 census shows a 2% decrease in the number of young people and a 3.1 % increase in the senior population. The city of Hamilton's 25-year ward population projection anticipates a fairly stable population from a base of 25,117 set in 2006 to a projected population of 26, 308 in 2031, a .04% increase. • Dundas is a slow growing community (the second slowest in the city of Hamilton) • Dundas has the highest concentration of seniors in the city of Hamilton • Dundas has the second highest proportion of families led by single moms • Dundas has the lowest percentage of recent immigrants in its population • Dundas has a low percentage of people identifying as a visible minority (6%), and • Dundas has the third highest median income in the city of Hamilton. Poverty • Dundas remains among the wealthier communities in the city. Yet it also has the second highest overall poverty rate (tied with Stoney Creek), standing at about 10% in 2006. This indicates a larger gap between the rich and poor in Dundas than in other parts of City of Hamilton." • Affordable housing is more and more a concern • 17,069 people per month turn to Hamilton food banks. • The Dundas Food Bank (begun by the Churches) is administered by the Salvation Army Family and Social Services and is supported by all the churches, and an annual Food Drive organized by Dundas Community Services Children and Youth • Routes Children and Youth Centre grew out of a concern in the 1980s for unconnected and vulnerable young people in Dundas. Routes was initiated by the Association of Dundas Churches. Today, the Centre serves nearly 200 active youth, the majority between 11 and 13 years of age. Membership • Church membership had declined from 452 in 2005, to 377 in 2016. • Proportion of members attending (on average) declined from 51% to 45% Financial • Long been one of the leading donors to the Missions and Service Fund in Hamilton Presbytery. • Has no indebtedness, but has had increasing annual deficits since 2014

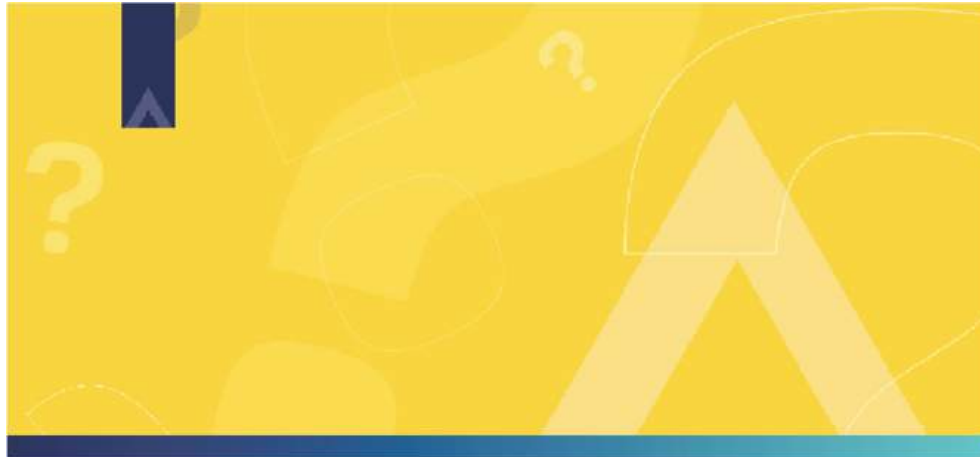
	Music • “At St. Paul’s, as one attends our worship experiences and community life over any stretch of time, one can be exposed to an eclectic and intentional diversity and richness of music seldom matched in other congregations. Reflecting the many musical gifts of our congregation and an awareness of growing in faith through music, our musical expression takes form in many musical mediums, drawn from all centuries from the 21st to antiquity, simple and complex.” Ministry personnel • Five retired Ministers in its midst, one of whom is Minister Emeritus. • A roster of lay liturgists regularly participates in leading worship. • A team of Stephen Ministers have been trained as lay pastoral care providers (currently inactive). • A roster of volunteers also assists the Young Christian Community and Nursery. Committees and Organized Activities • The report lists the various board committees and organized activities, with the observation that the average member donates 100 hours/year, with many donating > 1000 • The report lists the external groups and activities that are hosted at the church Facility • A major restoration project “The Next Fifty Years” began in May 2016 to repair the roof, masonry and eaves troughs, upgrade the interior lighting, and repair interior stucco and paint both exterior and interior. Funded through a bequest. Summary • St. Paul’s is a welcoming, inclusive congregation that engages in ministry ecumenically within the Christian community and initiates relationships with other faiths. St. Paul’s is a thriving, optimistic and active congregation, placing significant emphasis on its outreach initiatives. The health and vitality of the church is reflected through an exceptionally committed, competent and inspirational ministerial and staff complement and through volunteers who, individually and together, carry out a wide variety of activities on behalf of the congregation. The rich music programs augment and strengthen the spiritual inspiration and leadership provided by the two ministers. Alongside these, a strong program of Christian Education is provided and is regularly attended by a considerable number of congregants. General Recommendations (rec. for personnel not summarized) • That there be an emphasis on meaningful worship and excellent preaching • That there be strong support for the ministry with children, youth and young families • That there be an appreciation of the role of music in worship and congregational life; 19 JNAC report, October 2018 • That there be an intentional emphasis on deepening the spirituality and faith of the congregation • That there be ongoing facilitation of a wide range of adult study • That there be ongoing training of liturgical/lay leaders • That there be a continued emphasis on Outreach; and • That there be additional support for Pastoral Care
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Appendix IV: Joint Needs Assessment Report (JNAC)

Relevance	
Lead reviewer	• The document was produced after a thorough consultation process, is well written and remains relevant • The environmental scan done by the JNA Committee was thorough, and provides a useful point of comparison, having been done immediately pre-pandemic • Concerns noted regarding poverty and affordable housing have ben amplified over the past years • Demographic and facility concerns are ongoing

Appendix V: The Shifting Landscape of Faith in Canada

[https://www.cardus.ca/research/faith-communities/reports/the-shifting-landscape-of-faith-in-canada/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%2074%20percent%20of,and%20Sikhs%20\(24%20percent\).](https://www.cardus.ca/research/faith-communities/reports/the-shifting-landscape-of-faith-in-canada/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%2074%20percent%20of,and%20Sikhs%20(24%20percent).)



THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF FAITH IN CANADA

Ray Pennings and Jenisa Los
November 2022

A Cardus Research Paper

CARDUS

Appendix VI: St. Paul's United Church Summary of 2021 Retreat

St. Paul's United Church Summary of 2021 Retreat

January 30, 2021



Appendix VII: Compassionate Communities

<https://www.pallium.ca/compassionate-communities/>



Compassionate Communities

When it comes to palliative care, the health care system is only part of the equation.

Compassionate Communities respond to local community needs and empower individuals to provide important physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and practical support to patients, families, and caregivers.

At its core, a Compassionate Community is about improving the quality of life for people with a life-limiting illness and their families by encouraging people to advocate and provide assistance and practical support within their community.

Pallium's role is to accelerate the creation of Compassionate Communities across Canada, connect and enable them to support collaboration and knowledge transfer, and evaluate their impact.



Appendix VIII: United Property Resource Corporation Accountability Report

<https://united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/kindred-works-and-united-property-resource-corporation-uprc>

44th General Council, February-July 2022

For Information

UNITED PROPERTY RESOURCE CORPORATION ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Origin: Tim Blair, CEO - UPRC/Kindred Works

Report

This report consists of an overview, followed by more detailed comments in several key areas including platform, pipeline and social, environmental and governance responsibility.

Overview

The United Church of Canada ("UCC") created United Property Resource Corporation ("UPRC") as a separate for-profit corporation, which was incorporated on July 17, 2019.

UPRC is continuing to build capacity to develop and manage properties on behalf of its shareholder, the UCC when missionally appropriate and financially viable. This service is provided at the request of UCC Communities of Faith, Regional Councils, and other UCC entities.

UPRC respects the polity and governance structure of property within the denomination. UPRC will not hold title to, or any interest in, the property being developed. The beneficial owner of the property remains the local community of faith or Regional Council.

When UPRC was established, it became committed to incorporate UCC's principles through its operations. This includes, without limitation:

- ensuring continued availability of space for worship and Christian faith formation for UCC Communities of Faith;
- providing affordable housing in Canada;
- tailoring facilities and spaces in the development and redevelopment of UCC church properties to meet community needs, especially the needs of community members who face structural barriers to full inclusion;
- creating environments that are accessible for all people;
- environmental sustainability;
- a commitment to right relations between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people, and to the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
- a commitment to anticolonialism and antiracism in all respects.

In addition, UCC and UPRC have made a joint commitment in cooperation with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ("CMHC") Innovation Fund to build 5,000 affordable units by 2037. To achieve this target, CMHC has made a \$20 million credit facility available to UPRC to fund pre-development expenses for affordable housing. As a condition of the Innovation Fund loan, UCC capitalized UPRC through a further loan and equity commitment.

Appendix IX: Summary of Strategic Planning Workshop

On June 17, 2023, a strategic planning workshop was held in the dining hall of St. Paul's United Church. The purpose of the workshop was to share the results of the interviews, focus groups, panel discussion and the document review that was conducted by the Strategic Planning Committee of the Church Board.

Forty congregants and friends of St. Paul's participated in the workshop. Participants were assigned to one of eight tables. Each table was assigned one of the eight themes that were derived from analysis of interviews, focus groups, and relevant documents. Participants were asked to consider the theme assigned to their table, and to identify ways to accomplish the theme statement. Specifically, participants were asked to describe what success would look like, and to identify Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs).

Each group was provided with a flip chart, markers, stickie dots and stickie notes. A scribe, and a person to report back to the group, was identified at each table.

The group reporter shared their work with the larger group. The flip chart notes were posted on the wall for all to review. Each participant was given three stickie dots, and asked to put their dots on the themes that they believe are most important.

Participants were asked to consider becoming involved in helping to move a specific theme into an action plan. These individuals placed their name on a stickie note and tacked it to the theme which personally interested them.

This report documents: 1) the themes addressed by each table, 2) the information that each table put on a flip chart, 3) the priority ranking of each theme, and 4) the individuals who expressed interest in assisting with moving a specific theme into an action plan.



Create a Welcoming Space

- I want to be “accepted for who I am”
- When “I was not acknowledged I felt unwelcomed”
- The “building needs to be welcoming”
 - “Office is currently like a dungeon”
- “People leave when they are not included”
- “Saturday morning breakfasts are fantastic”
- “I think we are lacking warmth and a touch point”
- “intergenerational activities” e.g., game nights
- Become an affirming church
- Name tags

Success:

1. Accessibility – elevator sign – washroom signs.
2. Greeter at ALL entry points – map/guide.
3. Signage – outdoors & indoors.
4. Welcome package – email & bulletin.
5. “Easy” entrance towards small groups.
 - a. LIFE groups.
6. Gymnasium – athletic space – post worship games e.g., pickleball, basketball etc.
7. “Spotters”.

This theme generated 19 prioritizing dots.

Deepen Spirituality



OPPORTUNITIES "THAT STIMULATE
DEEP SPIRITUAL THINKING"



ESTABLISH AN EDUCATION
PROGRAM GROUNDED IN
CHRISTIANITY



FOSTER THE ARTS



ACKNOWLEDGE OUR DEEP
CHRISTIAN ROOTS INCLUDING
PAGAN, MYTHOLOGY...

Deepened Spirituality Looks Like:

- Presence of other people from our larger diverse communities (religion, social economic diversity).
- We would be happier and communicate well.
- See more participation in the spiritual church activities during different times, and days of the week.
- More of these spiritual activities.

Goal/Advice

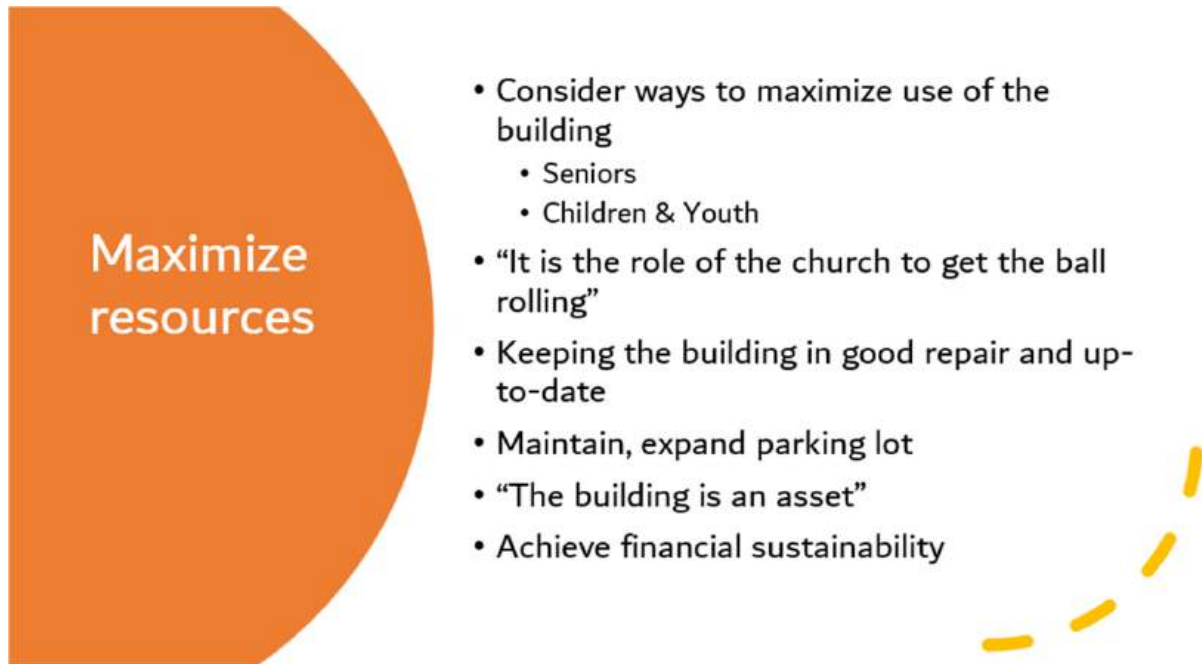
1. Encourage people to join us at St. Paul's for their spiritual needs.
2. Provide the tools to meet their spiritual needs.
3. By creating events different days of the week + times during the day.
 - Movie nights.
 - Death cafés.
 - Speed dating.
 - Games nights.
 - Spiritual discovery.
 - Art interpretation nights with Q&A sessions about spirituality.
 - Different religion nights (history).

This theme generated 12 prioritizing dots.



1. Facility is used to the max.
 - a. Having a multi-functional sanctuary.
 - b. Bean bag chairs for kids.
 - c. Interfaith sharing of physical plant.
 - d. Anyone (rather than "everyone") welcome.
 - e. Church has a high profile in the community and on social media.
 - f. Maximum use available technology.
 - g. Church as a 'trust network'.
2. Goals must relate to who we are as a faith community.
 - a. Achieving "affirming" status.
 - b. More interfaith engagement to create a vibrant interfaith dialogue.
 - c. Lift-up accomplishments of kids.
 - d. More activities to get acquainted.
 - e. Don't be afraid to try something.
3. Practical advice:
 - a. Remove pews.
 - b. Coffee before, during and after service.
 - c. Invite other faiths into conversation.
 - d. Provide other spiritual avenues for participation.
 - e. Have dedicated marketing person.
 - f. Use space for "gap" services in Dundas.
 - g. Provide deepening spiritual exercises e.g., meditation.

This theme generated 14 prioritizing dots + 2 dots listed in OTHER beside Outreach = 16 dots.



Maximize Resources

1. Small intimate theatre settings
 - a. Develop small spaces e.g., 100 people.
 - b. For youth group e.g., preteen & teens.
 - c. Improve & increase technology.
 - d. Unique program for these age groups e.g., physical activity, developing video games etc.
2. Space available
 - a. Focus on developing space, reconfiguration, dining room, gym, sanctuary, library.
 - b. What is presently utilized, under utilized.
 - c. Need improved parking flow.
 - d. Success – cater to and inviting plan for all age groups.
 - e. Expand the use and people coming through the doors, in and out.
 - f. Small theatre?
 - g. Open gym night.
 - h. French as a second language (ESL).
 - i. Improve safety/accessibility.
 - j. Music.
 - k. Readings?
 - l. Inclusive in all programming.

3. Financial
 - a. Increase rental use ongoing.
 - b. Work smarter and more efficiently.
4. People
 - a. Good communication – audit.
 - b. Community engagement.
 - c. Out of the box thinkers.
 - d. 'Prune' things that are not adding value.
 - e. Balance opportunity, budgets, for stability & flexibility.
 - f. Prudent and focused with capital spending.

This theme generated 21 prioritizing dots. **This is the highest-ranking theme.**

Expand Music Program

- “Music that touches me”
- Traditional music
- Classic music
- Contemporary music
- “Feeling the organ on the floor”
- “Create a faith-based approach, parents don’t just drop off children, they engage in faith-based activities...don’t want “rice” Christians”
- Consider unique offerings e.g. Jazz Service
- Consider DVO/St. Paul’s Band Camp – offer scholarships



Expand Music Program

Success:

- Steady growth in numbers involved in music.
- Groups for all different kinds of music.
- Eclectic music in services (variety).
- Special services for specific types of music.
- Music camps (e.g., ukelele).
- Education & explanation of different music.
- Many people from community outside the church involved.

Goals:

- Have musical organizations & opportunities for all tastes.
- Invite other groups in.
- Every member of choir or other musical group get a new member to join.
- Use social media.
- Choir exchange with other churches.

This theme generated 10 prioritizing dots.



Meaningful Worship Opportunities

- Communion – Lord’s Table – not less than once per month + special days “High Holy Days” e.g., Advent, Lent, Easter.
- Seeing the world as a Christian – and discuss problems/issues relevant now, such as MAiD, abortion, suicide.
- Survey church population to identify possible topics for sermons.
- UCC Creed – statement that describes how we see the world – would like this said more frequently in services.
- Baptisms & Weddings – occurring less frequently related to cultural shifts.
- Message of the church – “to love one another as you are loved.”
- Music – essential part of service – need variety – recognize individual preferences and types of music.

This theme generated 10 prioritizing dots.



Internal & External Communication

- Staying current with developing technology – leader required.
- Measuring effectiveness – able to do.
- Parish newsletter – reaching community.

Tours of the Church

- Regular scheduled tours of church – assign coordinator(s).
- Tour guide (document) & guides.
- Design the tour – assign leader(s) e.g., past & future.
- Share information about groups using church, outreach.
- Dedicated internal & external newsletter, website, about events, groups.
- Produce the newsletter and issue to field.

Signage in Church

- Improved, simple directional signs.
- Assign to property committee.

Social Media

- Have presence of effective media venues e.g., Facebook etc.

Market Ourselves

- Advertise what we do – best venues.
- Investigate best methods.

This theme generated 11 prioritizing dots.



- Training for more than strictly the ministers – more of a team approach
- Clear decision-making processes
- Accountability – identify goals and measure progress monthly with communication to membership
- Acknowledge and applaud volunteers
- More active measurement/management beyond finances – identify performance goals and metrics

St. Paul's does great things!

What does success look like?

- Develop a way to measure success.
- Community building continues.
- The Board shows accountability.
- The committees report to the Board regularly for the purpose of accountability.

Goals to Aspire to:

- All members feel informed – kept up to date (i.e., about the Board)
- Increase volunteer base.

How do we get there?

- Try to put names to faces.
- Survey to identify members needing information.
- Updates beyond technology.
- Mentor one another.
- Recognize volunteers.
- Continue to learn, be better informed.

This theme generated 5 prioritizing dots.

Other Ideas

A blank flip chart page was posted on the wall beside the goals generated under each theme. Participants were encouraged to jot down anything they felt was missing.

1. Pastoral Care
 - a. Accommodate people with cognitive impairment.
2. Outreach Activities

Note that 2 priority dots were posted beside “Outreach Activities.” Outreach is captured under the theme *Partner with and Engage Internal and External Community*. Therefore, the two priority dots were moved to this theme.

Ranking of Themes

Ranking of themes is intended to help discern the most important place on which to focus. While all themes are important to address, and will need to be addressed, the top ranking themes are seen as foundational next steps.

1. Themes were ranked by participants as follows:
2. Maximize resources.
3. Create a welcoming space.
4. Partner with & engage internal & external community.
5. Deepen spirituality.
6. Strengthen marketing & communication.
7. Expand music program.
8. Expand meaningful worship opportunities.
9. Strengthen governance, volunteer & leadership capacity.

Note: Priority 6 and 7 were tied.

Three individuals identified themselves as interested in working on a theme to flush out the goals/action plan.

Mary Sealey – Marketing & Communication (by ‘signage’ bullet)

Amanda Ljucovic, 365-476-1512 aljucovic@cogeco.ca – Partners & Engagement (by: ‘everyone is welcome’ bullet)

Bob Boose – Maximize Resources (by: ‘developing space’ bullet)