



**New Vision**  
UNITED CHURCH

# 2023 Annual Report

Prepared February 2024

**New Vision United Church**

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We affirm the inclusion of people of every ability, income level, age, race, family type, gender identity, and sexual orientation in the ministry, leadership, and life of this congregation.

We celebrate the gifts and graces of all.

## Council Report

The year 2023 at New Vision United Church was one of challenging decisions, intense change, and deep faith.

We began this past year having solidified our practice of hybrid online/in-person worship services. We continued to be blessed to see how our online presence brought together worshipers local and international. As our worship relationship with Sulah, and The Nature Network in Nairobi grew, however, it became clear that more than spiritual accompaniment was needed. Those staying in The Nature Network's safe house were experiencing increased harassment from local authorities, which also reduced the group's ability to earn money. In early spring, New Vision volunteers began raising money to send directly to The Nature Network. Thanks to these dedicated fundraisers, we were able to provide substantial support.

During the late winter, it became clear to the New Vision Council that the congregation would not be able to sustain the cost of paying for full-time ministry personnel. With the help of a facilitator, the Very Reverend Richard Bott, the congregation met twice to reflect on our path to this point, and to envision possibilities for the future. It was clear that our Pastoral Relationship with Rev. Ian would need to end. With financial assistance from the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, Rev. Bott helped council members revise our Living Faith Story to reflect our current situation. The revised LFS was presented to the congregation and was accepted by a vote at a congregational meeting in early September. Subsequently, the congregation voted to end the Pastoral Relation at the end of September.

New Vision has undertaken to continue its mission, becoming a lay-led congregation until its financial situation allows it once again to call a minister. During the autumn, an ad hoc Transition Team began to create resources and practices to empower more congregation members to provide worship leadership. The Transition Team began to update our website, and our other communications tools and will make recommendations to the New Vision United Church Council in order to make sure this work continues.

We have also been blessed by the support of our Voluntary Associate Minister, Rev. Diane Blanchard, and of Rev. Miriam Spies, who provide a monthly communion service, as well as any baptisms. Rev. Evan Swance-Smith is our Pastoral Charge Supervisor.

While this may not be the most common approach to the end of a Pastoral Relation for financial reasons, all New Vision participating members have stepped up with courage and faith to keep our church life happening. I believe this has made our worship more vital, more joyous, and more life-giving than ever! Every week, we hear from different voices who regularly worship in our midst. Every week, members minister to each other. Every week, we sing and dream of new ways to connect our church life with our broader community.

At the same time, New Vision folk continue to provide Pastoral Care and outreach work. Our dedicated card writers and pastoral visitors faithfully maintain contact with members who are not able to attend virtual or in-person services. Council was very appreciative that Jennifer Hompoth helped organize many volunteers to provide a multicultural Christmas Eve feast after our worship.

During the summer and early fall, at least a dozen newcomers from countries in East and West Africa sought out New Vision. Many were drawn to us because we are an Affirming congregation. As these individuals have settled into our faith community, they have immeasurably enriched it. As a council, we are committed to supporting all our newcomer community, particularly those who need to navigate the refugee system as asylum seekers.

As our Affirming Committee does not have a chair, responsibility for continuing to develop our Affirming work is shared amongst members of the church council. The congregation observed the annual United Church Pride Sunday and Trans Day of Remembrance. New Vision and four other Affirming Hamilton United Churches participated in Hamilton Pride 2023. We organized a carpool so that all congregation members – particularly newcomers – who wished to attend Pride were able to.

Our music leader, Martine Thibodeau, and the New Vision choir continue to inspire us. Their dedication to introducing us to new worship songs that embrace Affirming and culturally diverse expressions of Christianity enriches our worship weekly.

It would be remiss not to express deep appreciation for the work of Dan Peace and Helen Bradley, who are the New Vision Trustees tasked with representing our interests at the Music Hall Alliance. Their hard work and patience have ensured that the MHA has achieved official non-profit status, moving us closer to seeing our surplus space become a viable performance venue. In addition, Luke Fillion has shown tremendous initiative and dedication, not only diligently caring for our facility, but also taking over booking responsibilities on behalf of New Vision.

On behalf of the entire New Vision United Church Council, I want to thank all our participating members, and our exceptional staff, for your faith, commitment, and service in 2023. We are blessed with a community that consistently responds to challenges with gracious adaptation, always seeking new ways to follow God into our world.

In faith community,  
Dixon Challoner  
Chair

There are many references to the work of the Holy Spirit in the writings of the New Testament. But even before Jesus, the Spirit or "ruah" in Hebrew, blew over the face of the deep and creation emerged, one phase, one "day" after another. The Spirit is creative and generative, but it blows where it will, resisting human control. We can only do our best to attend to the movement, playfulness, creativity, and work of the Spirit. Prayer, conversation in community, listening, seeking understanding, using the arts, and testing possibilities are all paths in the process of discerning the work of the Spirit and ways the Spirit would have us respond.

It was the Spirit who appeared as the dove when God rent the heavens at Jesus' baptism. Then the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness for forty days where he grappled with understanding what God wanted him to do. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, frightened followers huddled together behind locked doors in an upper room, not knowing what to do next. The Spirit filled that room with tongues of fire and the amazed followers found themselves speaking in a multitude of languages. It was the birth of the church, the beginning of sharing good news about the crucified and risen One.

2023 was a year when New Vision United Church experienced the work of the Spirit and her surprises, all of which have invited the community to participate and respond. Sometimes the community has to move forward without complete certainty to test whether this is the Spirit's direction. It may only be later that we can look back to understand. But we can also look at what Paul names as the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:32)

New Vision has been under a great deal of pressure, really, since its birth, to use the building we have and the legacy of St. Giles to their greatest potential. This has not been easy work as it involves work with the wider church as well as various other partners in the secular realm. Rev. Ian's vision and dreams and his cultivation of connections in the community all helped lay an important foundation. But the resources needed to maintain full-time ministry personnel are not available at this time. The council, recognizing this, led the congregation through a process of consultation, submitted a Living Faith Story and other documentation to the regional council, and, with care for both Rev. Ian and the congregation, held a congregational meeting to consider the pastoral relationship between Rev. Ian and New Vision in early September. The result was a decision to end the pastoral relationship. Rev. Ian's closing service with New Vision was held in November.

As Dixon Challoner, chair of the Council, said in his Christmas message, moving forward as a lay-led congregation is a leap of faith. It's a move that invites the community to step up to provide leadership Sunday by Sunday. As people find their voices and share their faith, the community has the chance to deepen relationships and see how the Spirit works in our lives. In the first letter to the Corinthians Paul tells the community, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7) We see the Spirit at work.

This summer brought the Spirit's surprises in the form of newcomers from Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, and other countries in Africa. Homophobia, prejudice, and state-sanctioned violence mean that life in their own countries has become very dangerous. As an Affirming congregation, New Vision welcomes these siblings and hopes they will continue to make their spiritual home with the community. Many helped with

the Pride booth in the summer as well as volunteering as part of a fund-raiser for the Nature Network in Nairobi, Kenya. Christmas Eve dinner following our worship service at 4 this year was a feast not only of turkey and potatoes but also of wonderful chipatis, lamb ribs, kale, and other vegetable relishes.

New Vision is grateful for the leadership of the Council, all who volunteer on committees, and the Trustees as well as staff members, Luke Fillion and Martine Thibodeau, whose humour and cheer, creativity and compassion help infuse our worship life with grace and remind us that God has a sense of humor! We're also grateful for our representative to the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, Linda Waugh, and for Jennifer Hompoth and Miriam Spies who volunteer and provide leadership at the General Council level of the denomination.

May the Spirit continue to lead us into the future.

Diane Blanchard

## Music Leader's Report

Unsuspecting you:  
Martine waits with bated breath,  
sets the perfect trap...

Familiar comfort.  
Music can bring quiet hope,  
touch your soul, sing free!

Thursday night brings in  
sometimes more dogs than people.  
We all sing as one.

New hymns stretch our hearts.  
New voices add harmony  
with instruments, joy!

Hearts joined in music:  
the melody sounds the same,  
but those words? Fresh air.

Humble thanks to all  
who express their faith through song:  
***familiar comfort.***

Your challenge: Haiku  
Musically yours, with love,  
Martine Thibodeau



*Approved at NVUC's congregational meeting on Sunday, September 3, 2023*

### *Preamble*

Our financial reality has brought us to a bridging time. As a result, our Living Faith Story has been updated to reflect this. We acknowledge that our sources of funding (Holton Ave. redevelopment and MacNab St. leasing) have been slow to bear fruit. The funds for paid ministry leadership are limited in 2024. At this time, we anticipate increased income from Music Hall leasing in 2025 which will call for a review of our capacity for engaging paid leadership.

### *Mission*

New Vision United Church is an inclusive, diverse community of Christian faith that encourages the gifts and graces of all people. We are committed to pursuing our ministry through loving God and actively sharing with our neighbours.

### *Aspirational Values*

- We understand our values to be many: Affirming, Intercultural and accessible, community and social-justice focussed, innovative in worship style and stewardship, accountable to each other, welcoming, relevant faith, respect, lived values, integrity, pragmatism: the Gospel is our shared lens.
- We aspire to live these out by being:
  - a multi-generational congregation feeding the spiritual needs of the people;
  - committed to offering a social justice and equity-focussed ministry seven days a week;
  - a community of faith that follows Jesus with theological understandings that are both deep and wide. We value theological approaches that are rooted in Christ's call for the healing of all of creation: a faith that is equity-seeking, hope-fulfilling, and empowered by love. It is this value which guides us into being an intentional space for liberation, feminist, crip, mad, and queer theologies; and which invites us to learn of others;
  - a supportive ministry to newcomers and those seeking asylum, especially as related to those persecuted for their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression;
  - a community seeking to celebrate and engage in intercultural ministry. We value the diverse life experiences, values, and expressions of spirituality of our local and extended community through the growth of intercultural ministry;
  - a church responsible for stewardship, unlocking the value of our buildings to benefit the community and help to finance our ministry and mission;
  - a community that invites belonging first, without pre-conditions.

### *How New Vision Lives Out Its Unique Mission*

We are a United Church community of faith, based in the heart of downtown Hamilton, which is discovering how to be a church in a rapidly changing urban-core setting. Our faith and worship practice strives to be experiential, participatory, and image-rich (EPIC worship). We seek to incorporate many voices in every service; we make use of technology to enrich the worship experience; and we try to provide opportunities for Threshold Partners to move around to engage with each other and to live the worship experience. We intend for the worship experience to facilitate interaction with each other, and with God. Our practice of community celebrates the Belovedness of all people.

Everyone who affirms (annually) that they seek to follow Jesus by choosing to live a life of compassion, live and act in hope for God's world, grow in faith within New Vision United Church, and everyone who also makes these commitments:

- regular worship attendance
- generosity in giving
- practicing a spiritual life in daily living

...is a Threshold Partner of New Vision United Church. They have the right to vote on all matters, and to take on practically every leadership role. Threshold Partners are welcome to make a Profession of Faith as they continue to grow in their relationship with the community of faith.

As we pursue discerning what God is up to in downtown Hamilton, we seek to ensure that our Affirming values permeate our governance and decision-making process. We are learning to become anti-oppressive and anti-racist, acknowledging the need to move from a colonial institution to one that strives to be inter-culturally informed and enlivened. In the processes by which we make decisions, we intend that a broader spectrum of people – those who have frequently been overlooked or left out – will have opportunities to participate.

Currently, this mission finds expression in two ways:

1. Deepening New Vision's Commitment to Being an Affirming and Intercultural Ministry

### ***Outreach Ministry***

Before the pandemic, we had an active weekly Outreach ministry, providing meals, morning coffee breaks, worship, and social support. Now, we are trying to figure out what Outreach looks like in a post-pandemic world with our community of faith.

We have committed to partnering with four other Hamilton United Church Affirming congregations with our presence at Pride Day celebrations. Collaborations with these groups in providing linked Affirming ministry activities are a potential avenue for expanding our Outreach Ministry.

### ***Refugee Sponsorship***

- After almost six years of planning and waiting, the Al-Zahras, our Syrian refugee family arrived in May 2022!
- The sponsorship was officially completed and celebrated in May 2023, and some New Vision volunteers continue to provide social support and orientation to the city. With the generous help of the Rockville United Church of Christ in Rockville, MD, we were able to raise the funds necessary to support the family through their first year in Canada. The sponsorship project was also an exercise in faith and reliance on God for us. We have in the process developed meaningful relationships with our newcomer family.
- In 2019, we committed to supporting an LGBTQ refugee from Kenya to integrate into the community. This young person is now living independently and pursuing studies at Mohawk College.

- Through their best friend, a refugee in Kenya, we have established ties with the Nature Network, a group of (mainly Ugandan) refugees supporting other refugees in Kenya, providing housing, job-related skills training, and housing for their siblings.
- In 2023, we are providing emotional support and practical assistance to asylum seekers living in the region who find us.

### ***Intercultural Relationship Currency Design Project***

This group planned and presented two Asian Heritage Month celebrations, and increased our understanding of Indigenous issues, including a regular Land Acknowledgment before services. In addition, a service recognizing Orange Shirt Day was initiated by one of our congregation members. Our intercultural ministry is based on models of biculturalism and integration, not assimilation. This work came to a standstill, but we believe this is important to who we are. We have set the intention for this work, and started on it, but have much work yet to do.

We plan to develop special worship services that intentionally incorporate different voices and perspectives in their creation. We will be mindful of the language that we are using.

We will also continue to adapt our worship services to a hybrid model of gathering. Through a minister who is participating in our community of faith, we also now have a connection to the World Council of Churches, with the potential to become more involved with this important group.

We desire to have anti-oppressive and trauma-informed grassroots approaches to help enable marginalized folks who have dealt with institutional racism and religious-based trauma. We will need to incorporate Affirming strategies to hear others' voices and gather information on how to meet all of our needs.

We are committed to less hierarchical decision-making processes. sharing openly with the congregation. It is our goal to have the lay leadership of New Vision reflect the diversity of the congregation. This may require working to build intentional connections between incumbents and interested Threshold Partners to increase the confidence of a wider spectrum of individuals in accepting leadership roles.

### ***Discipleship***

There are other expressions of our values that we currently live as a supportive ministry - the community of faith offering pastoral care with each other, a depth of spiritual experience through *lectio divina* weekly bible study, and the growth of our Affirming Spirituality group.

Our Pastoral Care ministry was very active and intentional during COVID restrictions, creating an emergency call roster of Threshold Partners, and keeping track of calls and other contact offered or needed, especially for those without access to our Zoom services. Post-COVID, our Pastoral Care Committee continues to support congregation members with ongoing card and visiting ministries. We also value the spontaneous acts of pastoral support from varied Threshold Partners.

We celebrate the work our choir and music leadership have done in removing binary-gendered language from our worship songs. The introduction of “Songs for The Holy Other” as a regular source of worship songs has offered expansive language and introduces Affirming-inspired songs in worship. Our music also reflects and informs our intercultural values - especially with Black History, Asian Heritage, and Indigenous days of prayer. Threshold Partners are also encouraged to request favourite hymns for inclusion in our services. For those who participate in the choir, the group offers a place of support and joy. Post-COVID, with increased numbers attending in person, we plan to once again distribute rhythm instruments to make a joyful noise.

We have in the past several years supported Roots to Justice and the Gore Park Saturday outreach program. As our building uses expand with the Music Hall Alliance leasing the New Vision surplus space, we will seek opportunities for mutual aid participation with other groups supporting individuals from marginalized communities.

## **Property as Mission**

### ***Holton Site***

At the end of 2021, New Vision entered into a partnership with the United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC, now Kindred Works) to build new rental housing on the Holton Ave site. Although New Vision is no longer responsible for directing this project, it remains committed to supporting and enabling just housing for the community. Further involvement by animating the Holton Ave. space (outdoor and parking lot) in conjunction with Kindred Works may evolve as a project of interest and has the strong support of the local City Councillor.

### ***Main Street Site***

The pandemic slowed the redevelopment of our 24 Main W property as a concert hall. However, renovations have continued, including moving the organ console, remodeling the stage, and removing the remaining carpet and linoleum on the main floor. The building also now meets Fire Code standards. Leasing surplus church space to a Social Purpose Organization (SPO) with an EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) program will become a revenue stream for the ministries of New Vision. This group will have values aligned with New Vision but will be a separate entity, with a triple bottom line: Environmental, Social, and Financial. These are both organizing principles and areas by which value/growth will be measured and reported.

## **Some of New Vision’s goals for the next year that might enhance the current ministry or begin something new:**

### ***Affirming and Intercultural Ministry***

- We continue to build on helping our Affirming values be an integral part of the life of the congregation; that is, not just the responsibility of a committee, but a living commitment that animates all of our works.
- Formalizing and expanding our newcomer supports to meet their expressed needs will continue, with support from Threshold Partners.

## *Property as Mission*

### **Holton Site**

- While we may continue to monitor and assess potential quadruple bottom-line impacts (spiritual, environmental, social, and economic) of this project, for us it is largely a matter of waiting for Kindred Works' to lead this initiative and develop the property.

### **Main Street Site**

- Property Issues: negotiate a long-term lease for the Music Hall;
- Mission Issues: we will continue to develop the site as a concert/event venue and a space in which New Vision United Church continues to live into its ministry.

### ***Other initiatives, goals, hopes, and dreams***

- In our worship services, we plan to continue working to broaden participation in worship. Recognizing our financial resource limitations, we may have a community of faith-led worship life. We have experience with this and could draw on ordained and theologically trained members of the congregation to help support lay members in Breaking Open the Word. Online Lay Leadership Training could also be accessed. Shared worship using Zoom technology with other congregations has been successful and could be continued.
- Continue every week to recognize our debt to Indigenous peoples, to live with discomfort, to find ways to avoid perpetrating historical injustices, and to learn to be settler-allies.
- Celebrating diversity will continue to be an integral part of our worship service. A key symbol of this continues to be the lighting of the rainbow candle.
- We need to talk about healing, as a congregation, and with our remaining staff. Working towards healing will also impact how we are together as a congregation, and how we make decisions.
- We will support the faith life of any children and teens who attend New Vision services and aim to ensure their well-being by creating space for their individual needs, questions, and aspirations.
- Finding a way to continue as a congregation in 2024, being convinced that God has a future for us.



## Board of Trustees General Report

This year the Board of Trustees will provide 2 reports: a General Report and a Music Hall Report, with a narrative and a financial for each.

In February, the City of Hamilton inquired if the Trustees were willing to enter into a discussion regarding the City of Hamilton renting program space for a 'Community Hub'. This relationship would be separate from the Lease between the City and the Music Hall Alliance. The Trustees agreed that no further surplus space at New Vision would be leased until the Lease between New Vision and the Music Hall Alliance had been signed.

Also in February, Kindred Works, the United Church of Canada enterprise that is responsible for the management of 'closed' church buildings across Canada, asked for the New Vision Trustees to assist KW in cleaning up invoice confusion of outstanding City Water bills and Alectra hydro bills at the former St. Giles. The Trustees were able to provide the appropriate assistance and the invoices have all been cleared.

The Board of Trustees completed the support of our Syrian Newcomer Family and all the funds were paid to the family in May 2023.

It was agreed that the Board of Trustees would contact 2 members of the Community of Faith to invite them to consider joining the Board of Trustees. We have not yet been successful in adding new trustees.

In July, upon learning of the City of Hamilton's interest in providing significant funding for the Music Hall, the Trustees withdrew its application for funding from the United Church's Congregational Development Fund. Further, in July, the Board agreed, when appropriate, that it would buy 100-Day GIC Certificates from TD Bank when funds were available. Ultimately none were purchased in 2023.

On July 23, Heather Morgan was awarded the 2023 Soutar Scholarship Award.

As required by the Investment Readiness Fund it was agreed that both Simon Fraser University and New Vision sign mutual 'non-disclosure' agreements.

In August, a thorough discussion on the future of the Music Hall was held among Helen, Dixon, Dan, and Rev. Sloan. The content of the discussion was related to the current status of the Music Hall project and is noted in the Minutes of the August 1, 2023 Trustee Minutes. Also in August, Rev. Sloan, Luke Fillion, Dixon, and Dan (on Zoom) met in the church office and thoroughly reviewed and secured the location of all the pertinent documents of the Congregation.

On October 12, 2023, the Board of Trustees met, with Rev. Evan Swance-Smith, our Pastoral Oversight Minister. The Trustees filled in Rev. Evan with the plans for the Music Hall Alliance to enter into a Lease with New Vision, the pending grants from the City of Hamilton, and the pending actions in cooperation with TD Bank at King and MacNab.

On October 1, the United Church of Canada advised us that our UCC church insurance policy with the UCC was to be canceled, as of October 25<sup>th</sup>. The root of this shocking action was an “overzealous” staff member of the UCC in Toronto. After a discussion with the Chief Financial Officer of the UCC, Erik Mathiesen, our coverage has been restored, but only on a monthly basis. We have met with well-known Toronto performance insurance expert, Benjamin Rossington, and we are in monthly contact with him.

Since December the Trustees have been in significant conversations with Rev. Lynne Allin, the Congregational Support Minister of the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council concerning our continuing contributions of the United Church to the Music Hall project.

Daniel Peace  
Secretary/Treasurer

## Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee was actively involved in the stewardship campaign for the church in the spring of 2023. The campaign achieved an increase in donations from many people.

The finance committee prepared a draft budget that was approved by the Church Council for the operation of the church for 2023. As part of this effort, the committee reviewed the current patterns for M&S givings, donations generally, and expenses.

The committee was involved with the accounting firm of Brownlow partners who audited the church’s books as required for all charitable organizations.

The finance committee participated in a review of the financial processes used by the church to ensure there was a high degree of understanding of the various activities. This was a joint effort with the trustees who also represent the Music Hall operation.

We successfully moved more people to either PAR or direct contribution because of the cost of Canada Helps to process donations. This cost is deducted from a person’s donation.

The committee consists of Dave Whatmough (also the envelope steward), Willis Sloan, and George MacCuish. Erick Feltham is the church treasurer and participates as an active member of the committee.

Many thanks to Crystal Burkholder who has continued to do an excellent job as bookkeeper.

Respectfully submitted,  
George MacCuish  
Chair, Finance Committee

## Ministry and Personnel Committee

The Ministry and Personnel (M&P) Committee's mandate is to provide support for the staff of our Pastoral Charge, address any areas of conflict, and provide a link between our Community of Faith and our ministry personnel. This year we appreciated the support of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council in supporting our congregational leadership in updating our Living Faith Story and facing some difficult realities.

This has been a difficult year, in that our operational deficit necessitated discontinuing our pastoral relationship with Rev. Ian Sloan as of Dec. 25, 2023. Rev. Ian's skills and vision in promoting EPIC worship, the concept of Threshold Partners, and using building capital to finance ministry have enriched our congregational life. As we celebrated Rev. Ian's contributions to New Vision United Church at his last service on Nov. 26, we were particularly thankful for his vision and hard work in moving forward the Music Hall project, which continues to show promise as a beneficial use of surplus space in our beautiful Heritage building.

The rates of pay for employees of New Vision are reviewed at least annually. Casual part-time custodial and security workers received two pay increases in 2023, reflecting increases in Ontario's minimum wage. The most recent increase of 6.8%, effective Oct. 1, 2023, reflected an amount close to the United Church of Canada's recognized inflationary rate of 6.3%. The Custodian position rate of pay has been increased in proportion to minimum wage increases and the inflationary increase of 6.3%. The Music Director and Bookkeeper remuneration were increased in 2022, and have not changed in 2023.

Our sincere appreciation goes out to Martine Thibodeau for her inspired music leadership, embracing virtual and live worship, and her warmth and caring for all. Crystal Burkholder, our Bookkeeper, is gifted at keeping our finances properly documented, and she consistently produces financial reports and extra analyses whenever requested. Luke Fillion's energy, adaptability, ingenuity, and dedication keep the building running smoothly, supporting our EPIC hybrid worship, and presenting a caring and welcoming presence for New Vision as the first contact many people have with the Church. We appreciate the leadership and support provided by our staff and endeavour to provide resources and support to enable them to carry out their responsibilities. We continue to be blessed by the commitment to New Vision of Luke, Martine, and Crystal. We also appreciate the part-time services of Jessica, Steve, and Willis.

Rev. Evan Swance-Smith from Westdale United Church has been appointed as our Pastoral Charge Supervisor. We got to know Rev. Evan as they led worship on Nov. 12. Rev. Evan is a support to Council and the Trustees by ensuring quorum is met for our meetings and sharing their knowledge. Rev. Diane Blanchard is a wonderful support to the congregation as our Volunteer Associate Minister. Rev. Miriam Spies is also very supportive of New Vision's ministry. We appreciate Rev. Diane and Rev. Miriam's skills and leadership for our monthly Communion Services. We would also like to thank Erin Poole for their pastoral care support, worship planning, and willingness to provide their services for Celebrations of Life.

Our foray into lay-led ministry was deftly coordinated under the leadership of Dixon Challoner, our Council Chair, who organized transition group meetings to start the process and maintain good lines of communication.

As a final and essential part of this report, we acknowledge and express our appreciation for all members of New Vision who have participated in worship planning and presentation, hospitality, and caring. Our volunteer efforts have helped to make the transition to lay-led ministry while embracing all in our beloved community.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee is currently comprised of Helen Bradley (Chair), Linda Waugh, and Sharon Gal. We are committed to serving in this capacity, although we would still appreciate having a more diverse group to reflect our congregation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Helen Bradley, Chair, Ministry and Personnel Committee

## Worship Team Report

The Worship Team would like to thank all those who have participated in the worship life of our Community of Faith, particularly, Rev. Ian Sloan, Cater Sloan, Luke Fillion, Martine and Shannon, Rev. Miriam, Rev. Diane, Rev. Evan, and Julie MacCuish, our Co-Chair, and the other Committee Members: Judith, Deb, George, & David.

We started the year by welcoming Rev. Ian back from his Sabbatical Leave and celebrating Black History Month. We were also able to initiate volunteer rides for folks who found the HSR to be difficult on snowy Sundays.

In March, we were happy to thank Cater Sloan for her warm, engaging, and meaningful Children's Ministry for many years.

While the Social Justice Walk was not held in 2023, we committed to providing New Vision leadership to the event in 2024. Rev. Ian provided our Tenebrae Service on Maundy Thursday. Easter was a wonderful day.

Special thanks to Joey, Jen, Jie, and Joda for their leadership during Asian Heritage Month.

In April, our Community of Faith gathered while participating in an intensive 'Stewardship Development Program' designed by the United Church and presented by a team of folks from the Finance Committee and the Worship Team.

We celebrated our Anniversary in June and welcomed Councillor Cameron Kroetch as our Guest Speaker.



Heather Morgan was the recipient of the 2023 George Soutar Scholarship Award, and we welcomed them to preach the annual message.

The Worship Team was successful in providing our Worship Program through Rev. Sloan's Vacation through August and into September.

In October the New Vision Community of Faith decided it had to end the Pastoral Relationship with Rev. Sloan due to the financial situation of the Pastoral Charge, currently, and into the new year. The Worship Team was able to arrange Worship Services throughout the fall, with Rev. Sloan providing leadership once in both October and November.

Our Community of Faith gathered in November to say goodbye and thank you to Rev. Sloan and his extended family. Following Ian's final worship service, the congregation gathered together for a 'Thank You' meal and the presentation of gifts.

Martine officially joined the Worship Committee in October, and we are all delighted to welcome her leadership and insight.

With the regular attendance of many new folks from Africa every Sunday, we seek out opportunities to include our new friends in the New Vision worship life, providing them with many ways to participate.

Our Advent season was enriched by the United Church of Canada resource with a focus on Palestine.

We were particularly nurtured by Erin Poole providing leadership and individual support to the many folks who participated in our Service of Remembrance and Hope which took place on the Wednesday evening before Christmas.

As Christmas Eve was a Sunday this year we all agreed to move our Christmas worship experience to 4pm, followed by a full Christmas Dinner with traditional North American fare and a wide selection of foods from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. A big 'Thank You' to Jenn, Joda, and all the wonderful volunteers who helped prepare the meal!

Our last Sunday in the year was New Year's Eve, and we wrapped up the year with a joint Zoom Service together with our rural friends at Shiloh/Inwood United Church, and their Minister, Rev. Christine Jerrett.

Submitted by Dan Peace

## Property Team Report

2023 was an exciting year at New Vision!

Throughout the year, Luke has been on site, cleaning, sanitizing, and tending to other miscellaneous building-related needs and upkeep, ensuring the safety of all occupants, with additional support during events and other rentals from Steve. As we continued holding hybrid (in-person/Zoom) worship services on Sundays, this past year also saw our building welcoming various film and television production crews, most notably our friends at Zazie Films who returned to shoot season two of their award-winning series, *Paris Paris*. Our building (their base camp) was bustling with activity for their 2+ month tenancy here, with

some scenes being shot in the lower hall, auditorium, green room, lounge, and even one of the front washrooms!

Over the year we had the pleasure of hosting performing arts groups, support groups, and others. The Open Heart/Keeping Six art program was hosted in the lower hall on Wednesday afternoons throughout the year and we hosted the Fringe Theatre Festival's 'Spark' intensive training program for youth interested in learning more about dramatic arts in the summer. Funds from the Ontario Grant Program to Support Anti-Hate Security Measures for Faith-Based and Cultural Organizations (acquired through Rev. Ian and Dixon) were used to assist with upgrades to our electronic building access and security systems. Unfortunately, 2023 saw our building sustain multiple acts of vandalism, resulting in the expensive but necessary replacement of three thermal windows, and the replacement or re-installation of exterior LED safety lighting on the east side of our building.

The Music Hall hosted multiple events, including Hamilton Fashion Week, Whitehorse, Dwayne Gretzky, Jason Fernandez (of 'The Voice, Philippines' fame), and even featured concerts and parties that were part of the Canadian Country Music Awards Week. The last event held in 2023 was the exciting JR Digs Acoustic Christmas extravaganza, which completely filled our building with music and energy. We are looking forward to more exciting adventures in 2024!

Respectfully submitted,  
Luke Fillion and Dixon Challoner

## Covenant with Horseshoe Falls Regional Council

Meetings this year were held online, with one in person. It felt good to see people

### June Meeting:

- we got an evaluation of Governance and staffing models which was done by Bill Allen and Jenny Stephens
- the new Governance over the last four years has been seen as chaos
- new ways and language for doing things (add the pandemic)
- Zoom meetings and different ways of meeting
- the first time in 94 years the regional level of government could design itself
- Grief- loss of Presbytery and Conference
- staff needed priorities -outcomes were not clear
- expectations for lay reps - networking and connecting

### October Meeting

- Renewal and Transformation - A season of hope
- Lennox Scarlett is the president of Horseshoe Falls
- How do we hope again? Pray and invite others to pray with us

- Remit 1
- Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization within the United Church of Canada
- This must be voted on before March 2024 or the vote does not count
- Remembering the people of Gaza
- There will be a Pentecost event: keep watching for it - I think it will involve all of Horseshoe Falls with many activities
- The spring meeting - May 24, 25 and 26th - will once again be in Port Elgin
- The speaker will be the moderator Cameron Landsdowne
- All three regions will attend the meeting
- I have been able to attend Zoom meetings on Pastoral Care, Minister and Personal, and Racism

Thank you for letting me be a rep at Horseshoe Falls for New Vision United Church. We are thankful to the staff of Horseshoe Falls and Rev. Ian Sloan for helping us to move on as New Vision United Church.

Linda Waugh

## Sponsorship Report

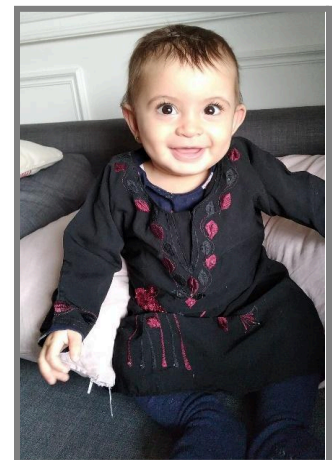
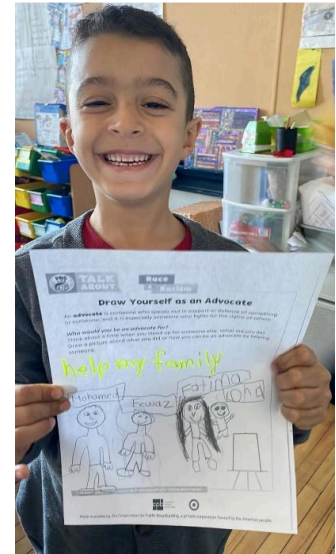


The Al Zahra family, jointly sponsored by NVUC and Rockville United Church in Maryland, finally arrived in Toronto from Turkey on May 10, 2022. The sponsorship wrapped up on May 9, 2023, as our year of obligations to the family formally ended. Khwaka Kukubo, the United Church of Canada Refugee Program Advisor, was notified of the successful end of the sponsorship.

There was no suitable time for us to host a welcome party in 2022, but we had a lovely get-together with Marwan and Aziza, Seham and

Iyad, their children, and visitors from Rockville United Church, Rev. Denise Giacomozzi and her husband Jan May, on August 1, 2023, at Marwan and Aziza's home. Notice the copious amounts of food provided by the Syrian families! Jan and Denise thoughtfully brought Baltimore Orioles baseball hats for each of the

Syrian children in both families, by which to remember Rockville. All members of the Al Zahra family now have their Permanent Resident cards. Marwan is taking English classes and works part-time as a house painter, the older children are learning English in school, and baby Lara will be two years old already, next July. Heartfelt thank yous to Khwaka, lawyer Tim, Suneet at RSTP, Seham, and all who prayed for, contributed to, gave moral or material support to, and took a chance on a newcomer family. Successful completion of the sponsorship is an impressive accomplishment for a small congregation.



Also in 2023, NVUC began providing substantial financial support to the Nature Network, a queer refugee-led community-based organization in Kenya, through Sulah Maweje, who is a friend of Dennis'. Many refugees have fled Uganda's harsh laws targeting LGBTIQ and trans people, and the Nature Network has been able to offer refuge. In addition to helping sustain the community, NVUC's donations to the Nature Network have provided considerable relief



when unforeseen stressors arose. Last year, NVUC contributed a total of \$5720 to help sustain this community, pay for some unexpected medical bills, and most recently, provide bail for two members who were arrested on December 31 simply for being trans. (These members were released the same



night when the bail money arrived). The community has expanded to 15 people and now operates a second, shorter-term shelter, as well as their main one. A huge thank you goes to all those who contributed during the past year!

Chicken raising at the Nature Network

See <https://sacredqueerstories.leeds.ac.uk/nature-network/>



Sulah



**HAPPYHAPPY  
INTERNATIONAL DAY  
AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA,  
BIPHOBIA AND  
TRANSPHOBIA.**



**LET'S CONTINUE TO  
ALWAYS REMEMBER WE  
ARE ALL HUMANS**

**#TOGETHER  
ALWAYS:UNITED IN  
DIVERSITY**

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Mathewson  
(with photos from Sulah)

The group continues to meet monthly to check in and share presentations of mutual interest to the group.

*Topics included:*

- January - Robin facilitated the topic of hemophilia (requested by Jie), particularly as it pertained to parents.
- February - Julie facilitated, using excerpts from *Immortal Diamond: The Search for our True Self* by Richard Rohr. We also welcomed 2 newcomer members.
- March - Helen facilitated a Lenten reflection using the book, *Good Courage: Daily Reflections on Hope*, edited by Alydia Smith.
- April - Deb facilitated focusing on disability. We watched and discussed a video, "The Mad & Crip Podcast" by Dr. Naomi Lawson-Jacobs, Season 2: Episode 11.
- May - Robin facilitated the meeting. We continued our discussion from the April meeting and planned topics/facilitators for upcoming months.
- June - We met in person at New Vision United Church and brought food to share. 😊 Joey facilitated the meeting by leading a session on the topic of diversity.
- July & August on break
- September - Julie facilitated the meeting, focusing on grief.
- October - Robin facilitated the meeting as we held a brainstorming session as to what we wanted this group's role/purpose to be for our newcomers, specifically those seeking sanctuary. We also discussed the direction of the group and scheduled topics and facilitators for future meetings.
- November - Robin facilitated the meeting with the topic of anti-racism.
- December - Robin facilitated the meeting as we held our in-person Christmas party!!

Joey, Helen, and Karen met with our newcomers through Zoom and in person to provide emotional support, validation, and supply resources. They also joined us for several church services and Pride Day celebrations. Joey created a WhatsApp safe space group for outreach to our newcomers at New Vision.

Affirming Spirituality Group members participated in a welcoming BBQ for the newcomers, helped create new ways for them to participate in church, and helped with the New Vision Christmas Eve dinner.

Affirming Spirituality Group (Joey with assistance from a few newcomers) supported Helen, Albert, and Karen in their mission to support the Nature Network's garage sale fundraiser.

In peace,

Robin Miles, for the Affirming Spirituality Group

## Pastoral Care Report

We continue to use Our Mission Statement developed in 2019. The Pastoral Care Committee are members of New Vision United Community seeking to be God's presence to other members of the community through visits, cards, phone calls, and electronic communication.

As Outreach in the community changes, we support the work of many who are working for refugee adherents. The Garage Sale to support Nature Network was a success. Thank you to all involved in this endeavour. It might be a good idea to think of having this twice a year, as an ongoing activity. We also thank Daryl for providing a venue for us to work from. Bob and Barry have been extra welcoming in supporting our friends from Africa. A barbecue during the summer, winter clothes before winter set in, and a treat at the Mandarin were some of their activities.

We have remarkable Lay Leadership. As we work through transition, we remember Ian's leadership helped us to get where we are right now. In the future, we hope to deliver poinsettias to the long-term homes where our members live, to be in the lobby with a note saying they are from New Vision United Church.

We thank Erin and Albert for leading the 'Blue Christmas Service'. Wonderful music was provided by Martine and Pippa. We continue to support the Hub in their Outreach, Wesley Urban Ministries in their changing times, the Road to Care and refugee families in Gaza as they prepare to move.

The Christmas Dinner after the Christmas Eve Service added polish to our year. Thank you, Jen, Joda, Joey, Robin, and many of our African friends for providing a delicious meal. It was nice to sit and eat together from an eclectic menu. Luke's support has proven to be invaluable. We have been able to meet the challenges brought to us due to the pandemic.

An e-mail prayer chain goes out on the first day of each month. If you would like to join as a prayer or give names for prayer please contact Linda Waugh.

We give heartfelt thanks to all who we notice are doing Pastoral Care work at New Vision. This makes us proud to be members of New Vision.

Your Pastoral Care Team,  
Linda Waugh

### *Threshold Partners/Professing and Participating Members*

We are in the process of updating our records to most accurately reflect our membership, and as such we present the numbers from the end of last year, acknowledging that the number of Participating Members has seen an increase.

Threshold Partners	59
Professing Membership	74

### *In Memoriam*

We lovingly remember the following people; some of whom were professing members of New Vision (\*), and others who joined us through their involvement with Thursday Outreach.

- ♥ Leatrice “Letty” Bennett\* - November 15, 2021 (\*note: we are sorry to have previously missed including Letty in AGM reports)
- ♥ Julie Rule\* - January 13, 2023
- ♥ Jean Baine\* - January 17, 2023
- ♥ Melda Clark\* - February 22, 2023 - (former long-time member of Centenary)
- ♥ Rita Rolfe - July 10, 2023 (longtime Outreach participant)
- ♥ Evelyn Smith\* - October 27, 2023
- ♥ Patrick Symonds - November 15, 2023 (Outreach volunteer)

Transfer from New Vision United Church  
One (unlisted)

Transfers to New Vision United Church  
Baptisms & Renewal of Baptismal Faith

### Weddings

There were 2 weddings recorded for families who were not part of the congregation.



## Music Hall Alliance Report (Board of Trustees)

Progress on this project picked up in pace throughout 2023, reaching some major milestones. The goals of the Music Hall Alliance (MHA) are to provide a 1000-seat mid-sized entertainment venue in keeping with the City's music strategy, maintaining our beautiful heritage building, and supporting the professional development of marginalized creatives. The role of New Vision United Church is to lease surplus space to the Music Hall Alliance, raising funds to continue our ministry in the downtown core.

Our construction consultants developed construction planning and costing for New Vision renovations, which went out to tender in 2023. Unfortunately, the lack of funding to start construction resulted in expired project tenders. Building permits for the construction have been renewed, however.

A \$35,000 Investment Readiness Program Grant supported Rev. Ian's time spent on the project and consultant fees towards developing the business plan and EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity) framework. Helen Bradley also attended several webinars on topics related to preparing a social enterprise for investment funding.

The non-profit organization, known as the Music Hall Alliance, was incorporated Mar. 23, 2023, with three inaugural members from the Music Hall Advisory Group (MHAG). Glen Norton, Jacqueline Norton (both former City managers), and Stephen Sloan (lawyer) comprised this group. Since then, they have recruited three further members, Evelyn Myrie (founder and CEO of Empower Strategy Group), Sean Jones (R&B musician and actor), and Mosa McNeilly (Black performance and visual artist). Recruitment continues for a diverse group of further Board members.

Rev. Sloan and members of the MHAG toured many new City Councillors and City staff through the Music Hall space, including Councillor Cameron Kroetsch from Ward 2, Mayor Horwath, Jason Thorne, Manager of Planning and Economic Development, and the Director of Healthy and Safe Communities. Consultations with several active members of the Hamilton music community were also held.

We benefitted from consultation with Kendra Fry of the Trinity Foundation and Rev. Jeff Crittenden of Metropolitan Church, London. The London Church recently implemented the use of its Sanctuary as a performance space. We are thankful for the financial support of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council in paying for this consultation.

We retained the services of a booking agent, Kevin Dick, in early 2023, and he has been doing an exemplary job of booking and supporting events in the Music Hall. He also helped secure a quote from a

sound and lighting company, as upgrading and installing technology in these areas makes the Music Hall a more desirable venue for rentals.

The City of Hamilton presented the opportunity to award New Vision a \$900,000 grant to commence Stage I of the New Vision renovations required to make the Auditorium (Sanctuary) safe for the capacity of the space (900-1000). The funds would be provided from Councillor Kroetsch's discretionary fund for Ward 2, and funds from Economic Development's 2023 budget. After consultation with the City, the Music Hall Alliance delegated to the General Issues Committee on Jan. 17, 2024. Councillor Kroetsch brought forward a motion to award \$900,000 to New Vision United Church for Stage I building renovations. The vote will be held at the next General Issues Committee in February 2024. We are hopefully confident of negotiating a mutually acceptable agreement with the City of Hamilton, supported by the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council. Negotiations will include how much of the building space will be made available to the City as a safe space for programming for marginalized groups at a nominal fee.

Dan Peace and Helen Bradley are the Trustees acting on behalf of New Vision United Church in the Music Hall development project. On behalf of New Vision, we acknowledge and appreciate Rev. Sloan's dedication and great efforts to move this project forward. We would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council. Last, but certainly not least, we are also most thankful to the community volunteers on the MHAG, who have invested several years of work to reach this point in the development of the Music Hall. Kudos to Glen and Jacqueline Norton, Ken Dick, Steve Sloan, Bob Roper, and Kerry Doole for generously sharing their talents and energies.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dan Peace and Helen Bradley

# Financial Reports

## Trustees Bank Account Transaction Report

Trustee General Account	Sunday, December 31, 2023		Bank Account #5273252 TD Bank	
Opening Balance January 1, 2023				\$2,702.94
	Date	Expense	Deposits	Balance
Marwan Alzahra	01-02-20023	\$1,971.00		\$731.94
The Music Hall	01-10-2023	\$589.00		\$142.94
RBC Investment	01-30-2023		\$20,000.00	\$20,142.94
RBC Investment	01-30-2023		\$42,159.48	\$62,302.42
Interest Income - RBC	01-31-2023		\$177.99	\$62,480.41
Bank Charges	01-31-2023	\$3.45		\$62,476.96
Marwan Alzahra	02-03-2023	\$1,971.00		\$60,505.96
Maroan Zahra	02-06-2023	\$1,000.00		\$59,505.96
Interest Income - RBC	02-28-2023		\$231.00	\$59,736.96
Bank Charges	02-28-2023	\$1.50		\$59,735.46
Interest Income - RBC	03-14-2023		\$1.37	\$59,736.83
Bequeathment Income	03-24-2023		\$75,000.00	\$134,736.83
Marwan Alzahra	03-28-2023	\$1,971.00		\$132,765.83
Bank Charges	04-03-2023	\$1.50		\$132,764.33
Maroan Zahra	04-03-2023	\$1,000.00		\$131,764.33
Marwan Alzahra	04-11-2023	\$1,971.00		\$129,793.33
Sheridan College - Grant Income	04-27-2023		\$21,000.00	\$150,793.33
Music Hall - Grant Income Transferred	05-02-2023	\$21,000.00		\$129,793.33
Maroan Zahra	05-04-2023	\$1,000.00		\$128,793.33
Maroan Zahra	05-08-2023	\$2,191.76		\$126,601.57
Bank Charges	05-31-2023	\$3.00		\$126,598.57
Empower Strategy Group	06-27-2023	\$8,475.00		\$118,123.57
McCallum Sather Architects	06-29-2023	\$22,202.55		\$95,921.02
XGC Consulting	07-04-2023	\$2,319.66		\$93,601.36
Music Hall	07-20-2023		\$32,997.21	\$126,598.57
Heather Morgan (2023 Soutar Award)	07-23-2023	\$1,000.00		\$125,598.57
D. Nyam	08-30-2023	\$500.00		\$125,098.57
Bank charges	08-31-2023	\$1.50		\$125,097.07
Pauline Oyugi	09-01-2023	\$500.00		\$124,597.07
Sheridan College	09-20-2023		\$14,000.00	\$138,597.07
etransfer	09-22-2023		\$1,000.00	\$139,597.07
New Vision Operating	10-11-2023	\$3,000.00		\$136,597.07
New Vision Operating	10-18-2023	\$3,000.00		\$133,597.07
New Vision Operating	10-25-2023	\$3,000.00		\$130,597.07
New Vision Operating	10-30-2023	\$1,000.00		\$129,597.07
Bank charges	10-31-2023	\$6.00		\$129,591.07

## Church Council Managed Funds

### Memorial Fund

Balance at December 31, 2022	\$ 4,062.51
Donations	\$ -
<b>Balance at December 31, 2023</b>	<b>\$ 4,062.51</b>
<i>(actual account closed and funds moved to operating account)</i>	

## Church Council Managed Funds

### Benevolent Fund

Balance December 31, 2022	\$ 898.40
Add Contributions to Minister's distribution fund	\$ -
Deduct: Amount for Minister's distribution fund	\$ -
<b>Balance December 31, 2023</b>	<b>\$ 898.40</b>
<i>(actual account closed and funds moved to operating account)</i>	

## Church Council Managed Funds

### Choir Fund

Balance December 31, 2022	\$ 860.75
Donations	\$ -
Balance at December 31, 2023	\$ 860.75

## Church Council Managed Funds

### Mission and Service Fund Remittance

New Vision contributions remitted to the Mission and Service Fund Jan-Dec 2023

Jan	\$ 865.00	July	\$ 785.00
Feb	\$ 865.00	Aug	\$ 785.00
March	\$ 865.00	Sept	\$ 1,190.00
Apr	\$ 865.00	Oct	\$ 785.00
May	\$ 865.00	Nov	\$ 785.00
June	\$ 760.00	Dec	\$ 785.00

Total congregational remittances:	\$ 10,200.00
Total Trust remittances credited to New Vision	\$ 10,200.00
New Vision Total Remittances 2022 (for comparison purposes)	\$ 10,665.00

## Church Council Managed Funds

### Outreach Bursary Fund

Balance at December 31, 2022	\$ -
Donations	\$ 1,450.00
Transferred to Trustees	-\$ 1,000.00
Balance at December 31, 2023	\$ 450.00

## Church Council Managed Funds

### Nature Network Fund

Balance at December 31, 2022	\$ -
Donations	\$ 2,229.38
Transferred to Nature Network	-\$ 2,179.36
Balance at December 31, 2023	\$ 50.02

## Chart of 2023 Givings

Range	Number of givers
over \$8,000	4
\$5,000 - \$8,000	3
\$3,000 - \$5,000	4
\$2,000 - \$3,000	1
\$1,000 - \$2,000	5
\$500 - \$1,000	7
\$250 - \$500	5
Under \$250	3
<b>Total identified givers</b>	<b>32</b>

## 2022 Financial Statement & 2023 Recommended Budget

Revenue	2020 actual	2021 actual	2022 actual	2023 budget	2023 actual	2023 diff	proposed 2024 budget
Giving	95,176	92,790	88,830	99,100	108,826	9,726	108,000
Rentals	94,604	75,145	32,671	85,000	73,547	(11,453)	25,000
Grants	9,100	15,000	15,000				
other	74,412	41,609					
<b>total income</b>	<b>273,292</b>	<b>224,544</b>	<b>136,501</b>	<b>184,100</b>	<b>182,373</b>	<b>(1,727)</b>	<b>133,000</b>
<b>Expenses</b>							
Personnel	156,943	148,818	163,890	173,861	172,557	(1,304)	55,000
Buildings	82,747	60,216	63,378	66,340	65,327	(1,013)	60,000
programming	32,426	18,677	15,726	17,886	20,744	2,858	20,000
Office, equip, audit	12,630	4,679	8,436	8,500	7,626	(874)	9,000
repay HFRC loan							6,792
UCC assessment	2,889		8,258	8,258	8,169	(89)	8,258
<b>total expense</b>	<b>287,635</b>	<b>232,390</b>	<b>259,688</b>	<b>274,845</b>	<b>274,423</b>	<b>(422)</b>	<b>159,050</b>
<b>annual difference</b>	<b>(14,343)</b>	<b>(7,846)</b>	<b>(123,187)</b>	<b>(90,745)</b>	<b>(92,050)</b>		<b>(26,050)</b>
<b>Covering the losses</b>							
Trustees Funds (\$58,600)			58,600				
CEBA Loan + Grant (\$60,000)	14,343	7,846	37,811				
HFRC Funds (\$100,000)			26,776		73,224		
MC Loan + Grant (\$70,000)					18,826		26,050

### Notes:

1. slight difference in the final numbers are caused by accounting practices during the audit process

# Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31, 2023

ASSETS							
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>							
Cash	72514	112058	63,052	114890	81182	73,668	49,593
Investments	59826	65762	65762	68260	43184	43,184	43,156
HST receivable	3368	4196	9687	7297	14961	7,704	3,912
Prepaid expenses	0	0	0	0	600	600	600
	135708	182016	138,501	190447	139927	125,156	97,281
LAND AND BUILDINGS (market value \$2,400,000)	962169	1267951	1267951	1267951	1269451	1,269,451	1,269,451
FURNISHINGS AND ORGAN	440015	440015	440015	440015	440015	440,015	440,015
	1,402,184	\$1,707,966.00	1707966	\$ 1,898,413	\$1,849,393	1,834,622	\$1,806,747
<b>LIABILITIES</b>							
<b>CURRENT LIABILITY</b>							
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	6001	2270	5718	7117	0	781	793
Canada Emergency Business Loan	60000	60000	60000	60000			
LONG TERM DEBT	0	674908	674908	658216	658216	418,211	249,480
	66001	737178	740626	725333	658216	418992	250,273
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>							
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>							
Aubrey R. Jones Memorial Fund	0	0	3116	4097	43	43	1,202
George Soutar Memorial Fund	0	0	8779	9743	10714	10,714	8,503
Benevolent Fund	898	898	705	705	1205	1,205	2,126
Memorial Fund	4062	4062	1247	1248	1798	1,798	4,733
Paulin Fund	0	2250	2250	5250	5250	5,250	5,250
Choir Fund	860	860.75	860.75				
Syrian Refugee Fund	0	14883	41612	50013	51796	51,796	53,296
	5820	22953.75	58569.75	71056	70806	70,806	75,110
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	2542	-577306	-557262	-607442	-589195	-364,642	-228,121
LAND, BUILDINGS, FURNISHINGS AND ORGAN	1402184	1707966	1709466	1709466	1709466	1,709,466	1,709,466
	1404726	1132160	1152204	1173080	1191077	1,415,630	1,556,455
					\$1,849,293		
	\$ 1,476,547.00	\$ 1,869,338.00	\$ 1,892,830.00	\$ 1,898,413	3	\$1,834,622	\$1,806,727



NEW VISION UNITED CHURCH  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

**COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

To the Trustees of  
New Vision United Church

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the consolidated statement of financial position of New Vision United Church as at December 31, 2022 and the statements of revenues, expenses and unrestricted funds and changes in restricted fund balances for the year then ended, and Note 1, which describes the basis of accounting applied in the preparation of the compiled financial information ("financial information").

Management is responsible for the accompanying financial information, including the accuracy and completeness of the underlying information used to compile it and the selection of the basis of accounting. We performed this engagement in accordance with Canadian Standard on Related Services (CSRS) 4200, Compilation Engagements, which requires us to comply with relevant ethical requirements. Our responsibility is to assist management in the preparation of the financial information.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement, nor were we required to perform procedures to verify the accuracy or completeness of the information provided by management. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or review conclusion, or provide any form of assurance on the financial information.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Ancaster, Ontario  
June 22, 2023

Chartered Professional Accountants  
Licensed Public Accountants

NEW VISION UNITED CHURCH  
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2022

ASSETS

	2022	2021
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 106,421	\$ 54,887
Restricted cash	98,439	166,296
Investments	59,826	61,946
Other receivables	-	30,325
Government remittances receivable	25,260	14,626
Prepaid expenses	13,278	17,602
Asset held in trust	1,380,745	-
	1,683,969	345,682
<b>LAND AND BUILDING</b>	1,159,455	1,269,451
<b>FURNISHINGS AND ORGAN</b>	440,015	440,015
	\$ 3,283,439	\$ 2,055,148

LIABILITIES

<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Short term debt	\$ 35,000	\$ 691,973
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	10,094	14,883
Deposit received	7,500	100,000
Current portion of long term debt	40,000	-
	92,594	806,856
<b>LONG TERM DEBT</b>	-	40,000
	92,594	846,856

FUND BALANCES

<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>		
George Soutar Memorial Fund	9,801	9,801
Benevolent Fund	898	605
Memorial Fund	4,123	4,123
Syrian Refugee Fund	14,076	36,926
	28,898	51,455
<b>GENERAL AND TRUSTEES FUND</b>	1,562,477	(552,629)
<b>CAPITAL FUND</b>	1,599,470	1,709,466
	3,190,845	1,208,292
	\$ 3,283,439	\$ 2,055,148

Approved by the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

NEW VISION UNITED CHURCH  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND UNRESTRICTED FUNDS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

GENERAL AND TRUSTEES FUND

	2022	2021
<b>Revenues</b>		
Offerings	\$ 100,267	\$ 106,205
Rentals	116,479	122,794
Grant income	7,500	15,000
Other	150	6,877
Bequests	-	32,742
	<u>224,396</u>	<u>283,618</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Church building	77,385	127,003
Grant	500	4,191
Interest on short term debt	29	17,066
Missions, service and outreach	19,053	12,177
Music department	14,051	13,750
Office and administration	7,592	5,975
Salaries and benefits	164,944	150,192
Worship and pastoral care	1,406	1,299
	<u>284,960</u>	<u>331,653</u>
	(60,564)	(48,035)
<b>Other income (expenses)</b>		
Investment income	2,538	4,577
Gain on disposal of assets	2,065,436	-
Government assistance	-	30,291
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	(2,300)	9,587
	<u>2,065,674</u>	<u>44,455</u>
<b>EXCESS (DEFICIT) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,005,110</b>	<b>(3,580)</b>
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS AT BEGINNING OF THE YEAR</b>	<b>(552,629)</b>	<b>(549,049)</b>
Add: Transfer from Capital Fund	109,996	-
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS AT END OF THE YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 1,562,477</b>	<b>\$ (552,629)</b>

NEW VISION UNITED CHURCH  
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN RESTRICTED FUND BALANCES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	George Soutar Memorial Fund	Benevolent Fund	Memorial Fund	Syrian Refugee Fund	Total 2022	Total 2021
Fund balance, beginning of the year	\$ 9,801	\$ 605	\$ 4,123	\$ 36,926	\$ 51,455	\$ 57,711
Add:						
Contributions	-	293	-	6,602	6,895	6,787
Less:						
Distributions	-	-	-	(29,452)	(29,452)	(13,043)
Fund balance, end of the year	\$ 9,801	\$ 898	\$ 4,123	\$ 14,076	\$ 28,898	\$ 51,455

NOTE TO THE FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

1. Basis of Accounting

The basis of accounting applied to the preparation of the statement of financial position of New Vision United Church as at December 31, 2022 and the statements of revenues, expenses and unrestricted funds for the year then ended is on the historical cost basis, reflecting cash transactions with the addition of:

- accounts payable and accrued liabilities

**New Vision United Church  
Threshold Partners  
Annual General Meeting, Hybrid Format  
February 26, 2023, 12:00 noon**

18 in person: Rev. Ian and Cater Sloan, Diane Blanchard, Helen Bradley, Dixon Challoner, Erick Feltham, Albert Jagt, Pippa Lock, George MacCuish, Karen Mathewson, Dan and Deb Peace, Judith Robinson, Jozé Ruiz, Bob Ward, Linda Waugh, Arlene Whatmough, Dave Whatmough

5 on Zoom: Luke Fillion, Jennifer Hompoth, Julie MacCuish, Pauline Oyugi, Angelica Stavnisky

1. Call to order – Dixon Challoner
2. Opening Prayer – Rev. Sloan
3. Enabling motions:
  - a. **MOTION** to appoint Karen M as Recording Secretary (Dan P/Erick F). **Carried 2023AGM1**
  - b. **MOTION** agreeing to Digital Record (including comments in the Zoom Chat) (Pippa L/Deb P). **Carried 2023AGM2**
4. Adoption of the Agenda:

**MOTION** to accept the agenda (Linda W/Dave W). **Carried 2023AGM3**
5. In memoriam – Linda Waugh read out the names of those *in memoriam* in 2022 from the Annual Report.
6. Review of 2022 Threshold Partners meeting minutes (Feb 13, 2022) and minutes from the congregational meeting (Oct. 16, 2022).
  - a. **MOTION** to accept the 2022 AGM and congregational meeting minutes with no amendments. (Judith R/George M). **Carried 2023AGM4**
  - b. Business arising from the minutes of the Oct. 16, 2022 congregational meeting: Rev. Ian presented an Interim Final Report on the Music Hall as a Project. The plan is to unfold as laid out in the Oct. 16, 2022 meeting minutes. NVUC originally engaged in the Music Hall redevelopment of the MacNab site because there was significant interest in a mid-size performance venue (~ the size of the NVUC auditorium) from the local music sector and the City. In 2018, City Council made a mid-size performance venue a “stretch target” of their economic development plan. A stretch target is something impossible at the time but should be named so it may occur in the future. To date, City Council members and senior city staff have had positive responses to the MacNab redevelopment. More tours of NVUC are lined up for city staff in March. Also, with support from Horseshoe Falls Regional Council (HFRC), Dan P, Helen B, and members of the Music Hall Advisory Committee met with two United Church (UCC) resource people (Rev. Jeff Crittenden of Metropolitan United, London, ON, and

Kendra Frye of Creative Collisions) on Feb. 25, 2023 to discuss the redevelopment plans. They were impressed with our progress to date.

**MOTION** that a thank you be sent to HFRC for their support of this consultation meeting. (Helen B/Dan P) **Carried 2023AGM5**

7. Review of all non-financial reports (pp. 12-21 in the Annual report) was presented by Dixon C.

**MOTION** to accept all non-financial reports as presented. (Arlene W/Deb P). **Carried 2023AGM6**

8. HFRC expects each congregation to update and approve its own Living Faith Story (LFS) annually. This is a retrospective report (see pp. 8-10 of the Annual Report). It was noted that the Intercultural Currency Committee (ICC) was supposed to support the intercultural aspect of the Music Hall but there is no update from the ICC. This is an important part of the LFS. Addressing this issue will be part of the work for 2023.

**MOTION** to accept the 2022 version of the NVUC Living Faith Story as presented. (Linda W/Bob W). **Carried 2023AGM7**

9. Review of all financial reports (pp. 23-30 in the Annual Report) was presented by Erick F.

**MOTION** to accept all financial reports as presented and the review of the accounts for 2021. (Erick F/Bob W) **Carried 2023AGM8.**

10. Establishing the M&S goal for 2023. The proposed goal for M&S giving for 2023 was originally suggested to be \$10,665. Givings to M&S must be designated as such on cheques, via PAR, or online. The M&S target was raised via friendly amendment to \$12,000.

**MOTION** that the M&S goal for 2023 be set at \$12,000. (Pippa L/Linda W). **Carried as amended 2023AGM9**

11. Presentation of the Operational Transactions Statement (p. 30 of the Annual Report). George M provided a walk-through of this statement. Shortfalls in the past three years have been addressed via a) transfers from the Trustees, b) a combination of loans and grants as part of the federal government's COVID response, and c) through the sale of a portion of the Holton Ave. property development to HFRC. NVUC received the federal Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) to help keep employees working during the pandemic. NVUC also received \$3000 and \$5000 from the City to run the Rest/Hygiene Centre during 2021 and 2022. The federal Canadian Emergency Business Account (CEBA) loan/grant (\$40,000 loan + \$20,000 grant) to NVUC was used in 2020-2021. \$40,000 of the CEBA money must be repaid to the government by Dec. 31, 2023. The Trustees will have to figure out how to repay the loan. They also normally aim to set aside \$50,000 in case of insolvency.

**MOTION** to receive the Operational Transactions Statement for information. (Erick F/ George M) **Carried 2023AGM10**

12. Presentation of the Budget for 2023. Discussion regarding the budget ensued. The question of how NVUC will handle the budget deficit was raised. NVUC can meet its financial commitments for this year, but beyond that is not clear. We need to take a hard look at this [situation]. NVUC will run a stewardship campaign this spring. There will also be a facilitated congregational meeting to walk through our options, within a month. It is reasonable to assume that NVUC will receive no income from the Holton development for several years. Personnel costs in 2023 were higher because of a minimum wage increase and extra hours required to support the building Rentals. Building costs were higher because the cost of insurance was much higher than expected and spending of half of the grant money on building security. The UCC Assessment was missed in the budgeting process because was not an expense in 2021. (p. 31 of the Annual Report). However, funds from a bequest notification received in 2022 will be received in the first quarter of 2023.

**MOTION** to adopt the 2023 budget as presented. (George M/Joey F). **Carried, with one abstention, 2023AGM11**

13. Appointment of Auditor/Reviewers: Brownlow Partners.

**MOTION** to accept Brownlow Partners as Reviewers for NVUC's finances. (George M/Dan P). **Carried 2023AGM12**

14. Nominating Committee Report. Note that Deb P was supposed to be included on the roster for Pastoral Care. There are still some empty slots in the Nominating Report. Importantly, it would be very helpful to have a Social Justice Facilitator who is willing to be on Council. Attendees were asked to consider this need. A Vice-Chair of Council and a person to take on hospitality activities are also needed.

**MOTION** that the Nominating Committee Report be accepted as amended (Pippa L/Bob W). **Carried 2023AGM13**

15. Expressions of Appreciation were given by Helen B, Dixon C, and Dan P to staff, including Rev. Ian, Luke F, Martine F, Crystal B, Steve L, Willis and Arthur S, to Rev. Diane B and Rev. Miriam S, to Karen M and others involved with newcomers, to Bob W and Cater C, to Council, the Finance Committee and the Trustees, to all of the other Committees (especially the Worship Committee during Rev. Ian's sabbatical), to the Affirming team, to Dixon C as Council chair, and to the Music Hall Advisory volunteers, the UCC, and other resource people who get to see the immense amount of work Rev. Ian does in this area.

16. Motion to adjourn: Pippa L, 1:57 pm

/kjm

The congregation of NVUC held an Information Meeting after the service on Sunday, July 9, 2023, in hybrid format.

## Agenda

1. Call to order and opening prayer
2. Adoption of agenda
3. First results of the consultation with Rev. Richard Bott
4. Results of the Called to the Church Stewardship Campaign
5. Trustee report and recommendation on 24 Main W. surplus space redevelopment
6. Adjournment and closing prayer

- 
1. George M opened in prayer.
  2. The agenda was adopted. Karen Mathewson was accepted as recording secretary.
  3. Rev. Richard Bott lead a two-part discussion with NVUC Threshold Partners that occurred on April 29 and May 27, 2023.

The purpose of the consultation meeting(s) was described to the participants as:

- To remember the story of New Vision United Church and, in that remembering, to both grieve what has not come to fruit and to celebrate what has.
- To imagine what our story could become and, in that imagining, to generate real, actionable options for the life of New Vision United Church in the coming year.

Recommendations from the consultation included:

- a. That the Church Council institutes regular “information and conversation” gatherings, inviting all the threshold partners to participate, so that the entire community of faith has the opportunity to hear together ongoing joys/concerns/movement/blocks on a consistent basis.
- b. Work to clearly articulate a shared understanding of the Music Hall, including how it is both a source of income and a community of faith ministry.
- c. That the Church Council begin to explore possible relationships with other communities of faith. Would there be a community of faith who would be willing to partner with the folks of New Vision, so that NVUC could continue in its unique mission and ministry, but as a satellite/partner of another community of faith?

- d. Recognizing that New Vision United Church may not be in a financial position to pay ministry personnel and staff salaries at the end of 2023, it is imperative, therefore, that the Church Council determine next steps.
- e. Could this include a community of faith that is lay-led for a period of time with a Pastoral Supervisor appointed who holds common values with New Vision, meets in a smaller place, partners with another congregation...
- f. Recognizing that this time will require even more energy from the threshold partners of New Vision United Church, that the community of faith begin an intentional process for inviting people they believe would be supportive of New Vision's core values and ministry, to become part of that ministry.

Reactions from the congregation members on July 9, 2023 included curiosity about different models of ministry, an admonition to read all of Rev. Bott's recommendations and comments in the report made by threshold partners at the consultation meeting(s), and concerns about next steps, timelines, and what the terms of a lease would look like.

- 4. Erick F reviewed with the congregation the stewardship campaign that occurred in April, 2023. Ten people increased their givings in various ways, representing an overall 5.5% increase annualized increase to Local givings, based on 2022.
- 5. Dan P presented a Trustee report and recommendation on 24 Main W. surplus space redevelopment. (See ABCD Powerpoint slides housed with these minutes). New Vision has directed its Trustees to obtain an income from its surplus space at 24 Main St. W. The Trustees are only contemplating leasing out space that is surplus to the needs of NVUC. For tax reasons, NV must have an arms' length relationship to the surplus space. Therefore, The Music Hall Alliance is a community of people [not all from NVUC] who are interested in 24 Main St. W. serving as a creative hub. Next steps include development of the Music Hall Alliance as a Social Purpose Organization (SPO), which can apply for grants at all three levels of government. Finally, the Trustees' will negotiate a minimum 10-year lease with the Music Hall Alliance/SPO, and then seek approval of the lease from the NVUC congregation and from Horseshoe Falls Regional Council (HFRC).

**MOTION:** That the New Vision Trustees negotiate a lease agreement with the Music Hall Alliance for use of space at 24 Main St W. that is surplus to the needs of NVUC, subject to the approval of New Vision United Church and Horseshoe Falls Regional Council. (Helen B/Pippa L). **Carried 2023C14**, with one abstention.

There will be another congregational information meeting on Sunday July 30, 2023, after the service.

- 6. Adjournment. Pippa L closed in prayer.

In-person attendance was taken. In-person Attendees: Rev. Ian, George M, Helen B, Erick F & Pippa L, Linda W, Judith R, Joey R, Al J and ... [I did not see the list. kjm]

Zoom Attendees: Dan and Deb P, David M, Julie M, Karen M, Luke

/kjm

The congregation of NVUC held an Information Meeting after the service on Sunday, July 30, 2023, in hybrid format.

## Agenda

1. Call to order and opening prayer
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Brief review of previous meeting
4. Further discussion of the consultation with Rev. Richard Bott
  - o Recommendations 4 and 6
5. Adjournment and closing prayer

- 
1. Joda K opened in prayer.
  2. The agenda was adopted by a show of hands.
  3. George M briefly reviewed the components of the July 9, 2023, congregational meeting, which focused on Recommendation #2, and the results from the consultation with Rev. Rochard Bott.
  4. a) Recommendations 1 to 6 were read aloud. Today's focus was on Recommendations #4 and 6.  
  
b) George M temporarily assumed the Chair while Dixon C presented slides that expanded on developments regarding Recommendation #4. To request a change in NVUC's pastoral relation requires updating the Ministry Profiles of the congregation and filing them with Horseshoe Falls Regional Council (HFRC). These include our Living Faith Story (LFS), a summary of the congregation's demographics, a financial viability report, and a summary of the real property holdings of NVUC. Our LFS was last updated in 2021. Four Council members (Dixon, Helen, Dan Karen) are currently updating the LFS with facilitation by Richard Bott. HFRC is paying for Richard's time because of the speed with which we need to assemble these profiles. The Ministry Profiles will be presented first to our Council, then the Threshold Partners at NVUC for approval in a matter of weeks. Then they will be sent to Horseshoe Falls Regional Council (HFRC). If Rev. Ian is on vacation when the Council meets, HFRC will appoint another minister to be present. The congregational (Threshold Partners) meeting to discuss the profiles will be announced at least two weeks in advance of its occurrence, in Sunday services and the New Vision Notes. When ready, the Ministry Profiles will be distributed by email, with the intention that they be read in advance of the congregational meeting. Some print copies will be made available as well.
  - c) Recommendation #6 was read aloud again. It is an open-ended idea--a proposal. It is up to us to decide how to do this. We need to imagine how the proposal to create a practice of

intentional invitation might be embodied, and pray on it. In our consultation with Richard Bott, he suggested various kinds of participation, including that supporting NV might be appealing to some individuals with similar values, even if they do not want to join the church. There are tools available for evangelism work (defined as articulating “what’s our good news?” E.g., Unbinding the Heart, a small-group, 40-day program). What would affirming evangelism look like? What would it mean for us? In our consultation conversations, Richard appeared to find something that spoke to his heart, which suggests there is something special about NV. People at NV are nimble and step up quickly when needed. We welcome others really well. Newcomers are [good] teachers. But you have to invite them. NVUC is unique in Hamilton, HFRC, UCC and the wider Christian body.

The next congregational meeting will be to discuss the Ministry Profiles.

5. Adjournment. Dixon C closed in prayer.

Attendance was not taken.

/kjm

## Minutes: September 3, 2023 Congregational Information Meeting

The congregation of NVUC held a Congregational Meeting after the service on Sunday, September 3, 2023, in hybrid format.

### Agenda

1. Welcome and Call to order
2. Opening prayer
3. Motion to adopt agenda
4. Motion to appoint recording secretary
5. Motion to record Zoom video and chat
6. Overview of the draft Ministry Profile
7. Motion to adopt the Ministry Profile
8. Rev. Richard B on inviting others to join us
9. Motion to adjourn
10. Closing prayer

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1. Dixon C welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Rev. Richard Bott (acting minister) opened in prayer.

3. **Motion:** THAT the agenda be adopted as presented (Dan P/Linda W). **Carried 2023C15**

4. **Motion:** THAT Karen Mathewson be appointed recording secretary (Joey R/Arlene W). **Carried 2023C16**

5. **Motion:** THAT The Zoom video and chat be recorded but destroyed after the minutes of today's meeting are recorded and approved. (Joey R/Dennis S). **Carried 2023C17**
6. Overview of the Ministry Profile drafted by the Writing Group (from the Trustees): Dixon C walked attendees through the four sections of the Ministry Profile (which includes the Demographic profile, the Real Property profile, the Financial Viability profile, and the Living Faith Story (LFS). (See the slide deck prepared for the meeting [housed with these minutes] or the four profiles themselves in New Vision Notes).

Friendly amendments were proposed for three of the four profiles and adopted:

- a) **Demographic Profile:** The total number of Threshold Partners (TPs) was changed from 59 to 52 in accord with the most recent list of TPs available.
  - b) **Demographic Profile:** The details at the bottom of p. 1 of this profile did not correspond with the age categories we've used elsewhere (in the Financial Viability Profile). This passage was amended to state that the two largest age groups in the congregation are 60-70 years (14) and over 70 years (13). We are an older congregation.
  - c) **Financial Viability Profile:** The final statement in the Financial Profile was changed to read: "NVUC is unable to meet its current commitment (full-time ministry) beyond 2023."
  - d) **Living Faith Story:** Joey provided a clarification about Orange Shirt Day on p. 4 of the LFS: This sentence was added: "In addition, a service recognizing Orange Shirt Day was initiated by one of our congregation members."
7. The congregation was asked: Recalling that the purpose of these four profiles is to present our reality to Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, do these four profiles accurately reflect the status of NVUC in 2023?

**MOTION:** That the congregation adopt the four sections of the Ministry Profile as amended. (Linda W/Joey R). **Carried 2023C18.** There were no abstentions or votes against the motion.

Next: The four sections of the Ministry Profile will be sent to the UCC Pastoral Relations Commission for approval.

8. Rev. Richard B, on intentionally inviting others to join us, something we in UCC are uncomfortable doing: Rev. Richard noted that he did not know where to enter the NVUC building today. [We use the side door.] Our physical set-up could be more physically inviting. Each of us knows 2-3 people who would find this community to be a healing, loving space. We need to build our capacity to invite others, not just welcome them. We may need to work in intentional relation with other communities of faith so we have the possibility of lay-led ministry. There are programs to help communities do that.
9. Motion to Adjourn. Dave W.
10. Rev. Richard B closed in prayer.

In-person attendance was taken. In-person Attendees: Rev. Richard B, George M, Linda W, Arlene W, Dave W, Bob W, Joey R, Rev. Diane B, Rev. Miriam S, Dennis S, Al J, Dan P, Deb P, Helen B, Judith R, Dixon C, Martine F (staff), Karen M

Zoom Attendees: David M, Sharon G, Erick F, Pippa L, Erin P, Robin M, Luke F (staff)

/kjm

## Minutes: September 24, 2023 Congregational Information Meeting

The congregation of NVUC held a Congregational Meeting after the service on Sunday, September 24, 2023, in hybrid format.

### Agenda

1. Call to Order and Introductions
2. Opening Prayer
3. Motion: To enable Threshold Partners & Adherents
4. Motion: To adopt the agenda
5. Motion: To appoint a Recording Secretary
6. Motion: To record the Zoom chat and video; attendance
7. Review: Financial Profile and implications
8. Motion: To request a change in pastoral relations
9. Rev. Ian
10. Questions and Discussion
11. Vote
12. Motion: to destroy the ballots
13. Motion to Adjourn and Closing Prayer

Helen B chaired the meeting for Dixon C who was called away to an emergency. See the Powerpoint slides for the meeting, housed with these minutes. Dixon joined later in the meeting.

Helen B opened the meeting. HFRC liaisons Rev. Micol Cottrell and Pat Tooley were introduced to the assembly. Rev. Micol opened in prayer.

**MOTION:** THAT Threshold Partners and Adherents be allowed to vote today. (Erick F/Bob W). **Carried 2023C19.**

**MOTION:** THAT the Agenda be adopted as presented. (Linda W/Judith R). **Carried 2023C20.**

**MOTION:** THAT Karen Mathewson be appointed recording secretary for today's meeting. (Deb P/Al J). **Carried 2023C21.**

**MOTION:** THAT the Zoom meeting and Zoom chat be recorded for the purpose of completing these minutes.

After approval of the minutes, both records will be destroyed. (Pippa L/Deb P). **Carried 2023C22.**

Review of Financial Profile information: The table with income versus expenses from 2021 to 2023 was presented again, as it was at the last meeting. Each year has a deficit. Helen B noted that the overall deficit for 2023 is projected to be \$90,745. The conclusion was read aloud: That NVUC cannot meet its expected commitment to called, full-time ministry beyond 2023. An opportunity to ask questions was provided. None were raised.

Dan P assumed the chair to enable Helen to move the following motion.

**MOTION:** THAT the congregation of New Vision United Church (NVUC) request Horseshoe Falls Regional Council (HFRC) to end its pastoral relationship with Ian Sloan, OM, effective September 26, 2023, noting that NVUC will be responsible for providing Rev. Sloan with 90 days' salary and benefit continuation, that is until December 25, 2023, in the same amounts as payable before this request for a change in pastoral relations. (Helen B/Erick F).

Rev. Ian presented some remarks to the assembled Threshold Partners and adherents. A transcript is presented here:

"I will speak briefly. I am not speaking for or against the motion before the meeting. Winston Churchill, whom some here are no fan of and others if they knew more about him might join them once said something like 'Democracy is a lousy form of governance, but it's better than all the rest.' To me it follows whether one likes the way the white conservative Churchill phrased it or not, that when it comes to truly difficult decisions, as this one is, it is better that we decide democratically. Then we've done an honest day's work in the vineyard, whenever we've arrived in it. To me the safeguarding and advancing democracy is the probable reason I am still here and not having moved on myself, which would have forestalled your need to take this vote today. In 2014, NV asked me into a risky venture of starting something new with very little in hand to make it go. You were fair in your compensation to me and always have been. Not to get into details, but there has been a meaningful premium paid to me in my compensation because for many years, we, I and my family, had to endure year-to-year appointments and all the uncertainty that brought. You must know as a body that your leadership earned and commanded my loyalty and continues to, today.

I am quite proud of all that you and I have accomplished together. It's an impressive list. This is not the time to rehearse what's on that list. It won't help in this moment. But there will be a time when it is right. Of that, I'm sure.

I'm not disappointed by the results we have achieved together. Few of you will know that I went into this, kicking and screaming, to this labour of finding, sharing, and using the supports, resources and knowledge in the areas related to identifying and re-developing surplus space, that was crucial to getting New Vision started. We have shared throughout the time we have been together that we believe change in the church will come from the bottom up, and from the margins, where we are. That's something I still believe. And know even more in my bones to be true from our experience. Standing as a local UC minister, your minister before the Planning Committee of City Council, calling for them to allow us to abolish a prized architectural component of an east-end neighbourhood of central Hamilton, and getting them to agree, was one of the hardest things I have done in my life. But it got this community of faith somewhere. And you are what has mattered to me and that's why I did it. I have no regrets.

We did not achieve the full-time ministry and mission supported by multiple and unconventional revenue-streams that we set out to achieve. There is always a risk of failing when one starts out on a new path. Some might second guess it now and say it was unrealistic to begin with. I don't. It was a risk, but it was a risk worth taking, and we took it. And if we hadn't, we wouldn't be here today, with a difficult decision, but a real decision.

So we, you and I, are making this decision together today, in the grace and the power of the Spirit. I am going to ask Dan to allow me to be excused from the rest of the meeting at the conclusion of these remarks, so that we truly know among us that the action you take is taken in the spiritual bond between us, and nothing else.

Both Cater and I value you all. We have confidence in you. I guess that's why I am here for both of us, to make sure you know you have our confidence, as you take an action that will move your life and ministry, and my life and ministry, in new directions from the one we have shared with each other. Thanks."

After presentation of his remarks, Rev. Ian asked to be excused from the meeting, leaving at 11:59 am.

Several attendees expressed appreciation to Ian before he left.

Helen B resumed the chair, noting that this motion was not a reflection of Rev. Ian's service or performance, but rather reflected a pragmatic decision. She also read out the slides titled From UCC Manual, More Background, Music Hall, and Going Forward. Comments and questions concerning the motion were solicited.

Questions: These included whether renovations planned for the Music Hall project were continuing and whether these renovations were completed. They are not continuing at present and are not completed. Helen B clarified that HFRC requested NVUC put a hold on the project for now, although we can continue to use the Music Hall for individual events attended by fewer than 800 people. It was clarified that today was Rev. Ian's last required Sunday service, although he has graciously offered to lead services on October 15 and November 26, so congregants will have opportunities to see him again and for closure. Rev. Ian has also offered to help Luke manage existing rentals that were initiated by Rev. Ian. Dixon C (on Zoom) mentioned that Council is effectively and rapidly working to preserve as much continuity as possible in upcoming worship services, and thinking carefully about the way forward for the congregation. Leadership for the next three Sunday services is in place. Rev. Diane is leading on October 1, 2023, and Martine is arranging the service for October 8, 2023.

Rev. Micol introduced the procedures for voting. The motion was projected on the screen throughout the voting process. Anonymous in-person votes were collected on paper ballots; Zoom participants registered their votes anonymously via a Zoom poll.

Rev. Micol C and Pat T left the room to count the ballots and poll numbers. On their return, they found the assembly singing a round from today's service ("Where two or three are gathered in my name").

Twenty-one votes were cast in favour of the motion. There were no abstentions and no votes against the motion. **Carried 2023C23**, unanimously.

**MOTION:** THAT the ballots be destroyed at the end of today's meeting. (Erick F/Pippa L). **Carried 2023C24.**

**MOTION:** THAT the meeting be adjourned. Erick F.

Rev. Micol closed with prayers for Rev. Ian, NVUC leadership, and the people of NVUC.

“To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.’ God ever gracious, hard decisions have had to be made today. The people of your church have stepped forward into the unknown. We hold in prayer Rev. Ian Sloan, as his ministry with the people of New Vision United changes. We pray for the leadership of this church, that the work of the church continues. We pray for these people of the congregation, and all who are enriched by their loving witness to You, in all they do. That they continue to be the church together, trusting Your faithfulness. Now, oh God, grant them rest on this weary day, healing and strength, in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Pippa L offered a vote of thanks to Council for the difficult work they did during the preceding months.

Helen B thanked all those present and also those who had attended the consultation meetings with Rev. Richard Bott and helped with the visioning exercises earlier this year.

The meeting was adjourned.

In-person attendance was taken. In-person Attendees: Rev. Micol Cottrell (HFRC), Pat Tooley (HFRC), Rev. Ian S, Helen B (chair), Dan & Deb P, Arlene W, Rev. Diane B, Bob W, Erick F, Pippa L, Linda W, Dennis S, Al J, Judith R, Martine F (staff), Karen M

Zoom Attendees: Dixon C, David & Karen M, Sharon G, Erin P, Joey R, Jen H, Joda K, George & Julie M, Beatrice M, Luke F (staff), (Cater S left early).

/kjm

Thank You



To each of you:

An expression of gratitude for sharing your true heart with this community; for your commitment and involvement to New Vision United Church.

We have so much to celebrate - embrace and revel in those amazing pieces. We also have challenges that need our care, consideration, and prayers.

***May the Spirit continue to lead us into the future.***

February 2024