



# Eglinton St. George's United Church

Extending love · Serving others · Growing in faith



# 2019

## ANNUAL REPORT

# Living out our mission in 2019

***“Do ordinary things with extraordinary love”***

*Mother Teresa*

2018/19 has been a transformational year for ESG in terms of building sustainable multi-generational ministry in our North Toronto church home.

We’ve had the opportunity to live out our strategic vision for growth expressed by our congregational goals:

**Growth:** meaningful presence of young adults, children, youth, seniors and families. Strategies for financial viability.

**Leadership:** a talented ministerial and lay leadership team that inspires and engages members and newcomers

**Extravagant Welcome:** open, welcoming and engaging culture of belonging

This has also been our first full fiscal year with our exceptionally energetic ministerial leaders, Paul and Sarah. They join Don, who has wisely steadied us through several years of challenge, reflection and renewal.

We have been very fortunate to receive a large \$266,000 three-year grant from the United Church of Canada. This grant exists to support churches like ESG with an intentional focus on creating new bold ministry like our Project Flourish. Significant progress has been achieved in Year 1: a substantive research and insights foundation; and pilot programs such as the Flourish House young adult intentional community and a community garden.

In 2019 we were also blessed with increased generosity from the congregation in terms of annual givings and bequests. The generosity of your families and your deep commitment to ESG’s viability has been essential to our strategic focus on a vision for growth. Thank you!

## ***Do amazing things with extraordinary love***

Don Parsons tells the story of a friend who thinks that Don is lucky to be at a “successful church” as measured by: a large team of ministers and staff, dedicated volunteers, new members, generous and increased givings, well managed trust funds, a well maintained, renovated church property, and more...

Don’s friend is right. ESG is abundantly blessed and 2019 has been a successful year for us.

Don’s wise counsel, however, is that the real measure of success is we make a difference in the lives of the people of our congregation and our community in Toronto, Canada, and globally.

*Doing ordinary things with extraordinary love* is our purpose as a congregation. This notion is not new for ESG ... it has pulled us through some tough times in the past. It is the foundation of the amazing meaningful programs that you will read about in this report: Outreach, Mission & Service, Worship, Music, Pastoral Care, Adult Learning and Family Ministry.

And, it is thanks to the commitment of our inspiring ministers, talented staff, generous members and dedicated volunteers that as community we can *do ordinary things with extraordinary love*.

*ESG is building sustainable multi-generational ministry in our North Toronto church home.*





Grammar Police might catch up to me. As I was writing this report, I had a huge list in my head - worship and music and care and support and people and property and staff and family and seniors and children and... and... and. There has been so much happening here that has been great!

The ampersand is the image that relates to our ministry at ESG. There isn't one thing that defines us, that can encompass all that we are.

We are continually moving into new opportunities. We have a multi-Generational focus providing relevance and meaning for all ages and stages. We are committed to supporting our loyal and dedicated members at the same time as attracting new members and supporters. Bruce Harding in hymn 62 in More Voices reminds us:

There is room for all in the shadow of God's wing;  
there is room for all, sheltered in God's love.  
And I rejoice and sing, "My refuge and my rock, in whom I trust."  
There is room for all!

As a community of faith, we lean into that promise, & as Christians, we are called to share that good news with others that they too may know that they are not alone!

*Rev. Dr. Paul Hutchison*

*Lead Minister*



# Project Flourish

In September of 2018, Toronto South East Presbytery approved ESG's grant application for funding for Project Flourish. The grant came from the Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation for \$276,000 to learn more about our community and to develop a strategy for growth. The mandate defined for the Project Flourish Team over three years is to:

**Do research for relevance** - Become informed through research, observation, conversation and reading to expand our thinking

**Formulate a path ahead** - Propose a strategic framework to respect current members and also attract new people

**Look Forward** - Test, learn and grow – co-mingle learning and strategy with experimental experiences and refinement. Use proposed strategy to guide a programming plan

**Reach out to let the community know about us** - Enhance external communications and marketing

The Project Flourish team was set up consisting of Alan Walker and Janet Hardy (co-chairs), Lisa Elder, Bryn Joynt, Bonnie Joynt, Nick Gibson, Donna MacCandlish and Sarah Chapman. This team came together in October 2018 to start reviewing documents that highlighted the history of ESG and why growth was important when looking to our future. We also reviewed existing quantitative and qualitative research that assessed how to access and connect with people's values, as well as church communities who are successfully growing.

As a team we highlighted three demographic targets for growth which were based on where we see gaps in our current congregation and programs: 1) 19-30 year-olds, 2) Families with young children and 3) 60-70 year-olds.

To begin our research to fill information gaps, we engaged the Environics Research company to learn more about the demographics of people living in our catchment area (*Allen to Bayview, 401 to St. Clair*) and their current needs.

We also worked with a qualitative research company, Heads Up, and held two "ExtremeExchanges": one with people in our Community catchment area, the other with ESG people. Both sessions had members from our 3 demographic target groups who were guided through different research exercises to learn more about their values, what they are seeking in their day to day lives, and what programs would draw them to a community of faith like ESG.

Some key learnings from our research included:

- Our target Community has an identifiable need for what ESG might offer. Those who don't know ESG are skeptical that any organization could deliver what we are already currently doing!
- There are commonalities among what all the demographic target groups are seeking. For example, all demographic groups said they want ESG to make it easy for them to give to others, to inspire them to better themselves, to teach them, to make them feel part of a community, to help them make new friends

Based on the in-depth reports we received and reviewed, and the results of this research, we are currently developing a strategy to stimulate growth within ESG.

While working on research and developing a strategy, we also have been lifting up three programs to help us “learn by doing”. These programs have included:

**Dinner Church** - an intergenerational alternative evening service, which includes a shared meal

**Community Garden** - raised garden plots built and rented to community and ESG members

**Flourish House** - an intentional community at the Church’s 92 Craighurst house that invites young adults to live together in a meaningful way, while offering their gifts to the ESG and greater community



Dinner Church on Sunday evening

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In addition to developing a strategy to stimulate growth, the next phase for the team is to continue to work on Program Development that responds to the needs of the community and growth groups and then communicate and market these initiatives.

This is a very exciting and vibrant team to be a part of and I’m grateful for their hard work over this last year!

*Rev. Sarah Chapman*

*Next Generation and Growth Minister*



ESG Community Garden

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ESG Grow Staff

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# Serving Others Generously

## Outreach

Outreach is happening at ESG! In the past year, we had many successes with a focus on food and housing.

*Our focus this year has been food and housing. Through education, advocacy and action, our Outreach programs allow us to effect change and offer direct help.*



**A group of volunteers from New Perspectives prepared and served dinner at Out of the Cold.**

With your help, ESG volunteers:

- prepared and served 5 delicious dinners at Out of the Cold (including turkey for Christmas!)
- gave food, transportation and a listening ear to more than 500 guests at our weekly Thursday Drop In program
- donated 65 boxes of food to families in need
- supported Outreach in the wider community through support of agencies such as AURA, Camp Scugog, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, CRC, the Fred Victor Women's Shelter, Friends of DISMAS, the Massey Centre, Street Health, Toronto Urban Native Ministry, Wychwood Open Door and Voices for a Just Society
- raised awareness of issues in Canada's criminal justice system through four Compassionate Justice Speaker events

ESG's Outreach programs can be categorized into three main areas:

- 1) direct aid to vulnerable individuals
- 2) financial assistance to charitable agencies
- 3) advocacy and education regarding social justice.

We encourage you to get involved through education, advocacy and action to effect change and offer direct help.

*Maggie Wilkinson*

*Member at Large, Outreach*

# Find Caring Community

## Pastoral Care

ESG's Pastoral Care Team coordinates many initiatives each year.

Our Fall and Spring Seniors' Luncheons keep our seniors connected with each other and are eagerly anticipated social events.

*Pastoral care at ESG is the care of individual members of our church family. We are proud of and grateful for a dedicated Pastoral Care Team and our Pastoral Care Minister, Don Parsons, who work together to provide support in meaningful ways.*

Our Retirement Residence Tours are great opportunities to stay informed about housing. ESG Cares is a confidential way to connect those with challenges to the support they need. Our Card Ministry coordinates with the ESG Angels to make sure those with health challenges or in hospital know that they are being held in care at ESG. Young adults facing the challenges of university exam time are not forgotten and receive Tim Hortons gift cards along with a supportive message.

We also have a caring group who regularly visit our members wanting to maintain a connection To ESG but are unable to come to church. These connections are very much appreciated. This year our Funeral Coordinator, with Ministerial staff, supported 7 families through their services. Additionally, our Christmas in a Minor Key, a service organized by Don Parsons, provides a quiet Christmas experience for those suffering bereavement.

Future plans include a new Photo Directory prior to Christmas and another Embracing Aging Series starting in January 2020.

*Arlene Duncan  
Pastoral Care*



**Seniors' Luncheons are enjoyed and appreciated**

# Discover Spirituality Together

## Family Ministry

Family Ministry at ESG offers caring, supervised small group programs for children and youth, nurturing faith development in an inclusive community.

## Church School

During the summer, a new bright nursery space was added in the lower level complete with new toys, equipment and books to reflect the diverse families we serve. We kicked off the new year in September with a Sunday School breakfast to celebrate the families who volunteered their time and talents in Children's Ministry.

We held our first Family Christmas Party and Carol Singing Evening at the end of November with a pizza party and holiday crafts. The Christmas Pageant, the Shepherd's Play, was a great success with children and youth. In the spring, Sarah Chapman directed the kids to act out the Easter Story in a seventeen minute Palm Sunday Pageant shown to the congregation.

The church School continued their fund-raising efforts for their outreach charity, House of Lararus, though the Cookies-in-a-Jar and Rummage Bake Sales. Easter Day was celebrated with a special program of crafts and games for children of all ages. Family events continued with the Pasta Dinner and Bingo evening along with the annual Sunday School Picnic in June.



Children at ESG raised money for charity by making and selling Cookies in a Jar



The Shepherd's Play



Celebration breakfast in Church School

## Youth Group

The Youth Group at ESG had another year of growth in faith, depth in community, and exploration of ourselves. During our regular times together on Sundays, we explored together many of the burning questions at the heart of the Christian faith: who is Jesus, and why does he matter? Why do we read Scripture? Does God care for creation? We also asked difficult questions of ourselves: how does our power and privilege impact our discipleship? How does Jesus challenge us to relate to the folks without shelter on the streets of Toronto?

As we dug into these sometimes-uncomfortable questions, we also made space for our community to grow in depth. We introduced monthly breakfasts on Sunday mornings as a way to break bread together in an informal and delicious way. We shared in outings to laser tag and bowling, as well as in-house pizza nights and social events. Over the course of the year, our group welcomed two new faces who bring their own gifts and experiences, and who enrich our shared life. As with all parts of ESG's ministry, we trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in our group: stirring up our prayer, shaping our lives, and deepening our trust in one another and God.

*Morgan Bell*  
Youth Leader



**Morgan shares his energy and conviction with ESG youth**

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## Adult Education

The fall featured a four part mental health series led by Mary Thomson focusing on depression, anxiety, and perfectionism. It was well attended and attracted many people from the surrounding community. We also ran an afternoon Soul Collage Workshop led by retired minister Rivkah Unland.

In the spring, Cathie Stewart facilitated two sessions of labyrinth walking. Paul Hutchison led a series for the North Toronto churches on becoming Progressive, Inclusive, and Life Affirming. The meditation group offered guided sessions one evening a month.

*Patricia Thompson*  
Adult Education

# Discover Spirituality Together

## Worship

Worship is often our first opportunity to connect with people as they experience one of ESG's key priorities: Extravagant Welcome. When did you last connect with someone new at ESG? When did you last bring a guest to worship?

At ESG, worship is a shared experience with shared ministerial leadership and members of the congregation actively participating. Thank you for all who contribute their time and energy to our services.

2019 was a year of reflection, celebration and new beginnings.



**ESG Celebrates our Affirming Ministry**



**Shared time with children and youth during worship**

A covenanting service was held in September to commemorate the new pastoral relationship between ESG, Paul Hutchison, Lead Minister and Sarah Chapman, Next Generation and Growth Minister.

In May, ESG celebrated becoming an Affirming Ministry, cementing our long standing commitment to the full inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities into the church's life and ministry.

With a new year on the horizon we look forward to new opportunities, to seeing old friends and to welcoming new ones. Thank you for your continued support. Your feedback is encouraged and appreciated.

*Christine Lawson*  
*Chair, Worship*

## Music

The 2018-19 choir season featured back-to-back fall Sundays with our Women's and Men's Choruses, each of which included participation by several congregation members. The Women's Choruses were prepared and conducted by choir members Emily Taub and Beth MacRae; the Men's Chorus included a rousing gospel piece that was thoroughly enjoyed by both participants and listeners.

Once again, ESG sponsored a series that included concerts by the Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto and the Elmer Iseler Singers, as well as two by the ESG choir with orchestral accompaniment. Both of our events featured works by Canadian composers, and both were attended by at least one of the composers or members of the composer's family, as special guests. This always makes the choir work harder! All performances were enthusiastically supported and enjoyed. Our own ESG concerts drew audiences of about 350, both winter and spring.

Worship services included jazz, preludes by our Section Leads, pianist Rowan Sawarna-Small and violinist Adriel Sloss, and VOX, our community youth choir. Our services of Remembrance, Christmas, and Easter were enhanced by additional instrumentalists.

*Beth MacRae*

*Music*



VOX Youth Choir performs at ESG



The ESG Choir sings *All Bells in Paradise*



Volunteers are the heart of our ministry





Multi-generational ministry is the key to our future



# *Governing Responsibly*

## *Ministry & Personnel Report*

We had a year of new beginnings with our Ministerial team. We thank Paul Hutchison and Sarah Chapman for their creative energy, leadership and commitment to our vision. We thank Don Parsons for his continued work with ESG as our Pastoral Care Minister. We are thankful to our staff team for the commitment and dedication that they bring to the life and work of the church. We look forward to an exciting time at ESG with continued energy and commitment to our vision.

### *Staff Team*

Rev. Dr. Paul Hutchison, Lead Minister

Rev. Sarah Chapman, Next Generation and Growth Minister  
*(on Parental Leave October 2019 – September 2020)*

Rev. Don Parsons, Pastoral Care Minister

Shawn Grenke, Music Director

Jennifer Torrens, Church Administrator

Irina Denissova, Bookkeeper

Ainsley Munro, Community Engagement Associate

Kate Littler, Family Ministry Coordinator

Morgan Bell, Youth Leader (Grades 7 – 9)

Adrian Legault, Youth Leader (Grades 10 – 12)

Donna Lang, Outreach Coordinator

Edgar Fulay, Custodian

Alvaro Perez, Custodian

Sam Cavanagh, Project Flourish Coordinator (October 2019 – June 2020)

### *Trustees Report*

The ESG board of Trustees holds all of the property of the ESG congregation for the congregation. This includes the church's real estate and other property, including the church's investment funds. The ESG Trustees meet 3-4 times a year to receive reports on and discuss property issues, to review all investment funds and to monitor the performance by our asset manager. The Trustees are also called upon by Governing Council to provide input and recommendations regarding financial planning and other related matters that affect the Church.

Fund reports are included in yearly ESG financial reports and are part of yearly audits. No new business arose in the past year that requires congregational input.

*Hugh DesBrisay*  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

## Financial Report

We ended the fiscal year June 30, 2019 in a positive financial position.

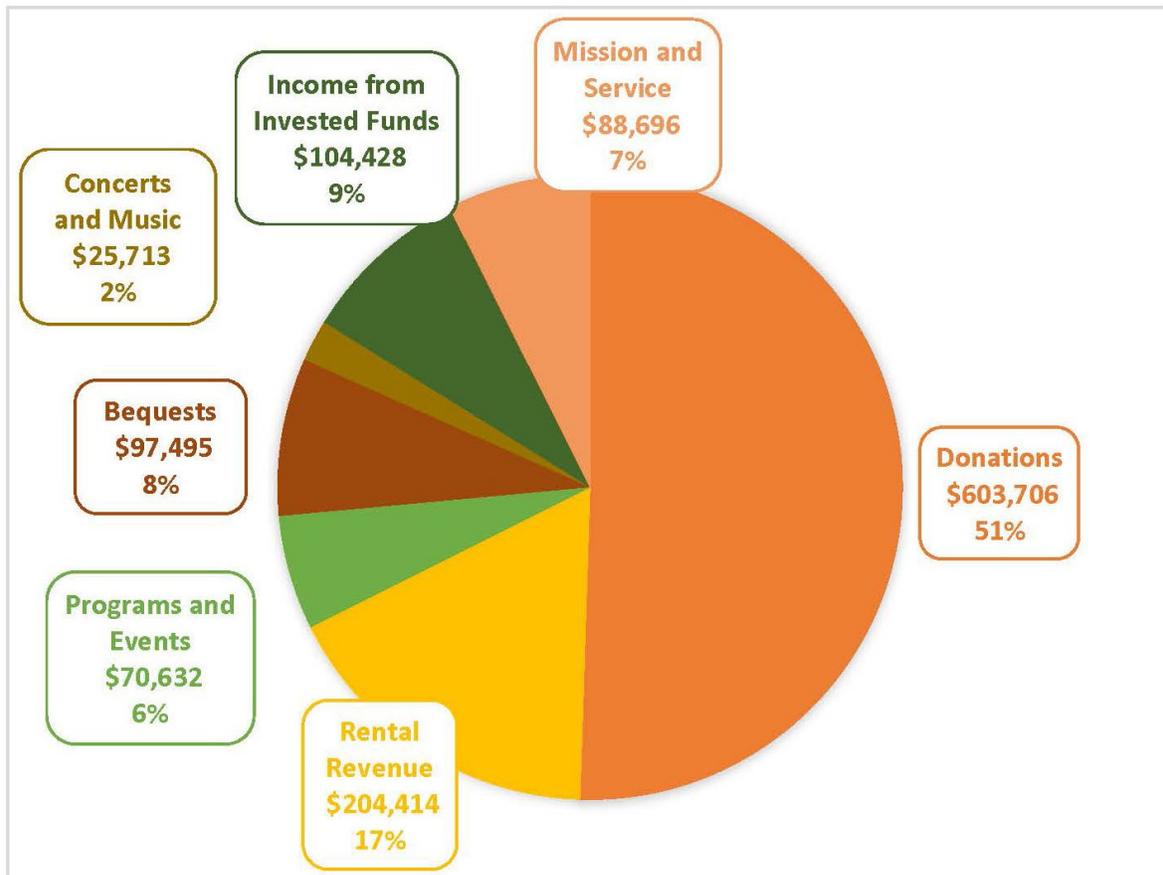
The following is a high level recap:

(Please refer to the Audited Financial Statements for details.)

- Our donations increased by **\$33,000 (6%)** from the previous year due to year end appeal and major donor
- Our rental revenues increased by **\$46,000 or 29%**. (\$204,414 vs \$158,703)
- Our operating expenses were slightly **below budget by 1%**.
- We received **\$97,495** in undesignated bequests.
- Our Operating Fund increased by **\$126,377 (17.5%)** due to generous bequests, investment returns and transfer of **\$37,500** to Property Reserve Fund by the Congregation.

This pie chart provides the breakdown of our revenue sources for the fiscal year:

### SOURCES OF REVENUE



With God's help we will:

- Create an inclusive, dynamic Christian community;
- Reach out to those in need;
- Live with love, compassion, and hope;
- Grow together in our faith journey.



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