

2023 ANNUAL REPORT





2022-2023 was a special year, one of building and rebuilding at ESG. Figuratively AND literally!

We were building back after two years impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. We have rebuilt – but also are going beyond what we were, building new programs, new worship experiences, new connections.

Looking back on ESG's 2022-23 year, I am astounded at how much activity has been embraced by our many hard-working volunteers. The quality of worship experiences and musical offerings online and in person, the variety of programs inside and out, and the level of care for our community and our building have all been exemplary.

The Sabbatical Team did an excellent job of building coverage for Paul during his Sabbatical absence; Sarah and Don as well as MJ and Ashley provided support and time to make sure ESG continued to engage and connect through worship and programs.

We built a Food Ministry that included workshops in the Community Garden, Cultural Kitchen parties, and new food justice learning sessions. We built our relationships in the North Toronto Cluster, holding a joint service for the entire Cluster when Moderator Carmen Lansdowne came to speak, joining for shared summer worship, and providing backpacks for students in Thorncliffe Park for 3 years in a row! Family Ministry has built up with new families, new programs, and great engagement and connection happening each month.

We rebuilt the storage room in the basement, replacing the roof slab that was crumbling. We are rebuilding in person attendance at worship services. Coffee Hour was rebuilt and expanded, and as a result, people are connecting before and after service. Out of the Cold came back in a different form, serving dinners to people on the streets. Multiple outreach programs continued to serve those in need in our community.

In response to challenges of demographics, societal demands and financial trends, we built the Evolve team to lead us in a strategic plan to define our values, clarify strategy, and lean into our future. Emerging from this group, a communications plan is underway, and a rental strategy group and music rental team have generated actionable plans that are already having positive impact. More work is needed, and I hope you will join in creating a sustainable ESG to live out our mission and values.

I look back on a great year of rebuilding and building up, and with this sound foundation, look forward to a bright future at ESG!

Blessings,

Maggie

Chair of ESG Governing Council

Table of Contents



Discovering Spirituality Together

1. Worship
2. Adult Education
3. Music
4. Family Ministry
5. Youth Ministry

Supporting Our ESG Community

1. Pastoral Care
2. Leadership/Hospitality
3. Volunteer Leadership Project

Extending Our Reach

1. Outreach
2. Compassionate Justice
3. Next Generation
4. Labyrinth

Governing Responsibility

1. Property Committee Report
2. Ministry and Personnel
3. Trustees
4. Finance

**DISCOVERING
SPIRITUALITY
TOGETHER**

WORSHIP

We have responded to the challenges of adapting to our world today in the way we worship at ESG. We have been practicing in-person worship in a careful way, mindful of the welfare of our fellow congregants. Our ministerial and music team has continued to move forward, evolving creatively, making use of technology to make worship more accessible than ever.

Worship had the challenge of adapting to our Lead Minister Paul Hutchison's Sabbatical beginning in April, but with the help of our Sabbatical Planning committee, put in place a robust and eclectic worship program that included Artistry of God guest speakers and other guest preachers. We also appreciated the support of our Sabbatical Co-ordinator Meghan Jamieson during this period.

During the summer we explored shared services with our neighbours at Lawrence Park and will consider whether this practice may continue in future summers.

Through creative application of technical skills by our in-house ESG production team, our choir leads continued to bring us the gift of their talents weekly and the gift of our full choir singing together.

We continued to offer both in-person and on-line worship, live-streamed or to be watched later if congregants prefer.

We look forward to 2023-24 as we continue to grow our church community. We look forward to joining together in worship as the ESG family.

Gord Brookes
Chair, Worship



ADULT EDUCATION

In 2022-23, Adult Education continued to focus on virtual learning and sharing opportunities.

- Monthly **We are Not Alone** newsletter with topics to reflect on and stimulate new thinking.
- Monthly **Community of Care** group. Topics dovetailed with the **We are Not Alone newsletter** or the sermon topics.
- Janet Hardy led a **book study based on the book “Faith After Doubt”** by Brian McLaren. It was well attended with insightful conversations about our faith questions.
- Suzan Samivard organized a webinar **“Strategies to boost confidence in the workplace”** aimed at adults 19-35.
- **Bible for Busy People** continued this year with several workshops facilitated by Stephen Milton of LPCC.
- **Faithful Green Action Group** organized by the North Toronto Cluster offered documentaries and book discussions.

In 2023-24, adult education will offer both virtual and in-person learning discussion groups and learning sessions. This will include:

Labyrinth: ESG’s new front lawn labyrinth opens this fall. Cathie Stewart will be offering workshops to learn how to walk towards your quiet centre.

Spiritual Discovery: It starts with a faith discussion group “So what do you think about God?” on October 1st after church led by Jim Black and Janet Hardy. Other opportunities include a book study, podcast group, and a planned forest bathing experience.

Interfaith Panel Discussion: Peter Wilkins will moderate an interfaith panel discussion in the winter, 2024.

Becoming a Healing Presence in a Traumatized World: Mary Thomson and Patti Thompson will be offering a two-evening program for those thirsting for a dose of optimism. It will focus on strategies for healing ourselves, creating a culture of connection, and operating from a place of hope.

We are not Alone: Jim Black will continue this monthly newsletter of reflection and inspiration. Want to discuss your insights? Join the monthly **Community of Care** discussion & prayer group.

Meditation: Cathie Stewart will be leading a Soul Sync meditation group starting in the fall.

Patti Thompson
Chair, Adult Education Team



MUSIC

The past year was a fruitful one for the choir: We came back together weekly to rehearse and to support worship services, sang very well-received concerts in December and May, and even celebrated the year-end with a party.

We continued to monitor health advisories and wore our singing masks until Easter, by which time it was deemed safe enough to sing without them.

Shawn continued his doctorate residency in choral conducting at the University of Alberta last year, while maintaining his coordination of our music life at ESG, even when he could not be here. On the weeks when Shawn was away, we enjoyed the consistent rehearsal and service leadership of Tenor Lead Kevin Bieman, assisted by Soprano Lead Emily Taub, with pianist Claire Harris and occasional guest organist Lydia Petersen. Meghan Jamieson provided administrative support and liaison with the ministers during the year.

We welcomed some New Expressions services during the year, experimenting sometimes with our Leads and sometimes with guest artists such as Colleen Allen for jazz and Emily Taub's A La Mode choir for gospel music. At the joint Good Friday music service with Lawrence Park Community Church, both choirs and conductors participated in what may become an annual tradition.

The two concerts, "What Sweeter Music," which included audience carols supported by organ and string ensemble, and "Serenade to Music," which celebrated many styles of music, were musically and financially successful. We were grateful for the support of the congregation and friends.

As this new year begins, we are looking forward to having Shawn with us full time and to continuing to be a vital part of worship at ESG. Our community of singers remains committed to each other and to the music heritage and future of ESG.

Thank you,

Shawn Grenke, Director of Music

Bronwyn Best and Beth MacRae, co-Presidents of the Choir



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

This was the first year since March 2020 when all Family Ministry programs took place in person at the church. In the fall, our attendance grew considerably as we welcomed many new families to ESG. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the newly renovated Sunday School room and library to the young children and their families.

Families were welcomed back to ESG with a team building Egg Drop Challenge. Kids and youth created structures to safely protect an egg when dropped from a height. This was followed by the community BBQ and ice-cream truck. At the end of the month, Orange Shirt Day was honoured by learning the Seneca creation story of Turtle Island. In October a special event called Waffle Church was organized to highlight the different gifts we offer to our church and world. Delicious waffles were made and served with various toppings.

The beginning of Advent was celebrated with the Family Christmas Party. The evening started with the first Pageant rehearsal, followed by a children's Sing-A-Long in the Sanctuary. Afterwards, pizza and snacks were served, and festive activities were organized for all ages.

At the beginning of December, the popular Cookies-in-Jar fundraiser was held. Funds raised helped to support two local children's charities: Moorelands Kids and Youth Without Shelter. Additional funds were raised for these charities at the Family Ministry Bake Sales at both Jumble Sales.

The first in-person Pageant took place since 2019. It was a special moment to watch all the children and youth in costume recall together the story of Jesus's birth and see the star shine brightly over the stable. Christmas Eve was celebrated with carols, special music and glow sticks as the Christmas story was told.

In February, Valentine's Day cards were made by the children and youth to share with the church community. Plus, shortbread cookies were decorated with colourful icing and sprinkles.

Pancake Day was celebrated with a brunch after church. Pancakes and fruit were prepared by the Youth Group. The traditional fast-paced Pancake Day races were held in the Sanctuary and certificates were awarded to all the participants.

Palm Sunday was celebrated by waving palms and singing Hosanna in a parade in the Sanctuary. Afterwards, families made Easter Gardens and learned about the events of Holy Week. On Easter Day, families gathered in the gym for a story and some eggcellent crafts.

The beginning of summer was celebrated with the annual church picnic. The kids and youth gathered in the gym for a variety of games and races. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed watermelon, sandwiches, cookies, lemonade, and the ice-cream truck.

Kate Littler
Children's Ministry Coordinator





YOUTH MINISTRY

We had an amazing time in youth group this year! I had the pleasure of meeting several new youth and reconnecting with long-time members of ESG. On Sunday mornings, the youth group participated in fun activities such as making breakfast and playing games like Codenames and Charades. I also led discussions on topics such as The Beatitudes, Advent and Jesus' Baptism to give youth the chance to cultivate their own understanding of these events. And finally, to take our faith a little deeper, we participated in Spiritual Practices. These gave youth the chance to use their senses and creativity to connect with their inner spirituality. On a few Thursday nights this year, we organized some exciting Social Events! There was a games night, a pizza night and an opportunity to bake cookies for Out of the Cold. The youth also took on the challenge of running a Family Ministry Event for Earth Day. They led activities such as "Food Chain Tag," reading the Creation Story and several nature-themed crafts.

All of the youth brought their enthusiasm, authenticity and curiosity to the youth room on each occasion for which I am very grateful. These young members of our congregation have so many interesting things to say and questions to ask, and their perspectives continued to strike me throughout the year. Although I had to say goodbye after one short year, I am very pleased to pass this wonderful group off to the extremely capable Rowena from Flourish House.

Thank you to ESG, to Paul, Sarah and Don, to Kate and Lita, and most importantly, the amazing youth!

Miranda Crabtree
Youth Leader, 2022-23

**SUPPORTING
OUR ESG
COMMUNITY**

PASTORAL CARE

We were very happy this past year to be back into our beautiful sanctuary and see our ESG friends in person. More freedom from Covid has made it easier to be in touch and visit with those who have been confined at home or in residences and unable to get to church.

Through ESG Cares we keep in touch with our congregation members through cards, phone calls and visits when allowed, for those enjoying special events (two with 100th birthdays), or suffering illness and bereavement. Our very active Card Ministry also 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.

Don Parsons reaches out to those we know need special attention. Our young adults are not forgotten and receive messages of support at exam time along with a Tim's gift card.

Don presided over 9 funerals and graveside services since June 2022. It has been a blessing to be able to hold these services at the church again.

A congregational survey showed that Evensong is highly valued, and as a result, monthly services are scheduled for the coming year. These are quiet services with beautiful music and reflections. Christmas in a Minor Key is a special service for those bereaved families and those needing a quieter celebration this time of year. It offers a peaceful time of reflection. Don is appreciative of the support of the Pastoral Care Team and congregation members in assisting with these services.

In collaboration with Last Minutes and New Perspectives, our Super Seniors were remembered at Christmas and Easter with gift bags of cookies, including a little knitted snowmen ornament (provided by an active group of ESG knitters) and messages about upcoming services and ESG news from Don. These contacts are so appreciated especially by those not connected via technology or able to attend in person.

The recent We Care initiative during the winter of 2023 (developed and continued by Judi Healy) provided over 503 kits of everyday essentials to shelters for distribution to the homeless. This year we hope to engage other groups to participate with the goal of assembling 1000 kits. A lofty goal but so needed.

The Pastoral Care Team has many areas of focus and each of our members play a role connecting with persons of all ages offering support with visits, calls and cards. Don Parsons is an important part of our team and takes an active role providing support to our team as well as our ESG community. Being at church is often when we learn about people needing some help from our team.

Our Embracing Aging Series and the Community Fair were popular events we hope to bring back again this coming year.

Arlene Duncan, Chair, Pastoral Care Team

Don Parsons, Pastoral Care Minister

Leadership Appointments:

We continued to expand and refresh our Ministry & Personnel team with Carolyn Woodland and Vicky Condo joining its ranks, alongside Bob Blair (chair), Heather Parker, Janet Walker, Gord Henderson and Rob Crabtree. With Joan Wepler having now retired from M&P, we are very grateful for her steadfast contribution over 17 years – high on expertise, empathy and commitment. Thank you, Joan!

We are also delighted that Matthew Literovich has joined the Worship, Sacraments and Music team alongside Gord Brookes (chair), Mary Thompson, Jim Black, DeParse Cottrell and our Ministers: Paul, Sarah, Don and Shawn. As this team's newest member, Matthew is providing fresh, much valued insights to the team.

Hospitality:

We have witnessed our “come early, come often, coffee's on” campaign work out well with folks engaging before and after the service. People seem to really value connecting – great vibe! We have organized a team of “lead hosts” and “hosts” (22 in total) to help on Sundays – all of us focused on “connecting people”. Further enhancements will be on-going, and we will be re-establishing our ESG “Welcome Desk” presence, in the months ahead, to offer up an “open arms, open doors” approach to visitors, while also using that time for volunteers to check in with others, by phone, across ESG.

Volunteer Leadership Project:

We continued to reach out to operational, program and fellowship groups across ESG inviting them to update their teams' role descriptions, where those exist, and to “tell their stories”. Two more groups – “Last Minutes” and the Property Team – stepped up to this exercise bringing total participation to 10 different groups so far. Output from their sessions was very rich. In the case of the Property Team, we were able to leverage their output to create compelling content for the June issue of “We Are Not Alone” – seizing the opportunity to showcase the tremendous work of the team.

Gathering input from our various groups is helping us build a “Get Involved” page on our ESG website designed to inform and attract future volunteers and participants. Input will also be leveraged, through social media and various mechanisms, to help both ESG and other community members find out about opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute.

Also, on the heels of very productive meetings with the Property Team, we collaborated with two of its members to flesh out a new “Community Service Mentorship Program” aimed at attracting youth and young adults to volunteer opportunities at ESG. While a draft concept at this point, this future program has the potential to: (1) grow our base of volunteers, (2) provide members with opportunities to channel their contributions to the life of the congregation while experiencing personal growth and satisfaction, and (3) cultivate opportunities to connect with, and engage, the “next generation”. Stay tuned – more to follow in 2023/2024.

**EXTENDING
OUR
REACH**

OUTREACH

Little Free Pantry

The Little Free Pantry continues to be accessed by those in the community experiencing food insecurity and has been stocked daily by group of dedicated volunteers. Two food drives were held over the summer by Jamie and the Grow Team. The community response to the drive was wonderful and has filled our shelves for the foreseeable future. Demand on the pantry has increased due to the rising cost of groceries and the choices that marginalized people must make in order to make ends meet. We continue to try and mitigate the occasional abuse of the Pantry by gently reminding our guests that the pantry is used by many not just themselves.

We have a new addition to the Pantry! A small portable fridge has been added to compliment what we can have on offer. Currently, produce from our gardens is being place in the little fridge, available to all.

The Good Food Box Program

Throughout 2022-23, ESG was providing a gift of a Good Food Box to 20 people each month. Good Food Boxes are either purchased by a donor or are purchased through our Outreach funds. Some recipients have exited the program but we have replaced them with new clients who have requested assistance with food. We cannot stress enough how much these individuals appreciate the Good Food Box. The Good Food Box program was drawn to a close at the end of June this year as the box that we were purchasing was being discontinued and the cost was going to be prohibitive for us to purchase the next size up.

Welcome Baskets - North Toronto Cluster Initiative

In the Fall of 2022 and Spring of 2023 ESG delivered a total of 15 Welcome Baskets to the Women's shelter at Markham Rd and the 401. With donations from the congregation and items from the spring Jumble Sale these baskets were gratefully received by women who were transitioning from the shelter system to their own residences.

Coat and Warm Clothing Drive

The community generously responded to our request for winter coats and warm clothing last December. Once sorted, we were able to deliver 4 super-sized bags of clothing, coats and boots to TUNM and the Red Door Family Shelter



OUTREACH

Donations to Agencies from ESG Operating Fund

ESG donated to these agencies in our last fiscal year: Camp Scugog, Blythwood OOTC, Street Health, Moorelands, TUNM, Sistering, Abiona Centre (Massey) and ECUT.

Advent Gifts

Our Advent Gift Campaign for 2022 allowed Outreach to make donations to The Red Door and TUNM.

“We Care” Survival Kits for Homeless

In January of '22, a new ESG Outreach initiative to provide survival kits for the homeless was undertaken and spearheaded by Judi Healey. This past year 500 kits were delivered to agencies in the downtown core. These including the Toronto Urban Native Ministry, St. Luke's, Street Health and Seeds of Hope. The program has already begun fundraising and creating new Survival kits for the winter ahead.

Second Tuesday Drop-In Support

ESG Outreach is launching a pilot support program this Fall. We will be providing a light uncooked breakfast to guests who are experiencing food insecurity and isolation due to diminished circumstances. On the second Tuesday of each month from September to June we will welcome guests into the lower kitchen reception area and the South Studio. Here they will have seating and be served a light breakfast along with coffee or tea. Each person will also have access to our indoor food bank and a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables. We have modelled this program after the Drop In Program that has been operating at Fairlawn United Church for many years (first Tuesday of the month).

Outreach feels that this program supports the goals of Rev. Sarah's Food Ministry vision and also helps to extend ESG's Little Free Pantry reach in a more equitable way. With our cancellation of the gifted Good Food Box program, we will put those funds into purchasing fresh fruit and veg from Food Share., thus providing more available produce to more people. We will monitor this program carefully.



OUTREACH

Refugee Work

The Syrian Children Education Fund was set up to help encourage and support the Syrian children that ESG sponsored as refugees, in their post-secondary pursuits. Upon successful completion and graduation from their programs, we help them pay off the tuition portion of their student loans. We initially raised \$46K for this initiative. We anticipate that we will exhaust our current funds in the Education Fund next year on 4 of the children and would like to continue to fundraise as we still have 4 more younger children to help out. We honestly could not be more proud of the academic success of this younger generation and feel honoured to help them on their journey towards a prosperous life.

Out of the Cold

OOTC resumed in the Fall of 2022 in a different format than in years prior. Meals were prepared at Blythwood Church on Saturday mornings, packed in individual containers and placed in insulated bags, then delivered to Seeds of Hope, a downtown agency serving the homeless community. Each Saturday yielded up to 130 dinners and leftovers to be distributed. We had a legion of bakers who also contributed to these meals with an assortment of delicious sweets. ESG prepared and transported 7 dinners over the course of the winter and into spring. Over the summer ESG volunteers along with other North Toronto Cluster churches have continued to serve the homeless community with sandwiches that have been prepared on many Monday nights from June through September and delivered next day to Seeds of Hope.

Connie Roden

Chair, Outreach Committee



COMPASSIONATE JUSTICE



ESG United Church hosts an annual program that is called the Compassionate Justice Speakers Series. Over the years, the principal focus of the series has been all aspects of our criminal justice system and selected other topics such as the Truth and Reconciliation experience. After a hiatus during COVID restrictions, the series returned for its 11th year from October 2022 – February 2023.

Speakers featured this year were:

Doug Saunders: Darkness on the Edge of Town – the crisis in the world’s suburbs

Bill Trudell: Innocence Unplugged

Lisa Kerr: What Judges Don’t Decide at Sentencing

We’ve enjoyed a great response from our community, attracting stakeholders and professionals in the fields being addressed. This has added to the relevance and depth of understanding of the Q&A forums that follow the speakers’ presentations.

The 2023-2024 season, the 12th in the series, begins in October 2023 and ends in April 2024. All events are at 12:30 p.m. on Sundays following the service.

The speakers featured this year include:

Oct 15 Phillip Crawley, Former CEO and Publisher of the Globe and Mail: Justice Starts with Knowing

Nov 12 Benjamin Perrin, Law Professor, University of British Columbia: A Criminal Justice Revolution: From ‘tough on crime’ to a new transformative justice system

Jan 21 Erin Dann, Criminal Defence Lawyer: A Blunt Instrument: Long-term detention of individuals found not criminally responsive

April 7 Rosalie Abella, Retired Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada: Putting Compassion into the Service of Justice

Dan Lang & Jim Black, Co-Chairs of Compassionate Justice



NEXT GENERATION

The work of the community supporting ESG's Next Generation and Growth Ministry was very active during the least 12 months. Highlights of activity include:

Food Ministry: ESG continues to connect with the congregation and the broader external community through Food Ministry programs, including the Community Garden, Remote Garden Plots (new), Love aLIVE dinner church, Food Justice Cooking events, the Little Free Pantry and Mobile Fresh Produce Pantry (new) along with ongoing Flourish House community meals. Through the support of a Government of Canada Grant (\$58,315) received this spring, ESG will expand activity to create meaningful supportive community experiences by growing and sharing food with people who are experiencing food insecurity.

The grant funding allowed ESG to hire Chad Lewis as Project Co-ordinator to make all projects happen and bring cohesion and connectivity across all Food Ministry initiatives and programs.

Community Garden & Grow Staff: The Community Garden and Grow Team expanded this summer with the introduction of remote garden plots, built in the spring and delivered to various community members to participate in our garden at home! Many of our initiatives from last year returned, including workshops organized by Sophia, our expert on such topics as medicinal plants, compost, and how to grow produce from leftovers. The Grow Team also engaged in social justice and food security projects, such as our food drives in support of ESG's Little Pantry. The Grow Team made occasional off-site visits to partner organizations such as FoodShare's urban farm in Etobicoke and the Regent Park Community Ministry. Within their eight weeks together, the team developed a strong work sense of togetherness, and engaged in a range of maintenance tasks around the church and Community Garden.

Food Justice Cooking Events:

Three in person events were held during the year involving congregation members, outside food agencies and new participants from the community:

- Food Labelling – a session focussed on food and best before dates, how to effectively use and not waste food. The session was co-ordinated with the Second Harvest Food Group.
- Food Share – Putting Race on the Table – a session focussed on racial justice and food justice
- Sophia Finley, part of the Summer Garden team led a session on growing our own food at home

Love aLive:

With the help from the Flourish House residents, co-ordination by Meghan Jamieson and Kate Littler, we hosted 8 online Love aLIVE dinner church experiences. Attended by people of all ages and often including participants from outside Toronto, we engaged with guest artists, shared experiences and a special children’s breakout time led by Kate. In 2023-24, we will return to in person Love aLIVE events, as well as virtual events.

Flourish House:

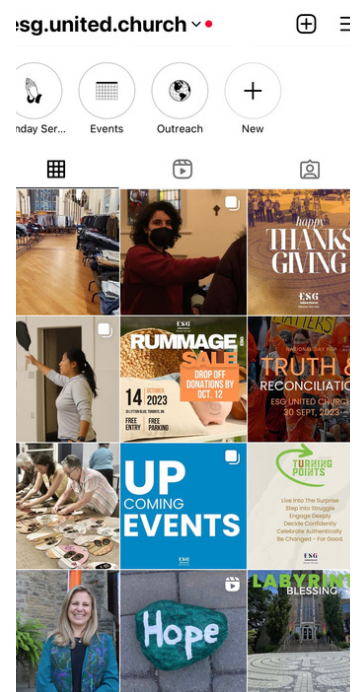
The residents of Flourish House continue to be committed to fostering a space of warmth, welcoming and hospitality. Flourish House invites community members, locally and throughout a nexus of other school/church/bring-a-friend networks, to their weekly Wednesday dinners. Flourish House has also hosted Christmas Parties, birthdays, and summer barbecues over the course of the last year. All three Flourish House members from last year are continuing their residencies, and have developed strong relationships with each other and their extended kin. They are excited to expand their capacities this year among ESG’s many initiatives!

Social Media:

We continue to intentionally grow ESG’s social media presence through on-line media (Facebook/Instagram/TiKTok, web communications). Through Ashley’s efforts, vibrant and attractive social media posts have elevated ESG’s presence and connected us with the external community outside the congregation. This work continues in 2023-24.

Labyrinth

A project long in planning and completed in August 2023, ESG is so pleased to introduce a walking Labyrinth outside the front steps to the church. Completed as part of a larger project to relay all of the paving stones, a new form of spiritual connection lies outside the doors for members, passers by and people in the community to stop, pause walk the Labyrinth and experience its spiritual benefits.



**GOVERNING
RESPONSIBILITY**

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Another busy year for ESG and the Property Team who are responsible for promoting a safe and clean environment for staff, congregation and visitors. This is accomplished through monitoring and maintaining the grounds as well as the buildings and their contents to ensure that they continue to support the needs of the congregation and the community.

As well as running a preventative maintenance program the team also advises and takes direction from the Governing Council on matters related to security, safety and the operation of the facilities, including Flourish House on Craighurst Ave.

To that end here are some of the activities of the Property Team:

Safety:

There were two ongoing projects that saw completion this summer: the replacement of the pavers at the front of the church and the replacement of the concrete roof slab over the storage room off the west side of the gym (former coal cellar).

The driveway, walkways and the central court in front of the church had deteriorated to the point of being hazardous and a liability. Council approved the replacement project, to be implemented in three stages, starting in the summer of 2020 with the driveway. In 2022 the walkway to Duplex Ave. was redesigned to reduce the number of steps by employing sloping terraces to improve accessibility. The final stage, the main court and walkway to Lytton (including a Labyrinth) was completed this summer.

Storage Room roof slab was deemed unsafe by the insurance underwriters, due to water ingress which had compromised the hundred-year-old structure. Engineering consultants assessed the structure's integrity and worthiness and two options were proposed, repair or replace the slab. After further investigation and consultation it was decided to replace the slab structure and incorporate a leak resistant membrane in the structure. The work commenced in May and is essentially complete and the storage room is now accessible for use.

Security:

As a result of vandalism and concerns for individuals' safety we have been reviewing the security systems with the goal of improving exterior lighting and surveillance as well as improvements to the alarm systems. As part of this program the Bookkeeper's office has been fitted with a touch keypad locking system.

Maintenance and Repairs:

The team is always on the lookout for opportunities to save money such as repairs or improvements to the equipment and systems.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Since the arrival of our new caretaker (Murray Brooks) the church has undergone a deep cleaning from basement to bell tower. Thank you, Murray.

The heating and cooling systems are inspected quarterly and remedial action taken as needed.

We have disposed of the gas operated lawn maintenance and snow clearing equipment in favour of battery driven equipment. The dilapidated sheds that housed the garden equipment have been replaced with a single low maintenance shed. The leaking underground sprinkler system (a portion of which was damaged by City of Toronto construction activity on Duplex Avenue) is under repair.

Audio Video/ Information Technology Team:

Sound System: Additional work is being done to tune the sound in the sanctuary following the installation of new audio/video equipment. As well ongoing adjustments are being made to enhance the on-line experience of viewers. Additional Wi-Fi access points have been installed in the Sanctuary.

In addition to having catalogued the church assets; (primarily the AV/IT equipment) and identifying those responsible for maintaining them in good working order we are cataloguing all the computer software programs, their respective administrators and users as well as securely recording account access information. A draft software policy outlining the operational protocol for maintaining a safe and secure database has been prepared and is under review.

Additional Wi-Fi access points have been installed in the Sanctuary, Gym, North and South Studios, the Narthex and Flourish House. The goal is to have Internet access from anywhere in the building and that is close to being accomplished.

John Blevins
Chair, Property



Ministry & Personnel

2022-23 has been an active year for the Ministry & Personnel Committee. The members have worked closely with Ministry staff and various Committees and Working Groups to adjust to changing needs at the Church – rental opportunities in particular – and to adapt for future adjustments to accommodate the evolving mission and plans of the congregation.

I wish to thank all staff for their dedicated and meaningful contributions throughout the year and for their commitment, ingenuity, and patience in supporting our resilient ESG community.

The M&P Committee oversaw Rev. Dr. Paul Hutchison's Sabbatical Leave from April to July. The Sabbatical Team planned the Artistry of God series over the six weeks of Easter with guest preachers and speakers. Meghan Jamieson, hired as the Sabbatical Coordinator, successfully coordinated the series with the support of the Worship Committee and Ministers. Thanks to Janet Walker for spearheading this effort overall, and to our ministers, Rev Sarah Chapman and Rev Don Parsons, for their care and support of the congregation in Paul's absence.

During the year, we welcomed the addition of Adam Brooks as part-time Caretaker. In June, we thanked Miranda Crabtree for her contributions as Youth Leader during the year, and over the summer we welcomed Rowena Hetherington Wilson to succeed Miranda as Youth Leader.

Jennifer Torrens, our long-time Church Administrator, resigned in May of this year. Our thanks as well to Jennifer, for almost 10 years of loyal service.

Meghan Jamieson and Ashley Abdul were engaged to cover administration tasks in the interim period following Jennifer's departure, and we are grateful for their able assistance, as well as for the contributions of Heather Parker and other volunteers throughout this period.

After a lengthy consultation period within the Church about the forward-looking needs of ESG, M&P (with the support of Evolve and other Working Groups) recommended and Council approved the hiring of both a Church Administrator and a Communications Coordinator. Each of these positions has been modified and redefined in order better to meet the needs of the congregation.

Ministry & Personnel

We are delighted that Meghan Jamieson has joined the staff on a permanent basis as our new Church Administrator. The position for the new Communications Coordinator is in the process of being filled.

2022-23/24 Staff

Rev. Dr. Paul Hutchison, Lead Minister

Rev. Sarah Chapman, Next Generation and Growth Minister

Rev. Don Parsons, Pastoral Care Minister

Shawn Grenke, Director of Music

Jennifer Torrens, Church Administrator (Resigned, May 2023)

Meghan Jamieson, Part-time Church Administrator (Permanent as of September 2023)

Murray Brooks, Lead Caretaker

Adam Brooks, Part-time Caretaker

Irina Denissova, Bookkeeper

Bryan Estabrooks, Audio Visual Producer

Kate Littler, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Miranda Crabtree, Youth Leader (2022-23)

Rowena Hetherington Wilson, Youth Leader (2023-24)

Ashley Abdul, Social Media Coordinator

Lita Tobias, Infant Caregiver

Robert Blair

Chair, Ministry & Personnel Committee

Trustees Report

The ESG Board of Trustees holds all of the property of ESG in trust for the congregation along with the church's endowed and restricted funds. The ESG property includes the church's real estate and investment funds. The ESG Trustees meet to receive reports on and discuss property issues, to review all investment funds and to monitor the performance by our asset manager. In addition, the trustees consider ways to use monies from the endowed and restricted funds to support the work of the church both within our walls and in the larger community.

The ESG trust funds are in managed investment accounts which are managed in accordance with the provisions of the ESG Investment Policy Statement. The ESG funds are invested in a balanced portfolio with a higher weighting in US and Canadian equities. The performance of the portfolio over the period of the church's 2022-2023 fiscal year was positive in line with the markets. Overall, the funds have had reasonably good returns over the longer term.

Transfers from the trust funds are an important contributor to church revenue and maintaining and growing these funds are critical to the long-term mission and financial health of the church. This year, in addition to supporting our own operating, music and property maintenance needs, trust funds were used to renew funding for the Summer Gardening Project, to support the Children of Thorncliffe Park Backpack Project, to provide annual supplemental retirement benefits for clergy and their spouses and to provide ESG financial support for students studying for the ministry.

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

Leave a Lasting Legacy Fund

During the fiscal year 2022-23, the church received \$440,490.24 in bequests. These bequests were added to the Leave a Lasting Legacy Fund. These generous gifts provide a truly lasting legacy. They will serve to enhance the life and the work of the church into the future.

Isobel Cork

Kitty Harris

Maida Lent

Honouring Donald and Maurietta Hutchison

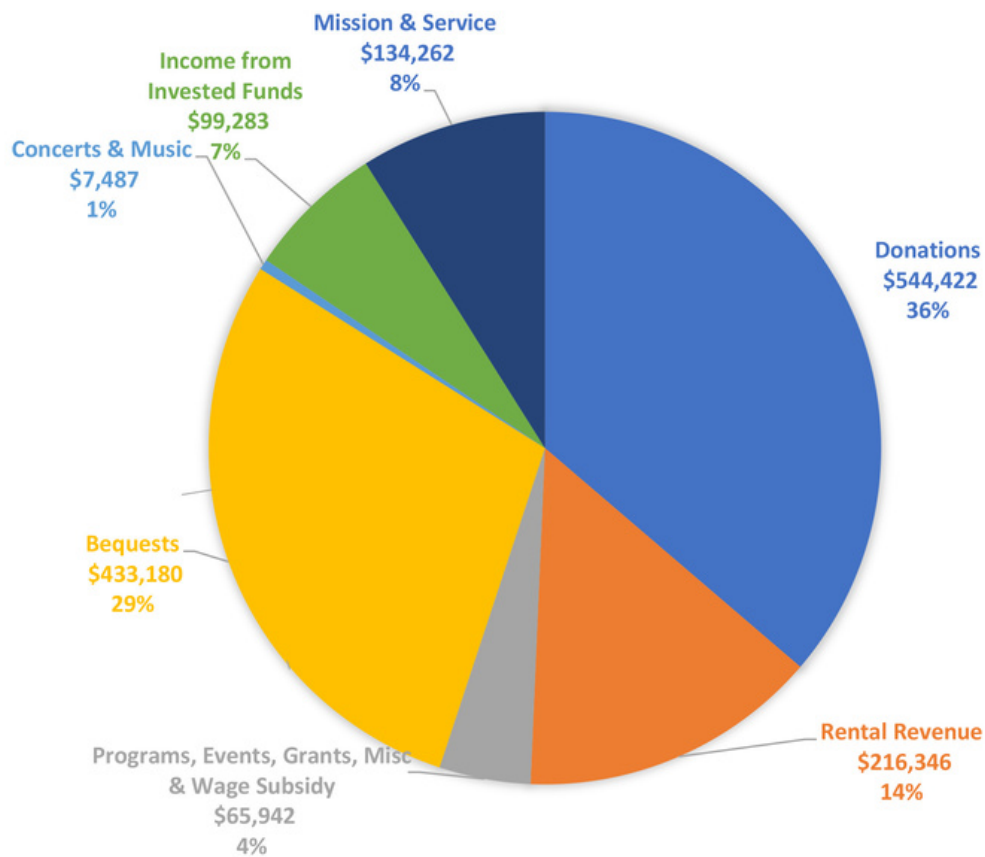
The Trustees were pleased that Janet and Alan Walker have agreed to assume responsibility for developing communications and information about the Leave A Lasting Legacy Fund and the benefits to ESG of estate/legacy gifts.

Finance

We ended the fiscal year June 30, 2023 with a deficit of \$76k. The following is a high level recap: (Please refer to the Audited Financial Statements for details.)

- Donations decreased by **\$38k (-7%)** from 2022 & down **\$83k** from 2021
- Rental revenues increased by **\$39.5k (22%)** with several renters returning.
- Revenues from Programs, Events, Grants & Miscellaneous increased by **\$26.6k (68%)** from 2022.
- Operating expenses were carefully reviewed during the year however there was a negative variance of \$30k in compensation due to a budgeting error, UCC charges increased \$4k above budget & the required repair of the storage room slab totalled \$232k versus an early estimate of \$90k.
- We are grateful to have received **\$433k** in very generous undesignedated bequests.

The pie chart below provides the breakdown of our revenue sources for the fiscal year.



Gord Thompson
Chair, Finance Committee

OUR VALUES

If our values resonate with how you look at life you'll find common ground with the people and activities that make up the ESG community.

Compassion

Borne from a deep passion and concern for the well-being of the human spirit.

Community

fosters relationships grounded in a spiritual foundation. Powerful connections that nurture belonging, self-love and love for others, honesty, and trust.

Fairness

does not tolerate judgement and discrimination and advocates for social justice.

Potential

Believing in everyone to be better and their ability to fulfill what has yet to be imagined.

*Eglinton St. George's United Church
35 Lytton Blvd. Toronto, ON, M4R 1L2
www.esgunited.org
info@esgunited.org*