



2025-2026 CARING IS GROWTH

ESG Annual Report

CONTACT OUR TEAM

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GOVERNING COUNCIL

This past year was year two of the implementation of ESG's 5-year plan and it has, in every sense, been a great year of progress. There is a vibrancy within the church community and a palpable and growing sense of belonging.

The Church has moved beyond identifying an overall strategic direction to undertaking initiatives to align with the strategic direction. This includes initiatives to more intentionally welcome an increasingly diverse community, to foster a vibrant spirituality within the Church, to care for each other and others, to develop a learning and innovation culture and to take strides towards operational and governance excellence.

There has also been a strategic shift in priorities from maintaining attendance at worship services to guiding people from a simple connection with the Church to fully belonging to the Church community in all its facets. This 'belonging' relationship is being fostered by offering many opportunities and by engaging gently without overwhelming, the motto being 'Notice → Try → Belong'.

This work of engagement is continuing as we enter year 3 of the plan. It is being led by Paul and Sarah, who were key to the establishment of the strategic direction and who are now weaving the commitments made in the plan into every initiative that they are undertaking. Staff and volunteers are stepping up. The congregation is energized. The Church is busy. The offerings to participate are many. The community is thriving.

We have much to be thankful for.

Our best wishes,

Simon & Hugh

Simon & Hugh
Co-Chairs, ESG Governing Council

OUR MINISTERS

This past year has been one of significant growth, and gratitude, both personally and in the life of ESG. We celebrated the arrival of Forest and welcomed the opportunity to spend precious time together as a family. I am deeply grateful to the congregation, staff, and colleagues who supported me through two periods of parental leave, ensuring that the life and ministry of ESG continued to flourish. Their generosity and care made it possible for me to be fully present with my family while knowing that the work we share was continuing.

Throughout the year, I have continued to focus on the ways we can nurture spiritual life, deepen relationships, and create meaningful opportunities for people to connect with one another and with their faith. Much of this work has been shaped by ESG's strategic directions, particularly Vibrant Spirituality, and by an ongoing desire to make space for people to explore, question, learn, and grow together. The accompanying Growth Report offers a more detailed account of the programs and initiatives that have taken shape over the past year. From the Storytelling Circle and Love aLIVE to our Community Garden and the life of Flourish House, these ministries reflect our commitment to creating opportunities for connection, belonging, and spiritual exploration. What matters most to me about this work is not simply the programs themselves, but the relationships they make possible and the ways they invite people into a deeper sense of community.

As we look ahead, I am particularly excited about the continued development of our Vibrant Spirituality Centre. This initiative offers an opportunity to bring together many of the things we have been exploring: meaningful spiritual practices, opportunities for learning and reflection, pastoral and psycho-spiritual care, and spaces where people can encounter spirituality in ways that are relevant to their lives. I look forward to continuing this work with the congregation and discovering together what it might become. Returning from parental leave this fall, I have been reminded of how much I value this community and the meaningful ministry we share. I am grateful to be part of a church that celebrates diverse experiences and beliefs, nurtures spiritual well-being, and creates spaces where people can experience a profound sense of belonging.

I look forward to the year ahead and all that we will continue to create together, trusting in the Spirit moving among us.



Rev. Sarah Chapman,
Co-lead Minister: Spiritual Life, Community Engagement & Faith Development
ESG United Church



The 2025-2026 year was marked by growth, transition, and intentionality as we continued discerning who Eglinton St. George's is called to be in our neighbourhood and beyond. A central focus of my work this year was helping shape our ministry around a simple pathway: **Notice → Try → Belong**.

These three words became a guiding framework for worship planning, communications, community engagement, and congregational life. We sought to help new people **notice** ESG, create meaningful opportunities for them to **try** worship, events, and programs, and ultimately find places where they could **belong**, participate, and contribute. This work has influenced everything from weekly communications to major seasonal initiatives and will continue to guide us.

This year also brought significant milestones for Sarah and her family. Sarah, Lauren, and Ruby welcomed Forest into the world, a joyful addition the entire congregation celebrated. Sarah began a parental leave in September, returned in January with a memorable Star Words service, and then took a second leave following Easter before returning in September. We are grateful for Sarah's leadership, partnership, and the opportunity to support her family through these moments.

Much of my ministry this year focused on long-range worship and ministry planning. For the first time, we mapped the upcoming church year with fierce intentionality, developing seasonal themes, sermon series, worship experiences, and strategic priorities well in advance. Building on our **Notice → Try → Belong** framework, we also developed a new approach to "Landing Sundays," applying the invitational energy and marketing strategies traditionally reserved for Christmas Eve and Easter to significant community-facing 2026-27 services such as Thanksgiving and Remembrance Sunday.

I remain grateful for our dedicated staff team. Shawn continues to enrich our worship through outstanding musical leadership. MJ's exceptional work in building rentals strengthened community connections while increasing rental income. Murray's daily care of our facility helps create a welcoming space for ministry and community use.

Another hopeful step was completing the first phase of our organ pipe replacement project. This investment reflects our confidence in the future of ESG and our commitment to inspiring worship and music ministry for generations to come.

One of the year's standout successes was our annual Rummage Sales. Hundreds of volunteers, community guests, partner agencies, donors, and shoppers contributed to an extraordinary event that strengthened relationships and generated significant financial support for ministry. Special thanks to Heather for her outstanding leadership of this remarkable community effort, and Mary for her leadership in jewelry with its once-in-a-lifetime return!

As I reflect on the year, what gives me the greatest hope is not a single program or initiative. It is our congregation's growing willingness to notice new possibilities, try new approaches, and deepen our sense of belonging to one another and to God's unfolding future.

Thank you to everyone who volunteers, serves, gives, prays, and participates in the life of ESG. Together, we continue to discover what God is creating among us.

With gratitude,



Rev. Dr. Paul Hutchison,
Co-lead Minister: Operations, Worship & Congregational Life
ESG United Church



WORSHIP

ESG's leadership team continues to work hard to make worship meaningful. Our ministerial and music team has continued to move forward, evolving creatively, making use of technology to make worship more accessible than ever.

Last year I reported about a number of important property improvements that promised to enhance Worship and Music in the coming months and years: I am pleased to report that in the fall of 2025 our sanctuary received a new audio system that has significantly improved the quality of sound in the sanctuary and enhanced the quality of worship. The Organ Replacement Project Team continues to advance and work on this very complex endeavour.

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

Shawn and our choir continue to provide high quality and eclectic range of music to enhance our worship experience.

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 2026-2027 as we continue to grow our church community. We look forward to joining together in worship as the ESG family.

Gord Brookes
Chair, Worship & Music



PERSONAL GROWTH AND SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION

Highlights from 2025-26

Our team offered both in person and online learning opportunities. Participants included those in the ESG Community as well as newcomers.

Book Study: Janet Hardy led an online series focusing on Mark Nepo's "The Book of Awakening."

Mental Health: Mary Thomson led two informative sessions on the Loneliness Epidemic.

Discover Your Way in Retirement: Patti Thompson repeated her three-week discussion group looking at how to create a meaningful, purpose driven life in the retirement years.

Discussion Group: Jim Black led a discussion after church on Living a Christian Life in the Twenty-First Century.

We are Not Alone newsletter: Jim Black continued to write and edit the monthly We are Not Alone newsletter with topics to reflect on and stimulate new thinking about our spiritual lives.

Plans for 2026-27

Our goal this year is to provide learning opportunities that dovetail with ESG strategic focus on creating a spiritual hub. **Look out for these offerings:**

- Leading a Meaningful Life seminar series
- Book Study
- Labyrinth Walks
- Meditation Group

Patti Thompson
Chair, Personal Growth and Spiritual Exploration Team



MUSIC LEADERSHIP

A Year of Growth and Music at ESG Choir

This past year has been incredibly rewarding for our choir. We met weekly for rehearsals, supported worship services, and presented two highly successful concerts, one in December and another in May. We also concluded the year with a festive social celebration, marking a season filled with music, friendship, and community.

A highlight was the world premiere of Andrew Balfour's work in May 2026. In preparation for the concert, we held several workshops with Andrew throughout the year. The choir was fortunate to spend meaningful time learning with him, both in rehearsal and at a few wonderful potluck meals.

Our New Expressions services continued to evolve throughout the year. In October, our leads explored the theme "Cherished Hymns with Refreshed Harmonies." We also delved into the rich and varied music of the United Church Hymnal, [Then Let Us Sing](#). In January, we were delighted to welcome Colleen Allen and her band for a morning of jazz and choral music.

We also marked a significant moment with a joint Good Friday service at ESG with Lawrence Park Community Church. This collaboration has now become an annual tradition and offers a meaningful opportunity to worship and make music together. Our two main concerts – "Love's Pure Light" and "Songs of Eternity" – were especially memorable. The Christmas concert featured audience carols accompanied by organ and strings, with the Canadian Chamber Orchestra joining us. The major work on the program was Bob Chilcott's "Gloria". Our spring concert, featuring special guests from the Achill Choral Society, included Haydn's powerful "Lord Nelson Mass" and selections from "The Pirates of Penzance".

Both concerts were artistically enriching and financially successful. We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support of our congregation, clergy, staff, and friends, whose encouragement makes these musical offerings possible.

The organ restoration project for our four-manual Casavant organ is also well underway. The first phase of work on the Choir division was completed in late summer, with Phase Two— covering the Great and Swell divisions— set to begin in fall 2026. Above all, the sense of community among our singers remains strong. We are more committed than ever to upholding ESG's proud tradition of musical excellence and to continuing to grow, explore, and share the joy of music together. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey and for your continued support of our choir and music ministry.

Warm regards,
Shawn Grenke
Director of Music

Bronwyn Best and Beth MacRae
Co-Presidents of the Choir





FAMILY MINISTRY

The congregation was greeted on Welcome Back Sunday to a reading of the story: "A Church For All" by Gayle E. Pittman. This story parallels our own faith community of embracing all people - no matter their age, race, socioeconomic status, gender identity or sexual orientation with love, respect, and faith. We welcomed our new youth minister, Julia Walsh, who had the opportunity to greet families during the BBQ.

On Orange Shirt Day, we learned about Phyllis Webstad's experiences in a residential school. We created designs for orange shirts to remember all the children who were forced to leave their families and suffered abuse in residential schools.

It was a fun Halloween pumpkin carving party. Families watched a lava lamp science experiment and participated in a pumpkin prayer.

Our annual Cookies-in-a-Jar fundraiser was a successful event with children, youth, and family members, working together to create three types of mixes: chocolate chip, oatmeal raisin, and brownies. The jars were sold after the service, and the proceeds donated to the charity: Youth Without Shelter. In addition, the funds raised from the fall and spring bake sales at the Rummage Sale were also given to the same charity.

The Annual Christmas Party was a special occasion as Sarah and Lauren visited with their daughter, Ruby, and their two-month-old son, Forest. The first pageant rehearsal was held and afterwards families participated in an intergenerational Christmas Sing-along. The kids decorated cookies and everyone enjoyed a pizza dinner.

It was a special occasion to watch all the children and youth work together to retell the story of Jesus' birth and see little Jesus in Mary's arms. It was an impressive performance by a talented cast. The Christmas Eve Family service was celebrated with glow sticks, stars, special carols, and a retelling of the Nativity story.

Epiphany Sunday was an opportunity to learn about the Magi/Wise Men who visited baby Jesus. Pancake Lunch was an amazing success. The Youth group made delicious chocolate chip, blueberry, and regular pancakes which were served with fruit, whip cream, and syrup. The pancake race was an energetic occasion as teams raced around the sanctuary with a pancake on a spatula.

In February and March, Allison Estabrooks taught the Sunday School program while Kate recovered from an injury. During the busy preparations for Palm Sunday and Easter, Allison was a tremendous help supporting the program as Kate returned to work.

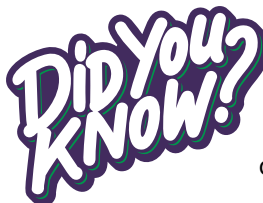
Palm Sunday was celebrated with a parade and the waving of palm branches. Families learned about the events of Holy Week. Kids made picture crosses highlighting the different events of Holy Week and painted Easter eggs.

A special Sunday School program was planned to celebrate the baptism of Sarah and Lauren's son Forest. It was a joyous occasion to be part of a family celebration. The kids learned about baptismal promises by making mini booklets.

It was lovely to see so many families gathered to celebrate Easter. All the children received purple Lego crosses and theme based Holy Week snacks. The kids made woven baskets and Easter story bracelets.

We finished the year by celebrating the beginning of summer with a church picnic, games, and the arrival of the ice cream truck.

Kate Littler
Children's Ministry Coordinator



Kate is currently enrolled at Emmanuel College, working towards her Certificate in Theology and Interreligious Engagement. Kate has received support, for the second consecutive year, from ESG's Bursary Fund, managed by our Trustees. Congratulations, Kate!



YOUTH MINISTRY



This year we had a consistent group of involved youth at ESG. On Sundays we explored bible stories, art, poetry, and personal spiritual practice. We discussed communities that we are a part of and how we can strengthen our roles in them. The youth were active participants in various events at ESG this year, including the rummage sale and pancake breakfast, and a few worked in the garden this past summer. They showed specific interest in the recipes gathered while working in the community garden. This year, we hope to continue expanding on themes explored last year and continue to foster a positive community within ESG!

The youth also enjoyed the many social activities at ESG. The youth brought friends out to our movie and pizza night that we hope to do again this year. Four very brave youths also played the role of 'narrator' in the nativity play. This year I hope to run more social events with the youth group and grow our community.

It has been a delight to be a member of our little group and look forward to another year with these bright individuals.

Julia Walsh
Youth Leader, 2025-2026



PASTORAL CARE

Our Pastoral Care team members embrace a shared vision to support and nurture those within our ESG community. We listen carefully to consider where care is needed, reach out individually by calls, cards or home visits, and as appropriate, engage companion teams such as ESG Angels, Outreach, Last Minutes, and New Perspectives, to help coordinate the diverse ways in which we support the well-being of our congregants and the wider community.

The Rev. Paul Hutchison is a member of our Pastoral Care Team and meets with us routinely. The Rev. Sarah Chapman also provides pastoral care to meet the needs of young families and youth from her connections.

For us, it is all about building and contributing to our culture of care. Here are a few highlights from the year gone by:

Seniors Luncheon: Together with folks from Last Minutes, New Perspectives and the ESG music team, 16 of us organized and hosted a Seniors Luncheon which was held in May. This allowed our 21 guests from seniors' residences and those who have mobility and other challenges, to socialize with friends not seen for a long while, and to participate in a communion offered by Rev. Paul and Coral Martin. The event was very well received and as requested, will be offered again in the Spring.

ReConnect: Under the leadership of Peter Wilkins, and in the spirit of efforts made several years ago throughout COVID, eight ESG members made outreach calls to over 60 folks we hadn't seen or heard from for some time. We were successful in reaching over 50% of them. Folks appreciated being contacted and expressed interest in receiving regular updates from ESG. An annual call-around is planned.

We Care Kits: Once again, we engaged many from across the congregation in assembling 750 We Care kits. Volunteer helpers included ESG children and youth as well as some wonderful young people from Addus, a local organization that provides support for youth with disabilities. Assembled with lightning speed, the kits were then delivered to Evas's Place (youth shelter), St. Lukes Church Meal Program, Blythwood Church for Out of the Cold, Street Health, and Fred Victor's Women's 24/7 and Queen Street Drop Ins. Kudos to Judi Healy, having initiated and led this program for several years, and to Maggie Wilkinson, to whom Judi handed over the torch to lead this valuable program this past year. We look forward to repeating this initiative again in November and January.

Christmas Gift Packages: Collaborating with Last Minutes we delivered 60 gift packages to seniors – many of whom are in residences and/or are homebound - offering Christmas edibles, various knitted ornaments (owls, pickles, Christmas trees, bells and stars), a copy of the Annual Report and a Christmas message from Rev. Paul. We received many messages of heartfelt appreciation.



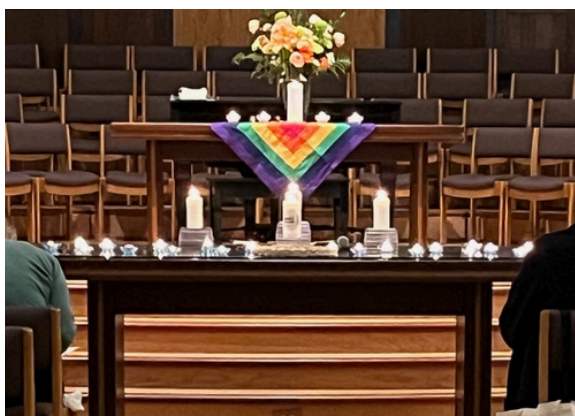
ESG Photo Directory: Arlene Duncan took on the Herculean task of organizing the creation of an updated ESG Photo Directory which will be published and made available this fall (2026). This has been a huge undertaking: 10 months in the making commencing in February 2026. Tasks included: 10 photo days supported by 10 volunteers and many, many hours spent in setting up appointments, greeting folks attending their photo shoots, proof-reading and editing content, and assembling a collage of photos profiling people and activities. In this 2026 version we are particularly excited with the wide variety of additional pictures showcasing many congregants as they interact in our various ESG programs. A special thanks to Peter Long, Peter Wilkins, M.J. and Dipali for their efforts in bringing this, our new 2026 directory to life! And, once again, major kudos to Arlene!

Funerals: Over the past fiscal year our funeral coordinator Betty Heininger worked closely with Rev. Paul and various families (ESG members and non-members) to plan and orchestrate funeral services that have been exceptional. Having overseen over 180 funerals over the course of 13 years, Betty has handed over her responsibilities to Heather Parker going forward. We are deeply grateful for the amazing care and comfort Betty has so consistently provided.

Evensong: The Rev. Paul Hutchison, assisted by members of the Pastoral Care team, and other ESG groups and members of the congregation, offered contemplative Evensong services over the course of the year. These included reflections and beautiful music, provided by our music director Shawn Grenke and the ESG choir leads. We assisted in our annual **Christmas in a Minor Key service** to comfort bereaved families and those valuing peaceful reflection and we continued our tradition of preparing a simple meal for the **Maundy Thursday Service**.

We are excited as we look forward to another fulfilling year of caring and camaraderie.

Kathleen Hull
Chair, Pastoral Care
With appreciation to Donna MacCandlish for this report.



LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY FUND

The Leave a Lasting Legacy Fund enables members and adherents to support ESG's ministry beyond their lifetime. Through bequests and memorial gifts, generations of faithful people help sustain worship, care, outreach, and the ongoing life of the church, ensuring that today's commitment continues to make a difference tomorrow.

As of June 30, 2026, the Leave a Lasting Legacy Fund balance is \$1,742,959. During the fiscal year 2025-26, the church received \$20,000 in bequests/gifts honouring the lives of long-time members Marguerite Hunt and Walter Pridham. We received \$1,710 in donations celebrating the lives of Robert Anglin, Patricia Fraser, Walter Pridham, and Sylvaine Bleytou Rabourdin.

We would like to take this opportunity to honour Walter Pridham for his leadership in creating the LLL Fund in 2015. The Fund has grown from under \$300,000 to \$1,750,000, or almost six times its original value. Walter's vision was a well-governed legacy fund that inspired the congregation to leave financial gifts as acts of deep care and spiritual commitment. We are grateful for his work and the many gifts that are enhancing ESG's capacity to live out its ministry.

As of June 30, 2026, and in accordance with policy, \$10,800 in disbursements were made as follows:

- 20% to Operating Fund \$4300
- 20% to the Property Maintenance Fund \$4300
- 5% to National & Global UCC Outreach (M&S) \$1,100
- 5% to Local Outreach \$1,100
- 50% of annual donations remain in the LLL Fund \$10,800

These allocations reflect ESG's evolving strategy, where legacy creates impact. Each disbursement strengthens ESG's capacity for welcome, care, outreach, and faithful ministry, while preserving resources that will support future generations. In this way, legacy gifts become an enduring investment in the church's life and mission.

We remain deeply grateful for the generosity of our members and adherents. Please contact us if you would like to discuss leaving a legacy gift to ESG.

Alan and Janet Walker
Legacy Team



Social Groups

New Perspectives is a long running group of women who enjoy social time together as well as working to fundraise for agencies supporting women and children in crisis. They meet in a member's home as a large group twice yearly and operate several activities through the year such as a Pickleball workshop, movie night, book study, New Year's afternoon tea, rummage sales and the Christmas almond bark sale. This past year, New Perspectives raised over \$11,000 and distributed the funds to these organizations: Abiona Centre, Fred Victor Shelter, Red Door Shelter, Parry Island shelter, Volunteer Readers program, Wellspring Foundation, as well as supporting ESG's spring campaign. The group is open to any woman and will start up activities again in the fall of 2026.

Janet Hardy, Group Lead

Last Minutes is a group of women who currently focus their energies on supporting food ministry and pastoral care at ESG, filling the pantry daily, assisting with the seniors' lunch, fundraising through sales of knitted Christmas ornaments and gathering socially to support one another. There are six meetings throughout the year including a book discussion, movie plus dinner night out and our Christmas gathering where we prepare gift bags for seniors. Members feel very connected to each other and strive to extend a hand to those in need.

Marilyn Piotrowski, Group Lead

Men's Discussion Group is a group of men who meet monthly after Sunday service to discuss issues of the day that are of concern. Meetings are open to any man who'd like to attend, and in fact some meetings have invited women to join in as well! The group determines topics to explore and group members research and present information as background.

Dave Clemens, Group Lead

Wise Women in Training (WITT) is a group of women who meet the second Monday from September to June for a couple of hours to discuss issues of common concern. Discussions are directed by the content of the book selected for the ten-month duration. The book study elicits thought provoking discourse and sharing by members on various issues: Past and present religions, the meaning of life, generational world changes, morality, truth and reconciliation, war and peace, and much more. For 2026-27 the book selection, to be confirmed, is "Toward a Post-Biblical Christian Future. The Promise of the Interspiritual Movement" by Rick Herrick.

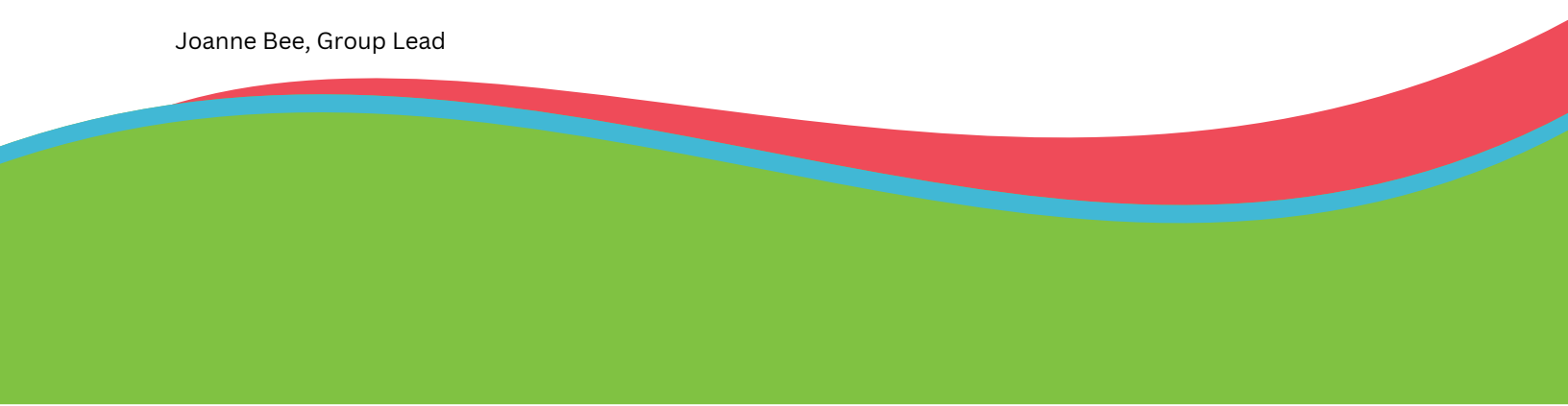
Magdalena Bracer, Group Lead

Peace with Justice is a group of like-minded individuals who are concerned about researching and supporting peace with justice locally and globally. The group has studied various books and researched articles related to various topics selected by the group. Funds are collected from members and this year donations were made to support CUBAbility in transporting much needed goods to Cuba and the United Nations Relief Works Agency for their work in Gaza. Meetings were held on the fourth Thursday most months.

Bronwyn Best, Group Lead

The ESG Angels group work with ESG's Pastoral Care to provide support for ESG community members who are going through a challenging period in their lives. We offer concern and support through cards and emails. New members are welcome to join.

Joanne Bee, Group Lead



OUTREACH

Little Free Pantry

The LFP was installed in September of 2020, during and because of Covid 19. Our commitment from the start was to place a bag of staples (canned goods and boxed items in the beginning) every day. The goal of the pantry is “take what you need, leave what you are able”. By committing to a bag of groceries each day, we have been able to a) provide, in a small way, for those in our community who are in need of food assistance b) involve our congregation by raising awareness that there are people in our neighbourhood who struggle to put food on their tables and c) to involve our neighbours in helping to fill the pantry (more recently Pickle Ball participants have been most helpful in bringing something for the Pantry when they come to play).

There is a team of volunteers who partner up, pick a day of the week and work together to make sure that day is covered each month. We have a storage pantry in the South Studio kitchen that supplies the outdoor Pantry.

We create single portions of dry goods which go into the pantry (rice, pasta, oats, sugar, small protein meal baggies and breakfast baggies). A dedicated group of volunteers meet once a month to replenish these baggies, creating enough supplies to last a month and also provide for our Tuesday Drop In that month.

Cooking for a Cause

We are starting our third year of Cooking for a Cause this Fall. Currently, once a month we have been meeting to create a tasty vegetarian soup or chili. We have some favourites and have repeated them. We make between 40 and 50 12 oz containers of our specialty of the month. They are frozen immediately after cooling and each Thursday we place 5 containers in our LFP. We offer the frozen soup to our guests on the following Drop In.

Second Tuesday Drop-In

This September will mark the start of our fifth year for the Second Tuesday Drop In. We have established a solid group of attendees (ranging between 25 and 30 guests).

This program was initiated to replace a former Thursday Afternoon Drop In, which was shuttered during Covid. We wanted to respond to the need in our area for food and emotional support.

The Drop In provides a cold breakfast, which we serve to our guests, including home made baked items, cheese and crackers, bagels and cream cheese, fruit and veg. During the cold months we also serve a hot soup or chili - made by our Cooking for a Cause team.

We also provide a wide selection of bagged fresh fruit and vegetables that are ordered from FoodShare and Walmart. Along with the produce offered we also provide half loaves of bread and dry goods from our pantry storage. We prepare the bags on the Monday afternoon ahead of Tuesday morning. Our guests choose their own pantry items.

A gently used clothing table is available for our guests to access after they have chosen their food.

We have developed a good relationship with most of our guests through quiet conversations at the tables, listening to their concerns and their struggles. We will often make a note of their needs and make an effort to help them access what they are looking for (ie microwave, extra food or snacks for a hospital appointment).

Sanwiches for St. Luke's

In the spring of 2025, we received a request from St. Luke's asking if we could make 200 sandwiches for their Out of the Cold program (which runs all year round). ESG responded to this request and we are committed to making sandwiches for them once a month. This activity is headed by Wendy and there is a dedicated team of folks who have bonded over peanut butter and jam! We will continue to provide sandwiches again this coming year. We had our first sandwich session two weeks ago and we are ready to go for October.

Out of the Cold

ESG has participated in the Out of the Cold program for many years. Previously, (pre covid) we participated in the Blythwood OOTC, which provided a hot dinner, a bed for the night, breakfast and a sandwich to go. The Blythwood OOTC program as we knew it was shuttered after Covid. However, we continue to cook meals at Blythwood Church but the food is now transported in single serve meal containers to a location in the downtown core. There is a team from Blythwood who look after the distribution of the meals.

Again, we have a dedicated team of helpers, new and long standing plus dessert makers who consistently show up on a Saturday morning (once a month) to create a massive amount of hot food to serve at least 120 unhoused people in downtown Toronto.

Other Programs at ESG that support our marginalized communities:

Welcome Baskets - North Toronto Cluster Initiative

Welcome Baskets are created for the Shelter to Homes program run by the City of Toronto. We have created baskets for the last 7 years. Last year we delivered 5 baskets to the women's shelter in Markham.

We collect gently used household items that would be a starter package for a new home owner (one pot with lid, frying pan, kitchen utensils, bowls, cleaning products, set of four place setting and set of cutlery for 4 plus many other items) ESG provides a set of new double bed sheets and new towels. All this is wrapped up in a laundry basket along with a \$50.00 grocery gift card. We will be preparing Welcome Baskets in October this year. When completed they will be delivered to the women's shelter in Markham.

Coat and Warm Clothing Drive

Come November, we launch our Warm Winter Wear clothing drive. We set up boxes in the entrance of the church and in the Narthex for our congregation to donate items of warm clothing and/or coats that they no longer need.

At the end of the drive, we sort through the items and divide them up for distribution to agencies that need these items (Fred Victor, Sistering, Romero House and Street Health - to name a few who have received coats and clothing)

"We Care" Survival Kits for Homeless

ESG creates toiletry bags for agencies in Toronto. Each bag contains small travel sized soaps, shampoos, toothpaste and toothbrushes, Kleenex tissues, and hand wipes. The bags also contain a pair of socks, a granola bar and a drink box.

Preparation of these items begins in early December with deliveries planned for the New Year.

On average, we create 500 of these bags for distribution.

Connie Roden
Chair, Outreach Committee



Volunteer Leadership

Volunteer Recruitment

Co-Chairs of Governing Council: This year we were fortunate to have Hugh Desbrisay serving as Co-Chair of Council beginning in September, with Simon Cummings joining as the second co-chair in January 2026. Hugh and Simon have provided great leadership for Council this year, with more strategic focus and less involvement in operational issues. Hugh has stepped down from the co-chair role to work on other strategic implementation plans, and we hope to have a new co-chair to support Simon as he continues to lead Council this coming year.

In 2025-26, Council said farewell to several people who continue to lead in other capacities in our community. We will miss having Marilyn Piotrowski as Secretary, Marion Axmith as MAL for Outreach, and Caren Cate as Family Ministry Team lead and MAL on Council. These people have made a great contribution to Council over several years and we know they will continue to be strong volunteer leaders at ESG. Thank you, Marilyn, Marion, and Caren!

Council Secretary: In April, we welcomed Kevin Maynard to Council as Recording Secretary. Kevin brings considerable board experience and leadership as well as insights as a worshipper at ESG. We are grateful to have Kevin's perspective and skills on Council.

Outreach Member at Large: Catherine Hough joined Council as MAL for Outreach in September 2026, and we are very happy to have her perspective and representation of Outreach concerns as part of Council discussions. Catherine has been a volunteer leader on the Outreach team for some time and we are grateful for her contributions as part of Council as well.

Family Ministry Team Leads: Sue Porritt and Christine LeLacheur stepped into new roles as co-leads of the Family Ministry Team in September 2026. Sue and Christine have been terrific supports for Family Ministry for many years and we welcome their presence on Council to represent our families, children and youth.

Volunteer leadership provides many benefits: social connection, ability to contribute to the welfare and direction of ESG, and learning new skills. Our team invites you to get involved!

Hospitality

We continue to witness energetic camaraderie as folks gather before and after the service at our coffee bar! Our team of 16 hosts offer a warm, enthusiastic welcome to friends and visitors, make introductions and facilitate connections. The introduction of 'connector hosts' and connect cards facilitates connection with those who are new or visiting, be that at worship services or other events.

Maggie Wilkinson
Team Leader, Volunteer Engagement/Nominating

COMPASSIONATE JUSTICE



The Compassionate Justice Speaker Series had a very successful 16th season in 2025/26. With great support from Eglinton St George's congregation and surrounding communities.

This year we focused on reflections on democracy as well as a look at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission - 10 years later and progress in the area of the Youth Justice Act

The speakers and topics featured in the 2025-2026 season were:

J.D.M. Stewart - Oct 19, 2025

Democracy and the Imperative of Engagement

Tanya Talaga - Nov 23, 2025

Ten years after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Lisa M. Kelly - Jan 18, 2026

The Unfinished Revolution in Youth Justice

John Ralston Saul - March 15, 2026

Democracy On The Line

The 2025-2026 season began in October 2025 and ended in March 2026. All events took place in the ESG sanctuary and began at 12:30 pm following the service.

Compassionate Justice concluded the season on March 15, 2026, with our largest audience yet when we hosted John Ralston Saul, author, historian and political philosopher. He had some wonderful insights on where our democracy stands in Canada today and how we may engage to keep it strong during these times of upheaval.

We always appreciate the support and engagement of ESG United Church and are looking forward to our upcoming season.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to reach out to Dan Lang at dan@dlang.com.



NEXT GENERATION

Over the past year, we have been living into our new strategic areas of focus— **Unapologetic Welcome & Inclusion, Vibrant Spirituality, and Care in Action**. We have been offering programs that connect to these areas and creating opportunities for new people to engage with ESG in meaningful ways, help them explore life's big questions, offer care, and empower leadership. As Sarah leans into the new role of Co-Lead and works closely with Paul she continues to offer programs that align with our strategic area of focus to prompt community, personal and spiritual growth as well as listen to trends, stories of care and connections made within our community, and future partners, in order to dream up new initiatives that can continue to authentically connect with ESG members and the broader neighbourhood.

Daevyd Pepper was hired this year in the role of program support. The Program Support role assists Sarah in the planning, coordination, and execution of church programs and our community growth initiatives. Daevyd is an incredible asset to the ESG staff team and brings a wonderful presence and efficient and wonderful work to their taste at hand

Our Storytelling Circle

We continued Our Storytelling Circle which has become a weekly programs offering community. Each gathering begins with coffee and muffins, a simple spiritual practice, and then a storytelling prompt. Participants share moments from their lives, listening deeply and supporting one another. The impact of this practice is beginning to ripple out beyond the walls of ESG, nurturing deeper connection and compassion within our congregation and in the wider community.

Food Ministry

We continue to believe that food can be the doorway into the room of personal, spiritual and community growth. Our food-related initiatives continue to thrive and offer care and opportunities for growth:

- **Love aLIVE** – in 2026 we offered one Sunday evening a month gatherings which explored the theme “Exploring Spirituality through our Senses,” Through the offerings of sound baths, gardening and taste, and community art. Each event included a shared meal, drawing approximately 25-30 attendees. These warm, family-friendly evenings are a welcoming space for those within and beyond ESG. Daevyd Pepper helped support the meal prep and volunteer coordination.
- **Community Garden** – ESG received a Canada Summer Jobs grant, and thus hired four Grow Staff, made up of youth/young adults to support our food ministry and gardens. These employees cared for the church's gardens and raised beds, helped congregation members build “remote gardens” at their homes, and shared produce with those experiencing food insecurity through our Little Food Pantry and Fresh Mobile pantry for fresh produce. The Grow Staff also held Food Drives and Workshops on food justice and gardening further deepened community learning and engagement.
- **Flourish House** - The Flourish House residency continues to be a hub of hospitality, fellowship, and spiritual exploration. From September 2025 to present, residents **Jamie Gibson, Magdalena, and Marnie Klassen** hosted weekly meals that regularly brought together a group of friends, neighbours, colleagues, students, and ESG members. Each meal created space for connection and support. When Marnie moved out for her room to move back to Manitoba, **Chris Clarke** joined the Flourish House community. The three current residents of Flourish house are continuing the incredible focus of creating a space for belonging among young adults and focusing on building community and belonging through their weekly meals and their Cinema and Faith series,
- **Community Outreach programs** - The outreach committee leaders continue to support and create and support impactful food justice initiatives including the Little Free Pantry, the Drop In Breakfast, Cooking with a Cause, We Care kits, Welcome Baskets, and supporting outreach agencies within Toronto.

Gratitude:

Thank you to everyone who supports our Growth programs! A special word of gratitude to Patti Thompson, Janet Hardy, and Alan Walker, who meet regularly with Rev. Sarah to offer guidance, encouragement, and thoughtful feedback that helps shape and strengthen the church's ministry of growth.

Rev. Sarah Chapman
Next Generation & Growth Minister

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Another busy year for ESG and the volunteer Property Team who are responsible for providing safe, secure and well-maintained facilities. This is accomplished through diligent oversight and proactive maintenance of the grounds and buildings. A special thank you to the Team: Doug McWhirter, Doug Dicks, Peter Long, Chuck MacRae, Rick Balmer and Murray Brooks for the many hundreds of hours they devote to ESG and the community. In addition, thanks to our contractors who do all the heavy lifting and oversee our major projects.

SECURITY:

The province of Ontario established a fund to assist (mostly religious) organizations dealing with acts of vandalism. It is referred to as a Hate grant and is intended to underwrite the cost of installing facilities to mitigate the effects of hate crimes and acts of vandalism. ESG has received three such grants of \$10,000 each. This year's grant was used to improve on and expand site security both internally and externally with additional video surveillance in the lower hallway and outdoor lighting in the front courtyard.

MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS:

After 25+ years of service the Sanctuary heating system reached end-of-life and was replaced. This included the main hot water heating boiler and domestic hot water tank.

Several areas in the church have suffered from water ingress. Keeping abreast of this is a continuous task. This past year the Hearth Room underwent roof and ceiling repairs, as did the Servedy kitchen roof. The Sanctuary and the West Wing roofs, have been inspected and a program launched to identify and repair leaks.

The facilities have been inspected by insurance appraisers and our Fire Alarm protection service with deficiencies noted and acted on.

Regular repairs and maintenance of 92 Craighurst (Flourish House) this year included appliance and plumbing repairs.

GROUNDS:

We have renewed the contract for René Fan (a landscape architect) through June 2027 to maintain the grounds. We thank René and Arlene Duncan for their work in keeping ESG grounds well looked after.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT):

New speakers/amplifiers were installed in the sanctuary following computer modelling of the space to establish the design requirements and locations for the speakers.

We replaced several computers due to obsolescence and regularly assisted groups within the church with their IT needs.

Our contract with Starport, ESG's IT service provider, has been revised to add additional mandatory cyber security features including migrating all the data bases to "the cloud". In addition, we have arranged for a second off-site data backup and a more secure internet login protocol.

The IT portfolio consumes hundreds of hours of volunteer time: special thanks to Doug Dicks and Peter Long.

John Blevins
Chair, Property

Ministry & Personnel

2025-2026 Members:

Robert (Bob) Blair (2025 – retired December 31, 2025)
Heather Parker (2025-2026 – retired June 30, 2026)
Gordon Henderson
Vickie Kondo
Rob Crabtree
Carolyn Woodland (Chair – commenced January 1st, 2026)

The Ministry & Personnel Committee (M&P) has been very active during this year working with the Ministry team and committees on matters of permanent and part-time staff coordination, managing contracts, workload oversight, and salary/compensation review to meet the needs of ESG. We also assisted Rev Chapman with her parental leave process and the hiring of Daevyd Pepper to support Sarah's ministry and programs during her absence and into 2027.

With the roll out of ESG's New Strategic Directions, members have participated in reviewing the final recommendations of this consulting assignment, and worked with leaders on addressing specific requirements for staff position description updates. We refined the job responsibilities and reporting structure for the permanent staff team including the Operations & Administration Manager, the Director of Music and Lead Caretaker. In addition, the co-lead position descriptions for our Ministry team were submitted to the Shining Waters Regional Council representative for review and support.

Robert Blair retired from M&P at the end of December 2025 and Carolyn Woodland took on the new role after several years on M&P in the past. In June of 2026, Heather Parker also retired after many years of leadership on M&P. For both departing members, a small thank you celebration was held to thank two outstanding members and their dedicated contributions to the Ministry & Personnel Committee tasks.

In May and June, Rev. Hutchison and Chair Carolyn Woodland conducted individual interviews with permanent staff to cover performance and introduce the refined position descriptions and reporting structure.

In June, updated contracts were forwarded to all permanent and part-time staff – 13 in total plus 8 choir leads. The majority have been returned and signed over the summer break. Many thanks to Vickie Kondo who worked extensive hours to setup the legal contract formats that we use currently in contract negotiations.

Members of the M&P Committee work closely with Ministry team (as their M&P reps) to set goals, provide and receive performance feedback, and deal with work-related issues as they arise. We have been assisting staff to establish a time-tracking process tied to invoicing and to create a caretaking Master Work Schedule to cover staff responsibilities in a busy church with many variable commitments to parishioners, renters and event organizers.

The M&P Committee has had 3 experienced members retire over the last 2 years and we are considerably reduced in terms of member capacity. Although we will need to streamline efforts for the short term, an effort to build talent and membership with experience will be needed going forward.

I would like to thank the Ministers and all ESG personnel, as well as M&P members, for their dedication and stellar contributions to the life of the church and the vibrant community to which we belong.

Congratulations to you all for a thoughtful and productive year of service together:

Rev. Dr. Paul Hutchison, Co-Lead Minister
Rev. Sarah Chapman, Co-Lead Minister
Shawn Grenke, Director of Music
Meghan Jamieson, Operations & Administration Manager
Murray Brooks, Lead Caretaker
Dipali Raje, Communications Coordinator
Irina Denissova, Bookkeeper
Bryan Estabrooks, Audio Visual Producer
Kate Littler, Children's Ministry Administrator
Julia Walsh, Youth Leader
Adam Brooks, Part-Time Caretaker
Tracey Cameron, Part-Time Caretaker
Shone Brooks, Part-Time Caretaker (occasional)
Jamie Gibson, Part-Time Caretaker (occasional)
Lita Tobias, Infant Caregiver
Daevyd Pepper, Program Support

Carolyn Woodland,
Chair, M&P Committee

Trustees Report

The ESG Board of Trustees holds 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 to discuss property issues, to review all investment funds and to monitor the performance of ESG's investments. 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 2026-2027 fiscal year was positive, with an overall return of approximately 14% over that period. Overall, the funds have had 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 supplementary funding for the hiring of staff for the Summer Gardening Project and to provide annual supplemental retirement benefits for clergy and their spouses.

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



Finance

We ended the fiscal year June 30, 2025 with a moderate deficit of **(\$22,000)**. The following is a high level recap: (Please refer to the Audited Financial Statements for details.)

Donations were \$566,000, down slightly by **(\$7,000)**. Donations contribute only 41% of ESG's total revenues

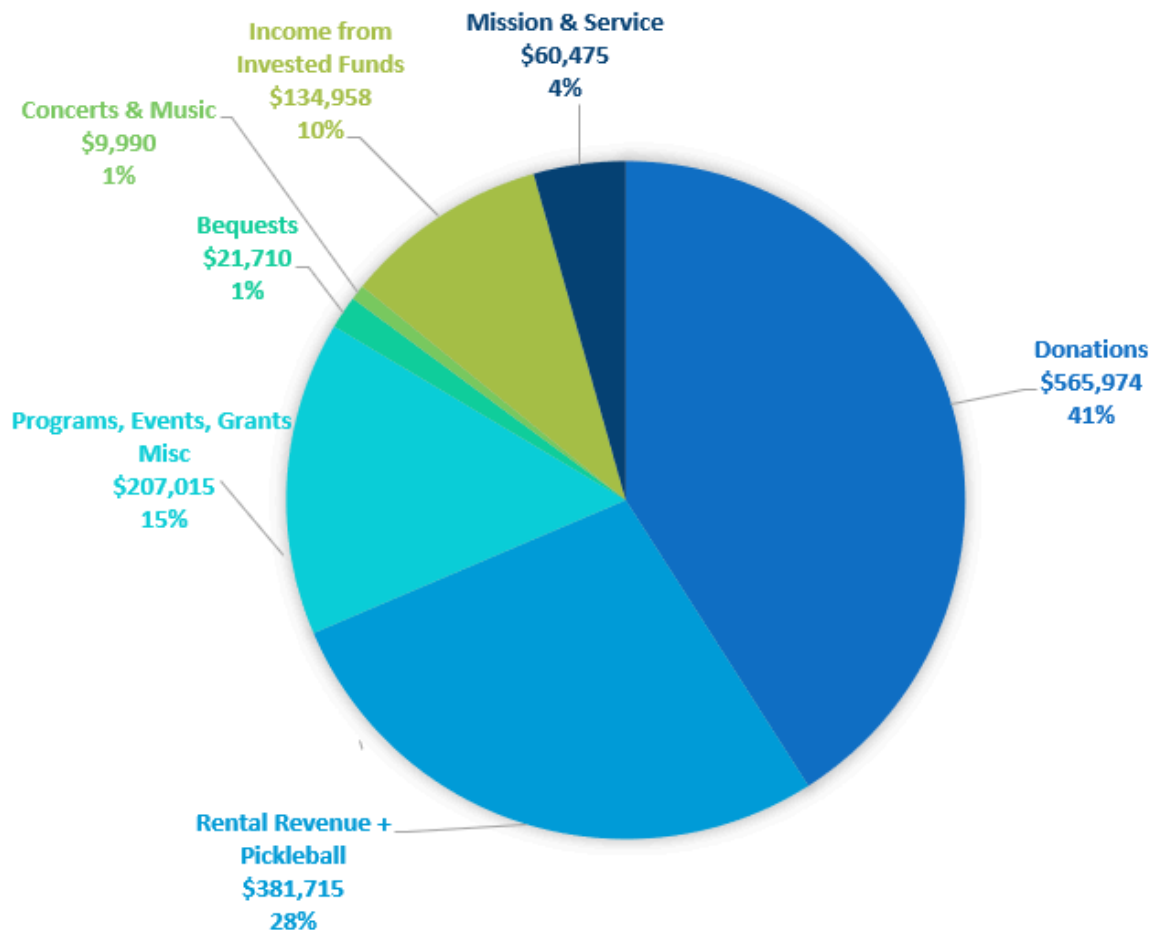
Rental revenues increased by **\$42,000 (12%)** with Choral Rentals & Pickleball providing significant increases.

Revenues from Programs, Events, Grants & Miscellaneous increased by **\$29,000 (16%)** primarily as a result of increased proceeds from rummage sales.

Operating expenses were carefully reviewed during the year however there was a negative variance of **\$30,000** in custodial overtime related to increased rental usage.

We are grateful to have received **\$21,000** in very generous undesigned bequests.

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





United Church

Discover. Your way.

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.

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