



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Rev. Sheena Trotter-Dennis

Minister

Dennis Ruf & Betty Norman Bray

Council

Chellan Hoffman

Music Director

Jo-Anne Willment

Stewardship

Janet Zatka

Treasurer

Norm Fenton

Ministry and Personnel

Roman Sizer

Social Media

Diane Trimming & Betty Norman Bray

Opportunity Knox

Karen Harrison

Book Club

Chuck Curry

Board of Trustees

Sue Forsyth

Office & Facility

Karen Harrison

Newsletter

Carey Barrett

Live Streaming

Doug Chandler

Open doors

Edgar Ayala

Affirming

Holly Smith

Truth and Reconciliation

Minister

When thinking about this past year at Knox, Isaiah's words come to mind: "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19). Emerging out of major upheaval (with a change in pastoral leadership and restructuring) and finding a foothold after Covid is monumental work. The people of this community have shown that they are committed to the work and committed to be a sacred space on the corner of 6th Avenue and 4th Street. The Council moved forward on a visioning process and agreed to a vision to be an "Open Space. Vibrant Place. Sacred Connections." I am continually struck with the number of people moving through this space either through our worship opportunities, through our rentals or by spending time in the sanctuary/labyrinth during the week.

Open Space.

Knox's commitment to be an open space showed up in many ways throughout the year. First, reopening the sanctuary and labyrinth during the week invited people into our space. I'm thankful for the many volunteer hosts who welcome people into the space.

Additionally, we were able to show our commitment to be an open space through PIE Day (passed out 300+ pieces of pie to people walking by and affirmed our Affirming stance), Aspire on Fire (a weekend event merging art and spirituality, particularly including those traditionally marginalized by the church), Yoga in the sanctuary, guest preachers/speakers throughout the year that highlighted social justice issues (Reconciliation, Affirming).

Vibrant Place.

This year saw an increase in rentals and people using Knox to gather in different ways. Our Christmas Eve services reached over 1000 people. A return of a Good Friday service was well attended, the Easter service was about 350, the Annual Carol Fest had three nights of full attendance and raised over \$10,000 for the Calgary Food Bank. Our social media had increased usage (see the Communications Report), and new people continue to show up on Sunday mornings. We had an increase of 25% attendance for Sunday morning worship. I am especially thankful for all the ways people have stepped into volunteer roles.

Sacred Connections.

Connection with one another is a key aspect of our downtown community. When we gather with one another we realize we are not alone. The return of our monthly potlucks was one way we gathered with about 50-60 people joining each month. Our Wednesday contemplative service grew from about 8 to 17 weekly attendees. A Sunday morning Bible Study/conversation was started with about 5 people attending each Sunday. Also, Knox continued to be committed to the work of Reconciliation (a Reconciliation team, procurement of a Treaty 7 flag in the sanctuary, participating in two feasts with the Stoney Nakoda community, hosting the Sobercrew Walk, facilitating a group through the Indigenous Canada course).

I had the privilege/honour of officiating 1 memorial (John Wood), 1 burial (Elaine Stewart) and 3 weddings. We celebrated 4 new members joining Knox.

I was grateful to work with our seminary interns, Keith Murray and William Brook, my colleague Rev. Tony Snow, and the talented and dedicated staff of Knox United.

The financial realities of operating a large century-old building are still a challenge for this congregation. Short and long-term plans to create a financially stable and thriving congregation for the next 100 years are being worked on diligently by the Board. I am grateful for their commitment and leadership and believe Knox will find ways to be financially secure.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve this community and look forward and with hope for the year ahead.

Respectively submitted, Rev. Sheena Trotter-Dennis



Council

It has been a year of growth and development for the Knox Council in our first year of working together without the support, leadership, and guidance of the Commission. The Commissioners, Reverends Bob Mutlow, Roslyn Campbell, and Tom Melvin were a critical factor in setting us on the path to renewal and revitalization, and we thank them for their assistance and service.

The Council consists of a harmonious group of dedicated individuals who work very well together. With the guidance of Rev Sheena Trotter-Dennis and others, Council's goal is to provide an effective catalyst for working into Knox's mission and vision.

Highlights from our year include:

- Establishment of an inspirational weekly hour of Reflection and Connection on Wednesdays at 12:30 in the Labyrinth Room. The focus is on building community through music, readings, reflection, and theme-based conversation.
- Lenten focus on Truth and Reconciliation including a Maundy Thursday feast and Thanksgiving feast with the Stoney Nakoda Nation in Morley, a Blanket Exercise with Tony Snow, and collection of winter wear for the Aboriginal Friendship Centre.
- Community connections including membership in The Calgary Alliance for the Common Good and Affirming Connections Calgary, weekday meetings of the Knox Nooners AA group and Respect Basketball, Stampede Parade seating and streetside celebrations on PIE Day, partnering with the City of Calgary for Neighbour Day and Yoga in the Sanctuary, Affirming Leaders Day with Chinook Winds Region, Springboard Performance for Spire on Fire, Carol Fest in support of the Calgary Foodbank and hosting the Sober Crew on their Ama'h nabino walk from Morley..
- Appointment of a very experienced and successful Grants and Partnerships Liaison, Kay de la Ronde and an Affirming Ministries lead, Edgar Ayala.
- The welcoming of two VST students, Keith Murray and William Brook who began their 200 hours at Knox in July.
- Inception of English Language Learning classes for new immigrants and refugees. Dennis Ruf set up 3 separate multiweek sessions in July, September, and November.
- Successful grant application for The Community Services Recovery Fun which enabled the temporary quarter time hiring of Reverend Tony Snow to foster our Indigenous ReconciliAction, an Online Engagement Coordinator, a Communications Support person and equipment to enhance our AV abilities in the sanctuary.
- As follow up to the Value Statements and Initiatives from the 2022 Mission and Visioning Working Group, Keith Murray led council through a Revisioning process which yielded much creative thinking about our Vision and Mission and a new tag line for Knox United Church- Open Space. Vibrant Place. Sacred Connections.

- Successful application to the Thriving Non-Profits learning program with participation of Reverend Sheena Trotter-Dennis, Student Intern Keith Murray, Trustee Chair Chuck Curry, and Council Co-Chair Betty Norman Bray. The goal of this program is to transform our organizational finances and culture with new strategies and entrepreneurial thinking.
- Completion of the negotiations of the loan agreement with the Calgary Foundation.

Respectfully submitted, Betty Norman Bray and Dennis Ruf, Council Co-Chairs.

Music

The Knox music program includes the following ensembles: Knox Choir, the ReBell Ringers, the Children's Handbell Ringers, and vocal and instrumental soloists. These dedicated folks presented music for Sunday services, special services, and extra events this year, and led the congregation in musical worship each week.

In January, we welcomed Elyssa Cundy to the choir.

In February, we celebrated Black History month with new and familiar works by American and Canadian composers.

The Lenten theme of journeying was marked by the congregation learning a new hymn: "This Path We Walk". The lyrics were written by Rev. Curtis Tufts in 2016 - honouring the 30th Anniversary of the United Church's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation made in 1986. Chellan chose to set these words to a melody written by sacred composer Ron Klusmeier. The pairing of these lyrics with this music has been effective, and as of February 2024, permission was granted by both Tufts and Klusmeier for this hymn, in its new form, to be sung in the context of worship.

Good Friday - Chellan and Rev. Sheena Trotter-Dennis designed a Good Friday service with readings and meditations alternating with music. The music of Bach and the Taizé Community was provided by special guests Lucie Jones, flute and Helayna Moll, soprano soloist; and by Knox Ringers and the Knox Choir. This was the first Good Friday service in many years that did not include a collaboration with Central, Scarboro, and Chinese United Churches. The pandemic was certainly a catalyst in pushing congregations to create their own services when larger gatherings were not allowed.

Easter Sunday featured celebratory music from the Knox Choir, and an Easter Fanfare for Knox Ringers and organ, written by Chellan Hoffman.

After a short break from rehearsals at the end of June, musicians gathered to provide some fun western and gospel music for both Stampede Sundays in July. Many thanks to the choir, ReBell Ringers, and instrumentalists: Ian Kennedy and Gerrit Voordouw (flutes), David Westwick (mandolin), John Hall (guitar), Victoria Mogilevskaya (bass), Ricardo Moraes-Pinto (drums).

Throughout the summer, many choir members continued to lead the music for in-house and livestream services, arriving at 10 am to review hymns with the director.

In September, regular rehearsals for choir and handbells resumed. The season started with about 15 choristers, and 7 ReBell Ringers. Both ensembles provided music for the Thanksgiving Sunday service.

On November 5, Chellan (piano and organ) and Michael Hope (singer) presented "Lest We Forget: A Concert for Peace". Admission was by donation, and proceeds were split 50/50 with half going to Michael Hope and his charity initiatives, and half going to Knox United. This year, Knox held a

Remembrance service on Saturday, November 11 at 11 a.m., rather than the annual Remembrance Sunday service. It was well attended, and music was provided by the choir, Chris Morrison on cornet and flugel horn, and Chellan Hoffman, organ.

Mid-fall, Chellan stepped back from directing the handbells, and Janet Zarka and the rest of the ringers shared the leadership. Janet Zarka also worked with Christine Sizer to form a children's handbell ringing group that practiced in another room on Sunday mornings. Over several weeks, they prepared "Away in a Manger" and played it beautifully for one of the Advent services, as well as the 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service, attended by over 500 people. This presentation was very well received and opened the door for other interested children to join.

In early December, to promote the upcoming Calgary Carol Festival, Chellan Hoffman and Chris Morrison represented Knox United on the CBC's Eye Opener with Angela Knight and Loren McGinnis. CBC broadcasted from the Calgary Food Bank location, which is the organization that the Carol Festival supports annually. Fueled by morning lattes from adjacent Fratello Coffee, Chris and Chellan played out the show with a high-caffeine trumpet/keyboard arrangement of "Jingle Bells." Knox members Elizabeth Campbell, Rosalee Morrison, and Steve Miller were there at 6 a.m. to cheer us on.

The Calgary Carol Festival was another great success. It was again organized by Arthur Barbosa, and supported in all areas by Murray Songer, Sue Forsyth, Sheena Trotter-Dennis, Chellan Hoffman, Gord McRae and others. There were about 28 choirs that performed over Dec 2, 3, and 4. The Knox Choir sang on Sunday evening, singing solo pieces as well as provided back up harmonies for Michael Hope, who sang two solos and emceed that day. A big thank you to the AV team including Marco Rojas and Carey Barrett who adapted to the many choirs' sound and lighting needs.

Christmas Eve fell on a Sunday this year, and so Knox presented three services that day, starting with the 10:30am service - Lessons and Carols - with Knox Choir providing music. Two Christmas Eve services followed at 7pm and 11pm, where music was provided by the Foothills Brass Quintet; the Knox Choir (augmented by extra singers Helayna Moll, Kim Reinhardt, Greer Reinhardt); by the Children's Handbell Ringers; and the ReBell Ringers. Thank you to Tenzin Dawa on sound, Carey Barrett operating "The Star" projected on the front wall; and all the AV people who supported.

Knox Choir: SOPRANOS Ann Farebrother, Karen Harrison, Pat Place ALTOS Elissa Cundy, Gillian Forster, Ruth Lomenda. BASSES John Hall, Ian Kennedy, Ricardo Moraes-Pinto, Jim Smith, Leslie Smith, David Westwick. TENORS Pete Dennis, Chuck Curry, Steve Miller.

Knox ReBell Ringers: Janet Zarka, Rosalee Morrison, Chris Morrison, Kat Hammer, David Westwick, Pat Place, Steve Miller, Chellan Hoffman

A big thank you to all who contributed their time and skill this year as soloists and ensemble musicians. Many hours of preparation and rehearsal go into each minute of music that is heard every Sunday.

A big thank you to Steve Miller who donates his expertise as a professional tuner technician, to keep the Casavant pipe organ tuned and maintained for Knox's weekly services, and for use in rental concerts, weddings and other events.

A big thank you to Sue Forsyth and Rev. Sheena Trotter-Dennis for their support of the music program this year.

Respectfully submitted, Chellan Hoffman, Director of Music

Finance & Stewardship Working Group

Duties of the Chair were revised in mid-2023 to bring together financial and stewardship responsibilities. At the May 28, 2023 of the Knox Congregational Meeting, the Chair of the Finance & Stewardship Working Group assumed the following duties.

- Works collaboratively with the Treasurer and the Governing Body to oversee the financial health of the church for the operating budget, investments and debt management.
- Provides leadership, advice, support and direction where necessary in the development of and carrying out the Stewardship program including Knox Giving, targeted fundraising programs and donor appreciation.
- Educate & engages the Knox congregation in giving time, talents and resources and offering gratitude & appreciation.
- Works with the Treasurer and the Governing Body to develop, review and communicate financial policies and procedures.
- Supports the Treasurer on financial reporting to the Knox congregation and the United Church of Canada.
- Collaborates with the Grants Liaison and forwards recommendations and suggestions to the Governing Body.
- Advises the Governing body on strategies to fund church projects.

The focus of the position is to strategize, plan and execute with others *incoming funding* for Knox United Church. This is done with the cooperation of a cross-section of broad participants including the Knox congregation, Council, ministerial and church staff, financial investment teams, and external partners.

Spring-Summer, 2023

Completed the professional development program for the Best Stewardship Practices course with the United Church of Canada (U.C.C.) in Spring, 2023. The program included a small group of Knox members including Rev. Sheena plus 3 additional churches from Western Canada. A Knox Stewardship Analysis Report was written by Vicki Nelson, U.C.C. and was successful used to strengthen Knox's Stewardship program.

A working draft was created by the Chair and agreed upon with other Council members. This plan included four financial initiatives: (a) a Financial Conversation series for interested Knox members to be held in September, 2023; (b) a 10-15% increase in stewardship pledges should be sought for the 2024 Stewardship Program; (c) the Stewardship Program will be a 4 week initiative scheduled from October 22-November, 19, 2023; and (d) an internal Appreciation Luncheon scheduled for Sunday, November 19, 2023 to thank the congregation for giving their talents, generosity and resources to Knox United Church.

Fall, 2023

The Financial Conversation saw 10 Knox members participating in discussion. The treasurer was invited as our first guest speaker. The successful response to this series will be repeated in future.

The Stewardship Program included two planning sessions held in Sept & Oct; the development of two sophisticated 2024 Stewardship Packages in October, four Knox Service speakers on, "Why I Give to Knox", and the planning of an Appreciation Lunch with participation of the Knox Choir and our world-class Knox Cooking Team.

Distribution of an in-house professional "hardcopy" of the Package was hand-delivered on Sundays, Wednesday noon hours and through the week at our Welcoming Table. A second "virtual" Stewardship

brochure was created with the assistance of Karen Harrison and Roman Sizer. This resulted in a copy for the Knox website which is available today. It is hoped in future that a new computer software program will enable a detailed analysis of stewardship donor practices for future stewardship initiatives.

Results of the Stewardship Donor Outcomes

A decrease in the number of Knox donors over the past 5-7 years has occurred for many reasons including an aging church demographic, the passing of loved ones, relocation of members due to work or retirement, the COVID closure and other factors. Encouragingly, new and young adults/families are attending Sunday and Wednesday services for community, spirituality, reflection and the many activities within our beautiful downtown historical church. Knox is seeing successful results including positive incoming financial statistics for our Stewardship Programs over the last 2 years as indicated below.

Year	Donor/Pledge Amount	% Difference	Mission & Service	Knox Foundation
2022	\$225,827		N/A	N/A
2023	\$204,995	Down 10% from 2022	\$10,735	\$4,260
2024	\$233,634	*Up 9.6% from 2022 * Up 13% from 2023	\$ 7,416	\$1,500

These statistics indicate positive financial growth. Our 2024 Stewardship program offers success with greater financial funding for which we are very grateful to our Knox community. The monthly cost of maintaining Knox is \$45K so the next issue is fundraising for monthly expenditures and the Calgary Foundation debt repayment. When we all pull together, success breeds success. Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted, Jo-Anne H. Willment

Treasurer

There is much to celebrate following the challenges of prior years. 2023 was an encouraging year with outcomes moving in the right direction. The unaudited financial statements as at December 31, 2023 report how the year ended and highlight where energies need to be focused for 2024.

2023 was the year of managing cash flows which included the bank account overdraft and accounts payable. At year end the net bank overdraft was -\$60,651 compared to last year's positive cash balance of \$9,346. During 2023 Knox was able to pay all four quarterly interest payments to the Calgary Foundation, compared with only two last year, and support a full staff complement for the entire year unlike the prior year of transition. Accounts payable at year end were current and lower than the prior year. This is very encouraging as Knox was able to reestablish timely payment of supplier invoices which had been difficult in prior years.

Property, equipment & furnishings include the unamortized stonework restoration and partial pit development, and the amortized building extensions which include Café equipment & furnishings and IT

& miscellaneous equipment. These fixed assets acquired in prior years position Knox for the future by having completed critical work on the historic building's stonework and sanctuary enhancements.

During 2023 Knox was successful in receiving grant funds in the amount of \$78,000 from the Community Services Recovery Fund grants (CSRF) supported by the Government of Canada.

These funds made it possible for Knox to acquire additional IT equipment in the total amount of \$34,000 for system upgrades in the Board Room and Sanctuary which enhance our in-person worship services, livestream capability and rental opportunities. The remaining total amount of \$44,000 made it possible for Knox to provide staffing to engage the expertise of an Online Engagement Coordinator to participate in online chat with livestream participants during worship services, a Communications Specialist to implement existing Church Centre software to improve communication and outreach with the congregation and a one-quarter time Minister to strengthen its continuing work with Truth & Reconciliation. All equipment purchases and initiatives must be completed by June 30, 2024

Knox follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. The year end balance of \$454,022 reported for Deferred Capital Contributions includes grants which are restricted in use for specific capital projects. This amount will be reviewed by the auditors and adjusted, if required.

During the pandemic Knox was eligible for and acquired the maximum interest-free loan of \$60,000 under the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) program. Before the close of 2023, Knox repaid the \$40,000 CEBA loan balance outstanding, enabling it to access loan forgiveness of \$20,000 (33%). Thank you to the Knox Foundation for providing a grant in the amount of \$40,000 for this repayment.

The original loan amount of \$1,000,000 to the Calgary Foundation was reduced by \$300,000 in 2023. Thank you to the Knox Trustees and Knox Foundation for releasing \$150,000 each from their respective investment portfolios to make this possible. The loan's current outstanding balance is \$700,000. On May 28, 2023 the Congregation, at its meeting, voted in support of the Third Amendment to the original loan agreement. This amendment was signed by all parties on June 27, 2023 and sets out the current lump sum principal repayment and interest loan repayment plan until the term ends April 16, 2030 as follows:

Year	Interest rate of 3.5%	Lump Sum Principal	Total
2024	\$23,800	\$40,000	\$63,800
2025	\$22,050	\$60,000	\$82,050
2026	\$18,900	\$120,000	\$138,900
2027	\$14,700	\$120,000	\$134,700
2028 to April 16, 2030	\$18,900	\$360,000	\$378,900
Total	\$98,350	\$700,000	\$798,350

Overall, 2023 total operating revenues of \$404,255 increased by \$78,010 over the prior year.

Highlighted increases:

- Targeted Givings by \$9,886.
- Facility Rentals by \$51,626.
- Fundraising and Other by \$16,498.

At the same time, total operating expenses of \$608,924 increased by \$27,737 over the prior year.

Reasons:

- Ministry and outreach expenses of \$360,188 increased by \$32,610 as 2023 included a full support staff complement and appointed minister for the entire year.
- Administration expenses of \$93,735 decreased by \$7,300 as professional transitioning support is no longer required.

- Building expenses of \$123,099 decreased by \$11,975 as insurance was acquired through the United Church of Canada at lower cost than prior years.
- Total Interest expense of \$31,902 increased by \$14,402 as 2023 included four quarterly interest payments for 2023 as opposed to two during the prior year where the Calgary Foundation deferred without accrual two quarterly interest payment during Knox's period of transition.

Knox collects and remits donations collected on behalf of the Mission & Service Fund of the United Church of Canada and Knox Foundation. During 2023 total amounts of \$7,490 and \$3,630 were collected and remitted for each, respectively.

Investment income includes investment income earned on the Barr Estate (Restricted) and Air Rights (Unrestricted) which are managed by the Knox Trustees and fluctuates with the markets. At year end the market values of each portfolio, including cash accounts, was \$109,858 and \$576,840, respectively. During 2023 withdrawals in the total amount of \$87,559 from the Air Rights and Barr Estate included support for salary, building repairs and community/social outreach in the amounts of \$50,000, \$13,500 and \$24,059, respectively.

We remain undaunted as we take on the new year. 2024 will be the year of opportunities as we focus on increasing operating revenues in new ways, looking at efficiencies to reduce operating costs and repaying the Calgary Foundation loan. Thank you to everyone who has supported Knox in a multitude of ways. It is my privilege and honour to serve as Treasurer on the Knox Council. I appreciate the energy of the wonderful people at Knox and look forward to another year of creating our Open Space. Vibrant Place. Sacred Connections.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Zatka, Treasurer

Ministry and Personnel

The past year was good for Knox, and that included dealing with the personnel and volunteers of Knox. It was also another busy year.

Two Events Coordinators were hired as part time employees: Sue Forsyth (with this position being separate from her job as Office and Facility Manager) and Amy Whitmore to cover the various concerts and other rentals occurring at Knox. Justin Cross was hired as a full time caretaker in June following a three-month trial period, resulting in a complement of two. Chellan Hoffman, after seven years as the Knox Music Director, has taken a six-month leave of absence, beginning in January 2024. Rev Sheena Dennis-Trotter, Jampa Tseten, Roman Sizer (contract extended to May 2024) and Alexis Kroon continued in their usual roles. Toward the end of the year, Keith Murray and Tony Snow were respectively hired as Ministerial Intern and Indigenous Minister until June 2024.

A changeover from our Microsoft email system to Google Drive never transpired, but is scheduled for March 2024.

During the year, the Committee met with employees on an individual basis, with some of those meetings including performance reviews. An appreciation luncheon was held for all employees in the boardroom in December.

MPC members: Dennis Ruf, Maggie Bolger, Helen MacRae

Respectfully submitted, Norman Fenton (Chair)

Social Media

Greetings, Knox Community!

It's been a dynamic year in our online world. Our social media presence has grown steadily and organically, reaching out to new friends, sparking interest and creating engaging conversations. We've made some changes along the way to ensure we're connecting with you where it matters most.

First off, I have decided to focus more attention on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, bidding farewell to Twitter (now known as X) where I was seeing no fruit for our efforts. This shift has allowed me to dive deeper into creating meaningful content and interactions on platforms where many of you are active.

I've been wearing many hats in my role, from managing our social media accounts to crafting eye-catching graphics and keeping our website fresh. On social media, you'll find a mix of daily updates, snapshots of our community, event highlights, and snippets of our vibrant musical culture, including performances by the choir and handbell groups.

Working closely with Sheena, Keith, Sue, Katherine, Chellan, and Ethan, we've been spreading the word about Knox's events and activities. Together, we've collaborated to craft the posters, postcards and other branded media that reflect the warmth and spirit of our community. Thanks to Sheena and Katherine's help, we have also seen a stunning redesign of our weekly email and have begun seeing a steady increase in subscribers to our mailing list.

But it doesn't stop there. I've also been busy sprucing up our website, giving it a modern, user-friendly makeover. Now, you can easily find the latest service details, catch up on past sermons, and discover ways to get involved. These updates not only showcase our active community but also ensure that we stay relevant in today's digital landscape.

Thank you for bringing me in to join Knox on this journey as we continue to grow and connect online. Your support and engagement make Knox a special place in person and the digital realm. Here's to another year of friendship, inspiration, and shared experiences!

Respectfully submitted by Roman Sizer

Opportunity Knox

For about four years, Opportunity Knox has been associated with messages announcing the availability of volunteer leadership positions at Knox, and the invitation to those interested to offer their services. Diane Trimming and Betty Norman Bray are currently the Opportunity Knox team.

The primary role of Opportunity Knox is to ensure there is an open and transparent process for filling vacant volunteer leadership positions. We strive to provide applicants with knowledge of the position and to match skills and interests with available opportunities. The positions most likely to fall under our mandate are those requiring congregational approval, such as Council members, Trustees and Committee/Team Chairs.

Our process begins with familiarizing ourselves with the appropriate position description and advertising the position in bulletins, online and during Sunday services. Interested individuals complete an application and once received, we contact the applicant and arrange a meeting with a prepared list of discussion items relevant to the position. After the meeting we write a meeting summary and recommendations which we forward to Council for a final decision.

The Opportunity Knox team has been especially busy as Knox reorganized with new roles, and we are pleased to provide a list of the positions we have filled.

- The 2023 Council positions including Treasurer, Secretary, Co-chairs, Chair of Ministry and Personnel, Finance and Stewardship Chair, Property and Facilities Chair, Chinook Winds Regional Representative.
- Two new Trustees
- Two new members of the Knox Foundation
- Team Lead for Affirming Ministries

We appreciate all those who have stepped up to volunteer for these leadership positions. It has been our pleasure to meet such interesting and capable individuals committed to the future of Knox.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Trimming and Betty Norman Bray

Book Club

Since the last Annual Report, it has been my privilege to convene 2 studies of the Knox Book Club: in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024.

In Fall 2023, the Book Club met weekly from late September until mid-November to read and discuss “Holy Envy” by Barbara Brown Taylor. A New York Times Best Seller in 2014, this book explores the deepening of Christian faith through exposure to and “holy envy” of the practices of other faith traditions. Barbara Brown Taylor is an ordained minister, and in this book, shares stories and faith lessons from her time teaching “World Religions 101” at Community College. It is a fabulous read and provoked fabulous conversations.

Our book for Winter 2024 is “Holy Chaos” by Amanda Henderson. Rev. Henderson is an Interfaith leader and a political activist in her home-state of Colorado. Her book is aimed both at developing in the reader the spiritual foundation for engagement and at offering wise and practical tools for ensuring such engagement is safe and respectful. The emphases on “why” you engage and on how you experience opposition/contention/different world-views demand a thoughtful engagement with your own beliefs and motivations – a journey made both easier and more honest through our shared discussions.

I must also give thanks for the establishment of the “Zoom Room”. The new screen and excellent microphones/cameras on the “Zoom owl” enable us to hold effective hybrid meetings. The new facilities have enabled us to retain our rhythm of fellowship despite arctic temperatures and physical travels/absence.

The 2 sessions discussed above have been greatly enriched through participation by members of Central United Church. I extend particular thanks to Holly Smith for inviting friends from CUCC to join us. I have learned much from their generously shared experience.

The Book Club is conceived as (and simply is) a “safe space” for spiritual exploration. We choose books that speak to an active, inquisitive faith journey. We are a diverse group of seekers with different traditions and backgrounds. Through meeting and discussion we build trust to share and learn from each other, knowing that there are no “wrong” things to say.

Finally, I must extend my personal thanks to the other Book Club participants who have made this such a rewarding group. Thank you for keeping showing up!

Respectively submitted, Karen Harrison

Board of Trustees

Trustees: Chuck Curry (Chair), Keith Bacon (past chair and secretary),

Betty Norman Bray, Sol Candle, James Smith, Jo-Anne Willment, David Westwick

Duties of Trustees:

- To hold all Knox United Church and Knox Church properties and funds in lieu of property in trust for the Congregation. Note: there are two deeds for the Knox property - Knox Hall (1960) is held by the Trustees under the name of Knox United Church and the heritage building (1912) is held on behalf of the congregation by the Trustees under the name Knox Church
- To hold and manage funds from the sale of the density rights (air rights) over the historical building, as directed by the congregation.
- To manage the Barr Estate investments and use dividends to fund Knox Mission and Outreach projects
- To have a representative on the Knox Council
- To ensure appropriate insurance policies are in place.
- To adhere to the guidelines set out in the Congregational Board of Trustees Handbook of the United Church of Canada.
- To report to the Congregation once a year or as required.

The Board of Trustee’s primary focus has been the administration of the “managed” investment portfolio of the funds realized from the 2001 sale of the air density rights over the historic church.

Scotia Wealth Management continues to be the administrator of the investment portfolio through their Martin Mueller Advisory Group. The market value of the portfolio as of January 2023 was \$762,148.

Recent activity of this account is:

- March 1, 2023 \$25,000 was transferred to the CIBC operating account for the support of Rev. Sheena Trotter-Dennis salary, originally approved by the congregation at the 2023 (2022) Annual Meeting, but not requested by the Treasurer until 2023.
- April 13, 2023 \$150,000 was transferred to the CIBC operating account for the purposes of paying down the Calgary Foundation loan.
- October 2023 \$30,000 was transferred to the CIBC operating account (\$25,000 to support operations and \$5,000 for glass repairs in Church Building.
- December 2023 \$8,500 was transferred to the CIBC operating account

At the beginning of 2024 the value of the investment account was \$575,586.

The value of the air rights sale in 2000 was \$1,200,000. Over the intervening years the funds have been used to anchor margin loans to restore the sanctuary, Labyrinth, Parlor, and Theatre of the Historic Building and the assist in the installation of a new elevator, and partially fund the replacement of the roof and ventilation machinery on the Christian Education Building

Trustees also manage the investments in the Barr Estate under a separate portfolio. Disbursements from that fund are solely for support of the outreach mission of the church. As of January 31, 2023 the market value of the fund was \$124,792.

Recent activity on this account is:

- March 2023 transfer of \$4,059 to the Knox operating fund to pay for the Knox membership in Calgary Alliance for the Common Good and Affirm United.
- November 29, 2023 \$20,000 was transferred to the Knox operating account for paying salaries that were related to charitable events which had no rental revenue.

At the beginning of January 2024 this fund value was \$109,562

INSURANCE COVERAGE CHANGE

On March 1, 2023 Knox changed its insurance coverage. For many years Knox has been in the Faith Guard Insurance Program of the UCC Protect Program administered through Rogers Insurance. Starting March 1, 2023, the United Church of Canada launched a Self Insurance Plan aimed at reducing the property and liability insurance by 15%-30% for all member churches. In 2022 Knox paid \$56,500 for three insurance policies: property and liability, boilers insurance and Volunteer Accident insurance. Our total insurance costs for 2023 were \$44,789.50.

CHANGE OF PROPERTY DEED FOR THE HISTORIC CHURCH

Knox trustees have been advised by a Chinook Winds Commissioner to consider the adoption of the Model Trust Deed for the Historic Church property because of a new Trust Act recently enacted by the Alberta Province, we are no longer sure of the liability for the Trustees.

Since 1925 when the United Church was proclaimed by an act of Parliament, Knox has chosen to keep the deed to the historic property rather than adopting the United Church Model Trust Deed. Under this Trust the trustees hold congregational property in trust for the congregation as part of The United Church of Canada in all provinces and territories except Quebec as long as the congregation exists. The United Church would only deal with the property if the congregation was to close. The UCC is involved because of this residual interest. There is no change in title. The title is still with the Knox trustees.

At the Annual Congregational Meeting of 2023 the Congregation voted to adopt the Model Trust Deed of the United Church of Canada for both of our properties.

APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDING

In August 2022 the Trustees applied for an Alberta Security Infrastructure Program (ASIP) for a new intrusion prevention system, garden lighting, security fence on the west side of the church and a surveillance system. We were successful and by the end of 2022 the new security system and the surveillance system were installed. The west wall security fence was completed in January 2023, and the garden lighting was completed in late spring.

Respectfully submitted, Chuck Curry

Office

The Knox Office continues to operate as the heart of the church's administration supporting the amazing efforts of many individuals. Recognition goes out to the office team who provides valuable assistance to me:

- Carey Barret and Karen Harrison
- Stephen Miller for IT and sound support
- Roman Sizer for social media and website support
- Lynda Murch for event contracts support
- Rev. Sheena Trotter-Dennis for being Sheena

The excellent and dedicated caretakers, Jampa and Justin, have worked hard to keep the church looking its best for all the services and the special events. Many enthusiastic volunteers have contributed to the success of the special events from the initial requests for renting spaces to the final production including ushers and greeters, and security marshals.

It has been a challenging year with regards to administrative technology for the office. The company that had been responsible for automatically backing up files stopped their service without notice in the spring. When the server failed in the fall we were challenged with replacing and retrieving files. Ongoing IT issues have been difficult without consistent and available professional support.

Many important fundraising activities in 2023 were supported by the office and resulted in significant funds.

- *Family-friendly Stampede Parade seating* – Tickets for 60 seats were sold as prime seats on 6th Avenue to watch the parade. Each ticket included a gourmet bag breakfast for 1 adult and 1 child; stroller parking; access to indoor washrooms; 1 chair and curb space for viewing the parade. A canteen was set up with drinks, snacks and freezies available for reasonable prices. Funds raised totaled over \$2,900.
- *The Christmas Choral Festival* initiative raised over \$14,250 and brought in 2,730 pounds of food helping the Calgary Food Bank to continue to feed those in the community facing food insecurity.
- *Choral Festival Snack Bar* – Over the 3 evenings of the Christmas Choral Festival over 1,200 people attended and purchased coffee, water and hot chocolate. During the many events over the year, the variety of items at the snack bar has been increased and significantly, 1,000 chocolate bars have been sold. Funds raised over the year totaled over \$7,200.
- *Jewels for Jesus* – Knox's first garage sale was organized by Murray Songer and held in September. This was a big undertaking and thanks go to Murray and the volunteer team with special help from Justin and Jampa. Funds raised totaled over \$5,200.
- *Christmas Bake Sale* – The annual sale was again organized and managed by Murray Songer and Vi Smith. Tables in the Labyrinth displayed the tasty donations on sale. Total sales added over \$800 to the fundraising revenues.
- *Bottle Drive* – This is an ongoing project that continues to generate funds. Thanks to Jim Smith and Gord McRae's efforts in returning donated refundable bottles and cans to the bottle depot funds raised totaled \$570
- *Special Events and Rentals* – In 2023, there were 29 special events and 31 rental clients which generated revenues totaling over \$216,800. The client base is growing slowly and becoming more

varied. Late in the year, Amy Whitmore was contracted to help with on-site management for several of the special events and she will be an important asset as the number of events continues to grow.

- *Calgary Musician's Association* – The main upstairs office space was leased to the Calgary Musician's Association and the move-in went smoothly. We are looking forward to the Association as a positive partner for Knox into the future.

Respectfully submitted, Sue Forsyth, Office and Facility Manager

Newsletter

The final edition of this iteration of News@Knox went to press on December 1st 2023.

We started the monthly newsletter in August 2022, in response to the voiced need from the congregation for enhanced transparency and with the mission of helping Knox rebuild its community. Sue Forsyth, Carey and I stuffed envelopes with paper copies in those early days, moving to an online edition in 2023 with the help of Roman Sizer, our Social Media & IT contractor.

It was my privilege and my pleasure to act as contributing editor throughout this iteration. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. With monthly reports from the Knox Council, M&P Committee, Building Team and regular updates from our Treasurer/Finance/Stewardship Committee, I think News@Knox was somewhat successful in fostering transparency in the life of our church. Through the listing of volunteer opportunities, the calendar, testimonials, and articles about different aspects of Knox, I think we did also contribute to bringing us together in community. Thank you to all those who allowed me to nag them into submissions each month. I really think you made a difference. A special thank you goes to Reverend Sheena, whose monthly welcome note set the tone and opened every edition in the last year.

As we move into 2024, it is time for something new. The monthly newsletter format is, I will be the first to admit, somewhat old-fashioned. I am leaving for an extended period, which feels like a natural opportunity to try a different approach. Keith Murray is now appointed our Outreach and Communications Leader. From my own experience, I know he will be ably supported by Roman, who has already made such a fabulous job of our social media feeds and revitalised our website.

I look forward to seeing what Keith and Roman will do next.

Respectively submitted, Karen Harrison

Live-Streaming

Since the previous Annual Report, live-streaming has gone from strength to strength, both in terms of technology and in terms of people.

The Federal money received from the grant application stewarded so ably by Kay De La Ronde enabled us to buy quite a bit of additional equipment. In fact, with expert guidance from Steve Miller, we overhauled our capacity AND came in under budget.

We bought and installed 2 additional Canon CR-N300 remote cameras in the Sanctuary. This means that we now have 3 professional, fixed cameras permanently available and no longer have to rely upon the two hobby cameras lent to Knox by an adherent, which had to be set up and taken down for every recording.

We also upgraded to a new video switcher (ATEM Mini Extreme) which doubled our capacity and enables us to capture and record separate feeds from each camera and to enliven the stream with new mixing effects. This is made easier by the generous donation by an adherent of 2 new monitors for the team to work with.

Steve Miller and myself also replaced the old flood lighting with new, low-energy rigs that will cost roughly a third to operate and give a much more uniform and natural lighting field – enhancing the look of everything we see through the lenses.

The new set-up has already earned Knox enhanced rental fees, as we can (and did) offer a first-rate video service to high-end renters, such as the Cantare Choir.

In many ways, even more important than the excellent new equipment is our new Live-streaming crew. I put out a call for volunteers in November and was extremely blessed by the enthusiastic and talented response. My thanks and respect to Vladimir Bodrug, Christopher Denman, Rick Hand and Mirko Zátka, who have seized the chance to contribute to Knox's online presence. With Keith's appointment as Outreach and Communications Leader, I depart on my extended leave of absence, excited to see what this engaged new crew will achieve.

It remains only for me to thank the Knox community for the opportunity to serve as your live-stream technician throughout this year. I leave you in excellent hands.

Respectfully submitted, Carey Barrett.

Open Doors

From March of 2020 until December of 2022, our sanctuary and labyrinth were closed to the public during business hours. In 2023, we began to rebuild our presence in downtown Calgary. In January, we unlocked the 4th Street doors and permitted visitors from 10am until 2pm. In April, we began opening the 6th Avenue doors whenever a volunteer was available to greet visitors. Our volunteers welcomed over 200 visitors during June, July and August. Visitors came to see our building, to meditate or pray, or to find out more about us as a community of faith. We gratefully remember Ken Allen who was our most faithful volunteer sanctuary host last summer in, as it turns out, a few of the last months of his life. Activity tapered off as the days grew cold but we look forward to growing this ministry of presence during the warmer days of 2024, with expanded resources for both volunteers and visitors.

Respectfully submitted, Doug Chandler

Affirming

It is an honor to support the Affirming ministry. Knox United is a pioneer in an affirming congregation in Calgary. There are many years, stories, and members in the History of Knox United advocating for the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Knox United Church keeps its mission to support the affirming congregation and has new challenges to face. Knox United Church supported Calgary Pride 2023, just as it had done in the past. As an affirming ministry, in the past months, we had the presence of allies and other organizations, like Skipping Stone, to raise awareness about Trans and non-binary issues in our congregation. Also, this is the second year we will celebrate National PIE Day (Public, Intentional, and Explicit) to celebrate the inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ people in faith communities and beyond, and we are in contact with the other affirming congregations to share activities. Knox United Church's affirming congregation is open to new initiatives to serve our 2SLGBTQ+ church members and the community.

Respectfully submitted, Edgar Ayala

Truth and Reconciliation

As we closed out the year of 2023 we said goodbye to one of our members Tony Van Vliet. It was Tony's vision to hang the Treaty 7 flag in our Sanctuary and with the help of Rev Tony Snow the flag now gently blows in the breeze on the East side of the Sanctuary. The "East" side of the sanctuary is a very fitting place for this flag because of what it represents in Indigenous culture. It represents a time of new light and beginnings that a new day brings. It is also a time for gaining wisdom to live a good life. It is with the awareness that we can learn to lean into the work that needs to be done on our journey to live in better relations with our Indigenous relatives.

In 2024 there is a new TRC committee for Knox . The committee has five members and they are as follows : Rev Sheena, Holly Smith, Dianne Roulson, Pam Rudd and Karen Harrison. Dianne and Pam both bring a wealth of knowledge to the group with their work in the past and present with different First Nations peoples. The committee has met several times and are having ongoing discussions on how best to continue the work that needs to be done. More information to come as we make some time and space for events to happen that everyone will be invited to attend. In the meantime, we are committed to assisting with the work that Rev. Tony Snow is doing while he is at Knox. I have had many people ask me what they can do because they are "tired of just feeling guilty." Attending Rev. Tony's sessions (one at the end of March) is a great start. Either Dianne, Pam or myself (or all three) will be there as well so you will not be alone. These learning sessions bring a way of starting to learn and understand and then begin to start conversations about where we as a church community go next.

Last year we were honored to be able to offer "Sobercrew " hospitality and have them accept. We provided housing and meals (with other United Churches) for three days for those participating in the walk from Morley to Calgary. We look forward to having them stay with us again this August.

In addition, we hosted a discussion on learnings from the Indigenous Canada class. Five people took part in the month-long session.

If you would like to help with this important work this year please let me know. I am always available at coffee after the service and even before if you are there early.

Respectfully submitted, Holly Smith

In Loving Memory

Gordon Swann	January 5, 2023
Linda Wolstencroft	February 6, 2023
Yvonne Scott	February 22, 2023
Derek Bridges	March 28, 2023
Ernest Hutchinson	July 27, 2023
Mark Wiencki	August 6, 2023
John Wood	September 3, 2023

Membership Statistics

Members:	2020	2022	2023
Active	130	122	126
Non-Active	62	62	62
Community Care	25	18	18
Non-Resident	6	6	6
Clergy	2	1	1
Adherents:			
Active	192	199	199
Community Care	3	1	1
Visitors	339	347	347
Transferred Out	3	4	1
New Members	0	1	4
Deceased Members	4	5	7
