

ST. THOMAS UNITED CHURCH 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

MINISTERS: Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Simmins (until June 30, 2012)

Rev. Dr. Bob Fillier (as of July 1, 2012), Rev. Victoria Fillier (as of July 1, 2012)

CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRY: Pat Shier

YOUTH LEADERS: Andrew Taylor-Kerr and Kevin Leitch

MUSIC TEAM: Pam Bazinet, Barb Robertson, Erin MacLean-Berko, Dick Worton, Kari Orosz, and Kloria Wen.

ORGANIST: Kari Orosz

OFFICE MANAGER: Sandra Dusoswa

CARETAKER: Ferdinand (Ferdie) Justo

TREASURER: Betty Smith

OFFICE HOURS: Monday – Thursday 8:30am – 3:30 pm Fridays 8:30am - Noon

OFFICE PHONE: (403)241-0366

Office Fax: (403)547-5556

Email address: stthomas@shaw.ca

Website www.stthomasunited.ca

MAILING ADDRESS: 100 Hawkwood Blvd. NW
Calgary, Alberta T3G 2S9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES.....	2
Sunday, January 29, 2012	2
Annual Congregation Meeting Minutes - Sunday, February 12, 2012.....	4
Sunday, November 25, 2012.....	6
ST. THOMAS UNITED UNIFIED BOARD – 2012	10
ANNUAL REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.....	12
STAFF REPORTS.....	13
STATISTICS	14
COMMITTEE REPORTS	14
REPORT FROM PRESBYTERY.....	36

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2012

As chair of St. Thomas Executive Council, Ruthann Watson welcomed those present and outlined the purpose for this meeting – The Joint Search Committee recommend two calls to two ministers. An attendance sign-in sheet was circulated. The congregation was reminded that only members of St. Thomas United Church could vote on this matter.

She introduced Reverend Kathy Holmes who would chair the meeting. Kathy is a minister at McDougall United Church and has served as Presbytery Representative on this Joint Search Committee.

Heather Worton was appointed as secretary for this meeting.

Karen Holmes explained that only a full member of the church could vote for a call to a pastoral charge. She outlined the agenda for the meeting, how the motions would be presented, and explained the requirements for a quorum.

She declared that a quorum was present and the meeting could begin.

Opening in Prayer - Karen led a prayer for grace and guidance

Presentation of the Joint Search Committee Report and Recommendations:

Marj Aucoin introduced the members of the committee:

Marj Aucoin –Chair

Barry Mingo – Co-chair

Ryan Sanderson – Corresponding Secretary

Andrea Mendritzki – Recording Secretary

Stu Robbins

Judy Booth

Cathy Rivard

Rev. Karen Holmes - Presbytery Representative (McDougall United)

Stutt Pottruff - Presbytery Representative (lay) - (Scarboro United)

Barry Mingo gave an overview of the work of this committee:

JSC mandate - formation at a Congregational Meeting May 9, 2011 JNAC Report; conduct a search for candidates for two positions – Minister for Preaching & Administration, Minister for Nurture, Education and Outreach.

JSC Process – advertising the positions, job descriptions, interview questions, screening criteria, evaluation of candidates, screening resumes, phone interviews, face-to-face interviews, reference checks were undertaken by the committee.

Screening assessment and interview process – total of 18 resumes for the two positions, 12 for Minister of Preaching and Administration, six for Minister of Nurture, Education and Outreach. Also outlined was the actual number and type of interviews given for the various candidates.

The Search committee was unanimous in their choice of the two candidates to be recommended.

The recommended candidates were introduced to the congregation by means of sharing their qualifications and personal information. The terms and conditions of each contract was presented to the congregation, explained and discussed. Questions from the floor were answered.

- 1. Motion that St. Thomas United Church call Rev. Bob K. Fillier as Ordained Minister at St. Thomas United Church in the position of Minister for Preaching and Administration starting July 1, 2012 with the terms and conditions as outlined.**

Motion by Barry Mingo, seconded by David Robertson

Motion carried. Unanimous

- 2. Motion that St. Thomas United Church call Rev. Victoria M. Fillier as Ordained Minister at St. Thomas United Church in the position of Minister for Nurture, Education and Outreach starting July 1, 2012 with the terms and conditions as outlined.**

Motion by Barry Mingo, seconded by Elaine Gray

Motion carried. Unanimous

(Motions 3, 4 and 5 were handled as a single vote)

- 3. Motion that Calls be forwarded to Calgary Presbytery with a request that the Presbytery approve the Calls and the terms of the Calls.**

and

- 4. That the Joint Search Committee be disbanded upon completion of the covenanting service.**

and

- 5. That the Ministry and Personnel Committee of St. Thomas United Church undertake ongoing team building activities with the new team and all staff of St. Thomas.**

Motion by Barry Mingo, seconded by David Smith

Carried.

Next steps, Considerations – Marj Aucoin

The next stage in the transition will involve providing support for the new ministers in their relocation to Calgary, planning for their first service in August and for a covenanting service in September.

Karen Holmes closed with some reflections on the experience of serving on a Search committee and encouraged those present to do so if given the opportunity. She remarked that it has been an honour and privilege to be a part of this St. Thomas Search team.

Motion to adjourn. Cathy Rivard

Appreciation for the committee was offered by Andrew Major on behalf of the congregation.

Rev. Karen Holmes, Chair

Heather Worton, Secretary

ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING MINUTES - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2012

The Annual General Meeting was chaired by Ruthann Watson and called to order at 11:30 AM, following the Sunday 10:00 AM service.

Gathering Prayer

Acknowledging the Community: Motion to Extend Voting Privileges to Adherents

Moved that voting privileges be extended to those persons who are not members of this congregation in regard to the building, property, finances, and other secular matters that concern the life and work of the congregation. (Motion by Joanne Hyatt; Seconded by David Gray)

Motion Carried: 1 abstention

Motion to change the responses to a vote on a motion to alternatives other than *Amen (pro)* and *It is not so (con)*. (Motion by George Zirotf; Seconded by Christal Reed)

Carried:

Memorium: A moment of silence and prayer in remembrance of Roy Brent Quigley, Mary Helmina McDougall, Jill Ann Harbicht, and Russell John Zaharko.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting

Moved that the minutes of the February 6, 2011 Annual General Meeting of St. Thomas United Church be approved as presented. (Motion by Karen Kavanagh; Seconded by Ron French)

Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes - none

Receiving the Annual Reports / Review of the Work of the Church in 2011

Betty Thompson mentioned that there is no report from Primetimers in the 2011 Annual Report, but will be next year.

In the Worship Committee Report the number of Confirmations should read as 9 and Reaffirmations should read as 1.

Moved to accept the 2011 Annual Reports as presented. (Motion by Dennis Watson; Seconded by David Robertson)

Carried.

Financial Statements 2011

Greg Hyatt reviewed the statements, highlighting a surplus of about \$48,000, a Mission and Service Fund of \$52,000 contributions to the missions of the United Church, and recognition to the fine efforts of the committees to maintain worship and other programs through this year of transition, and a thank you to the congregation for maintaining the financial commitments also through this past year.

Moved that the St. Thomas United Church Financial Statements for the year ending December 31, 2011

be approved. (Motion by Greg Hyatt; Seconded by Sherrill Knight)

Carried.

Moved that \$30,000 of the Operating Fund surplus for the year 2011 be transferred to the Building and Mortgage Fund. (Motion by Greg Hyatt; Seconded by George Ziroff)

Carried.

Presentation of the 2012 Budget

Greg Hyatt outlined the proposed budget, accounting for the reduced staffing for the first part of the year, and the full staff complement and relocation expenses of the new staff in the second half of the year. He is expecting 2012 to be a "break-even" year.

Moved that the St. Thomas United Church Operating Fund Budget 2012 be approved.

(Motion by Greg Hyatt; Seconded by Ryan Sanderson)

Carried.

Greg acknowledged and thanked the members providing help in managing financial matters at St. Thomas.

New Business

Changes to the by-laws of St. Thomas United Church

Ruthann reviewed the changes and rationale to the church by-laws that have been approved by Executive Council January 18, 2012 and requiring ratification of the congregation.

These changes include:

Article 3 - e-mail votes

Article 4 - add ex-officio Executive Council Chair may preside if Chair or Vice Chair absent

Article 5 - updating the names and list of Standing Committees

Update positions for 2012; Chair – Hope Cochran; Past Chair – Ruthann Watson;

Secretary – Heather Worton; Chair of Trustees – David Gray.

Addition of Faith Statement

Moved that the St. Thomas United Church By-laws as amended be approved.

(Motion by David Gray; Seconded by Linda Miller)

Carried.

Congregational Meeting January 29, 2012

Stu Robbins announced the decision made to call Bob Fillier as Minister for Preaching and Administration and Victoria Fillier as Minister of Pastoral Care, Nurture, Education beginning July 1, 2012. The Search Committee was thanked for their extensive work.

Recognition of Leadership 2011

All those who had served the church as a member of one of the many committees or ministries were asked to stand and were acknowledged for their contribution, leadership, and commitment.

Ruthann commented that, in her three years as Chair of Executive Council, she never felt she was on her own; there was always help and support at hand.

The congregation thanked Ruthann for her years of leadership as chair.

Meeting adjourned by the Chair with the Final Prayer and Blessing

Chair - Ruthann Watson **Secretary** - Heather Worton

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2012

Stu Robbins, as chair, welcomed those present and explained that at this meeting only a particular issue was to be discussed – that being the St. Thomas Response to GC41.

Motion to extend voting privileges to adherents (Hugh Johnson, Sherrill Knight). Carried.

Stu thanked Rev. Bob Fillier and Rev. Victoria Fillier for their leadership and willingness to help the congregation address this matter.

Rev. Bob provided a brief review of the background and process that had resulted in the position statements and action proposals being presented today. The document had been presented to the Executive Council and it was decided that it should come before the Congregation and that a favourable vote of 75% would be required for approval.

The voting process was also explained: color-coded ballots; eight separate votes on the 2 proposed positions, and the 6 action items #5 through 10. (Action items #1 through 4 have already been completed). Each statement will be presented on the screen as written in the document circulated. Discussion on content, wording, grammar and

such will be allowed and the changes approved by formal vote or consensus will be incorporated into the position statement before the vote is taken.

Motion to approve the position statement on the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline.

Moved by Elaine Taylor-Kerr, seconded by Greg Hyatt

Carried.

In light of these statements, it is the position of St. Thomas United Church: that GC41 acted without the fullness of information available to it, both economically and technically, in its “categorical rejection” of the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline; that we do not support this categorical rejection; that GC41, as representing the whole United Church of Canada, has regrettably taken sides on this issue; that we support energy resource development that is in keeping with the biblical teachings of ecological and social stewardship that sees us living with respect in creation; that The General Council Office must develop a proactive media strategy for communicating actions taken by it or any General Council; and we affirm that, to the best of their abilities, members of St. Thomas are involved in the energy industry in ways that are in keeping with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Motion to approve the position on the Israel / Palestine issue.

Moved by Nancy Rehdo, seconded by Roger Anderson

Amendment (Dan MacDonald, Dennis Watson) to clarify the “tarnished image” by adding “of the United Church of Canada”.

Carried.

The motion on the position statement on Israel/Palestine issue as amended was carried.

In the light of these statements, it is the position of St. Thomas United Church: that GC41 has regrettably been perceived to have taken sides between Israel and Palestine; that such action does not promote dialogue; that regrettably there was no proactive media plan in place once the decision was made which has led to confusion and a tarnished image of the United Church of Canada; that recommended initiatives like the boycott of products from the disputed territories needs to be actionable; that more consultation at all levels of the denomination about contentious, complicated, and divisive issues needs to happen prior to decision making; that Israel has the right and legitimacy to exist as a state; and that on-going threats of violence towards Israel are major stumbling blocks in the area.

Motion to approve Action Statement #5.

Moved by David Gray, seconded by Dennis Watson

Motion to omit “and with media outlets” from the statement. (Dan MacDonald, Ron French) Carried.

Motion to specify ANW Conference and include General Council in the statement.

(Ryan Sanderson, Andrew Major)

Carried

Motion to end the motion after General Council. (Lori Weller, Deyelle MacDonald). Defeated.

Motion to reword “take action by engaging in consultation” (Russ Heal, Ryan Sanderson). Carried.

Motion to approve Action Statement #5 as amended.

Carried.

5. Communicate our action to Calgary Presbytery, ANW Conference, and General Council proposing that they take similar action. This letter would also include a request that Presbytery and Alberta Northwest Conference engage in consultation with all congregations in order to develop a response paper and statements that reflect the concern of the grass roots with the intent of sharing it at Presbytery, Alberta Northwest Conference and General Council.

Motion to approve Action Statement # 6

Moved by Elaine Gray, seconded by Marj Aucoin

Carried.

6. Develop a proposal to The General Council proposing that the “categorical rejection” be re-examined; that The General Council Office issue a clear statement that the United Church of Canada is committed to on-going dialogue about the ethical development and best stewardship practices related to energy resource development; and that the action of GC41 in no way is meant to negatively reflect on the women and men who work in the energy sector of our economy.

Motion to approve Action Statement #7

Moved by David Gray, seconded by Ryan Sanderson.

Carried.

7. Develop a proposal to The General Council proposing a new model for dealing with proposals including discerning the potential denominational impact and plan for dealing with it.

Motion to approve Action Statement # 8

Moved by Andrew Major, seconded by Carrie-Faye Wong.

Carried.

8. Develop a proposal to The General Council proposing a model of consultation and connection building with the individual congregations such that policy statements can include input for all the Courts of the Church before action is taken on them.

Motion to approve Action Statement # 9

Moved by Roger Anderson, seconded by Morris O’Bryan.

Carried.

9. Write to both Calgary Presbytery and Alberta Northwest Conference requesting an explanation as to why there has not been any statement or press release pertaining to the actions of GC41 and in particular the Northern Gateway Pipeline and the Israel/Palestine policies from those Church Courts.

Motion to approve Action Statement # 10

Moved by Russ Heal, seconded by Sheila Campbell.

Carried.

10. That STUC through its Executive Council develop a communication plan to disseminate our position to the wider Calgary community.

No further issues were raised from the floor.

David Smith extended a thank you to those who had given much of their time and thought to a STUC Response to CG41; in particular, to Bob and Victoria who were so recently in to their new positions when this matter arose.

Motion to destroy the ballots of this meeting.

Moved by David Smith, seconded by Betty Smith.

Carried.

Motion to adjourn. Andrew Major

Chair: Stu Robbins

Secretary: Heather Worton

ST. THOMAS UNITED UNIFIED BOARD – 2012

100 Hawkwood Blvd. NW T3G 2S9
(403) 241-0366, fax (403) 547-5556

* designates resignation in 2012
bold denotes new in 2012

stthomas@shaw.ca

MINISTERS: * Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Simmins

Rev. Dr. Bob Fillier
Rev. Victoria Fillier

Staff Pam Bazinet
Staff Barb Robertson
Staff Kari Orosz
Staff Dick Worton
Staff Erin MacLean-Berko
Staff Kloria Wen

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Chair Hope Cochran
Vice-Chair
Past Chair Ruthann Watson
Treasurer Betty Smith
Secretary Heather Worton
Presbytery Rep Hugh Johnson

BUILDING AND PROPERTY

Co-Chair Elvin Dorscher
Co-Chair David Blackadar
David Vermeulen
Trent Hunter
Richard Pon
Computers Hal Tonkin
Staff Sandra Dusoswa

TRUSTEES

Chair David Gray
Dennis Gidley
Elaine Taylor-Kerr
Carrie-Faye Wong
Rev. Dr. Bob Fillier
Rev. Victoria Fillier

COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Kristin Raugust
Staff/Newsletter Sandra Dusoswa
Digital Arts Sub Committee
*Chris McPhee
Hal Tonkin
Kristin Raugust

STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE

Chair Greg Hyatt
Treasurer Betty Smith
Barry Mingo
Wayne Pennington
Envelope Steward Jo-Anne Hyatt
Counting Coordinator Derek Fenty

Sound/Audio Ad-Hoc Committee

Chair John Robertson
Hal Tonkin
John McCrea
Brian Shewan
Denis Chalifour
Don Mills
*Bob Ford

STEWARDSHIP

Chair Angela Waleski
Mark Wagner
Maureen Dodd
Denis Chalifour

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL

Chair Maureen Dodd
Dennis Gidley
Carrie-Faye Wong
Kristin Raugust
David Smith
Barry Mingo

WORSHIP

Chair Cathy Rivard
David Robertson
Diane Luke
Drina Nixon
*Geoffrey Simmins
Bob Fillier
Victoria Fillier
Andrew Major
Greeter Sheila Campbell
Greeter Linda Miller

MISSION & OUTREACH

Chair Karen Kavanagh
Linda Dick
David Vermeulen
Rachel Murray
Inn from the Cold *Gwen Campbell

MUSIC TEAM

Chair Elaine Taylor-Kerr
Pat Robbins
Ron French

PASTORAL CARE

Chair Marjorie Aucoin
Jan Mingo
Betty Thompson
Roger Anderson

Judy Booth
Victoria Fillier
 Healing Ministry *Daryl Fenty
 Prayer Shawls Charlotte Cormier
 Funeral Receptions Beth Phillips
 Friend To Friend Coordinators (PC Visiting Program)
 Liz Smith
 Barb Cousens
 Dorothy Muir
 And a multitude of visitors!
 WIN (Welcoming & Integrating Newcomers) & Ask Me
 (part of Pastoral Care)
 WIN Members Linda Miller
 Sherrill Knight
 Roger Anderson
 Newcomer Contact Sherrill Knight
 Fiona Craig
 Elaine Gray
 Ask Me Coordinator Sherrill Knight
 Ask Me Coordinator Roger Anderson
 And a multitude of hosts!

AFFIRMING GROUP (sub group of Pastoral Care)

Chair Marjorie Aucoin
 Stu Robbins
 Pat Robbins
 Karen Kavanagh
 Judy Booth
 Anne Gannon
 Rachel Murray
 Fiona Craig
 Wanda Veer

FAITH FORMATION

Chair *Lynn Tait
 *Krista Strayer
 Members at Large Sandra Glass
 Dale Bergeson
Tom Snowden
 Staff Pat Shier
 Staff **Victoria Fillier**
 Nursery Coordinator *Kerrie Goodfellow
Dan MacDonald
 Library Winona Anderson

COMMUNITY FORMATION

Chair Christal Reed
 Nonie Johnston
 Bob Ford
 Donna Swalm
 Brian Shewan
 Staff Pat Shier

Wednesday Night Dinner Sub-group

Coordinator Wanda Veer
YOUTH ADVISORY
 Chair Elaine Taylor-Kerr
 *Roger Anderson
Jan Mingo
Sharon Jones
 Correspondence Susan Harrington
 John Latter
 Wendy Atkinson
 Joan Robertson
 Staff Andrew Taylor-Kerr
 Staff Kevin Leitch
 Junior Youth Rep *Ryan Sanderson
 JY Leader Deyelle MacDonald
 JY Leader Brittney Whittaker
 JY Leader Matthew Taylor-Kerr
 JY Leader **Karl Wagner**

UCW

Past President Margaret Blakely
 President Lois Shewan
 Programme Convenor Marilyn Barry

REPRESENTATIVES

Observer Rep Marilyn Whittle
 Archivist Bill Cousens

JOINT SEARCH COMMITTEE (struck April 3-2011)

Chair Marj Aucoin
 Barry Mingo
 Stu Robbins
 Corresponding Sec. Ryan Sanderson
 Recording Sec. Andrea Mendritzki
 Judy Booth
 Cathy Rivard
 Presbytery Rep Rev. Karen Holmes
 Presbytery Rep Stutt Pottruff

STAFF

*Geoffrey Simmins (minister)
Bob Filler
Victoria Filler
 Pat Shier (children & family ministry)
 Sandra Dusoswa (office manager)
 Kari Orosz (organist & junior choir accompanist)
 Barb Robertson (teen choir accompanist/director)
 Pam Bazinet (adult choir director)
 Dick Worton (orchestra)
 Kevin Leitch (youth leader)
 Andrew Taylor-Kerr (youth leader)
 Erin MacLean-Berko (children's choir director)
 *Jessie Negropontes (children and family ministry)
 *Kelley Warner (diaconal ministry student)
 Kloria Wen (teen choir accompanist)
 Ferdinand (Ferdie) Justo (caretaker)

ANNUAL REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Yearly Thoughts from the Chair

A note from the Chair...

As you read the reports of the various committees and groups, it becomes obvious that the people of St. Thomas are a very active family. We are doers. We are not afraid to speak out and we stand up for what we believe in whether it is our faith, helping our community at large, or social justice. We don't just stand at the door and welcome people into our church; we go out into the world to actively help others. We extend a welcome hand to newcomers and we give a hand whether it be at Habitat for Humanity or Inn from the Cold, or to sponsor projects such as All Roads Lead Home and Child Haven.

A change is as good as a rest. We are constantly changing....evolving to ensure that newcomers find what they are looking for as regards their faith when they enter the sanctuary and to ensure that our "regulars" are challenged to learn something new each week as well.

New committee members, committee members changing roles, new Executive Council, new Ministers, and new members to the congregation – this is the life of a community....of a church community that is constantly changing. A community where people want to give of their time to serve.....serving food, cooking food, teaching, gardening, knitting, and babysitting and just having fun. All of these things happen because St Thomas members make them happen.

During my first term as chair of Executive Council, I've learned a lot from the people who help to make this church work. They are a very dedicated and very committed group. They all bring a variety of skills to their committees, to the Executive Council, and to the congregation. You see them every time someone needs a helping hand, someone to talk to. They make you feel good just walking in the door. As you read the reports of committees and groups, you'll see that they echo the ways that our congregation endeavours to put their faith into action.

I would like to thank everyone for their help over this past year - for their support, guidance, and especially for their patience. I've learned a lot and look forward to learning even more in this next year of my term.

Prayers and thoughts,

Hope Cochran

STAFF REPORTS

The staff team at the beginning of 2012 included Geoffrey Simmins, part time supply minister for worship and pastoral care; Kelley Warner, diaconal student doing her pastoral care placement with us; Jessie Negropontes, part time Faith Formation; and Pat Shier, who continued to help in areas beyond Children and Family Ministry. All four ministry staff enjoyed collaborating to create and lead the Good Friday worship.

We valued Geoffrey's easygoing nature, positive attitude, and collaborative approach, which empowered volunteers and other staff. Kelley's experience and compassion as she connected with others through pastoral care was greatly appreciated. Jessie provided calm, inquisitive leadership in the groups that she led. Pat acted as a resource for other staff and helped coordinate programs led by others. As Sandra became more comfortable in her role as the office manager, we learned she has a gift for remembering who is who in the congregation. By the end of June, Kelley's placement had ended, Pat reassumed her primary role, and we said goodbye to Geoffrey and Jessie, thanking them for sharing their faith and talents with us as they ministered to our congregation.

In fall, we welcomed Bob and Victoria Fillier as our fulltime ministers. Bob works predominantly with worship, administration and stewardship, while Victoria's focus is faith education, pastoral care, outreach, and growth. We quickly appreciated their understanding and love for the larger church when decisions made by the General Council in August caused heated debates at St. Thomas.

A variety of faith formation and community outreach programs was offered by staff over the year, including conversations about the impending vote about UCC Remits, adult confirmation classes, Bible studies, a variety of spirituality topics and discussions, and family communication. This fall, in response to the General Council 41 decisions, several facilitated conversations took place and our new Moderator Gary Paterson spoke at St. Thomas before the congregation approved two positions.

We are deeply thankful for the leadership offered at St. Thomas by so many volunteers. This spring it included Kelley's local committee support, countless hours of our Search Committee, and with the part time staff, others dedicated time to ensuring that programs were offered, people were cared for, and that we had worship each Sunday. The generous sharing of your faith, time, and talents helps to make this church a welcoming and vibrant community.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Shier

STATISTICS

This year there were:

New Members:	(1-adult baptism, 1-confirmation, 6 Re-affirmations – from Historic Roll)
Confirmations	1 (see above)
Re-affirmations	6 (see above)
Baptisms	8 (including 1 adult baptism)
Weddings	1
Funerals	4
Transferred out	1

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The M&P Committee had a whirlwind year, with many changes during our transition to a new full complement of staff.

Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Simmins was our part-time minister until June 30, Jessie Negroportes assisted Pat Shier with Children and Family Ministry, and Kelley Warner did her pastoral care field placement at St. Thomas until the end of April. They were all kept busy and we are grateful for the time they had with us.

Pat Shier increased her hours to help cover the staffing gap, and was the anchor that helped us sail through the sea of uncertainty and often chaos. We are very blessed to have had her constant presence and gifts in our midst.

Sandy Dusoswa started her second year as our Office Administrator. She cut her summer vacation short to be in the office when our new ministry team arrived in August.

Rev. Dr. Bob Filler and Rev. Victoria Fillier accepted the Call to St. Thomas, and started in August. They came from Brockville, Ontario, with their daughter Rebecca. Their son has stayed in Ontario to continue his schooling. It has been a very busy time for them, as they learn the ins and outs and many quirks of our congregation, and challenge us to look at our mission and work in new ways.

Hope Cochran resigned from M&P to take on the role of Executive Council Chair. Thanks, Hope, for your work on M&P. Barry Mingo joined our merry band in September, and it is great to have his experience and perspective.

The rest of the devoted members are Carrie-Faye Wong, Kristin Raugust, Dennis Gidley and David Smith (Chair Emeritus). They have all contributed a great deal of work 'behind the scenes,' and I am continually grateful for their time and talent.

Elaine Taylor-Kerr is our 'ex-officio' member, and coordinates the contracts and work of the music staff. Elaine has also been very busy, ensuring all the music needs are taken care of, particularly when staff has been 'under the weather.' Thank you, Elaine!

Faithfully submitted by Maureen Dodd, Chair

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee works hand in hand with the ministry team of our congregation to ensure that the worship needs of the congregation are met. Worship experiences are planned on a quarterly and yearly basis bringing together the talents for: music, communications, children and youth, pastoral care, stewardship, mission and outreach, and faith formation.

From January to June, the Worship Committee, along with Rev. Geoffrey Simmins, focused on the following monthly themes: living in the season of light; teachings from wisdom women; turning inward; celebrating new life; building strong communities; and learning from nature. We hosted a speaker from Habitat For Humanity Calgary - with a free will offering of over \$1,000. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of The United Church Women.

During July, worship was led by members of our congregation. A big thank you to those who stepped from the pews to the pulpit and took on this leadership role. Each one shared their experiences and insights and shaped meaningful worship experiences. Guest speaker Dr. Teri Bryant helped us acknowledge our 1st anniversary as an Affirming Congregation and focused on how to put being an Affirming Ministry into action.

The Worship Committee also wants to acknowledge the contributions of Deyelle and Dan MacDonald who shared with us a ministry of helping people prepare for baptism during 2012.

In August, Reverends Victoria and Bob Fillier joined us as our full-time ministers. Their covenanting service was on October 21st. Guest preacher, The Rev. Michael Blair, Executive Minister of the Communities in Ministry Unit for The General Council, and other representatives from Calgary Presbytery joined us for the service. Since August, the Minute for Mission has been reintroduced and each week we enjoyed hearing about a ministry that is supported by our contributions to the M&S fund. In November, we heard from members of the Stewardship Committee and their theme Saints Alive- Living Generously. If you're wondering how that went, have a look at the Stewardship Tree in the Narthex.

In December, we started the Season of Advent. Thank you to all those who took part in the Candles of Advent readings and helping us understand where this tradition comes from. Once again we partnered with the Pastoral Care Committee for a Blue Christmas worship on December 9th. On December 16th, the Children's and Teen choirs shared with us their rendition of "A Charlie Brown Christmas," which was a huge success. This year there were three Christmas Eve worship opportunities: the 6pm Family Worship with The Strummers and Children's Choir; the 8pm Adult Choir Cantata "Let the Whole World Sing;" and 10pm Candlelight Communion with our Teen Choir.

Respectfully submitted by Cathy Rivard

BUILDING & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The objective of the Building and Property Committee is to keep church facilities and property well maintained and to provide improvements where required to meet the needs of the church family. With the heavy use of the facility this can provide challenges. However, with the great volunteerism of the committee members these challenges have been met. Some of the work that was carried out over the past year that probably was not too noticeable by most church members was: the

replacement of the damaged and weathered parking lot curbs; changing out all the lights in the main floor level (except in the Sanctuary) and the second floor hall and offices to more energy efficient lights; replacing all the lenses in the Sanctuary periphery lights; changing two of the toilets to a more energy efficient type; replacing the warped fire door on the main floor stairwell; painting of all the offices; and installing baby change tables in a couple of the main floor restrooms, just to name a few changes. One item that is surely noticeable by all is the brightness of the front screen in the Sanctuary, thanks to Hal and John for the up-grading of the projector.

Faith and Common Good auditors carried out a Greening Sacred Spaces Program audit on the church facility the past year and provided many good suggestions for greening up the place. While several of the suggestions have been carried out there are still many more to be followed up on this coming year. That, with a few other improvement projects also planned, is building up another busy year for the committee.

Respectfully submitted by Elvin Dorscher and David Blackadar

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank the generous St. Thomas congregation, who freely gave of their time, talent, and treasure over the past year.

We welcomed Rev. Dr. Bob as our newest member, and appreciate the resources and guidance he provided during the busy Fall season.

In the Fall of 2012, the Stewardship Theme was “Saints Alive - Living Generously.” We challenged the congregation to be living saints in whatever form that took for them, to help St. Thomas continue its mission.

The small but mighty Stewardship cadre of Denis Chalifour, Angela Waleski, Mark Wagner and Maureen Dodd thank all who responded to this challenge, and look forward to an exciting renewal as new staff are called to St. Thomas.

Respectfully submitted by Maureen Dodd on behalf of the Stewardship Committee

LEGACY GIVING COMMITTEE

Our Mandate:

- The definition of a Legacy Gift is a gift to the Church, or other charity (such as bequests in wills, gift annuities, insurance, securities etc.) from a donor's estate or accumulated assets and not their income.
- Legacy Giving is a long-term stewardship strategy that will complement the congregation's annual-giving stewardship strategy since more than 99% of the money from Legacy Gifts is deferred - that is, the gift comes to the Church upon the donor's death.
- As specified in the Legacy Giving Policy of St. Thomas, this committee is responsible to:
 - (i) develop and promote a Legacy Giving Program for the congregation;
 - (ii) provide information to interested members and adherents about the Legacy Giving Program;
 - (iii) arrange a Legacy Giving Information Session for interested congregational members every two or three years;
 - (iv) be a resource to members and adherents who wish to make a Legacy Gift;
 - (v) work with the Regional United Church Financial Development Officer and keep them informed about any finalized Legacy Gifts or donors who wish to meet with them to discuss or arrange a Legacy Gift;
 - (vi) write “thank you” letters to those who make a Legacy Gift;
 - (vii) write acknowledgement letters to executors, lawyers, etc. where appropriate;
 - (viii) report annually to the congregation and regularly to Executive Council;
 - (ix) keep a permanent record of donations to the Fund;
 - (x) receive applications for financial assistance from the Fund in accordance with the operating guidelines and in accordance with policies and procedures established by the congregation;
 - (xi) make disbursement recommendations to Executive Council regarding the financial assistance applications received by the committee;
 - (xii) review any restrictions on any proposed Legacy Gift in accordance with the Gift Acceptance Policy contained in the Policy, and make recommendations to Executive Council for final decision making on acceptance of such Legacy Gifts;

- (xiii) annually review the Policy so that any recommended changes may be presented to Executive Council and then the congregation for approval according to the amendment guidelines in the Policy;
- (xiv) ensure that all the Legacy Gifts are celebrated and their donors recognized in appropriate and faithful ways ensuring that individual wishes are respected.
- The Fund is separate and distinct from all other church funds. Money from the Fund is not to be used to cover regular and ongoing operational requirements of the church, but rather it is to be used to expand the ministry and mission outreach of St. Thomas United Church.

2012 Activities:

- Ongoing communication with the Financial Development Officer of the United Church to discuss Legacy Giving.
- Legacy Giving bulletin inserts were used from time to time throughout the year.
- Initial meeting with new Ministers to discuss the Committee's go forward strategy.

Planned 2013 Activities:

- Continued use of Legacy Giving bulletin inserts to keep the topic in front of the congregation.
- Host a series of 3 Legacy Giving related sessions in the spring focused around the following topics:
 - Financial Planning;
 - Will & Estate Planning;
 - Funeral Planning
- Host a more general Legacy Giving Information Session for the congregation in the fall.

Committee Membership:

- Denis Chalifour
- Dennis Watson
- Stu Robbins

- Margaret Blakely
- Barry Mingo
- Andrew Major

Respectfully Submitted by Andrew Major

MUSIC TEAM

The music team consists of six staff members plus the music leadership team. The staff members are responsible for music selection, running the weekly practices, and ensuring their choir/orchestra presents music in church on a regular basis. The music leadership team assists with coordination between the musical groups, with the ministers and with the Church office. They also gather congregational input on the programs, perform the annual performance reviews, and recruit new staff as needed.

The music staff this year were Kari Orosz (Organist, Children's Choir accompanist), Pam Bazinet (Adult Choir director), Dick Worton (Orchestra director), Barb Robertson (Teen Choir director), Kloria Wen (Teen Choir accompanist), and Erin MacLean-Berko (Children's Choir director). Pam had surgery in October and Erin directed the adult choir while Pam recuperated. Kari broke her wrist in late November. Barbara Tetzlaff and Stephanie Blakely very capably stepped in to cover for Kari. We are very fortunate to have talented people we can call on in an emergency.

The Children's Choir is for children in grades 1 to 6. They practice Thursday evenings between 6:00 and 7:00 from September to April and share their music in church at least once per month. The Teen Choir is for youth in grades 6 to high school and beyond. They practice Wednesday evenings between 7:00 and 8:30 from September to May and share their music in church once or twice a month. The Adult Choir is for anyone who has decided they are too old to sing with the teens. They practice Thursday evenings between 7:15 and 9:30 from September to June and sing at alternating services every Sunday between September and June. The Orchestra is for anyone who plays an instrument, regardless of skill level. They practice from September to April between 7:00 and 8:30 on Monday evenings and play in church once per month. The Strummers is an informal group of folks who like to play strummed instruments and sing. They meet Thursday evenings between 6:15 and 7:15 and participate in church services as they feel ready. Erin presented the music committee with the idea of forming ad hoc groups who would practice

for a month and then sing once in Church. A women's chorus formed in November and sang in December. A mixed chorus is planned for the new year.

Highlights from the year include the Adult and Teen Choirs singing at Twelfth Night, two performances at Scenic Acres Senior's residence by the Children's Choir and Adult Choir, Joy of Song service, STUC on Movies (a concert of movie music performed by the choirs and various soloists on a Saturday evening and a Sunday afternoon), the Stampede Service created and presented by the Strummers, the Children and Teen Choirs' presentation of 'Charlie Brown Christmas' and the Adult Choir's presentation of 'Let the Whole World Sing' on Christmas Eve.

Several people have provided assistance with the music program throughout the year. The music leadership team consisted of Pat Robbins, Ron French, and Elaine Taylor-Kerr. Elizabeth Griffiths recruited musicians to share their talents at services where there is no choir or during the offering. Maureen Sheasby and Barb Veitch maintained the music inventory records. Several people helped file music and with music selection. Parents of Junior and Teen Choir members have assisted with costumes, props, snacks, the sound system, etc. Several people accompanied services when Kari was away. Thank you to all of the staff and volunteers.

Respectfully submitted by Elaine Taylor-Kerr

MISSION AND OUTREACH

The objective of the Mission and Outreach Committee is to educate and inspire our congregation to participate in local and global mission and outreach projects as a response to God's love. This is accomplished by:

- 1) Providing a broad range of volunteer opportunities so that active hands-on involvement in mission and outreach projects grows from year to year.
- 2) Fostering a charitable atmosphere within the church community so that our children and youth develop a vision of perpetuating and expanding our *ministries*.
- 3) Educating and inspiring our congregation to seek justice and loving kindness in everyday life.

4) Creating opportunities for members of the congregation and beyond to use their “open hearts, open minds and open hands” to assist others in need and create a better world for all.

The committee was once again delighted by the number of initiatives that were undertaken or supported by the congregation of St. Thomas. Below is a brief description of many of the activities undertaken by the Mission and Outreach Committee in 2012:

Local Projects

We hosted four *Inns From The Cold* at St. David’s United Church, where we provided dinner, overnight accommodation, breakfast, and a bag lunch to about 80 homeless people, many of them families.

The Veteran’s Food Bank received about four carloads of food which the congregation donated and the veterans greatly appreciated.

Again this year we continued to support our *All Roads Lead Home* family. This organization provides support to families who have moved from homelessness into stable housing. We adopted our first family, a single mom with two daughters 13 and 15 years old, in May of 2010. We have been providing rides to the grocery store and medical appointments, tutoring in math and science, and coffee and conversation, as well as assistance with moving.

Our Christmas project this year was to adopt three families for the holidays. The congregation generously provided grocery store gift cards, essentials to keep the families warm, and gifts for each member of the family.

In June, Mission and Outreach started a new project making dinner one Sunday a month for the homeless youth living at the *Boys and Girls Club* shelter *Avenue 15* and the *Safe House*. We have had only limited success as we have not had a lot of volunteers from the congregation. In the seven months we have been involved with *Avenue 15* we have provided volunteer groups to make dinner only three times. We are proposing new approaches in 2013 to better involve the congregation in this initiative.

This fall we had Melinda-Rae Lyse join our committee as our new *Habitat for Humanity* representative. She will be offering the congregation opportunities for involvement with *Habitat for Humanity* starting in 2013.

Global Projects

Our international mission project for this year is *Child Haven International*. It is a Canadian charity started in 1985 that has built eight homes for destitute children in India, Bangladesh, Tibet, and Nepal. Inspired by the ideas and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, *Child Haven* creates homes for orphaned and destitute children and women. They provide food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, and education for over 1000 needy children and about 150 women, regardless of gender, race, caste, colour, culture, or religion. The children are not westernized but are instead taught about their own culture. They are provided with education to help them to be productive members of the community. Some receive scholarships to attend college or technical school. *Child Haven* also cares for many senior citizens without family to care for them, who are like grandparents to the children. *Child Haven* is almost completely funded by donations from individuals. In April, the committee presented Fred and Bonnie Cappuccino, the founders of *Child Haven*, with a cheque for \$6400. Through our penny drive and charitable donations we are hoping to reach our goal of \$10,000.

Our foster child with *Plan Canada*, Nyeme Gbilimou of Guinea, Africa had reached an age where she is no longer considered a child and does not qualify for support. We have a new foster child, Sahadatou Morou from Tillaberi, Niger, Africa. The Sunday School children will send cards, letters, and pictures to greet her.

Looking Forward

In 2013, the Mission and Outreach Committee will continue to facilitate congregational efforts in a number of projects including support for *Inn From The Cold*, *All Roads Lead Home*, *Veteran's Food Bank*, *Avenue 15*, *Habitat for Humanity* and *Adopt A Family*.

Current committee members consist of Gwen Campbell, Linda Dick, Karen Kavanagh, Rachel Murray and Swee Wong. We also welcomed Melinda-Rae Lyse and Maxine Mendritzki as new members to the committee.

We want to sincerely thank Elaine Gray and Cindy Smallman, past members of the M&O Committee, for their contributions to the committee, the congregation, and our community.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Kavanagh, Chair

YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In 2012, the Youth Advisory Committee consisted of two staff members plus seven volunteers. The staff members are responsible for planning and running a Sunday morning program and a weekly social event for youth in grades 7 to 12. The program runs between September and June. The Youth Advisory Committee acts as a sounding board for the staff and assists in planning, finding volunteers, and communicating with the congregation. They also gather input from youth and the congregation on the programs, perform the annual performance reviews, and are a part of the committee to recruit new hires as needed.

The focus of the Sunday morning program is on spiritual development and exploring social justice issues. The youth attend portions of the church service regularly and also have discussion in the youth room. They planned and ran a church service in June. They also participated in other services through serving communion and reading scriptures. They created videos to request help from the congregation for their outreach activities. The youth attend Pathways at a south Calgary United Church. Pathways consists of sharing a simple meal, attending a youth oriented worship service, having a discussion on faith or social justice topics, and having a social time.

Weekly social events are mostly a time for fellowship and volunteer service. Activities have included Pathways, swimming, bowling, games night, movies, mini golf, tobogganing, skating, roller blading, attending performances of youth group members, making sandwiches and cookies for Alpha House, organizing a sock drive, Christmas caroling at the homes of senior members of the congregation, etc. The annual sleep-over is always a big hit. Our youth leaders planned an event called 'Bigger and Better' and invited other youth groups to come and participate. A Youth Retreat at Kamp Kiwanis, organized by several Calgary youth leaders, was well attended by St. Thomas Youth.

A Junior Youth group for children in grades 5 and 6 is held the third Friday of each month between September and June. They play games, do crafts, have a snack, and get to know each

other better. Ryan Sanderson(January – June), Deyelle MacDonald, Brittany Whittaker, Matthew Taylor-Kerr, and Karl Wagner (Sept – Dec) led this group in 2012.

This year, the staff members have been Kevin Leitch and Andrew Taylor-Kerr. As Kevin and Andrew are not always able to make it, Brittany Whittaker and Matthew Taylor-Kerr substituted as needed. The committee consisted of Roger Anderson (resigned mid-year), John Latter, Susan Harrington, Wendy Atkinson, Joan Robertson, Jan Mingo, Sharon Jones (joined in November), and Elaine Taylor-Kerr. Thank you to all for their dedication to the youth program at St. Thomas.

Respectfully submitted by Elaine Taylor-Kerr

COMMUNICATION AND DIGITAL ARTS TEAM

In 2012, the Communications Committee focused on maintaining the following goals:

- Provide communication channels for St. Thomas news and information through newsletters and the website
 - Provide an enhanced worship experience through the use of projected text, graphics, and videos
 - Design and distribute promotional material to enhance the image and awareness of St.

Thomas United church within the community

Members of the Communications Committee included Chris McPhee (Web Expert Role), Hal Tonkin, Kristin Raugust (Chair), Sandra Dusoswa (staff), and Bob Fillier (staff).

The Digital Arts Group is a subcommittee of the Communication Team and had the following members: Hal Tonkin, Kristin Raugust, Chris McPhee, Elaine Taylor-Kerr, Greg Hyatt, Gary Tickner, Mark Wagner, Brian Shewan, Dan MacDonald, and Jeff McLean.

Committee activities in 2012 included:

- Preparation and distribution of monthly newsletters (staff)

- Placement of advertisements in the Hawkeye Newsletter and the Calgary Herald
- Recruiting new presenters for Sunday morning PowerPoint and creation of PowerPoint
- Weekly web updating
- Coordination of Christmas give-aways
- Preparation, design, proof-reading, and presentation of PowerPoint presentations during Sunday worship services
- Initial usage of Pro Presenter instead of PowerPoint during services
- Installation of a new projector and 2nd computer screen in the sound booth (Thank you Hal!)

Our plan for 2013 includes the following initiatives:

- Prepare and distribute monthly newsletters
- Prepare and deliver Pro Presenter presentations during Sunday worship services.
- Design and print Christmas take-aways and other printed material as requested such as posters for events
- Explore additional ways to leverage the stthomasunited.ca website, facebook, and twitter to share information about the church, including the re-design of the website and regular social media updates
- Work with other committees to help address their communication needs

Respectfully submitted by Kristin Raugust

SOUND COMMITTEE

Members of the Sound Committee: John Robertson – Chair

David Robertson Dennis Chalifour

Hal Tonkin Don Mills

Brian Shewan John McCrea

Committee activities in 2012 included:

- Setting up the Audio to support activities in the Sanctuary and the Mountainview Hall
- Designing and operating the sound for the Saturday and Sunday performances of STUC on Movies in April (Many thanks to Don Mills and Brian Shewan)
- Designing the sound for the Youth Choir Christmas play
- Preparing the combined web audio for Past Services

Highlights and Recognitions:

- Web services have been retooled to work on all devices (iPads, iPhones and Androids)
- Web services are put together weekly by Brian Shewan and John McCrea (many thanks)

Plans for 2013:

Replace the pulpit microphone to allow for better sound reproduction.

Respectfully submitted by John Robertson

PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

Working with the ministry team, the Pastoral Care Committee cares for the congregation in a hands-on way by providing spiritual, emotional, and physical support to those in our church family. With your help, we have offered:

- Meals and other food support during times of crisis
- Prayer shawls and prayer squares
- Visiting program focussed on our seniors, shut-ins, and folks under medical care
- Funeral receptions when requested
- Assistance and refreshments at Blue Christmas and special services
- Educational programs
- Sunday coffee, tea, and juice
- Welcome calls, exit interviews, Ask Me hosts and Welcoming & Integrating Newcomers (WIN)
- Card program – cards mailed on behalf of the congregation. In 2012, 90+ cards were sent.

- Drumming Circles every month
- Cookie gift packages at Christmas – this year, 23 were delivered
- Financial support with grocery cards, Good Food boxes, and referrals as needed
- Hand sanitizers throughout sanctuary
- Affirming initiatives – this year we were pleased to welcome Dr. Teri Bryant as a speaker at St. Thomas and Presbytery’s Learning Day. We welcome all.

This year we lost our Healing Touch program, though we are happy to make referrals to practitioners. The committee was sorry to say goodbye to Daryl Fenty this year – a heartfelt thank you, Daryl, for so selflessly giving of your time and extraordinary talent. You are missed on the committee and for HT.

Going forward in 2013, there are several opportunities to live out our call to care for one another at St. Thomas in addition to the above programs that we will continue to offer. We are able to drive people to church or appointments from time to time by reaching out to members of our community. A proposal under consideration is to establish a benevolent fund, though this will take further study before any implementation takes place. All you need to do is let us know how you would like to care for others in our midst. You do not have to be on the committee but we happily welcome new recruits anytime. I am pleased that Judy Booth is joining the committee in 2013, after having been one of our background heroes for many years. We love to hear new ideas anytime.....Compassion and Pastoral Care is everyone’s calling!

- Learn to be a Healing Touch practitioner to revive this essential program
- Make or buy cards that Pastoral Care sends out on behalf of the congregation
- Make meals on request for times of emergency
- Help at or provide food for funeral receptions
- Learn to be an Ask Me host
- Do some calligraphy occasionally
- Organize a hymn book signing for members moving away

Remembering our church familyIn our hearts, you will always live.....

Carl Tetzlaff – husband of Barbara

Jack MacLeod – husband of Jean

Guido Haas – husband of Sandra

Sister – of Val McNeill

Peggy Isfan – wife of George

Gerry Moffatt – husband of Gloria

Mother – of Kim & Melanie Wagstaff

Aunt – of Barb & Bill Cousens

Sister-in-law – of Barb & Bill Cousens
Father – of Anne Gannon
Father – of Peter Usher
Father/father-in-law – of Gloria & Hugh Johnson
Sister-in-law – of David & Gail Vermeulen, aunt of Vicki McPhee
Nephew – of Jessie Negropontes
Sister/sister-in-law – of Steven & Jennifer Abar
Father – of Russ Heal
Uncle – of Andrew Major
Father – of Sharon Jones
Mother – of Charissa Tremblay
Uncle – of Fiona Hunter
Mother/mother-in-law – of Rob Ellis & Karyn Ahern
Aunt – of Doreen Ahern
Marven Blakely- husband of Margaret
Aunt – of Sandra Dusoswa
Friend – of Sandra Dusoswa
Great- Aunt – of Sandra Dusoswa

My deepest thanks to our very dedicated committee – Jan Mingo, Betty Thompson, Beth Phillips, Charlotte Cormier, Roger Anderson, Sherrill Knight and our Visiting program coordinators, Liz Smith, Barb Cousens and Dorothy Muir PLUS all our exceptionally committed visitors, the Ask Me hosts, WIN members, and wonderful coffee hosts. You folks are amazing, remarkable, phenomenal, fantastic!! A huge thank you and gratitude to the team we call on for countless undertakings - you have my utmost admiration and respect for your remarkable devotion, enthusiasm, and gifts.

Tons of thanks to Pat Shier who has been an indispensable conduit between staff and committee, particularly during our transition stretch. Special thanks to Barb Cousens for organizing the Sunday morning coffee makers for the past two years.

We welcome aboard our new ministers, Bob & Victoria Fillier, who have jumped in with vigour and passion since day one of arriving in our great city. Already they have made a vital difference in the lives of so many congregants. Pastoral Care could not carry out our mission without the incredible support we get from all the background heroes we call our PC team. You are the epitome of Open Hands, Open Hearts, Open Minds. St. Thomas folks – believe us when we say that everybody’s first calling is to greet with warmth, friendliness, and hospitality – make everyone who walks through our doors feel comfortable and welcomed, like family.

Thank you for caring and let’s all go make a difference!

Respectfully submitted by Marjorie Aucoin (chair)

AFFIRMING MINISTRY

St Thomas United Church became an Affirming Congregation in February 2011 as a result of a 95% positive vote by the congregation. This is a clear indication of St. Thomas’ desire to become a ‘welcoming congregation’ whatever a person’s background or circumstance. St. Thomas is an Affirming Ministry that seeks to welcome, make space, and appreciate everyone who visits or is part of our community of faith. Wherever folks are on their journey, all are welcome here.

It may be useful to reflect on our Affirming commitment:

We declare that St Thomas United Church is an Open and Affirming congregation. We believe that all people are sacred in the eyes of God, welcome at God’s table, and entitled to full and equal participation in the life of the church.

We recognize that churches have historically condemned and excluded some persons and groups of persons through active effort or complicit silence. In response to our understanding of Christ’s invitation to the table, we declare that we will continue our struggle to be open and affirming of all, regardless of age, ethnic, cultural or spiritual background, gender identity, sexual orientation, family composition, and physical or mental capabilities, and we will work to show our understanding of God’s world as a place of diversity and justice by our actions and witness to the world.

As an inclusive church, respectful of our differences and loving in our solidarity, St Thomas United Church publicly affirms the following fundamental principles that have guided our actions in the past and will continue to guide them in the future:

- All are welcome in our faith community regardless of age, colour, ethnic, religious or linguistic background, gender, gender identity, social or economic circumstances, sexual orientation and physical or mental capabilities.

- All members and adherents of St. Thomas are welcome to serve in any appropriate position within the Church, in accordance with their desires and abilities.
- All services offered by the Church, including baptism, marriage, communion and pastoral care, are available to all members and adherents of St. Thomas.

It is clear that being a “Welcoming Congregation” is a ‘journey’ and not a ‘destination’. The challenge is to hold this vision before the congregation without becoming a squeaky wheel. It seems so obvious that we should be welcoming but do we make everyone feel welcome? Although it is difficult, we need, each of us, to take the opportunity to be inviting. Our rainbow logo and flag are the outward signs that we are accepting but the real sign is the way that we greet people and make them a part of our community.

Members of St. Thomas have been involved in the wider affirming community. Several of us helped celebrate Wild Rose’s 5th Anniversary as an Affirming Congregation with a wonderful musical concert. Others were part of an organizing committee for a full morning study on ‘transgender’ at the Calgary Presbytery Learning Day in October.

We encourage you to reflect on our rainbow above the sign on our building each time you pass it to remind ourselves that we have committed ourselves to be ‘welcoming’ and accepting of all people.

Respectfully submitted by Marjorie Aucoin on behalf of the Affirming Ad Hoc Committee

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

Our St. Thomas UCW has gone through some changes this year in an effort to accommodate more women. We have found that a daytime meeting during the darker, colder months is working well; however, we still want to include our working women, so we have decided to have the meetings during the warmer, brighter months at 7p.m. on the third Monday and those during the other months at 1pm on the third Wednesday of the month (no meetings in July and August). We meet in the church lounge unless otherwise specified. The UCW purpose is to unite the women of the congregation for the total mission of the church and to provide a medium through which they may express their loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship, and service. Within the year, a variety of different activities, guest speakers, fundraisers, and potlucks are held.

We have hosted a variety of meetings throughout the year. A very special evening in March was held with Janet Bullard speaking to us about Planning Before the Crisis – decisions about health, finance, and legal issues. We opened the evening up to the community and had almost 100 people in attendance! Members shared stories about themselves through talking about a

favourite antique in April. During our first daytime meeting in May, Kelley Warner shared her faith journey with us. Prior to our usual pot luck in June we were treated to a garden tour at Florence Comstock's! What a treat that was! Flowers, plants and all so organized and weed free! Our September meeting was a time for us to reconnect following the summer holidays. Judy Steiert shared her passion for aging during her Sage-ing presentation in October; then Victoria Fillier shared some of her life journey with us in November, and we got to know her a little better. Our first ever Saturday pot luck brunch in December was a huge success! Delicious food, fellowship, and a great program was enjoyed by all! This year's Christmas charity of choice was the Alex Youth Health Centre which was grateful for two large boxes of food, warm clothes, personal care items, and bus tickets.

This year was a very special year because of the 50th anniversary of the national UCW. Florence Comstock and Pat Usher were awarded certificates for being charter members. We also participated in the paper doll project in hopes of drawing attention to the 70,000 children living in poverty here in Alberta, with a presentation at the Alberta legislature in November.

Our annual Student Union Ticket book sales were completed in record time; raising \$950! We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your continued support, and encourage you to use your coupons throughout the year. We plan to make our annual UCW donations in January (watch the newsletter for details). Last year's donations were made to the Calgary Women's Centre, the Stephen Lewis Foundation, the National UCW, St. Stephen's College, and the M & S Fund.

We continue to take Fair Trade Coffee orders four or five times during the year. This is not a fundraiser; instead, the extra income from this project allows us to supply our St. Thomas Church with coffee throughout the year.

All women in the congregation are technically members of the UCW and we welcome and encourage you to attend any meeting, especially when we have a guest speaker of interest or a potluck. This is a very social group and it is a great way to meet and support other women in the congregation on a more personal level.

Executive for 2013: President - Lois Shewan; Treasurer – Diane French; Secretary – Wanda Veer; Programme Convenor – Marilyn Barry

Respectfully submitted by Lois Shewan

FAITH FORMATION COMMITTEE

Providing opportunities for our members and the community to explore and grow on their journey of faith. From infants in the nursery through the Sunday School and youth years into adulthood and retirement. The committee consists of approximately six volunteers from a cross

section of the congregation and ministry personnel. Roles within the committee include chairperson (co-chairs), a volunteer librarian, a nursery coordinator, and members at large.

Programs offered in 2012 included:

- Preschool Spirituality
- The Education of Jesus (Dale Bergeson)
- *Connected* film and discussions (Jessie Negropontes)
- Faith Journey groups led by Christal Reed and Peter Usher
- What Do We Believe? (adult confirmation...)
- Moe and the Big Exit
- Calgary Interfaith Food Bank Tour
- United Church of Canada – National Updates?
- The Prince of Egypt
- Bible Studies – Parables of the Lost, Healing Jairus’s Daughter, The Last Supper, Paul’s Conversion, travels and writings, and Peter’s Faith Journey (led by Jessie Negropontes).
- Memories of a Holocaust Survivor
- Learning about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.
- Mormon Temple tours
- Writing Through Grief and Loss (offered in conjunction with Pastoral Care Committee)
- Nursery Caregiver Training
- Lessons from Dr. Seuss
- The Changing Faces of Jesus (Dale Bergeson and Victoria)

Milestone Awards:

A decision was made to recognize the importance of starting Sunday School and a lifelong learning practice. Children at this age are very keen to hear the Bible stories and parents welcome the chance to cuddle up and share this knowledge. This first Bible also becomes an independent learning tool as the children are able to look at the pictures and review the stories they have heard on their own and as they learn to read. Two primary Bibles were selected to be given out, the second in the case of an older sibling having already received a

copy and a third choice was made for an alternate in case one of the other versions becomes unavailable.

The Preschool Bibles chosen to be given out to this age group are:

My First Bible, Paragon Publisher

Lion Read & Know Bible

Spark Story Bible, Augsburg Fortress Publisher

The Bible awarded to the Grade Four students was reviewed this year and the Contemporary English Version Bible was selected for its reading level and wording which aligns with the St. Thomas perspective.

Sunday School:

St Thomas' Sunday School program is for children ages 3 through grade six. Sunday School is a Bible-story based rotation, focusing on a story for three weeks at a time. Through drama, games, art, science, and cooking, the meanings behind the Bible stories are explored.

We are always looking for volunteers for teaching Sunday School; if you are interested, please contact the church office. The lessons have been thoughtfully prepared and supplies pre-arranged to make the commitment simple and rewarding.

The entire Sunday School offering goes to CUPS One World Child Development Centre.

Nursery:

The nursery provides a safe and fun place for little ones from newborn to age 3. Our youth who provide childcare are paid \$10 per service and have Red Cross Babysitting Certificates as well as in-house procedure training.

Library:

Free lending library for books, videos, and games for all ages of children and adults. The library is located on the second floor. Requests and recommendations for new material are welcome.

A heartfelt thank you goes to the members of the Faith Formation Committee for your time, dedication and input; Krista Strayer (Chairperson), Sandra Glass, Dale Bergeson, Tom Snowden, Winona Anderson (Librarian), Dan MacDonald (Nursery Coordinator). A special thank you to our past members Lynn Tait and Kerrie Goodfellow. Your time and efforts have been so appreciated. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted by Krista Strayer, Faith Formation Chairperson

JOINT SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Joint Search Committee was struck at a congregational meeting April 3, 2011 following approval of the Joint Needs Assessment Committee report. We were charged with finding and recommending two full-time ministers – Minister of Preaching & Administration and Minister of Nurture, Education, & Outreach. We met 38 times from May to December 2011, reviewed and assessed 31 potential candidates, shortlisted and conducted several in-depth interviews with 6 applicants and after comprehensive deliberation, the committee was convinced that we had come to an ideal fit for St. Thomas – a clergy couple who would challenge and energize our church community.

On January 29, 2012, a congregational meeting was called whereby the Joint Search Committee recommended Calls to Rev. Dr. Bob Fillier and Rev. Victoria Fillier for the aforementioned positions. The congregation, then Calgary Presbytery, approved these Calls and we were delighted to have Bob and Victoria relocate to Calgary in July. From the outset, they have taken the plunge with St. Thomas in a big way with vim, vigour, and a ton of passion – from weddings to funerals to political principles, beliefs, opinions and beyond. Staff and congregation are adjusting, adapting, and responding to this interesting journey and St Thomas will be a more vital community because of it.

We were extremely pleased and impressed by the quality of ministers who expressed serious interest in ministry with St. Thomas which confirms our belief that St. Thomas provides an excellent environment for ministry staff to work and grow.

Thank you to the congregation, for allowing us to represent you as the Joint Search Committee fulfilling the interests of this spirited community. St. Thomas Committee members were Stu Robbins, Barry Mingo, Andrea Mendritzki, Judy Booth, Ryan Sanderson, Cathy Rivard, and Marjorie Aucoin. We were thankful for the guidance of our wise Presbytery representatives - Rev. Karen Holmes from McDougall United and Stutt Pottruff from Scarboro United. The committee was officially disbanded on completion of Bob and Victoria's covenanting service October 21, 2012.

Respectfully submitted by Marjorie Aucoin on behalf of the Joint Search Committee

PRIMETIMERS

Primetimers is a group offering fellowship for the over 55's in the church. Others are welcome to join us also.

January – Coffee Party in the Narthex – 19 people

February – Coffee Party in the Narthex – 18 people

March – Stage West “The 39 Steps” – 20 people

April – Coffee Party in the Narthex – 18 people

May – Symons Valley Dinner Theatre “Death by Chocolate” – 26 people

June – Coffee Party in the Narthex – 19 people

July – no event

August – no event

September – Coffee Party in the Narthex – 11 people

October – Pumphouse Theatre “Singin’ in the Rain” – 21 people

November - Coffee Party in the Narthex – 24 people

December – Christmas Lunch at Tony Roma’s -33 people

December – Lunchbox Theatre “Oh! Christmas Tree” and lunch at Milestones – 18 people

My thanks to all those who have hosted our coffee parties - Gladys Marshall, Lois Hudson, Marlene Rankin, Annette Steele, Marj and Lou Heinen, Betty Hughes, Dorothy and Allan Muir; those who have organized outings – Ron and Diane French; and all those who have driven others to the outings.

Respectfully Submitted by Betty Thompson

REPORT FROM PRESBYTERY

St Thomas continues to be involved in the work and organization of the wider church through its work in Calgary Presbytery, Alberta and Northwest Conference, and General Council. Pat Shier, Hugh Johnson and Stu Robbins were all members of Calgary Presbytery in 2012 as were our ordained ministers. Although Stu resigned as

Presbytery Rep in 2011, he continues to serve the greater church as a member at large of Presbytery for which all in the United Church should be grateful.

St. Thomas is entitled to one representative for each 100 resident members to a maximum of 4. This is a great opportunity to get to understand the broader church and for St. Thomas to assist in the growth and development of the United Church in Calgary.

Given the concerns expressed over some General Council decisions, participation in the broader church, such as Presbytery, gives another outlet for expressing opinions. Presbytery (there is a comprehensive review being undertaken that may result in new structures) is the governing body of the United Church that most directly impacts St. Thomas. The more who participate, the greater the influence of St. Thomas in the work of the United Church.

Various members of St. Thomas participated in Presbytery by being members of Search and Joint Needs Assessment Committees, discernment committees, and the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Needs Assessment. Hugh Johnson is the Chair of the Ministry of Planning and Administration, a member of the Executive Committee, and a member of the Conference Committee on Mission Support Grants. Stu Robbins was Convenor of the Education and Students Working Unit but has stepped down to be a zone co-ordinator within Presbytery. A special thanks to Harold Black who served as Chair of Ministry of Personnel Support and as a zone coordinator during some particularly difficult circumstances. David Blackadar continues his work on the Campus Ministry Advisory Committee and is a key cog in their fundraising efforts. If you are interested in seeing what goes on in other churches there is always a need for Presbytery representatives on all sorts of committees. It is a challenging and rewarding experience. For those whom I may have missed, I apologize. One of the problems of being active in one aspect of Presbytery (planning and administration) I don't follow as closely as perhaps I should the participation of others in the many other aspects of Presbytery.

Calgary Presbytery, in conjunction with Symons Valley, received a grant from the Conference to hire a consultant to look at ways that Symons Valley and St. Thomas, being the two most northerly United Churches in Calgary, could improve their mission. Dr Harper's reports are available to any who wish to read them. (He also did a brief report for Red Deer Lake in 2012.)

St. Andrews is engaged in a visioning process that will see them take a bold step toward a virtual church; the path has taken some turns but hopefully in 2013 they will complete the road map. There is currently quite a dichotomy between the urban presbyteries such as Calgary (that is not to say that even within Calgary presbytery there are significant differences), that have paid presbytery staff, and the rural ones that rely to a much greater extent on the Conference office. Services from Conference will be reduced given that the regional staff was terminated. The three southern region Presbyteries are attempting to coordinate more and provide more services to the churches in this segment of Alberta

Conference was held May 31 to June 2 in Calgary at SAIT. Special thanks to those who were delegates and worked at the meeting. Vicki McPhee was ordained on the last day of Conference.

Respectfully Submitted by Hugh Johnson