
ST. THOMAS UNITED CHURCH 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

MINISTERS: Rev. Dr. Bob Fillier, Rev. Victoria Andrews (Jan-June 30, 2014), Rev. Tracy Robertson (as of June 30, 2014)

YOUTH LEADERS: Brittney Whittaker, Marika Wagner, Matthew Taylor-Kerr

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 – 12:30

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CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES –

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2014

The Annual Congregational Meeting was chaired by Hugh Johnson. It was an integral part of the worship service Sunday 11:00 am.

Opening Prayer read by Hugh Johnson.

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 Brian Shewan; seconded by David Gray.

Carried.

Approving the Agenda:

Moved that the order of worship be the agenda for this meeting.

Motion by George Zirotf; seconded by David Gray.

Carried.

Adjournment:

Moved that the congregational meeting be adjourned immediately following the Benediction/Blessing with no further motion necessary.

Motion by Linda MacAngus; seconded by Ryan Sanderson.

Carried.

In Memoriam: A moment of silence and prayer in remembrance of Marilyn Gail Vermeulen, Lloyd Edwin Forest Snow, Marion Eliza McEwan, William Garner, and Spencer Seymour Winters.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2013 Congregational Meetings

Moved that the minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting of February 3, 2013, Congregational Meeting of June 2, 2013 (formation of JNAC); and the Congregational Meeting of June 23, 2013 (Recommendations of the JNAC) be approved as circulated (and amended).

Motion by George Zirotf; seconded by Linda Miller.

Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

Receiving the Annual Reports: Review of the Work of the Church in 2013

Moved that the Annual Reports of St. Thomas United Church for 2013 be received as they have been prepared and circulated.

Motion by Elaine Taylor-Kerr; seconded by Elizabeth Griffiths.

Carried.

Approval of the Financial Statements 2013

Copies of the 2013 financial statements with accompanying notes were available and distributed. Greg Hyatt presented an overview of the financial statements, providing explanations and an opportunity for questions. Greg thanked the congregation for maintaining contributions during the past year.

Moved that the St. Thomas United Church financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2013 be approved.

Motion by Ron French; seconded by Drina Nixon.

Carried.

Moved that the Executive Council appoint a member or adherent of St. Thomas to conduct a financial review of the St. Thomas 2013 financial statements, pursuant to the United Church of Canada handbook requirements.

Motion by Jo-Anne Hyatt; seconded by David Robertson.

Carried.

Presentation of the 2014 Budget

Greg Hyatt outlined the proposed budget.

Moved that the St. Thomas United Church Operating Fund Budget 2014 be approved.

Motion by Kristin Raugust; seconded by Carrie-Faye Wong.

Carried.

Greg acknowledged the work and time commitment of the members of the Finance Committee helping to manage the financial matters of St. Thomas. In particular, Betty Smith, Treasurer; Envelope Steward, Jo-Anne Hyatt; and the counters were recognized.

Recognition of Leadership in 2014 - The Nominations Report 2014

All those who have offered to serve in 2014 as a leader or member of one of the many committees or ministries were thanked for their service and the congregation shared in a prayer of support.

Closing Prayer by Hugh Johnson

Chair – Hugh Johnson

Secretary - Heather Worton

Attachments:

- 1. List of attendees - 83 total**
 - 2. St. Thomas United Church 2013 Annual Report**
 - 3. Minutes of 2013 Congregational meetings**
 - 4. St. Thomas United Church 2013 Financial Statements**
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CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 2014

As Chair of Presbytery and Rep for St. Thomas, Hugh Johnson welcomed those present and called the meeting to order. Rev. John Schneider arrived shortly after and presided over this meeting on behalf of Calgary Presbytery.

1. Appointment of Secretary:

Motion to appoint Heather Worton as secretary for this meeting.

(Sherrill Knight, John Robertson)

Carried.

2. Conditions of a Quorum had been met. (Attendance 47 total , Members of St. Thomas 38)

3. Executive Council Chair, Jeff McLean, explained the purpose of this meeting was to appoint a Joint Needs Assessment Committee or authorize Executive Council to do so.

He provided some background information.

Staffing announcement – Maureen Dodd (Ministry and Personnel)

Effective April 1, 2014 Reverend Bob Andrews-Fillier is taking a full leave for restorative care. This is for a non-life-threatening medical issue. A return-to-work date is not known at this time.

Reverend Victoria Andrews-Fillier has agreed to take on the preaching duties for several upcoming Sundays and M & P and others are working with Victoria to ensure other things are covered.

Short Term Strategy – Jeff McLean

Jeff outlined the plan:

Proposal: To establish a short term committee to search for and recommend a candidate for a temporary contract position (3 to 12 months) that will fulfil the role of Minister for Nurture, Education, and Outreach as recommended by the Unified Board.

Purpose: To ensure ministry support in areas of pastoral care and faith formation at St. Thomas United Church.

Timing: 1 to 2 months

Consisting of 3 to 4 members and a Presbytery Representative (for interviews and taking the recommendation to Presbytery)

Volunteers/Nominations – to be determined at the Unified Board Meeting and approved by Executive Council.

Long Term Strategy – Jeff McLean

Jeff outlined the plan:

Proposal: To elect individuals to serve on a JNAC (Joint Needs Assessment Committee)

Purpose: To ensure ministry support at St. Thomas in the areas as defined by the JNAC.

Timing: At the call of the JNAC by Presbytery Representatives.

Request: 4 to 5 members and 2 Presbytery Representatives (yet to be determined)

Nominations for the JNAC:

Four members of St. Thomas have agreed to let their names stand for nomination:

Dan MacDonald, Andrea Sonpal, Stu Robbins, Elaine Taylor-Kerr

Additional nominations: Hope Cochran

**Motion that Dan MacDonald, Andrea Sonpal, Stu Robbins, Elaine Taylor-Kerr and Hope Cochran be appointed to serve on the Joint Needs Assessment Committee for St. Thomas United Church as established by Presbytery.
(Marj Aucoin, Marilyn Barry)
Carried.**

Adjournment: As the purpose of the meeting had been accomplished, Reverend John Schneider adjourned the meeting.

Attachments:

1. Attendance

Respectfully submitted by Heather Worton

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2014

1. Call to order: Bryon Delarue presided over this meeting on behalf of Calgary Presbytery. He welcomed those present and called the meeting to order and led an opening prayer.

2. Appointment of Secretary:

Moved by Hugh Johnson, seconded by Jeff McLean that Heather Worton be appointed as Secretary for the Congregational meeting.

Carried.

3. Establish conditions of a quorum: There was a sufficient number of members present to meet the Conditions of a Quorum.

4. Corresponding Privileges:

Moved by Sherrill Knight, seconded by Diane Paley that adherents in attendance be granted corresponding privileges.

Carried.

5. Voting:

The manual states that voting must be by ballot unless the congregation decides on another way of voting. So if it is the desire of this congregation, a motion that voting be done by show of hands is in order.

Moved by Stu Robbins, seconded by Marj Aucoin that voting be done by a show of hands.

Carried.

6. Agenda:

Moved by Jeff McLean, seconded by Hugh Johnson that the agenda be approved as presented.

Carried.

7. Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC)

7a. Introduction of the members of this JNAC: As chair of this committee, Elaine Taylor-Kerr introduced the committee

Hope Cochran, Dan MacDonald, Andrea Sonpal (Secretary), Stu Robbins,

Elaine Taylor-Kerr (chair), Judy Chapman (Presbytery), Bryon Delarue (Presbytery)

7b. Highlights of the Report: Elaine gave a brief overview of the report and the work of the committee. She also spoke to the committee's recommendations.

7c. Questions and Answers: An opportunity was provided for members of the congregation to ask questions and seek clarification about aspects of the report and the recommendations.

Moved by Elaine Taylor-Kerr, seconded by Hugh Johnson to receive the JNAC Report.

Carried.

8. JNAC Recommendations:

Moved by Stu Robbins, seconded by Marj Aucoin that St. Thomas United Church request that Calgary Presbytery declare a vacancy for a full-time Ordered Minister for the position of Minister of Nurture, Education and Outreach to be filled through call.

Carried.

Moved by Jeff McLean, seconded by David Smith that St. Thomas United Church request that Calgary Presbytery approve changes to the terms of the existing call with Rev. Dr. Bob Fillier due to a change in the position description of Minister of Preaching and Administration.

Carried.

Moved by Carrie-Faye Wong, seconded by David Robertson that St. Thomas United Church request that Calgary Presbytery disband the JNAC with thanks, and appoint a Joint Search Committee.

Carried.

Moved by Diane Paley, seconded by Marilyn Barry that St. Thomas United Church direct Executive Council to continue with one-to-three Youth Workers sharing 16 hours per week, and one full time Office Manager.

Carried.

Moved by Jan Mingo, seconded by David Gray that St. Thomas United Church direct Executive Council to consider re-introducing the role of a congregational appointed position for Ministry with Children and Families.

Carried.

Moved by Roger Anderson, seconded by Keith Campbell that St. Thomas United Church direct the Executive Council to further review the need for adding a paid position of Volunteer Coordinator, if an unpaid position cannot be filled.

Carried.

Moved by Elaine Taylor-Kerr, seconded by Hope Cochran that St. Thomas United Church direct the Executive Council to further review the need for adding a paid position of Communications Coordinator, if an unpaid position cannot be filled.

Carried.

9. Establishment of a Joint Search Committee (JSC)

Executive Council proposes that the JSC committee consist of 9 members. (7 from St. Thomas and 2 Presbytery Representatives). Members of this committee may be members or adherents of St. Thomas. Six members have agreed to serve on this committee. A call for nominations from the floor resulted in one other member volunteering to serve.

Moved by Maureen Dodd, seconded by Stu Robbins that Elaine Taylor-Kerr, Hope Cochran, Melinda-Rae Lyse, Marjorie Aucoin, Jeff McLean, Mike Orosz, and Mark Wagner from St. Thomas United Church be approved to serve on the Joint Search Committee.

Carried.

Moved by Hugh Johnson, seconded by David Smith that the Executive Council be empowered to add or replace members on the Joint search Committee as required.

Carried.

10. Closure

Bryon Delarue declared the meeting closed, being satisfied that all business and purposes of the meeting have been attended to and there was no further business.

11. Closing Prayer – Bryon Delarue.

Attachments: 1. Attendance: 86

Respectfully submitted by Heather Worton, Secretary

STATISTICS

This year there were:

New Members:	1
Confirmations:	2
Re-affirmations:	0
Baptisms:	17
Weddings:	0
Funerals:	7
Transferred in:	1
Transferred out:	4

ST. THOMAS UNITED UNIFIED BOARD – 2014

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

* designates resignation in 2014
bold denotes new in 2014

stthomas@shaw.ca

MINISTERS:

Rev. Dr. Bob Fillier
 *Rev. Victoria Fillier
Rev. Tracy Robertson

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Chair **Jeff McLean**
 Past Chair *Hope Cochran
 Treasurer Betty Smith
 Secretary Heather Worton
 Presbytery Rep Hugh Johnson

TRUSTEES

Chair David Gray
 Dennis Gidley
 Elaine Taylor-Kerr
 Carrie-Faye Wong
 Bob Fillier
 *Victoria Fillier

STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE

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

STEWARDSHIP

Chair **Andrea Sonpal**
Jake Highfield

WORSHIP

Chair *Cathy Rivard
 David Robertson
 Linda Miller
 *Diane Luke
 Drina Nixon
 Bob Fillier
 Staff *Victoria Fillier
 Staff **Tracy Robertson**
 Staff Andrew Major
 Candle Lighters Diane French
 Scripture Readers Fiona Craig
 Decorators *Shirley MacGregor, *Lyn Tonkin,
 Lori Weller

MUSIC TEAM

Chair Elaine Taylor-Kerr
 Pat Robbins
 Ron French
 Pam Bazinet
 Staff Barb Robertson
 Staff Kari Orosz
 Staff Dick Worton
 Staff Erin MacLean-Berko
 Staff Kloria Wen
 Staff Bob Fillier
 Staff *Victoria Fillier
 Staff **Tracy Robertson**
 Alternate Music *Elizabeth Griffiths

BUILDING AND PROPERTY

Co-Chair Elvin Dorscher
 Co-Chair David Blackadar
 David Vermeulen
 Trent Hunter
 Richard Pon
 Bill Roeske
 Murray Lees
 Hal Tonkin
 John Robertson
 *Lyle Prokopowich
 Craig Gallant
 Hal Tonkin
 Sandra Dusoswa
 Bob Fillier
 Dan Ahern
 Allen Innis
 Elvin Dorscher, David Vermeulen
 Murray Lees

COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Kristin Raugust
 Staff/Newsletter Sandra Dusoswa
 Staff Bob Fillier
 Proof-reading Carrie-Faye Wong
 Presenters Kristin Raugust, Brian Shewan,
 Greg Hyatt, Hal Tonkin,
 Elaine Taylor-Kerr, Mark Wagner,
 Dan MacDonald

Digital Arts Sub Committee

Hal Tonkin
 Kristin Raugust

Sound/Audio Sub Committee

Chair John Robertson
 Hal Tonkin
 John McCrea
 *Denis Chalifour

Don Mills

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL

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

MISSION & OUTREACH

Chair Karen Kavanagh
Linda Dick
David Vermeulen
Rachel Murray
Swee Wong
Melinda-Rae Lyse
Staff *Victoria Fillier
Staff **Tracy Robertson**
Loree Irving

PASTORAL CARE

Chair Marjorie Aucoin
Jan Mingo
Betty Thompson
Roger Anderson
Staff *Victoria Fillier
Staff **Tracy Robertson**
Prayer Shawls Charlotte Cormier
Funeral Receptions Beth Phillips
Ask Me & Newcomers (part of Pastoral Care)
Sherrill Knight
Roger Anderson
Fiona Craig
Quilting for Others Janet Barker
Quilting for Others Lyn Tonkin
Community Time Pastoral Care

AFFIRMING GROUP (sub group of Pastoral Care)

Chair Marjorie Aucoin
Pat Robbins
Judy Booth
Rachel Murray
Wanda Veer
Staff Bob Fillier
Staff *Victoria Fillier
Staff **Tracy Robertson**

FAITH FORMATION

Chair Tom Snowden
Members at Large Sandra Glass
Janice Campbell
Staff *Victoria Fillier
Staff **Tracy Robertson**
Nursery Coordinator
Library *Winona Anderson
SS Offering *Lynn Tait

COMMUNITY FORMATION

Nonie Johnston
Donna Swalm
Staff Bob Fillier
AM Fun & Fitness Ellen Norrish
Bridge Group *Barbara Rodgers
Primetimers Betty Thompson
Wed Night Book Club Fiona Craig
Open Art Studio Linda Knopf
Wednesday Night Dinner Sub-group
Coordinator Wanda Veer

YOUTH ADVISORY

Chair Elaine Taylor-Kerr
Jan Mingo
Sharon Jones
John Latter
Wendy Atkinson
Joan Robertson
Staff *Victoria Fillier
Staff **Tracy Robertson**
Staff Brittny Whittaker
Staff Marika Wagner
Staff Matthew Taylor-Kerr
Junior Youth Rep Vacant
JY Leader Heather Robertson
JY Leader Taylor Thompson
JY Leader Andrew Taylor-Kerr
JY Leader Matthew Worton

UCW

Past President Margaret Blakely
President Lois Shewan
Programme Coordinator
Treasurer Diane French
Secretary Wanda Veer

REPRESENTATIVES

Observer Rep Marilyn Whittle
Archivist Bill Cousens
Presbytery Karen Kaganak 286-8073

STAFF

Bob Filler (minister)
*Victoria Filler (minister)
Tracy Robertson (minister)
Sandra Dusoswa (office manager)
Kari Orosz (organist & children's choir accompanist, adult choir accompanist)
Barb Robertson (youth choir director)
Pam Bazinet (adult choir director)
Dick Worton (orchestra)
Brittny Whittaker (youth leader)
Marika Wagner (youth leader)
Matthew Taylor-Kerr (youth leader)
Erin MacLean-Berko (children's choir director)
Kloria Wen (youth choir accompanist)
Ferdinand (Ferdie) Justo (caretaker)

ANNUAL REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Change is inevitable. The world continues to change rapidly around us, from the global scale down to a local perspective. We often feel uneasy or out of sorts when it affects us individually. To help us deal with these changes, it is good to keep in mind our vision & mission statements; that we endeavour 'to live out our full Christian potential through open hands, open hearts and open minds'.

When we are open to it, change can be great, as it often introduces us to individuals or experiences that enhance our lives and those around us.

When I look back at 2014, for the St. Thomas United Church community it has been an eventful year with a few significant changes. Interestingly, when I think about St. Thomas since its early days, 'change' has been one of the constants. In the subsequent committee reports you will get a good appreciation of what went on in 2014 at St. Thomas. It has been a busy year for all of our committees and executive council. Let's look at a few of the significant changes:

1) The first to affect our community was the announcement in the spring of the resignation of Reverend Victoria Fillier, as she had accepted a new position in British Columbia beginning in July. Reverend Victoria will be missed, and on behalf of the congregation, I wish her all the best and success in her new position. Her departure initiated a Joint Needs Assessment Committee, which received approval of its recommendations in November. A Joint Search Committee has been established, and is in the process of seeking candidates to fill the identified need.

2) The second major event was the change in number of worship services. Led by the results of a survey initiated by the worship committee, we have moved from two services to one service beginning in September. From my perspective, we are already reaping benefits from this change with an increased vibrancy, renewal of acquaintances with members who attended different services, and welcoming new individuals/families who are considering St. Thomas as part of their faith journey.

3) St. Thomas welcomed Reverend Tracy Robertson in June to our ministry team on a contract basis in the position of Minister of Nurture, Education and Outreach. Among many things, she brings passion and enthusiasm to her ministry, and her efforts are sincerely appreciated.

4) A review and redesign of our logo was initiated this year to better reflect our creed and commitment to affirming ministry. This culminated in the fall with a vote by the congregation on the new logo, which also incorporates elements of the past logo. It is executive council's hope that this will help in the recognition of St. Thomas within the wider Calgary community.

Those are a few of the changes that have happened at St. Thomas in 2014, but we have also maintained a solid grounding in our fundamentals and continued to build on the priorities established at the 2013 Unified Board meeting, and reaffirmed in 2014. The following are some of my observations:

1) Reverend Bob Fillier and the ministry team have continued to develop our faith through excellent thought-provoking and inspiring worship services.

2) There is a continued high level of pastoral care and we have had good success in new events initiated by the faith formation committee.

3) St. Thomas has a vibrant music program, both in our worship services and in the community.

4) We have a focus on outreach, local and global, and are a welcoming, affirming church with an active youth group.

5) And we have a congregation that continues to step up to meet the challenges of the day.

On behalf of executive council, I believe we can be a focal point in NW Calgary Christian faith through our ministry, music, outreach, pastoral care, and youth programs by continuing to live out our creed of ‘open hands, open hearts and open minds’. It isn’t always easy, but we can adapt to the changes that meet us.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the life of the St. Thomas United Church community; your help makes this a great church to continue our faith journey together.

Respectfully submitted by Jeff McLean, Chair of Executive Council

STAFF REPORT

Paulo Coelho once wrote, “When we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change; at such a moment, there is no point in pretending that nothing has happened or in saying that we are not yet ready. The challenge will not wait. Life does not look back.” Change happens. That might seem like an obvious statement, yet how many times have all of us said or heard, “I’m not ready to change!” maybe not in those exact words, but with the same sentiment. Change happens. It isn’t so much about whether it will happen or not, for change is more guaranteed than taxes. Rather it’s about what we do as a response to the change and the greater the change the more significant the response becomes.

In the 20th chapter of John’s gospel his version of the resurrection is recorded. In particular John records appearances of Jesus post resurrection. One appearance in particular, Jesus’ appearance in the locked room with Thomas, is particularly about that moment when change is realized. In fairness to Thomas one degree of change had already happened. Jesus had been arrested, put on trial, and crucified. For any community to lose a leader, even if it’s not quite as deadly, is traumatic. It generates complex emotions: a sense of anger, a sense of sadness, a sense of grief, of betrayal, of uncertainty, and of doubt – to name just a few. Sometimes it’s tempting to make it all about us and how we’re feeling and the effect events are having on us. Thomas was resistant to the change that he hadn’t chosen for himself or for his community. “I won’t believe unless I see it for myself and can touch him” is the statement that has followed Thomas through the ages. Change can evoke that kind of response in us.

In that same story we’re offered another option as a response to change: faith. John records Jesus as saying, “blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” In that moment a model of change management is presented to us. On the one hand, there are the tangible things that we can deal with, the variables that are within our control. On the other hand, there are the things we can’t control and require faith and the belief that, in the case of our faith community, we are part of God’s mission in the world and at the same time God’s mission is much bigger than any one of us or any one community. 2014 was about change and St. Thomas dealt with change very, very well.

Rev. Tracy

2014 has been a year of transition and change for me personally as it has been for STUC as well. After a traumatic end to my Chaplaincy at the Calgary Young Offender Centre, STUC has become a place of renewal and resurrection. I have experienced a time of deep grieving at the loss of one Ministry Call and I have been struggling with my sense of direction and Call from God. In one sense I was pleased to be a part of the St. Thomas team because, quite frankly, I needed a job. What has grown from that initial need, however, has been a true renewal in my Call to ministry and resurrection is again attainable for me. The STUC family has welcomed me with open arms and I pray every day to be able to give back the immense gifts I've received with the same enthusiasm and grace. As we move ahead together, I look forward over the next few months to being able to fulfill my supply commitment but also to continuing to develop deep and meaningful relationships with you all.

Rev. Bob

When I look back over 2014 there's not much that hasn't changed. Worship changed, the ministry team dynamics changed, my family life changed, my life changed. It doesn't matter if I wanted these changes – they happened. There were moments when I was deeply uncertain about the future and what it would bring. Moments of personal and professional doubt and yet here I am and here we are. To say I have a personal understanding of the resurrection that is deeper and more personal seems trite and yet it is so true. There's no doubt that 2014 was a year of blessings and challenges. I've always felt deeply connected to the congregations I've been in ministry with. Perhaps it's because my personal family has always lived somewhere else, often far away and so the faith community has become my family. We use that metaphor a lot in church circles, yet it can be so true. Like any family, we have our shining moments and the ones we'd sooner forget. We have the whacky uncle, the favourite aunt, and everyone in between. It's my honour and privilege to be part of this family and I look forward to seeing what our part of God's mission will be in 2015.

As you read this 2014 Annual Report, hear between the lines the stories of a family that has the goal of living out its full Christian potential with open hands, open hearts, and open minds. Hear between the pauses how STUC has managed the changes of 2014. Hear between the reports, the acknowledgement of accomplishments, the activities, and meals about a community that knows how to deal with change and looks to 2015 with hope and faith. And then, as we congratulate one another, discern where you can be part of the changes that are to come.

Respectfully Submitted by Rev. Bob Fillier and Rev. Tracy Robertson

COMMITTEE REPORTS

JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE AND JOINT SEARCH COMMITTEE

Victoria's resignation in March created the requirement to form a Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC) to affirm the goals of St. Thomas, re-evaluate the staffing needs for St. Thomas, and make recommendations for the future. This committee consisted of members of the St. Thomas congregation plus two representatives assigned by Calgary Presbytery. The St. Thomas reps were appointed at the Unified Board meeting held in April and the Presbytery reps were appointed shortly after. The committee consisted of Hope Cochran, Dan MacDonald, Stu Robbins, Andrea Sonpal, and Elaine Taylor-Kerr from St. Thomas. Bryon Delarue and Judy Chapman were the Presbytery reps.

The committee gathered input from staff, committees, and the congregation through meetings and a congregational survey. The information was analyzed and a report was prepared that included recommendations. This report was presented to Executive Council on Oct 22. It was accepted by Executive Council and the recommendations were voted on and approved. The report was made available to the congregation and is still available on our website. On November 2, a congregational meeting was held and the congregation voted to receive the JNAC report and voted on and approved all recommendations. The report was forwarded to Presbytery. It was discussed at the Presbytery Ministry of Personnel Support commission meeting on Nov 18. The commission accepted the Joint Needs Assessment Committee Report, declared a Vacancy for an Order of Ministry position of Minister of Nurture, Education and Outreach, and affirmed Bob Fillier in his position as Minister of Preaching and Administration.

At the November 2 meeting, the congregation also approved seven people to serve on the Joint Search Committee (JSC). The St. Thomas members of that committee are Marjorie Aucoin, Hope Cochran, Jeff McLean, Mike Orosz, Melinda-Rae Lyse, Elaine Taylor-Kerr, and Mark Wagner. Approval of establishing this committee was received at the Nov 18 Presbytery Ministry of Personnel Support commission meeting. Two Presbytery representatives – Murray Laverty from Parkdale and Bryon Delarue from Deer Park- were appointed by Presbytery.

The Joint Search committee held its first meeting on Dec 9. We set a deadline for receipt of applications at Jan. 23, 2015, we are advertising our ministerial position nationally, and we are committed to calling the best candidate for St. Thomas to the position of Minister of Nurture, Education and Outreach. You can view our ad on the St. Thomas website as well. The purpose of the JSC is threefold – find the best minister to join St. Thomas, negotiate the terms of his/her call, and hold a covenanting service to celebrate. When we have completed our work and are ready to announce our selection, a congregational meeting will be called immediately. It cannot be over-emphasized how important it is that we seek the very best match. Although the Search process is not a secret, it is critical that confidentiality be at the core, both for the church and the candidates who apply. Consequently, please do not ask us questions we are not allowed to answer. We cannot tell you who has sent in resumes or how many we have received. In the meantime, keep believing and have faith in us!! Please remember that we have the best interests of

you, the congregation, in our hearts and we will pick the best fit. Thank you for understanding and helping us. We appreciate it. Marjorie Aucoin, Chair of the Joint Search Committee.

*Respectfully submitted by Elaine Taylor-Kerr (Chair of the Joint Needs Assessment Committee)
and Marjorie Aucoin (Chair of the Joint Search Committee)*

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The M&P committee continued to toil ceaselessly in 2014 for Queen and Country and Church. Thanks to Carrie-Faye Wong, Barry Mingo, Kristin Raugust, Dennis Gidley, and David Smith for their wisdom and patience in this ministry.

Rev. Tracy Robertson joined us on a one year contract in June, to fill the vacancy left when Rev. Victoria Filler accepted another position and left St. Thomas.

Thank you to Elaine Taylor-Kerr, the Youth and Music staff liaison, and to the Building and Property Committee, who oversee the work of Ferdie Justo, our custodian.

Faithfully submitted by Maureen Dodd, Chair

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The year 2014 has been a year of several changes within Worship at St. Thomas. It has been a year that encourages us to keep an open mind. We keep an open mind and open heart when we support or embrace changes and in fact welcome some. One of the biggest changes last spring has been the transition to one Worship service at 10 am. How nice it is to be able to get to know people better when we all worship together and create one community with open hearts!

As Rev. Victoria Filler left us in June, we have welcomed Rev. Tracy Robertson with open hearts in Worship and service to families and children.

After the summer holidays and for the second year running, we opened our hands and hearts through the “Welcome Back To Church” service with worship, games, and a BBQ.

This fall the Worship committee took a bold step and has experimented with a new announcement style whereby the ministers or a designated person highlight the timely announcements for the week.

Our prayers of the community take on a feeling that the congregation is of one mind.

We have kept open views towards baptisms this year as we bless children of families wherever they have come from, the preliminary process used, and the specific liturgy of baptism used.

We have expanded our Christmas Eve offerings, opening a mid-afternoon opportunity for children five and under – Toddling Around Christmas – to participate in the Christmas Story with the use of masks and sounds of animals and other characters encouraged.

In numbers the Worship committee expresses our thanks to years of service and support from Cathy Rivard as Chair and Diane Luke who resigned during this past year.

As we pause to consider the coming year, may the Worship committee and Worship at St. Thomas continue to grow in faith and openness.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Miller & Drina Nixon

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Open Hands, Open Hearts, Open Minds (and Open Wallets)! It's often been joked about that the Stewardship Committee takes the Vision of St. Thomas one step further and encourages people to see their financial support of our ministries as an expression of living out our full Christian potential. While that's certainly true, Stewardship is about more than money and paying the bills. At its heart, Stewardship is a holistic expression of both our personal and collective discipleship - it's the living out of our faith. Over the last year, and especially during the annual Stewardship Focus, the committee endeavoured to help people see a link between what we think and what we do. By highlighting the number of hours invested in ministry by volunteers, the amount of financial resources it takes, and various ways people can contribute, a holistic stewardship model was developed. In addition this year, we worked with the theme of *Fearless Generosity*; the committee developed the concept that together and with God, we can accomplish far more than we could have on our own.

This year we said thank you to Maureen Dodd, Mark Wagner, and Angela Waleski for their years of dedication to uplifting stewardship as a basic part of a life of faith. While this meant doing things a little differently in the fall of 2014, we are pleased to welcome Andrea Sonpal and Jake Highfield to the Stewardship Committee. In 2015, we're looking to make Stewardship a regular focus of all that we do, so stay tuned. In the meantime, if you'd like to know more about Stewardship, get involved with the committee, or would like some help discovering where your time and talent fits into one of our ministries or programs...just let us know!

Respectfully submitted by Bob Fillier & Jeff McLean on behalf of the Stewardship Committee

MUSIC TEAM

At the Unified Board Meeting in 2012, a strong music program was identified in the list of top priorities for the congregation. This includes both excellent music to enhance worship services and putting on

musical concerts and events. This priority was re-affirmed by the Joint Needs Assessment Survey conducted in Sept 2014.

The music team has continued to provide programs for all ages that contribute to the worship experience at St. Thomas. In addition, the STUC on Radio show in May was a huge success. All musical groups performed a variety of music that could be heard on the radio during various decades. Soloists enhanced the performance as did a theatrical reading and a 'name that tune' item. In November, we hosted a group called 'The Great Plains' who sang a variety of familiar and original music. This concert was greatly enjoyed by all who attended.

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, ensuring their choir/orchestra presents music in church on a regular basis, and organizing other musical events. 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 ministers are also a part of this committee.

The music staff this year has been Kari Orosz (Organist, Children's Choir accompanist, Adult Choir accompanist), Pam Bazinet (Adult Choir director), Dick Worton (Orchestra director), Barb Robertson (Youth Choir director), Kloria Wen (Youth Choir accompanist), Erin MacLean-Berko (Children's Choir director, Ensemble Director).

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 Youth 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 at least once a month. The Adult Choir is for all who have decided they are too old to sing with the youth. They practice Thursday evenings between 7:15 and 9:30 from September to June. Now that we have gone to one service, they sing an anthem approximately every second Sunday and provide hymn leadership every Sunday between the Sunday following Labour Day and Father's Day. 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 are 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 has organized two Ensemble groups this year. A ladies ensemble sang in the STUC on Radio show and another ensemble sang for the Blue Christmas Service.

Highlights from the year included the Adult and Teen Choirs singing at Twelfth Night, performances at Scenic Acres Senior's residence and at Agape Hospice by the Children's Choir, Joy of Song service, the STUC on Radio Show in May, the Stampede Service created and presented by the Strummers, the Children's and Youth Choirs' presentation of 'The Greatest Christmas Card in the Whole Wide World', and the Adult Choir's presentation of 'A Prairie Christmas' (script written by Bob Fillier, music taken from 'Were You There on That Christmas Night?' by Lloyd Larson) 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. Barb Veitch maintained the music inventory records. Several people helped file music and with music selection.

Parents of Children's and Youth Choir members have assisted with costumes, props, snacks, the sound system, etc. Erin MacLean-Berko, Elizabeth Griffiths, Jessica Hu, Barb Tetzlaff, Pauline Watson, and Kloria Wen accompanied services when Kari was unavailable. Elizabeth Griffiths recruited musicians to share their talents at services where there was no choir or during the offering. Elizabeth has resigned from this position as of the end of the year. We thank Elizabeth for her many years of service. Thank you to all of the staff and volunteers.

Respectfully submitted by Elaine Taylor-Kerr

MISSION AND OUTREACH

The Mission and Outreach Committee wants to thank all of the members of the congregation for their donations of time, talent, and treasure. Your donations make it possible for Mission and Outreach to have a positive impact on many lives locally and globally.

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 love 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 M&O Committee was once again delighted by the number of initiatives that were undertaken and supported by the congregation of St. Thomas. Below is a brief description of some of the activities undertaken by the Mission and Outreach Committee in 2014:

Local Projects

Hope Cochran is now overseeing our *Inn From The Cold* program. 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, most of them families. One of our Inns had 25 people even though we only had 20 cots; many of the small children shared space with their mothers on those very narrow cots.

The Veterans' Food Bank donations are being managed by Loree Irving, who made six trips to deliver food that was donated by our congregation to the Veteran's Food Bank, where it was greatly appreciated.

Loree Irving is also collecting knife stamps, donated by the congregation, as part of a program offered by Safeway. She will trade the stamps for knives then donate them to people in need.

Our *All Roads Lead Home* program is being handled by Rachel Murray. Again this year we continued to support our *All Roads Lead Home* family. Through this organization we provide support to families who have moved from homelessness into stable housing. We adopted a family in May of 2010 - a single mom with two daughters 14 and 16 years old. Rachel has been providing a good food box, rides to the grocery store and medical appointments, and assistance with filling out forms, as well as joining them for coffee and conversation.

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. We want to thank everyone in the congregation for their overwhelming generosity and support making 2014 a wonderful Christmas for these families. Your contribution of gifts will keep these families warm, fed, and feeling cared for the whole year through.

Mission and Outreach also makes dinner one Sunday a month for the homeless youth living at the *Boys and Girls Club* shelters *Avenue 15* and the *Safe House*. This year we provided volunteer groups to make dinner four times. So far we have had only limited success recruiting volunteers but we are looking for someone to coordinate this initiative and find new ways to better involve the congregation.

Melinda-Rae Lyse heads up *Habitat for Humanity* for our committee. She has been extremely successful with recruiting volunteers for projects, fundraising for the "Women's Build", and directing donations of gently used household items to the ReStore.

For our second year we have financially and physically supported one day of meals for *Camp Fyrefly*, which is Canada's only national leadership retreat for sexual and gender minority youth. Sixteen volunteers drove out to Cochrane to prepare food, cook, clean up, and wash dishes after two meals for the 100 participants in the retreat. The congregation also donated \$500 to help cover the cost of meals for the day, to keep the costs low for the participants in the retreat.

Global Project

During 2014, we began working on our international project. We are planning an Exposure Tour in July of 2016 to Kabale, Uganda to work with KIHEFO, a local not-for-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to community development. KIHEFO works to address a diverse array of community needs including medical and dental care, education, economic development, and counselling. We are planning to work in their Nutritional Rehabilitation and HIV/Aids outreach clinics, their rabbit breeding project, and their community gardens. We are also planning to take them the technology for the CAWST water treatment project so that they can have clean drinking water. (see www.cawst.org)

The donations from our Advent Calendar, 50% of the non-designated Christmas Eve donations, as well as funds from selling 'Rabbit Cards', will be taken with the Exposure Tour group as a donation to help

KIHEFO with its work in Uganda. People can purchase a pair of breeding rabbits as a charitable gift, and receive a 'Rabbit Card' to give to others.

Through Plan Canada we have adopted a foster child, Sahadatou Morou, from Tillaberi, Niger, Africa. The Sunday school children will send cards, letters, and pictures to her.

Looking Forward

In 2014, 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*, *Veterans' Food Bank*, *Avenue 15*, *Habitat for Humanity*, and *Adopt A Family*. We will also be encouraging the congregation to advocate for the homeless with a letter writing campaign. We are partnering with Immigrant Services Calgary to provide financial support, space, and volunteers for their program *Cooking with Friends*. This program offers immigrants an opportunity to gather, cook, and eat together to build friendship and support. We are also providing space for the Immigrant Services to offer a Mandarin Mother Goose program for Parents and Tots to meet, share stories, play, and socialize. Mission and Outreach is also looking to help other churches support a high risk refugee family from Iraq. Our planning will continue for our Exposure Tour to Uganda by enlightening the congregation about the challenges facing the people assisted by KIHEFO, recruiting group leaders, and in the late spring involving members of the congregation who are interested in joining the Exposure Tour in Uganda.

Current M&O Committee members consist of Linda Dick, Loree Irving, Karen Kavanagh, Melinda-Rae Lyse, Rachel Murray, and David Vermeulen, with support from Tracy Robertson. We also welcome Hope Cochran and Jake Highfield as new members to the committee.

We want to sincerely thank Gwen Campbell and Swee Wong, past members of the M&O Committee, for their contributions to the committee, the congregation, and our community. We also want to thank Victoria Fillier for her guidance and support of our work.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Kavanagh, Chair

YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Youth programming has been identified as a priority for St. Thomas. Consequently, we retain youth leaders who run an excellent program for the youth in grades 7 – 12 and any friends they choose to bring. They are responsible for planning and running a Sunday morning program and a weekly social event 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. In 2014, the Youth Advisory Committee consisted of three staff members plus six volunteers. The Minister of Education, Nurture and Outreach also sits on this committee.

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 discussions in the youth room. They planned and ran a Church service in January. They also participated in other services through serving communion and reading scriptures. They have helped out occasionally on Sunday mornings by serving coffee. The youth have attended Naked Faith, which 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. This program is run by St. Andrew's Regional Ministry and is for all youth within Calgary Presbytery.

The youth were involved with mission and outreach projects again this year. They ran a sock and underwear drive in February for Alpha House, volunteered at Inn from the Cold in March, and joined forces with the Symons Valley Youth Group in November to make 11 loaves of sandwiches for Alpha House. They ran Parents' Day Out in December, assembled the gift bags for the Adopt a Grandparent program, wrapped the Christmas gifts for Adopt a Family, and went Christmas Carolling at the homes of senior members of the congregation.

Weekly social events are mostly a time for fellowship and volunteer service. Activities have included Naked Faith, swimming, bowling, games night, movies, mini golf, tobogganing, skating, roller blading, attending Presbytery-wide youth events, etc. A Youth Retreat in May, organized by several Calgary youth leaders and youth, was well attended by St. Thomas Youth.

A Junior Youth group for children in grades 5 & 6 is held one Friday evening of each month between September and June. They play games, do crafts, have a snack, and get to know each other better. Volunteer leaders for this group are Heather Robertson, Andrew Taylor-Kerr, Taylor Thompson, and Matthew Worton.

Youth leaders for 2014 were Brittney Whittaker, Matthew Taylor-Kerr, and Marika Wagner, with Andrew Taylor-Kerr substituting as needed. The committee consisted of John Latter, Wendy Atkinson, Joan Robertson, Jan Mingo, Sharon Jones, and Elaine Taylor-Kerr. Victoria Fillier was on this committee until May with Tracy Robertson assuming the role in June. 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

Members of the Communications Committee included John Robertson, Hal Tonkin, Kristin Raugust (Chair), Sandra Dusoswa (staff), Bob Fillier (staff), Tracy Robertson (staff), and Carrie-Faye Wong (proof-reading).

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

In 2014, members of the Digital Arts Committee lived out open hearts by volunteering to put announcements into slides for Sunday morning, and running our ProPresenter program on the big screens. ProPresenter has allowed us to ensure our weekly presentations are easier for the congregation to read and understand as many had mentioned the fonts and colours difficult to see on our previous program, PowerPoint.

John has enhanced the open hands of St. Thomas by running an up-to-date, wonderful looking website. We know this is broadening the scope of St. Thomas, reaching new members, and ensuring we can keep current members up to date on what's happening at our church. Bob has also introduced Bold Signs in our neighbouring communities prior to large services such as Christmas Eve. We are hoping this also helps people to see our open hands and be drawn directly to a service or to our website.

Sandra continued to send out the monthly newsletter with great feedback, and e-mail weekly bulletins to those who signed up for electronic communication.

2015 will include a focus on Facebook and Twitter communication, starting early in the new year. We anticipate this will help us reach both current and possible future members with our message of open hands, open hearts, and open minds.

Respectfully submitted by Kristin Raugust

SOUND COMMITTEE

Members of the Sound Committee: John Robertson – Chair, Hal Tonkin, John McCrea, Brian Shewan, Don Mills, and David Robertson

Committee Activities in 2014 included:

- Setting up the audio to support activities in the Sanctuary and the Mountainview Hall.
- Designing and operating the sound for the St Thomas STUC on Radio on May 10. (Many thanks to Don Mills and Brian Shewan)(This required attendance at two separate rehearsals as well as the performance.)
- Designing the sound for the Youth Choir Christmas play. (David Robertson)
- Videoing and posting of the Youth Choir Christmas play on our private St Thomas YouTube Channel. (John Robertson) Check with Sandra for the link.
- Preparing the combined Web Audio/Video for Past Services. (John McCrea and Brian Shewan)
- General maintenance of the sound system.

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)
This takes about one hour a week multiplied by 40 services = 40 hours!

Changes in 2014:

- Purchased two new choir/hanging mics and moved them forward to the screen for better Choir/performance pick up. (Hal Tonkin)
- Purchased new Hearing Assist Equipment.
- Purchased two new headsets which work on rechargeable batteries for standard Sunday services. (Made possible through an anonymous donation to the music committee) Thanks to Hal Tonkin and John Robertson for research and investigation.
- Purchased an electronic drum kit for use in services and special presentations. (Made possible through an Anonymous Donation to the Music Committee) Thanks to Hal Tonkin and Dan MacDonald for research and investigation.
- The hanging of a 'house mic' at the back of the Sanctuary to better pick up the sounds from the congregation. (Hal Tonkin)
- Design and mounting of an iPad holder for use in Broadcasting Services Live through Livestream.ca. (Hal Tonkin)

Moving ahead in 2015:

- Solidifying the ability to broadcast all services and special events LIVE! This was experimented with in the latter part of 2014. Christmas Eve Services were watched as far away as Winnipeg in real time. There are a few glitches with the transmission to be worked out before this becomes a real happening, but this is just one of the things the Sound Committee will be working on in 2015.

Respectfully submitted by John Robertson

PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

Open Hands, Open Hearts, Open Minds – the very cornerstone of Pastoral Care at St. Thomas. We have a committee of six and an amazing mass of volunteers who make up our team. The St. Thomas family is an incredible one – from newcomers to those who have been here since the inception of our church – we all come together to help make meals, cookies, coffee, gift bags, quilts, shawls. Whatever is needed, we can count on our family to lend a hand and support one another in times of joy or crisis. We could not do what we do without the extraordinary backing of each and every one of you.

Did you know?

- Our visiting program is going strong. Our visitors are a terrific display of Open Hearts.
- We sent out 132 cards this year on behalf of the congregation.
- The Prayer Shawl group meets Tuesday afternoons in the church to make prayer shawls, baptismal shawls, and prayer squares. Many folks knit/crochet at home. Beautiful hearts.
- The Quilting group has generously donated many quilts to Pastoral Care for our distribution. They are a very dedicated, gifted group....we even managed to surprise one quilter by featuring a special Calgary Flames quilt she had made featured in one of Bob's September messages.
- There were seven Drumming Circles held at St. Thomas this year, averaging 20+ people per circle.

- Marj and Tracy attended an Aging Workshop in October to learn about various affordable housing options available.
- Our holistic style and attitude encompasses Open Minds. Bullying Ends Here in November was one such presentation.....the man with this mission is mind-blowing.
- With the unbelievable generosity of members of our congregation and the quilting group and the assembling magic of the Youth group, we provided 25 very stuffed gift bags to vulnerable seniors through Calgary Seniors Resource Society's Adopt a Grandparent project.
- There's the Ask Me team with their Welcome bags who we can't thank enough for their hospitality work every Sunday.
- We give out numerous grocery cards via our ministers to those in need of a hand-up.
- With the baking magic of our committee members, we put together and delivered 23 cookie boxes for folks in our own congregation. We had so much fun doing it, too!
- Tracy and a committee member will take communion to shut-ins on occasion.
- We have a calming CD in the library, particularly for folks facing surgery.
- Both our ministers offer services once a month at Rocky Ridge retirement home.
- Blue Christmas – the embodiment of Open Hands, Open Hearts, Open Minds.

How would you like to participate in Pastoral Care?

- The folks who come forward to make coffee, tea, and goodies every single Sunday are remarkable, wonderful folks! Who would like to offer Open Hands and join this group?
- Open Hearts – knit or crochet prayer shawls and baptism blankets. We have the patterns and the yarn to give to you!
- Bake, cook, and serve as needed. Just let us know how and we'll let you know when.
- Organize or co-ordinate inspiring events that speak to Open Hands, Open Hearts, Open Minds. Our every effort is through this lens.

Remembering our Church Family - Many of us lost important family members and friends over the last year. In our hearts they will always be.

I profoundly thank our very devoted committee – Betty Thompson, Jan Mingo, Beth Phillips, Charlotte Cormier, and Roger Anderson. You folks are fantastic!! A huge thank you to the countless individuals we call on for meals, baking, appetizers, and emergencies, and to our wonderful coffee & tea makers, Ask Me hosts, and regular Friend to Friend visitors. And to the congregation as a whole who continually support our many initiatives - thank you for your remarkable enthusiasm and talent. Thank you for all the caring ways each of you make a difference in someone else's life. May your light shine even brighter all through 2015!

Respectfully submitted by Marjorie Aucoin (chair)

AFFIRMING MINISTRY

The Affirming Group has been quietly working in the background to ensure that St Thomas is a welcoming place to everyone. We have based our approach on the principle “if it ain't broke don't fix

it!” Rather than concentrating on one part of affirmation, for example sexual orientation, we have tried to focus on welcoming all - whatever their age, ability, colour, ethnicity, economic circumstance, status, or sexual orientation. While we remain a predominantly white Anglo-Saxon congregation, we have embraced people of other ethnic groups and we do hope that they feel welcome. We still need to work at encouraging more people so that there is a critical mass for them to relate to. We have heard from at least one gay couple who attended St Thomas while on vacation that they felt comfortable and welcomed and that we were living out our commitment as an affirming congregation. The signs both outside and inside are evidence of our commitment. Our Bullying Ends Here presenter at St. Thomas in November was impressed to see the beautiful banner in the Sanctuary, the rainbow flag in the Narthex, and the sign on the building outside.

Members of the group attended the annual get-together of the Calgary Affirming United Church Congregations at Wildrose United Church and shared activities, ideas, and programs being used across Calgary. Several people participated in the Pride Parade which had strong representation from churches in the city. One member of the Group attended a full-day workshop at Christ Church Anglican Church. The keynote speaker was a retired Anglican Bishop from Vancouver who worked for many years for the LGBTQ cause. We also participated, for the second year, in preparing meals for participants at Camp Flyefly in Cochrane. Once again there was an excellent turnout from the congregation and St Thomas was able to provide and serve both lunch and dinner. Thank you for your help!

St Thomas has agreed to be a sponsor for an upcoming National Conference to be held May of 2015 in Calgary. Both Tracy and Bob are involved in the planning and Karen Kavanagh will be part of the ‘welcoming group’ for the Conference. Hopefully this Conference, the first National Conference in Calgary, will attract people from across Canada to focus on human “RITES” (**R**eclaim **I**nclude **T**ransform **E**ngage **S**afe **S**pace). The Keynote speaker will be Matthew Vines, an exciting young scholar from the USA. Look for more information in the New Year!

The Affirming Group is a sub group of the Pastoral Care Committee and consists of: Pat Robbins, Marj Aucoin, Wanda Veer, Karen Kavanagh, Judy Booth, Rachel Murray, and Tracy and Bob. If you are interested in being part of this group please contact Tracy.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Robbins on behalf of the Affirming Group

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

When Rev Bob asked that we incorporate how “Open Hands, Open Hearts, Open Minds” played a role in our past year, I wondered how much literary creativity I would have to invent for this annual report. After much thought, and re-reading the minutes from the past year, I am happy to report that YES, the UCW did in fact follow the “open hands, open hearts, open minds” mantra... without even being aware that we were doing just that.

In February, we hosted the Calgary Presbyterial UCW Meeting. About 40 ladies from various United Churches in Calgary enjoyed our coffee, muffins, and lunch, interspersed with their meeting. We recruited some of our MOST (Men of St Thomas) to help with moving tables and chairs, while our

membership very ably provided the food and beverages. I consider this to be Open Hands. And, as part of the Open Hands concept, some of our fundraising proceeds this year went to update our lounge with new blinds, end tables, plants, mirror, and tablecloths. Many hands were involved in this process.

“Open Hearts” has long been a theme for UCW. We welcome all women of the congregation, and have found that this is a place where newcomers feel at home, particularly if they have been active members in other church congregations. During 2014 we often shared heart-warming stories with each other... Valentine's memories, baby pictures of ourselves, June potluck fellowship, summer memories, and our annual Christmas Potluck Brunch.

“Open Minds” helped us explore several charities, such as Christmas Shoebox for Samaritan's Purse; WINS Calgary (Women in Need Society); plus we toured STARS with Sandra Young where we learned of the amazing emergency work done by that organization.

We continue to be a small, but committed group of ladies. Our fund raisers... Student Union Ticket book sales, and Fair Trade Coffee are fully supported by our congregation. These fund raisers allow us to donate to various charities, supply coffee to our St Thomas church, and to purchase items we deem necessary.

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.

Executive for 2014: President: Lois Shewan, Treasurer: Diane French; Secretary: Wanda Veer; Program Coordinator: Marilyn Barry.

Respectfully submitted by Wanda Veer

FAITH FORMATION COMMITTEE

Faith Formation Committee

Our committee is all about **Open Minds**: learning, stretching, challenging, and growing our Faith. We provide opportunities for people of all ages to explore and grow their faith through a variety of films, book studies, small group activities, Sunday School, etc. The committee consists of five people along with the dedicated volunteer support of more than two dozen people (Sunday school teachers, Sunday school large-group leaders, Sunday school materials coordinators, library coordinator, etc.)

Sunday School

St. Thomas Sunday School program is for children ages 3 through grade 6. The total number of children who were registered in Sunday School in 2014 was 46 with an average weekly attendance of 5-10 (January-August) and 10-15 September onward.

Season of the Spirit is the purchased curriculum that we are using.

Programs Offered in 2014 Included

-Sunday School

-Nursery

-*Animate*: Seven evening sessions using short videos and journaling to stimulate discussion on Christian faith issues

-*Pizza & Movie*: Family event on a Saturday with 55 people coming out to eat pizza and watch the Disney movie *Up*.

-*Movie & Popcorn Nights*: On three Tuesday nights we showed the following movies to between 25-40 people:

Rabbit Proof Fence: a true story about three aboriginal sisters in Australia who were forcibly removed from their family.

Whale Rider: a story about a Maori girl in New Zealand who challenges the traditional role of women and wants to become chief.

Pay it Forward: a story about a boy who decides to do three unsolicited acts of kindness and encourages those people to do the same.

-*Introduction to World Religions*: Four sessions were held on Sundays following the church service to cover Hinduism and Buddhism.

-*SeaSick* – An evening book study on climate change and the effects on the ocean. The book is by Alana Mitchell.

-*Hellbound*- 25 people stayed after church to watch. *Hellbound* is a feature-length documentary that seeks to discover why we are so bound to the idea of Hell and what our views on Hell reveal about how we perceive God, justice, the Bible and, ultimately, ourselves. This was followed up by three evening sessions to discuss three differing Christian concepts of Hell.

-*Atheism for Lent* –a study of reflections focusing on the greatest, most perceptive criticisms and critiques of God, religion, and faith. This was a multi-week evening program that involved advanced level reading of philosophers and other critics of Christianity.

-Interfaith discussions and activities with Islamic Group

We try to provide a wide range of topics and programming from introductory levels to advanced. If you have a suggested book, film, or topic you think would be suitable please let Tracy Robertson or anyone on the Faith Formation Committee know.

Library

A free lending library for books, videos, and games for all ages of children and adults is located on the second floor. Requests and recommendations for new material are welcome. Thank you to Winona Anderson, our librarian, and her assistant, Loeta Black, for organizing and maintaining our lending library. Winona has now retired from this activity and we are looking for someone to take her place.

Nursery

The nursery provides a safe and fun place for little ones from newborn to age three. People (particularly youth) who sign up to provide leadership and childcare are paid \$10 per service by the church.

PRIMETIMERS

Primetimer Events in 2014

January – coffee party in the Narthex hosted by Murray & Barbara Lees and Harold & Tess Ashley - 23 attended. Murray talked about his experiences when he worked on a tea plantation.

February – St. Peter’s Players Dinner Theatre roast beef dinner and “Steel Magnolias”. 36 attended

March – Coffee Party in the Narthex hosted by Ron & Diane French and Norma & Bob Barradell. St. Patrick’s Day celebration – Ron French & John Robertson sang and played Irish songs for us. 20 attended

April – Lunchbox Theatre “Dad, Day 1” & lunch at Milestones Restaurant. 15 attended

May – Coffee Party in the Narthex hosted by Harold & Loeta Black. 16 attended

June – Coffee in Baker Park hosted by Marlene Rankin and Marj & Lou Heinen. 10 attended

September – Coffee Party in the Narthex hosted by Cec & Glen Clark. 17 attended

October – Lunch at the Saskatoon Berry Farm. 18 attended

November – Coffee Party in the Narthex hosted by Berniece & Oscar Roth, Dorothy & Allan Muir, and Annette & Ron Steele. Slide Show “Falkland Islands, South Georgia Island and Antarctica” presented by Betty Thompson with help from John Robertson on the audio/visual. 28 attended

December – Christmas Lunch at Tony Roma’s hosted by Diane & Ron French. 28 attended

Thank you to all those who hosted or helped out at events.

Respectfully Submitted by Betty Thompson

BUILDING & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The willing hands of many individuals were used by the Building and Property Committee throughout the past year to keep the church building and property safe and well maintained and to provide improvements to meet the needs of our church family, control maintenance costs, and work towards the objective of having a “green” church.

The majority of the fluorescent light ballast and tubes in the building were changed out to a more energy efficient type with the expectation that electrical energy consumption will be reduced by about one third.

Our thanks go to the dedicated committee members who put in some long days in order to get the work done with a minimum amount of interruption to church users.

Handicap door openers were installed on the east exit doors of the Mountainview Hall to go along with the handicap ramp that had been installed a few years ago.

The work, which was started last fall, of converting the old, infrequently used, handicap entrance to the Narthex into a storage closet was completed, providing more storage space for Narthex supplies.

One set of double doors into the Sanctuary was removed and the opening was closed to give more wall space for the placement of furniture, thereby providing more usable space in the Narthex.

Thanks to the help of an EDNS staff member, Amy, the Sunday school entrance and main room upper walls were repainted in order to clean and brighten them up.

A defibrillator and first aid kit were purchased and installed in the Narthex to meet current industry safety standards. It is hoped that the defibrillator will never have to be used, but if it is, it will hopefully help to save a life.

We also give a big thanks and our appreciation to the willing hands of Loeta and Harold Black who did a wonderful job of looking after the front flower beds this past summer. The flower beds looked great.

Respectfully submitted by Elvin Dorscher and David Blackadar

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. I would like to thank all those who have participated in various Presbytery activities including those on St. Thomas' informal search committee, Joint Needs Assessment Committee ("JNAC"), and search committee. I would particularly like to thank Rev. Tracy who has served as the chair of the Local & Global Commission and as a member of Calgary Presbytery executive since the end of June and Rev. Bob for providing assistance and advice when needed. Rev. Victoria was active in presbytery up until June.

As I noted in last year's report, we are doing Presbytery differently, relying more on the Executive and the four Commissions, which meet on an as-needed basis, generally the evening of the third Tuesday, and less on meetings of the full Presbytery. The full Presbytery meetings have generally had a theme and/or education component and been held on a Saturday. Plans are underway to make Calgary Presbytery an affirming Presbytery.

2015 will be the year of Conference and General Council. Conference is being held in Slave Lake May 28 to May 31, 2015. Calgary Presbytery is planning to rent a motor coach to take representatives to and from Slave Lake. Conference elects the representative to General Council which will deal with the Comprehensive Review (www.united-church.ca/general-council/gc41/comp-review). Conference will also elect a president for Conference and perhaps a president elect.

St. Thomas, Ogden, and Central are to participate in pastoral oversight visits amongst themselves (peer review) starting in 2015. If you would like to participate let either of the ministers, Jeff McLean, or me know.

Presbytery is also involved in the Fresh Start program which is to assist clergy and congregations in determining expectations and goals near the beginning of new pastoral relationships. In addition, in the next few weeks Presbytery will be exploring a couple of EDGE (www.edge-ucc.ca/) initiatives, one focussing on Mission Needs Assessments (“IMNA”) and one on neighborhoods (Loving Your Neighbourhood), church property and how to make Congregations more relevant to the neighbourhoods that they are in. Most of the churches in Calgary Presbytery have some interaction with the communities they are in, so we will need more details on the EDGE programs to see how it might assist congregations in Calgary to be better at those relationships.

St. Thomas is entitled to three Presbytery reps and three representatives to Conference who have to be approved by Presbytery. If you are interested in one or both of these opportunities please let Jeff or me know or put it on the communication card. There is always a need for Presbytery representatives on all sorts of committees, particularly JNACs and Search Committees. These are finite appointments for a few months at most.

Presbytery (there is a comprehensive review being undertaken that may result in new structures) is currently 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 in Calgary and beyond. It is a challenging and rewarding experience.

David Blackadar continues his work on the Campus Ministry Advisory Committee. Campus Ministry has expanded its role to Mount Royal University as well as the U of C thanks in part to funding from St. Andrews regional ministries. Calgary Presbytery is the only Presbytery in Alberta with a full time university chaplain.

For those whom I may have missed I apologize and thanks again to all who have participated in either Presbytery, Conference, or a National committee.

Respectfully Submitted by Hugh Johnson, St. Thomas Presbytery Representative, and Chair of Calgary Presbytery