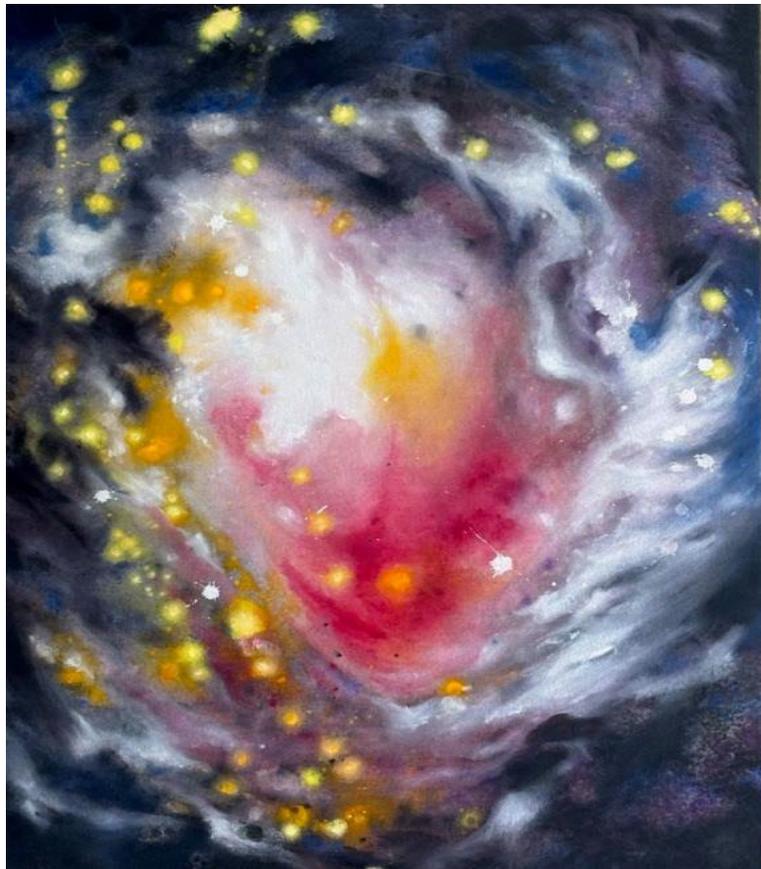


Sylvan United Church

2022 & 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

April 21, 2024



**SYLVAN UNITED CHURCH – 2022 & 2023 ANNUAL REPORT
For Annual Congregational Meeting – April 21, 2024**

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2023 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

AGENDA

Call to Order by Chair

Opening Prayer

Orders of the day

Voting

Adjournment

Approval of the Agenda

Minutes of the last Annual Congregational Meeting – March 19, 2023

Errors, Omissions, Adoption

Business Arising

Looking Back – Committee and Team Reports 2023

- as printed

Election of Officers

Looking Ahead – 2024 (New Business)

Budget 2024

Adjournment

Benediction

**SYLVAN UNITED CHURCH
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

March 19, 2023

The meeting was called to order after the morning service. Rev. Katherine Brittain welcomed everyone and offered an opening prayer.

Orders of the Day

CHAIR

Moved by Joan Keith-Burgwin, seconded by Judy Duncan that Tom Baxter act as Chair of this meeting, and that Karen Younie act as recording secretary. CARRIED

VOTING

Moved by Anne Marie MacLean, seconded by Peter Elphick that all people present at the ACM be entitled to vote (as per B.3.7.1 of the 2019 Manual of the United Church of Canada).

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

Agreed by all present that the meeting be adjourned after 30 minutes.

CARRIED

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Judy Duncan, seconded by John Kamphof that the agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED

Treasurer's Report

George Power noted that we were able to finish the last year with a much smaller deficit than expected, due in large part to the Blue Moon fundraising campaign and the increased rent from the Birdsong Day School. He is projecting a small surplus for 2023, which will be used to pay down our line of credit and repayment of designated funds.

The United Church has decided to self-insure, so insurance costs are significantly reduced (although our UC allocation costs will go up).

Birdsong Day School plans to increase to five days per week in September, which will increase their rent by 15%.

Mr. Power has estimated fundraising 2023 to only three events; the Mother's Day weekend plant sale, the Skills and Service Auction, and the Raspberry Tea and Quilt Show.

So far, the absence of campers at Pringle this summer has not changed the Pringle allocation. Mr. Power noted that Finance seems to have to chase the camp administration for each payment.

PAR allocations are based on December 2022 levels.

Moved by John Kamphof, seconded by Janet Power that the 2023 budget be approved.

CARRIED

Mr. Power took the opportunity to thank Anne Marie MacLean and Kim Hennecker for their continued assistance.

2023 Sylvan Council

Chairman Baxter noted that Marian Davies and Judy Duncan have volunteered to resign from their respective team leadership positions to become Co-chairs of Sylvan Council. The congregation approved this.

This leaves several openings on council going forward.

Issues for Information/Discussion

Birdsong: Judy Duncan presented an update on the day school.

Stonebridge North Development: Rev. Katherine presented information from the UCC as part of their new strategic plan for opening 100 new church plants in the coming years. She proposed that she explore with the national church the possibility that Sylvan could become one of those new plants. This would not necessarily mean more people at

Sunday services, but the church buildings and property could be a locus for the new plant. This would fit the PTTT model that was developed by the church several years ago. The congregation supported the idea, noting that Stonebridge was not the only new housing development being planned for the Mill Bay/ Shawnigan Lake area. Rev. Kath requested that Congregants contact her with any ideas that they might have.

Reverend Katherine then expressed thanks to Tom and Judy Baxter for their work for the church.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned after a closing prayer.

Tom Baxter, Chair

Karen Younie, Recording Secretary

Minister's Report

In March of 2020, we gathered as a Congregation for an annual meeting that focused on setting priorities for the year ahead. The council had met the week before, coming up with a process and some ideas, stemming from the Planning Today, Thriving Tomorrow work from 2015. We got into small groups, had sheets of newsprint around the sanctuary, used “dotmocracy”, saw what we valued, heard our friends’ ideas, and chose to focus our time, energy and effort on music and children’s programs.

And then, 2 weeks later, the world shut down.

But the ministry continued. In that time, we took the seeds that were planted in that meeting, were still growing. We said that our priority was to be a place filled with music and children. We now are home to Birdsong daycare. We hosted a Girl Guide program that is so popular, we had to split into two – the Embers (formally Brownies) have 25 girls and meet in the Mill Bay Hall next door, while 27 Girl Guides meet at Sylvan, and both groups have waiting lists. We hosted Camp Spirit for 3 summers, offering faith-based summer day camp for about 25 children each summer.

Our Children’s Christmas choir was so popular that one year we needed to have two concerts and the next we formed two choirs because there wasn’t enough space to hold them all – and requests for a spring choir mean Eve and I will host one next spring. A solid core of teenagers have gathered in our sanctuary on Tuesday’s during their lunch break, to sing together in a choir. Our senior choir is back and singing monthly.

We worked with the Victoria Baroque Youth Orchestra and hosted both a singalong and a candlelit Messiah that packed our sanctuary – and saw people join us for worship just before the practices, people we wouldn’t have reached in other ways. We offered Jazz Vespers for a year that brought in community members and guest musicians for worship and Jazz and poetry and readings, people who wouldn’t necessarily gather to hear the Gospel.

We are bursting with music and children. Just like we hoped. And this from seeds we planted during a global pandemic.

This is just a small glimpse at the ministry that happens at Sylvan – but through the lens of what we decided should be the focus of our time and energy.

We are in the midst of other changes as a congregation – people have moved, beloved members have died, others have joined us at so many stages of faith journey. Some of us feel tired and overwhelmed. But if we can accomplish so much during a global pandemic,

maybe we need to focus our time and energy on planting new seeds in hope and anticipation. What one or two things will we say are our ministry priorities now? What seeds can we plant that will grow amid such a time as this, and surprise us with energy and fruitfulness? Now is not the time to throw up our hands and say, “we can’t”. It's a time to look at what “we did”, thank God for this, and look to “what now?”

The Bible, the story of our faith is consistent in its narrative of God doing new and surprising things even when, especially when, the people had given up hope because things weren't working out like they thought. Jeremiah was commanded to buy a field even while an invading army was taking over the land – trusting that he would be back, in a time of peace to plant it. Abram and Sarai packed up everything they owned and moved, not knowing where God would take them, but trusting there was a way. The Hebrews wandered through the wilderness for 40 years. The Easter story is one of God bringing hope and new life even in the darkest and scariest times. Every time things look like the end was near, God did a new thing.

What will we choose as our priorities, the places to focus our time and energy next – and what will God do with that? Let's plant those seeds and find out.

Rev. Katherine Brittain



Office Administrator Report

April 2024

I have enjoyed co-creating the bulletins and Life and Work with Rev. Katherine. I was extremely happy that Eve, Katherine, and I were able to receive the provision funding and put it toward two projects that I was interested in: The rekeying of the building as well as the new security system. The grant also funded the new website design as well as music program. It has been amazing to see the growth with the daycare, teen choir, youth choirs, jazz vespers and all the other musical productions I've seen in the relatively short time I have been here. I am also appreciative of Lois Turner stepping in to work for the office, so I am able to visit my almost 97-year-old mother in California. The rentals are constant, and it's been great to see the variety of people choosing Sylvan for their events. We had a healing day for cancer patients which utilized the Labyrinth, Sanctuary as well as the church hall. The sanctuary is used so often that Rev. Katherine has had to reserve time for Sylvan's use. I was able to have the former reverend's office moved, aid in some general clean up within the office area. I have secured new letters and numbers/characters for the outside sign. This is something Anne Marie and I had wanted for some time, and she put considerable time in researching the best options. The creation of the rainbow bench was another project I was able to accomplish with the help of the community and our dear custodian Terry. I am in the process of doing a deep dive within the office space and further organizing and updating the rental procedures. Thanks to all of you for making me feel welcome and a part of this very special community. Thank you for your hard work, guidance, and support.

Beth McDermott

Sylvan Office Administrator

Children's Worship

The children continue to gather in the sanctuary, eager to ring the bell which summons all worshipers inside, a tradition of many years standing. They also enthusiastically take part in the lighting of the candle before retiring to their own worship space in the church hall. There they have their own opening ceremony which includes locating the current Sunday on the liturgical calendar, lighting the candle on the altar, singing one of three "Settling Songs", asking for God's presence and reciting "A New Creed". New this year, is the changing of the colour of the altar cloth to match the liturgical season or event. A Bible story and discussion follows. They then move into the Fireside Room for a snack and a time of sharing events of their week. The hour ends with a craft or activity.

Attendance varies from a high on special occasions, such as "Sundae Sunday" which ushers in the new Sunday School season, to a low of two or three. When Sundae Sunday was introduced by Susan Mayner, it was a Sunday School event only. When Reverend Katherine noted that in many churches, it is an all-congregation event, we expanded it this year to include everyone.

The ages of the core group of small worshippers is generally mid-range: eight to twelve years. We occasionally have a five-year-old. Most of the group has gone through the "Godly Play" curriculum, but it is still used on occasion. Reverend Katherine has sourced other material for us: An Illustrated Earth and A Sanctified Art.

Otherwise, we refer to the lectionary for the lesson.

Planning for Children's Worship is collaborative, generally online. The teachers are Connie Harris, Robbie Fritz, Corrie Kamphof, and George Power.

Respectfully submitted,

Robbie Fritz

Passages 2019-2023

We remember . . .

Jean Luscombe	2019
Annamarie Kinskofer	2021
Lois Stephenson	2021
Rev. Dr. James Beal	2022
Derek Coughlin	2022
Theo van der Boom	2022
Allen (Hap) Shapley	2023
Mari Brown	2023
Rev. Robert Norris	2023



Co-Chairs of Council Report 2022/2023

Marian, I, and our fellow members of Council wish to thank Tom Baxter for his many years of skillful leadership of Sylvan's Council. We acknowledge the particularly difficult Covid period and the challenges this presented to Council as well as to Rev. Katherine, and the entire congregation.

Marian and I have been sharing the duties of chairing the Council since the spring of 2023 and we feel that this has shown how teamwork works. We feel that we have been accepted by our fellow Sylvanites and this has given us the confidence to function in our leadership position. Co-chairing allows each of us to take vacations and have someone at the meeting to chair, to share concerns and issues, to provide a listening ear and to have someone to discuss suggestions and ideas with. We both thank the Council and the staff as we navigate the busyness of our church.

In response to requests to hold Council meetings on a different evening, we surveyed the Council members and settled on having the meetings the second Monday of each month. If that Monday is a statutory holiday, we are flexible enough to change the meeting to another evening.

Our main concerns this past year have been preparing for Rev. Katherine's sabbatical, facing the myriad of challenges that the dissolution of the partnership with Camp Pringle brought about, and continuing to adjust to sharing our space with the growing daycare.

Encroaching a bit into the news of 2024, a special congregation meeting was held January 7th, supervised by Mr. Rick Roberts for the purpose of re-opening Rev. Katherine's call. This was as a direct result of the dissolution of the partnership with Camp Pringle. The change in call has yet to be ratified.

Additionally, our first three Council meetings of 2024 were supervised by Rev. Nancy Colton from Duncan United Church during Rev. Katherine's sabbatical. We appreciated her wisdom and guidance in Katherine's absence.

We hope that as we move into 2024 that we can look forward to an interesting year with fewer challenges and a greater appreciation for our blessings.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Duncan

Marian Davies

Co-Chairs Sylvan Council

Finance Team Report 2022-2023

The generosity of Sylvan continues to surprise and delight the finance team. Sylvan continues to manage within its budget. In 2022 and 2023 we had special appeals (Blue Moon and Clothesline) which were critical in meeting our budget.

The past two years have also been when we established our relationship with Birdsong pre-school. Besides addressing some of the goals of our visioning from years ago (making better use of our space during the week, bringing the wider community in, and supporting children) the revenue from Birdsong has been a significant addition to our income.

Last year we made unplanned investments in parts of our physical infrastructure, notably replacing the water connections to the sanctuary. As a result, we were behind budget for most of the year.

The Messiah event was a huge success on many levels, including financially, and allowed us to get back on budget, which had included a small surplus after a couple of years of deficits.

Finance Team report – 2022-2023

Budget 2024

For 2024 we are not including special appeal in the budget and plan to not need an extraordinary appeal. We are hoping to have several successful fundraisers including Skills and Service auction, Spring Plant sale, Raspberry Tea, Christmas Tea and another successful Music event in December.

Areas of concern include increasing costs for insurance and utilities and lower income from PAR compared to previous years. The budget reflects the difficult decision to change Sylvan's call from a full-time minister to a three quarters position, after the Camp Pringle Board decided it could no longer support a quarter time position.

We continue to need to manage our finances closely and Anne-Marie and George are immensely grateful for the work of our bookkeeper Kim Hennecker to carefully manage our cash flow. We have over the past few years borrowed from our reserve funds to pay for operational costs and unexpected expenses need to be carefully tracked and managed so that we do not exceed our line of credit.

Respectfully submitted,

George Power and Anne-Marie MacLean co-treasurers

Sylvan Pastoral Charge ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING April 21, 2024

	2022 actual	2023 actual	2024 budget
Income			
Regular giving			
Canada Helps	1,160.00	1,208.00	1,200.00
Pringle	26,494.77	27,468.52	7,329.00
PAR	61,935.00	54,565.00	53,880.00
Envelopes	53,570.00	47,288.15	48,000.00
Loose	913.30	1,844.96	1,700.00
Investment Income	68.29	117.63	
Regular giving total	144,141.36	132,492.26	112,109.00
Rental			
Birdsong	5,400.00	26,520.00	31,200.00
Other rentals	6,192.20	6,645.50	6,450.00
Rental total	11,592.20	33,165.50	37,650.00
Fundraising			
Hand in hand	6,071.31	10,230.32	8,800.00
Birthdays	977.00	1,529.00	1,200.00
Christmas Tea		553.64	1,600.00
Soup Supper		85.00	
Pancake dinner		360.00	
Silent Auction	162.00	95.00	
Bake and Pie sale	583.00	2,144.25	Included in events
Spring/Plant sale	956.00	214.00	2,800.00
Skills & Service	4,880.00	75.00	4,000.00
Raspberry Tea	1,644.00	908.47	1,600.00
Spring Fling		2,299.80	
Total Fundraising	15,273.31	18,494.48	20,000.00
Music programs			
Advent recital	210.00		
Choir registrations		1,125.00	1,000.00
Pastoral Programs		1,158.15	
Messiah		5,609.45	5,000.00
Total music programs	210.00	7,892.60	6,000.00
Stewardship			
Clothes Line		3,641.75	
Blue Moon	5,333.00		
Total Stewardship	5,333.00	3,641.75	-
Other			
Mortgage Principle Funds	600.00	600.00	
GST	2.27	114.21	
Other income	692.00	1,605.00	6,000.00
CofTin, Nwltr, EnvSup	69.20	2,765.02	
Professional Services	956.90		
Total Other	2,320.37	5,084.23	6,000.00
Total Income	178,870.24	200,770.82	181,759.00

Sylvan Pastoral Charge ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING April 21, 2024

	2022 actual	2023 actual	2024 budget
Expenses			
Sunday School	-	77.56	
Benevolence	-		250.00
Adult Education	-	207.06	
Supplies - Special Services	-		
Outreach	200.00	100.00	100.00
Hospitality	53.00	347.90	180.00
Pastoral Care	32.84	13.69	210.00
Property			
Materials and supplies	1,338.92	2,661.32	2,000.00
Maintenance/improvements	6,662.71	9,204.98	3,000.00
Custodial	100.00	-	
Total Property	8,101.63	11,866.30	5,000.00
Worship			
Pulpit supply	2,464.00	2,088.00	2,912.00
Worship expenses	1,060.32	321.41	1,200.00
Total Worship	3,524.32	2,409.41	4,112.00
Ministry and personnel			
Custodial Services	5,350.00	7,550.00	7,200.00
Financial records	2,250.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Pianist	5,075.00	5,400.00	6,000.00
Music Director	300.00	810.00	900.00
Misc.	1,163.38	1,866.14	-
Cell phone - minister	720.00	720.00	720.00
Continuing Ed - minister	1,493.04	1,543.20	1,600.00
Payroll	117,033.29	121,993.00	114,546.00
Total ministry and personnel	133,384.71	142,882.34	133,966.00
Mortgage			
Mortgage interest	1,568.62	1,446.32	1,400.00
Mortgage Principle	2,315.54	2,437.84	2,484.16
Total Mortgage	3,884.16	3,884.16	3,884.16
United Church Allocations	5,480.00	6,535.00	6,600.00
Miscellaneous	2,090.01	757.75	1,800.00
Insurance	10,630.28	8,896.74	9,598.00
Utilities	6,974.46	7,684.31	7,680.00
Par/bank fees	1,407.26	1,531.88	1,560.00
Copier	3,018.05	3,405.59	3,000.00
Office supplies	547.08	1,082.84	600.00
Communications	2,109.42	2,768.51	2,132.00
Security	487.76	556.69	636.00
Telephone	644.66	865.92	768.00
Total Expenses	182,569.64	195,873.65	182,076.16
Net (Income – expenses)	(3,699.40)	4,897.17	(317.16)

Balance sheet – Dec 31, 2023

Assets

Current Assets

Term Deposits - Restricted

Term Dep #61

1,500.00

Total Term Deposits

1,500.00

Designated - Restricted

Savings 1 - Designated

7,901.26

Total Designated

7,901.26

Chequing Account

Community Outreach account

296.41

Operations Account

Borrowed - Op contingency

10,000.00

Operations Account - Other

(17,107.55)

Total Operations account

(7,107.55)

Mortgage Fund Account

1,169.96

Total Chequing

(5,641.18)

FWCU Membership shares

6.08

Total Current Assets

3,766.16

Fixed assets

Lands, Building, Equip & Furn

58,477.14

Total Assets

62,243.30

Liabilities & Equity

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Other Current Liabilities

Restricted

Restricted savings - Op Contingency (10,000.00)

Restricted designated

Jazz Vespers 2,077.81

UCC ProVision 12.47

Children's choir 500.00

Capital 596.55

Memorial Funds 3,355.80

Musical Outreach - Youth 1,085.59

Observer | Broadview 35.00

Sylvan Bursary 1,093.67

Women Together 168.87

First Third of Life 4,069.42

Total restricted designated 12,995.18

Restricted flow thru

Mortgage Fund 1,169.96

Community Outreach Recycling 296.41

Total restricted flow thru 1,466.37

Total Restricted 4,461.55

GST/HST payable (281.11)

Total Current Liabilities 4,180.44

Long-term Liabilities

Mortgage 33,894.37

Total Liabilities 38,074.81

Equity

ISCU share dividends 0.84

Retained earnings 11,532.64

Net Income 12,635.01

Total Equity 24,168.49

Total liabilities and Equity 62,243.30



Board of Trustees Report

Board of Trustees Report 2022

The main item of business, other than staying on top of the insurance for Sylvan, was for the Board of Trustees to support the decision of the Church Council to enter into a 60-month lease agreement with Birdsong Nature Day School.

In the spring of 2023 Judy Duncan resigned as Chair of the Board of Trustees; Brenda Sober now holds the position of Chair while Judy remains as a trustee. Thank you, Brenda, and to all the Trustees.

The trustees continue to serve in various capacities on the board of the Shawnigan Cemetery Society.

The members of the Board of Trustees are:

Chair – Brenda Sober
Rev. Katherine Brittain
Judy Baxter
Bill Davies
Judy Duncan

Respectfully Submitted,
Judy Duncan

Board of Trustees Report 2023

Many thanks to Judy Duncan for her years of service as Chair of the Sylvan Board of Trustees. Her mentorship has been of great assistance to me as the new Chair, and I especially appreciate Judy's willingness to remain on the Board in addition to taking on new duties as Co-Chair of Sylvan Council.

Sylvan's insurance coverage has been the main focus for Trustees for several months due to a significant error made by our insurance company resulting in large overpayments being taken directly from our bank account. The matter has been resolved, but it has been a long and frustrating process with a serious impact on the Church's budget.

The church mortgage is another major responsibility of the Trustees, and one year remains on the term of our existing mortgage. That renewal will be a project for early 2025.

My thanks to the members of the Board of Trustees listed above, all of whom have stayed on in their roles.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Sober
Chair, Board of Trustees



Photo: Janis Jones

Shawnigan Cemetery Society Report 2022/2023

Shawnigan Cemetery has become a Society and Sylvan congregants continue to populate the board. The Cemetery committee is comprised of some of the members of the Board of Trustees, including Rev. Katherine Brittain. Other members are Roy Davies (administrator), Kim Hennecker (treasurer), Jason Whitehead (contractor), and Tom Worth (Malahat Lion's representative, and coordinator of the team).

The team from the Malahat Lion's Club faithfully maintains the Cemetery as part of their community service. This church/community partnership has been ongoing for approximately 20 years. Almost every Wednesday the team diligently attends to whatever is required in order to keep the Cemetery looking park-like. This is a challenge when you consider that the water is supplied by Mother Nature. The cistern is occasionally topped up by the Shawnigan Lake Fire Department and we are grateful for this.

A 10-year plan was undertaken to both enhance and enlarge the Cemetery. A few years ago, 70 loads of fill were brought in and used to level the lower southern corner of the property; large retaining blocks were purchased and installed for stability. This really enhances the visual aspect of the Cemetery as people drive by on Shawnigan Lake Road. Six trees have been planted, and eventually columbaria will be purchased and niche spaces will be made available. This will provide a peaceful area for mourners to reflect and contemplate as well as an alternative choice for burial.

There is a need to add more cremation plots as the current section is filled; more people are choosing cremation than full burial. The former child and youth section will be resurveyed and reconfigured which will add approximately 100 plots there. The additional cremation plots will extend south between this area and the fence.

There were 22 internments in 2022 and 4 internments in 2023; we ask for God's blessings on the departed souls and peace for their families.

An interesting item to note is that when the Cemetery finally came into fruition it needed an address – and remember, at that time (1963) things were different. The address that was used was that of the late Bill and Anna Kennedy - 2971 Shawnigan Lake Road, which is down and across the road from the Black Swan Pub. Somehow everyone knew where the Cemetery was located! In this day and age of Google maps, people were being misdirected; it was past time to try to obtain a proper address. Jason Whitehead was able to convince the CVRD to give the Cemetery its own address – normally addresses are

assigned when building permits are issued, so this was a bureaucratic anomaly. The new address is 1825 Munsie Road, Shawnigan Lake.

I also want to explain the situation at the Mill Bay Cemetery. It is considered closed as no plots are available for sale. If a person already owns a plot there, they can be interred. There are 12 spaces on the list and hopefully people will have the necessary paperwork required to allow a burial to proceed when the time arises. That Cemetery became part of CVRD Parks when they acquired the old Mill Bay church and grounds; CVRD is responsible for the upkeep. Roy Davies oversees the burials on behalf of CVRD as there were too many logistics involved for CVRD to manage the internment aspect. Problems have arisen because people believe they have a plot there but there is no record of purchase. This is a good reason to get your paperwork in order and keep it in a place where your executors can find it.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Duncan, Secretary
Shawnigan Cemetery Society



Ministry and Personnel Committee Report

A few changes since our last full congregational meeting in March 2020 (due to the pandemic).

Our M&P committee to date includes John Kamphof and Monika Morgan. Blair Howard moved down east back to extended family 2 years ago. Bill Wallace has recently had to step down due to other family priorities. We thank him for his contributions during his time with us. We welcome at least one more member to our committee. We are a standing committee whose purpose is to act as a confidential consultative body that supports the welfare of the staff and congregation.

We have had a couple of office administrator changes in the last few years. Brenda Sober was finally able to retire in July 2021 once we hired Laurel Walton in July of 2021. We were so fortunate to have Brenda carry us through those difficult transition times of Covid & helping Rev. Katherine Britain settle in her new position. Laurel Walton worked with us until October 2022 when she moved to the Okanagan. Beth McDermott started as our new office administrator in October of 2022. We are blessed to have her (and family) in the office and also as a regular participant in our Sylvan activities. She is the welcome face at the office entrance with a warm smile and willing to take on the challenges of this position. Lois Turner has assisted in the office also when Beth has taken time off to visit family in California. We appreciate Lois's assistance & enthusiasm.

Our musicians Catharina De Beer & Eve Daniell continue to accompany us. Always awe inspiring. It has been wonderful to have a restart of our choir after the pandemic and Eve's expertise & good humour make these sessions a delight. Thankyou also to Rykie Avenant who has also made herself available to accompany us on Sundays that Catharina or Eve is not available.

Terry Valley continues to be our dedicated and very thorough custodian. We are very fortunate.

Kim Hennecker continues as our dedicated bookkeeper.

Thank you to the folks that filled in our pulpit supply during Rev. Katherine's sabbatical. It all went quite smoothly.

We are very grateful for Rev. Katherine's leadership and creativity over the last 5 years, especially at times when the worship committee was very small or nil. Our recent unexpected loss of our financial partnership with Camp Pringle has created many challenges for our congregation and Katherine. We are working through this process and pray for guidance and patience. We will continue to strive together to serve God and the ministry of Sylvan.

Monika Morgan
Committee Member

The image shows the letters 'M&P' in a bold, red, 3D font. The letters have a slight shadow underneath them, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The ampersand is also in the same red, 3D style.



2024 AGM – Outreach Report for the past two years

This is fun, trying to remember all the events we had and served for, over the past two years!

Please remember, Outreach isn't just a little team, it's the outworking of the Holy Spirit through all our congregants – it's us all.

Our mission - Micah 6:8 NIV -

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

We're involved in justice to do with climate change, supporting the rights of various people groups who could use a helping hand; we love mercy in terms of helping others and sharing our wealth with happy hearts; and we do it all humbly realizing we are only doing what God asks us to, and whatever we have is because of God's goodness to us.

General areas:

UVIC chaplaincy support – Soup suppers. In October of '23, Rev. Katherine and the girls took the food to Rev. Min-Goo Kang at UVIC. So many people in our church contribute – vegetable gardeners, soup-makers, bread providers, vegetable-plate makers, and our faithful cookie-makers.

Our Place support – giving and Angel Gifts. We’ve done Angel Gifts for many years now. Thanks to all who contribute. Sylvan usually comes up with 15-20 gifts which are delivered downtown to Our Place, then to matched people in need, homeless and camping out in the cold. The gifts bring a lot of joy and warmth to the recipients. This past year gifts were given to about 700 homeless people in Victoria.

Smitten Tree – headed up by Joan Keith-Burgwin, this started as a family tradition of her family, and continues annually. Thanks for the amazing outpouring of knitted treasures, socks, etc. These are delivered to Cowichan Mill Bay Shawnigan (CMS) food bank by Joan and become part of the next year’s hampers.

“Pop Bottle Fund” – officially the Community Outreach Fund- Bill and Robbie Fritz initiated this project and take care of the logistics. We have a non-stop bottle/can drive, containers are to the left of the shed. Out of this fund we send money to:

El Hogar – the school and housing project in Honduras. Our student that we supported graduated from university, now we are supporting the project in general. Here is a note from El Hogar: "The transformative power of education is truly evident in the lives of the students we serve. On behalf of the students, staff and families of El Hogar, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to our supporters for their belief in the potential of every child. Together, we are making a lasting impact and shaping a brighter future for these young minds – and for Honduras."

– Denise Vargas, Executive Director in Honduras

Warmland House – we gave cheques both years,

Nourish Cowichan –

Cowichan, Mill Bay, Shawnigan (CMS) Food Bank – regular giving through congregational funds, plus top-ups from the pop bottle fund, plus food hamper donations and regular deliveries – thanks to all who participate.

Women Against Violence against women – we gave cheques both years,

Coldest Night of the Year- a fundraiser held in February – team Sylvan is headed by Teri Young. 2023 was our first year. The fundraising is for Canadian Mental Health Association, Cowichan Valley Branch to provide a youth shelter. Many Sylvanites walked in Duncan and had their support groups of friends and family contributing to the cause. We also supported our team with a gift of money from our Community Service fund. Thanks to all participants.

Food for Thought - Movie and Potluck dinner nights – we were still on Covid pause in 2022 but resumed in '23. We shared a meal, then showed a movie about a somewhat controversial topic, and had interesting discussions afterwards. This year we were

rewarded with community volunteers coming forward to help out with local projects after hearing the presentations at FFT night.

- '23 – November – We showed the Gabor Mate documentary film “The Wisdom of Trauma” which explains trauma as the root of addictions. Jennifer Caldwell from Our Place also presented in person.
- December – We hosted a “mini-symposium” on homelessness, addictions and what we are doing in Duncan, with 6 presenters and a good audience. We gave donations to each of the groups from funds received at the door.
- October – “This Changes Everything” by Naomi Klein, a film on the Climate emergency.
- June – “Small Town Pride” about how LGBTQ+ young people in Winkler, Manitoba participated in a pride parade.
- May – John Restakis and Tom Shandel presented their films “Civilizing the Economy” on co-ops as an alternative to corporations.

Sylvan Scholarships – We supported four students over the past two years, as we have for many years previously. We gave cheques of \$500 each to two young people in practical applied studies, and two in music and the arts. Thanks to our faithful supporters.

We supported National Truth and Reconciliation Day, with Orange Shirt Day, an annual walk around Duncan followed by speakers. People from Sylvan participated both years.

Camp Spirit – something we all participated in, not under the “Outreach” umbrella, but it certainly is outreach to the community. We participated in 2022 and 2023, with a fine team of Sylvanites providing food preparation, helping out with crafts, with Reverend Katherine as our on-site supervisor. Each year we had about 15-20 campers, and about six young people leading them. Thanks to all involved.

Affirm United – Sylvan is an affirming church and part of the network of United Church of Canada churches supporting LGBTQ+ people. There is an annual fee of \$100 which comes out of Outreach funds. Jane Kiltie is our main contact with that group. Over the past two years we have supported the Duncan gay pride parade, provided a rainbow bench at the entrance of the church to let our position be known in the community, and once a year the Food for Thought program is devoted to this concern.

Other outreaches - Some of us from Sylvan provide food and serve at the third Monday of the month dinners for the homeless at Duncan United. Contact Monika Morgan if you feel led to help.

Submitted by Connie Harris
Chair of the Outreach committee
February 2024

Birdsong Report 2022/23

Marian Davies, Judy Duncan and George Power continue to be the liaisons between Birdsong Nature School and Sylvan UC.

In 2022 George prepared a new lease and a 5-year lease was entered into. There is an annual cost of living adjustment built into the lease; the rental payments reflect this. We meet annually in January to ensure that any issues can be dealt. Of course, if there is an urgent problem, we arrange to meet and develop solutions in a timely manner.

It has been an adjustment for Sylvan and particularly for Rev. Katherine, as we navigate sharing the social hall space and having more activity around than we were all used to. There is an assigned play area which adjoins the garden area for outside activities. The wonderful bonus is being able to see the children, enjoy their happy sounds and marvel at the patience of the teachers as they encourage the children to explore and learn.

Birdsong is open five days per week. There are 20 children ages 2.5 to 5 years who attend and several teachers who support Shari in developing her vision of providing what I call, wholesome engagement with learning.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marian Davies
Judy Duncan
George Power



Hospitality Team Report 2023

As my involvement didn't start until Marian Davies retired from this position, my report will only cover the latter half of 2023.

HIGHLIGHTS

It is with great joy that Sylvan became involved with the students of Kelsey's choir. The choir meets over the lunch hour on Tuesdays and is sponsored by Eve Daniell and Reverend Kathrine for Sylvan United Church and Anna, one of the Kelsey's teachers.

On average a dozen students or so learn to sing in harmony and were ready to sing in public at the Remembrance Day service at school and joined the community junior choir at their Christmas concert. Eve has a knack to get the best out of these students. And I'm sure that the snacks they are treated to keep them coming back as well.

They are not the only choir; Eve also invited the elementary school aged community children to join a choir and we were treated to their very lively performance at a Spring session and again at a Christmas concert.

In the month of August, we hosted youngsters at our Camp Spirit day camp. The Hospitality team prepared snacks and lunches for a hungry group of children and their camp leaders. Attention was given to ensure that food allergies were taken into consideration while preparing food. It was suggested that another person take the Food Safe course as well.

Members of the congregation have been forthcoming to fill in their turns on the coffee, flowers, greeting, and reading schedules. Thank you, Beth, for reminding us of our turns. The greeters welcome returning and new members/visitors alike, while the Outreach committee makes sure to follow up with them.

Members of the Hospitality team were also involved in providing lunches for the UVic students at the Interfaith Chapel, the Youth Baroque Orchestra, and snacks for the choir members after their performances.

Donations were received to cover some of the expenses, while those for the Camp Spirit meals were covered by the Pacific Mountain Region UC of Canada.

I would like to thank Marian and Bill Davies for their involvement with pancake breakfasts, roast beef dinners, and at one time, for the men's get-togethers. With demands for tea or coffee at special personal events, the Hospitality team may be called on to host these in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy van der Boom, Hospitality team.



Hand in Hand Thrift Shop Report

Hand in Hand turns NINE!

Valentine's Day 2015 our little Thrift Shop opened its doors for the first time! Located off the parking lot of St John's Anglican Church it is truly a hidden treasure, but once folks find it, they never forget where we are!

The first year we were so excited when a dozen or so shoppers came by on our one-day weekly opening. Then five years later we started opening one Saturday a month as well as the Friday openings and we were even more excited when twenty plus shoppers came in a day!! Each left with full bags of clothing and collectables.

Now nine years from opening there can be a dozen shoppers in the shop at one time!! Business has grown, doubled, tripled, and now quadrupled since we opened. We closed for the pandemic, but shoppers were waiting for our doors to swing open again....and they came!!

We feature men's and women's clothing, including shoes, scarves, jackets, formal and casual wear. Also, you will find the most intriguing collectables, jewelry, framed pictures and some old books. Millennials love Vintage!! What was normal in our grandmother's home is now back delighting a younger generation! If you see it, want it, buy it because it will be gone the next time you look.

We value our donors for sending us their best making it easy for our sorters and volunteers to display and sell! Thank you to all who donate, sort, work and buy!! We thank Michael St. Clair for his amazing talent of staging the shop...making everything look so good and inviting you to want to browse and browse some more!

From Sylvan United Church and St John's Anglican Church we thank you for all your support!!

Stay tuned for what a TEN-YEAR celebration will offer!!

Marian Davies, Monika Morgan &
Brenda Sober
Sylvan Reps



Property and Environment Team Report

2022 and 2023 saw some large maintenance projects done along with the usual maintenance and upkeep of our property and buildings. It is with great appreciation to our team leader, Reg Hall, that I submit this list of projects he saw to completion.

2022

- Gas heater repair
- Ventilation upgrade in the lower level of the church hall. This also included a clean out of unused items and reorganization of the Cowichan Consort music stored there.
- Chimney repair.
- Both decks for the hall were replaced and concrete ramp was installed with railing. The office deck was surfaced with exterior grade vinyl covering.
- The pump house water line froze and split causing a major leak and flood in the area near the fire pit. This was repaired without cost to the church and the event underscores the need for the pump not to be used in the winter once the system is shut off for the winter months. Water lines even on Vancouver Island can freeze.

2023

- The old copper waterline connection into the hall was replaced. This involved digging up the waterline in the parking lot. At the same time the taps in the church narthex sink were repaired and water is now available there. This project involved digging in some areas and soil, gravel and concrete pads were all restored to safe use, thanks to Reg Hall.
- The locks were rekeyed in the hall and the security system was upgraded in the church and hall; these costs were covered by the ProVision grant. The security upgrade has resulted in access through personalized codes so at anytime entry and exiting can be checked in the event of an outstanding problem. Temporary codes can now be given to those renting the facility.
- A tree fell on the church roof causing multiple holes puncturing the roof which were repaired by a roofing company. The tree was removed by a member's spouse and in thanks for his prompt and thorough cleanup of tree and debris the tree was added to the firewood supply.

Over both years the regular maintenance included snow plowing done by a local contractor, hoses and nozzles were replaced as needed, the driveway and parking lot had numerous potholes filled, and gravel was added to the parking lot.

It must be added that when the call goes out for holes to be filled, a capable and hard-working group of ladies can be seen with their shovels and rakes under the watchful eye of Reg Hall tending to the task at hand. Special thanks also to the gardeners who work hard at maintaining our beautiful garden, mowing the lawns, watering plants during the droughts, trimming trees to list just some of what they do. Special mention must also be made to thank the men who keep the waterlines flowing, the equipment running and all the unseen work they do. There are many people who work together to keep Sylvan going and our dedication is much appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Anne Marie MacLean

SYLVAN GARDENERS

Report for the ACM by Robbie Fritz

This companion group to P&E, was formed in 2019. A chart of the gardens and grounds was drawn up dividing the whole property into manageable sections. Volunteers were invited to choose a section and “make it their own”. The aim was to ensure that our beautiful grounds were maintained and enhanced, with the labour spread out among as many people as possible. Initially twenty-two volunteers responded. They could garden as part of the group on a designated day or manage their “own piece” at their leisure. Currently, there are seven regulars: Miriam Coughlin, Robbie Fritz, Janis Jones, Anne Marie MacLean, Monika and David Morgan, and Karen Younie.

The group is fortunate to have considerable expertise among it. Janis Jones had twenty years’ experience as a silviculture forester. Monika belongs to the Mill Bay Garden Club. Master Gardeners from the club have kindly volunteered their presence at our plant sales. Monika and David’s friends, the Jenkins, have offered their assistance as well, especially with pruning.

Keeping the labyrinth weed free is a daunting task, so the gardeners have been very grateful for help from Birdsong staff and children and from The Guides. New volunteers to the Sylvan Gardeners would be warmly welcomed!

In addition to gardening, this group has taken on some property improvement tasks. The largest was re-staining the trellises, arbour, pergola and gazebo. It also replaced the two weathered Memorial Plaques with advice and assistance from Bill Wallace.



VISION

***Moved by the Spirit, we gather in love and
we work together for a better world.***

MISSION

***We are a welcoming community called to embrace diversity,
partner with our neighbours, serve those in need, celebrate
together and to create a just and sustainable world.***

***The congregation of Sylvan United Church acknowledges
with respect our location on traditional lands of the
Hul'qumi'num People, recognizing especially the
Malahat (Malexel) and Cowichan First Nations.***

**Cover Image:
Cosmos Painting #1
Nan Goodship, Artist**