



Como Lake United Church

Governance & Ministry Annual Reports

January 1 to December 31, 2023

*We are Christ's caring community,
connecting people, with God and with one another,
answering God's call and making a difference.*

**We acknowledge that Como Lake United Church resides on the traditional, ancestral,
and unceded territory of the kʷikʷəłəm First Nation.**



Photo © Como Lake United Church

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LEAD MINISTER/MINISTRY OF WORD, SACRAMENT, AND SOUL CARE

Rev. Jan Bihl's Annual Report January 1st to June 30th, 2023

Dear Como Lake United Leadership Team and Congregation,

This, my final Annual Report, is a bit long...well, quite long, actually, so I ask your forbearance. It just kept growing as I remembered you and our ministry together these past months...with so much gratitude and appreciation. It takes a tribe...and a village...to do this amazing work...and to think I have had the honour of being in it with you through all these years. It feels like we have had two very different stretches of ministry together (2007-2014 and 2014-2023) that have been both life-giving and costly.

Thank-you for the faithfulness, kindness, diligence, and patience you have shown. I take this moment again to send my blessing, gratitude and prayer for each of you and all of you as you step into the next part of your journey. I am grateful for God's grace and the Holy Spirit's inspiration...for our accomplishments...and for the learning that was and continues to be possible from our experience together. The rest, it seems to me, is a call to be open and curious, compassionate, and insightful toward participation in the next step in God's work in and with each of us and in the world...and to allow the goodness we have received to inspire us forward.

And so, I offer this 2023 Annual Report with gratitude for the faithful presence of God and for each of you who have prayed, loved, ventured out, forgiven, encouraged...and gone above and beyond in so many ways...

WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTS

Worship is always a highlight for me. I have loved working with different musicians: Darlene Cooper, Carolyn Crooks, Isaac Juarez-Flores, Linnea Good/David Jonsson, as well as having the gift of permission to feature videos by Diane Lines/Sam Ellington/Tony Chamberlist from Golden Ears UC...as well as videos from Steve Bell and Carrie Newcomer, Pat Newbery, etc.... What a gift this has been! Also, I am so grateful for the Revs Gerhard Bihl and John Cashore and others for leading services on Sundays when I was away...and also for those who read Scripture, offered prayers, prepared the Sanctuary, made coffee...for the AV team, for Michelle, who put together the bulletin and update so beautifully... and to Kim for keeping the church clean. I could go on... Every act of kindness and assistance matters!

Liturgical themes, symbols, colours, and texts enriched our pilgrim year's worship life: continuing the arc of Light from Advent, Christmas into Epiphany up to Transfiguration Sunday and then to Lent, Holy Week, Easter Day and the Season of Easter through to Pentecost Sunday, May 28th, and a few Sundays into the Season after Pentecost. I have such appreciation for the openness of you and the congregation to the variety of modes to convey the Gospel message: by-heart tellings and readings of the stories from standard translations and not-so-standard ones: Celtic, The Message, First Nations Version...as well as through a creative array of special music, poetry, prayers and blessings by an eclectic array of artists and writers.

In January and part of February we spent unpacking the meaning and impact of “Epiphany” We revived the spiritual practice of Star Words as a spiritual practice for this season as well. Shrove Tuesday brought with it the announcement of a further discovery of unmarked graves, so our usual Shrove potluck pancake supper became an occasion for a special time of reflection and prayer for Indigenous communities before our time of connection over our meal.

The season of Lent included daily Prayer Cards (from A Sanctified Art) for individual or group reflection. These were sent to everyone on the email list. Sundays in Lent, we explored insights into traditional texts for the season. We held a Maundy Thursday evening based on an amazing Godly Play story about the events surrounding Holy Week and Easter – with time for response and ritual. On Good Friday we participated in a service planned in collaboration with the Lougheed Corridor churches – the first time we were all together since before Covid. Very powerful. Easter Sunday we welcomed the music leadership of Linnea Good and David Jonsson, not to mention what a blessing it was for me to share the biblical telling and reflection time with Linnea. Wow! So rich!

The First Sunday of the Season of Easter, April 16th, was a very special day! We had a service of celebration and gratitude for the repurposing project, with a lunch and a special blessing ceremony with guests Deborah Richards (President of PMRC) and Treena Duncan (Executive Minister of PMRC) taking part. Gratitude and grace abounded. So many pitched in to help make this a very special day for the congregation and leaders!

As a faith exploration and in preparation for re-affirming our faith, during Lent and the Season of Easter, 25+ people, individually or in pairs/groups, participated in reading the book “Building God’s Beloved Community: Discipleship in the United Church of Canada” in preparation for renewing baptism promises at Pentecost. On Pentecost Sunday – the birthday of the Church – we received three full members and celebrated the renewal/re-affirmation of faith for several more congregants. After worship we held a Conversation Café focusing on questions about what difference this congregation makes, personally, in the lives of congregants today. Maria initiated a video along those lines, interviewing congregants. At my final service at Como Lake, June 18th, the Pentecost video was shown – what a great moment it was to hear from congregants about the difference the church makes in their lives today. At this service we also engaged in a liturgy to complete the Covenant of Ministry among the Congregation, the Minister (me), the Pacific Mountain Region, and God. It was very rich and very emotional.

Sacraments and Special Services:

Communion was part of Worship on the first Sunday of the month, for the most part. In March, one adult was welcomed into this church community’s full membership through Baptism/Profession of Faith. On Pentecost Sunday three more adults engaged in Profession of Faith and became full members of Como Lake UC.

I officiated at one memorial service for a family who had live in Coquitlam and attended Como Lake UC many years ago...and we hosted an informal tea to remember Debbie Dadds. Thanks to all who set up for that and provided food.

Worship Enhancement Team

The Worship Enhancement Team worked to organize the Sacred Service Teams for Worship set-up and coffee time. It was felt that the coffee part might be a separate team of people but no decision was made on that. There was discussion about whether the Worship Enhancement Team is morphing into something different in the new space.

Liturgical Themes and Symbols Team This is a new team that began in May and has the responsibility of connecting with the themes and symbols of the church seasons and with the Minister, to enhance the worship experience through deepening the themes through displays, banners, etc.

LEADERSHIP, VISION , ADMINISTRATION

Governance: Vision and Planning Council - This involved planning Council agendas with Valerie, offering spiritual reflection/prayer, and participating in the meetings, connecting/planning with Tim Scorer to plan the beginning stages of the vision and governance review. This led to several leadership task groups who met to explore and define proposals for moving forward. Council met with the larger leadership group several times regarding a relational covenant/Holy Manners and a new model of governance (with Tim facilitating), and also to review the presentation that had been made to PMRC regarding the annuity as well as oversight of documents that were presented for signing. I kept in regular contact with Rev. Victoria Andrews (Regional Minister for Congregational Support) to make sure we were in coordination with PMRC policies.

This Council has been amazing to work with through discernment and direction for the repurposing journey both spiritually and practical terms, changes of Governance model, Covid, repurposing debacle response, continuing to provide leadership of vision and purpose...I could go on. The 3 R's priorities set in 2022 continued to influence our leadership – Re-gathering the Community, Re-grounding in our identity, and Recognizing our Neighbour.

The Mission Team Model of Governance

Patt, Valerie, and I worked on the initial stages of fleshing out this model for Como Lake. After gatherings of the larger leadership group and smaller task groups, Como's version of this is unique with its energizing descriptions of the 3 areas of leadership plus the Governing Council that will include voices from these three leadership expressions. At the conclusion of my time at Como, Council was working and praying diligently to inform the congregation about this model and to encourage participation, especially for Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. We started the Liturgical Themes and Symbols Team in May; Sacred Service Teams were being reviewed, Church Management teams such as Trustees and Finance continued in form as they did previously. Relational Wellness is an area we all agreed is very important and needs attention.

Board of Trustees, Finance Team, ad hoc groups

I chaired the Board of Trustees meetings, participated in Finance meetings, and consulted with the ad hoc group who diligently reviewed documents regarding the agreements around percentage allocations for

expenses for the church portion of the building as well as Air Space Parcel agreements, and research regarding legal counsel for understanding of these documents.

Como Repurposing Team

I was blessed to work with Valerie, Linda, Eric, and Dave (and earlier on, with others) on this team! What a mammoth task and impeccable work they accomplished. The move-in deficiencies tracking was an unexpected challenge...huge...and my small contribution to that was to provide support and encouragement where needed for Linda, Michelle and the team working on deficiencies and on ongoing systems. So much gratitude to our team and to the many kind and thoughtful people who followed up with the “to do list” for the past year.

Discernment for Ministry

Michelle Andersen – I have connected Michelle with Rev. Brenda Fawkes of the Office of Vocation for the United Church for information on the discernment process in the Candidacy Pathway for Ministry. Council voted an enthusiastic yes to support Michelle in this discernment at their June 9th meeting.

New CRM

Zoho –Michelle and Iván have been working hard on this new data management system change-over from Power Church. Zoho has broad capacities not only for storing data but also for communication, website, organization, and bookkeeping. Susan and Barb are transferring the bookkeeping part over from Power Church beginning January 1st 2023. My involvement here has been limited...basically providing support.

SPIRITUAL NURTURE/FAITH DEVELOPMENT/PASTORAL CARE

Prayer Circle and Labyrinth Walk took place each week prior to the **Tuesday Tea**. It is a contemplative time of reflection, meditative walking of the labyrinth, prayer, and sharing faith with one another. Tuesday prayer circle and labyrinth walks were sometimes led by me and sometimes by Linda Hof or Michelle Andersen. So great! I had hoped to arrange a training time for our folks with Veriditas, a well-accredited labyrinth training center but the time commitment was out of sync with all that was needed for the building/admin work. There are a variety of ways to further learn, train, and deepen this practice...

Michelle has built a community feel to the Tuesday Tea and has expanded it to learning events off site...and I am sure that will grow to more offsite and onsite gatherings. Michelle has a sense of what is needed, gleaned from listening and watching for trends within the church and in the community for various generations. What a gift!

Wednesday Study Group Our Wednesday evening study group continued to meet via Zoom, except for June 14th when we met to walk around Lafarge Lake for guided conversation and then ice cream. :) For Epiphany and Lent we studied the biblical texts for the season and moved into a book study with Building God’s Beloved Community: Discipleship in the United Church. The Wednesday evening study group participants voiced often their appreciation for this small band of pilgrims gathering to share life, faith, and prayer. I know, for me, it was a mid-week shot in the arm of energy and hope.

The Pastoral Care The Tuesday pastoral care team continued making care calls and sending cards to those who encountered changes in their health, and those experiencing grief, loss, and changes in their life situation. I received a weekly update from the team and made calls and visits on an emergent basis as needed. I met with the Pastoral Care Team in person twice in this period. I continue to be amazed at the formal and informal care for one another that is widely shared in this congregation. It is one of the reasons people feel part of this faith community.

WIDER CHURCH

The Annual Ecumenical Prayer Service was held in January at Como Lake UC with Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, and United Church people participating. What a wonderful opportunity to work with other denominations. A few weeks after the event, the leaders had a wind-up dinner at one of the participants' homes and learned more about each other's faith journeys. Very rich.

The Tri-Cities Ministerial group meets monthly, and we hosted the group at Como Lake in May. It was a joy to show them around the new building. This is a group of ministers from different denominations, including, but not limited to mainline churches so it's always good to gather with each other for lunch, learn about someone's faith journey and pray with one another. The Tri-Cities Ministerial sponsors a Prayer Breakfast every October for city and provincial leaders, to get together over a meal, to get to know one another, and to let the leaders know we appreciate them and pray for them.

PMRC General Meeting

In the wider church, I attended the Pacific Mountain Regional Council in June. The theme was Refining Fire/Living Stones. I sent a video and reflection on ministry for the PMRC's honouring of retirees.

In closing, I leave you with Paul's prayer from Ephesians 3, one of my all-time favourites:

I pray that, according to the riches of Gods' glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Glory to God, whose power at work within us is able to do abundantly more than we can ask or imagine, Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

With Love, Blessings, Prayers, and the Peace of Christ,

Rev. Jan Bihl

A BLESSING FOR AFTER

This blessing
is for the moment
after clarity has come,
after inspiration,
after you have agreed
to what seems
Impossible.

This blessing
is what follows
after illumination departs
and you realize
there is no map
for the path
you have chosen,
no one to serve
as guide,
nothing to do
but gather up
your gumption
and set out.

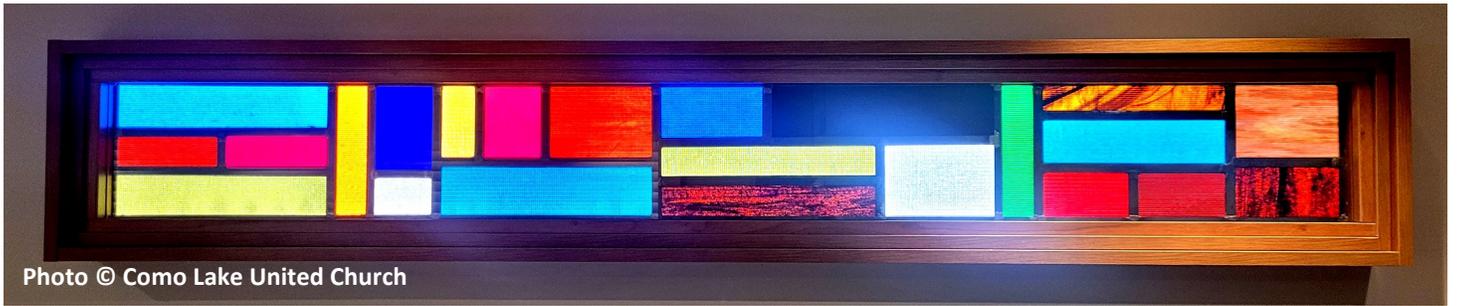
This blessing
will go with you.
It carries no answers,
no charts,
no plans.

It carries no source
of light
within itself.

But in its pocket
is tucked a mirror
that, from time to time,
it will hold up to you

to remind you
of the radiance
that came
when you gave
your awful and wondrous
yes.

Circle of Grace
by Jan Richardson
pages 51, 52



COMO LAKE UNITED CHURCH PURPOSE, VISION, VALUES, AND APPROACH TO MINISTRY

Background for Annual Vision for Ministry

Our Purpose

We are Christ's caring community,
connecting people with God and with one another,
answering God's call and making a difference.

Our Vision

We are joy-filled people
connected to our purpose
committed to one another
growing in faith and discipleship.

Our Core Values below, rooted in Love, supports our Vision For Ministry

Faith – We live, grow and share faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ:
faith that feeds the heart and soul.

Connecting – We joyfully connect with God, one another and community in ways that nurture belonging, communion and a sense of purpose.

Caring – We lovingly care for one another and the community spiritually, physically, and relationally.

Generosity – We generously give energy, time, talent and treasure for the good of others out of gratitude for God's gifts.

Respect – We respect God, humanity and all creation in ways that embrace unity in diversity.

Approach to Ministry

We invite people to enter into and deepen their relationship with God as disciples of Jesus Christ in the context of a vibrant, healthy community of faith. We nurture individuals as they grow in their relationship with God and one another within a small group ministry and through the discipleship practices of regular prayer, worship, scripture reading/study, service, spiritual friendships, and giving. In this we embody the spectrum of the 5 marks of the church: worship, teaching and learning, sharing our faith, building loving relationships, and service.

COMO LAKE UNITED VISION AND PLANNING COUNCIL

Looking back on 2023, in relation to Council, can be likened to a Rollercoaster or Ferris wheel ride. Your perspective, childhood memories and life experiences informs all our in-person experiences of this first full year in our new space. As with life, it is often more challenging to live it than highlight it for the enlightenment of others.

V&P Council members for all or part of 2023 were: Rev Jan Bihl; Anne Carson; Patt Green; Linda Hof; Susan Kennedy; Barb Mendt; Valerie Simpson.

During 2023 Council has recognized God and Spirit, alive and present in much of what we do, discern, express or share in meetings and in community. Not everyone in the congregation always agrees to the outcome of decisions made but as a congregation we all strive to make a positive difference in people's lives. Listening for that unseen voice and sharing ideas with others is paramount. With each emerging opportunity or thought provoking challenge, council continued to ask the question:

“What, for Whom and at what Cost” (cost: human resources & financial impact).

*In January we gathered the Larger Leadership and invited the congregation to a number of Discernment gathers led by Tim Scorer. Initial conversation lead to task groups being struck to meet separately and later present to the group. Discussion subjects were: Liberating Structure, Holy Manners, and Celebrating our Coming Home, with gratitude. In another session we looked at Covenant Statements and concrete steps for resolution when covenant practices are not followed. In April we met to formulate our Mission focus and Tim gathered up our conversation into a Mission Statement to expand on our current Purpose, Values and Ministry statements which continue to reflect our faith and identity.

*Also in January Council received four legal agreements from Don Evans, executive Director of B.C. Community Renewal Society of the UCC-- (CRS). Our air space parcel, parking area and the rewrite of the 2017 agreement originally signed with BC Conference were important items, going forward. A sub group was struck to seek legal advice for better understanding. These documents morphed to eight agreements and Trustees were charged with reading, evaluating and reporting. We requested clarification of CRS. The legal terms and altered content of the original document set up ongoing negotiations involving a sub group with reps from Trustees, CRT & Council, meeting with CRS and PMRC executive throughout the year. End result, was a pile of agreed upon, signed legal documents in Dec. 2023. Trustees, Council and key leaders put immeasurable hours into this process and learned a great deal in the process.

*Hosted the Ecumenical Prayer Service for the week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

*In April we celebrated a church blessing event, ‘Together Anew’ during and after worship,

*Sought clarification on costs, related to amenities agreement between CRS and CLUC as we share a building structure with Mountain View Suites.

*Facilitated the 2022 Governance and Ministry reports and engaged Tompkins Wosny LLP to complete 2022 financial year statements using the review model.

*Met with Michelle Andersen re: newly created packages for wedding/funeral. This was also an opportunity

to review previously established 'purpose of the property' info in relation to church usage and community rentals of multipurpose rooms. Reviewed Facilities Rental options doc.

*Received 'Three Expressions of Leadership in our Congregational Life' from Discernment time with Tim Scorer and moved forward with the Mission Team Governance Model.

*In March Rev Jan Bihl wrote her 'fare well' letter informing us she would be retiring June 30. After almost sixteen years she felt it was time to finish her ministry with us, stating "you have been a blessing beyond measure" and "I pray that all you good people will indeed fare well in the days and years to come". This set the time line for a 'Completing Our Ministry' covenant service as part of Sunday June 18 worship and a Fair Well Pot Luck Party for Jan and Gerhard July 20. Ministers guide, inspire, educate and encourage so at the pot luck we asked people to share gratitude moments that most of us hold in our hearts. God is good and laughter was abundant.

*Struck a sub group with reps from CRT, VPC, Trustees to meet with Don Evans (CRS) and Cameron White (PMRC lawyer). Ongoing throughout the year.

*Council approved the newly formed Stewardship Team and appreciated the 100 Years Campaign as well as their dedication to education. The goal; to enlighten members to our current financial situation.

*We called on the larger leadership group for input and perspective on a number of challenging topics during 2023, especially when we needed a broader knowledge base to inform decision making or as a sounding board prior to presenting to PMRC, CRS or the Congregation. Their willingness, input, and dedication was insightful and gratifying.

*Reviewed and facilitated the process for selecting Ministry Profile and Search team members (MPST). Encouraged their training with Rev Victoria Andrews (PMRC congregational support). Held a joint MPS Team/ Rev Victoria/Council meeting to clarify rolls and expectations.

*Follow-up with PMRC pertaining to their honouring the essence of the original 2017 property repurposing agreement CLUC made with BC Conference. On Sept 13 Linda Hof, Sharie Ford and Valerie Simpson had an in-person meeting with PMRC reps Rev Deborah Richard and Rev Treena Duncan. They shared their trust in our congregation's ability to thrive and carry on and how PMRC plans to help us grow our Ministry by supporting a Minister Staff position.

*Trustees kept Council apprised of property insurance challenges pertaining to our Air Space Parcel and sharing a building with Mountain View Suites.

*We ensured that the membership roll was updated and that the required UCC congregation meetings and conversations with the Ownership took place.

*Council continued working on the Mission Team Model. Slotting existing teams and individuals into the structure. Two ongoing challenges were finding individuals willing to take executive leadership rolls and looking for the best way to people the 3 Leadership Teams:

Spiritual Leadership-Stewardship of the Gospel;

Church Logistics/Management- Stewardship of Resources;

Relational Wellness-Stewardship of Relationships

*During our time without a staff minister we were fortunate to have an eclectic mix of wonderfully diverse guest ministers for Sunday service and Rev Jenn Swanson (Inlet United Church minister) serving as our Pastoral Charge Supervisor for Council, Trustee and Congregation meeting. Her patience and insight has been a gift.

*Council circulated information highlighting the responsibilities of the Council and the Council Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer as the current council members needed to move into new church roles. The outgoing council offered to mentor and walk with anyone who was interested. Generative conversations took place around going forward as a working unit and implementing the discernment outcomes from earlier in 2023. The VP Council downsized to UCC mandatory positions and acted as the executive of the new Mission Team Model, continuing to work at getting people to step into leadership roles.

*In November there was education and information on 'Serving it Right' and the BC liquor laws for Rentals wishing to serve alcohol in any private building. At Nov 26 congregation meeting, two separate paper votes were passed. One to allow renters to serve alcohol at their event and the other to allow church groups to serve alcohol at events. Both groups will be bound by the same government mandated permits, purchase and Serving it Right supervision guidelines.

*Numerous ongoing generative conversations around the Mission statement, Holy Manners, Governance Model and 3 leadership teams, discerned in the spring were packaged. Plans to take then to the congregation in January 2024 were set down at our December 18 meeting. December continues to be a time to focus on Advent at all the wonderful gatherings and to appreciate Hope, Joy, Peace and Love, in our lives, leading up to our Christmas eve services.

* Our core values are as viable today as when originally written, years ago and our wanting to make a difference, today, could easily read 'How can we make a difference in people's lives?'

*In a retrospect reality check, we could add a couple of professional jugglers to round out the Rollercoaster/ Ferris wheel experience, mentioned earlier. I offer this overview knowing that God is with us, every step we take.

Blessings, **Valerie Simpson**, a past chair perspective.



OUR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE IN TRANSITION 2023

Three Expressions of Leadership in our Congregational Life (from March 2023)

Spiritual Leadership – Stewardship of the Gospel

The people providing leadership in the spiritual life of the congregation know that matters of Spirit are an essential foundation to our life together. They also know the restlessness that is felt by those who choose to be on God's vision quest. In that sense they see themselves as guides who ensure safety on the faith journey as well as mentors on the way. They know that participation in this quest is open to all: there is no academic pre-requisite for entry into this community of faith, this work of the soul. The creativity of these leaders is expressed in the provision of learning opportunities for all. They delight in creating an open-hearted environment where questions are welcome, visions expanded, circles celebrated, and God's way known.

Church Logistics/Management – Stewardship of Resources

Here are leaders who know that we are all earth-bound and that to survive we need shelter, nourishment, organization, and safety. They also know that to thrive we need beauty along with functionality, places for busting out as well as belonging, and times for tearing down as well as building up. At the heart of their giving is the awareness that God's love for the world is made known in the flesh and blood reality of our living. There is no kitchen utensil, no spread sheet, no labyrinth, no toilet plunger, no lock and no light bulb that is outside the circle of loving that holds us together in a community of faith. Yes, the delight of these leaders is in being enablers, supporters and artists in the House where love can be at home and grow!

Relational Wellness – Stewardship of Relationships

The question under the attention of these leaders is this: 'How then shall we live?' We have sacred intentions rooted in our convictions and commitments, but we still have to live out the practicalities of being human: generosity as well as ownership; acknowledgement as well as pride; influence as well as surrender; justice as well as power. These leaders are focusing their skills on shaping a community where respect, acceptance, responsibility, inclusion, and accountability are more than words: they are a visible expression of being a community that consciously walks in the Way of Jesus. These folks ensure that job descriptions are clear, that covenants are known, that processes are in place, and that Love is at the heart of the matter.

The Governing Council – Stewardship of Mission, Vision, Direction, Priorities

The Governing Council is made up of a Chairperson, Secretary, Rep from Finance, and Minister plus 3-4 individuals from each of the three teams: **Spiritual Leadership**, **Church Logistics/Management**, and **Relational Wellness**. The Governing Council provides and monitors the big picture, especially Mission and Vision, which includes congregational engagement for discernment. The Core Council (Chairperson, Secretary, Finance Rep, Minister) is a group that communicate and monitor between quarterly meetings.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

Council facilitated 2 congregational meetings, and a special information session on November 8.

March 26 had thirty-one individuals in attendance and met the membership quorum.

The membership received the 2022 Como Lake United Governance & Ministry Annual Reports and agreed to the motion to extend the appointed core council's term to June 30 in order to give more time for implementing the new governance model.

The November 8th information session was held after worship in preparation for the Nov 26 Annual Congregation Meeting (ACM). The subject matter was Alcohol Service Restrictions for Rental and CLUC as it was time to consider allowing renters to serve alcohol at their private events. The following info highlights the government requirements, by law, for anyone wishing to serve alcohol outside of their home. You must apply, get approved and present the following documents to our church office prior to the rental date.

1. A Serving it Right Certificate.
2. A Special Events Permit with limits, by type and quantities of alcohol that can be purchased for your event.
3. Third-Party Insurance including \$5,000,000 liability with CLUC listed as additional insured. Questions about types of alcohol led to beer, wine, & cider only and a list of what is not allowed. Building security concerns were also addressed and it was decided that a 60% yes majority was required to pass this motion at the ACM.

If Como Lake United wanted to serve alcohol they too would need to meet the government rules 1 & 2 above. Our church liability insurance would cover a church event. Council was very grateful for Michelle Andersen's research and well-presented info package for our presentation to the congregation.

At the November 26 ACM, voting took place in real-time with no proxy or email in votes. 50+ members and adherents enjoyed a nice lunch prior to the meeting as we must wait for Rev Jenn Swanson to travel from Inlet United to CLUC as our Pastoral Supervisor must be on site in order to call a meeting to order.

We acknowledged the retiring Council members Linda Hof, Barb Mendt & Pat Green, with heart felt gratitude and CLUC pens made from our former sanctuary pew wood. We elected a temporary Core Executive council, Susan Kennedy, Anne Carson & Valerie Simpson until Jan 31 2024. Treasurer, Secretary and Chairperson are mandated by UCC.

The motion to accept the 2024 budget was passed. The motion to allow alcohol to be served at private rental events & the motion that alcohol be allowed to be served at CLUC congregational events also passed. Reverend John Cashore closed with a meaningful prayer and blessing.

Respectfully submitted, **Valerie Simpson**

MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Ministry and Personnel Committee's responsibility is to be a caring, consultative and a supportive role for the lead Minister, and support for the relationship between Minister, Staff, and Congregation.

Committee members are John Cashore and Angie Neville

The committee is confident in the value of the pastoral relationship. During the first half of 2023 we continued to support Rev. Jan as more of her time and energy was being used by the tasks required with a new church building until her retirement in June 2023.

In her absence, the church community was challenged to carry on the work of the Como Lake United church. The committee was instrumental in supporting staff through some frustrating and difficult days.

We look forward to continuing our support for the new minister, their work, and relationship with staff and congregation through 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Angie Neville

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is comprised of The Rev. Jan Bihl (January—June 2023), Rev. Jenn Swanson (July—December 2023) our Ministerial representative from Inlet United Church, Sharie Ford, John Alandi, Mindy Lane and Ralph Johnston.

The Trustees hold title to all real and personal property of Como Lake United Church, for the benefit of the congregation. At present, and since the beginning of the repurposing project, the title for the property is held at Pacific Mountain Regional Council of the United Church for the purpose of facilitating transactions needed during the building process. The title for the church portion or air space parcel of the new building was returned to Como Lake United Church in December.

The Trustees' duties and responsibilities involve anything to do with the congregations property and include:

- annual review and renewal of insurance covering property loss, public liability, errors and omissions
- coverage for special events held in the name of the Church
- annual application for exemption from municipal taxes and
- administration of the Church's reserve funds which are not required for the normal day-to-day operations of the Church.

The Trustees are responsible for the investment policy and recommendations to Council for allocation of the Unbudgeted and/or Reserve Donations and Stabilization Funds.

Four designated Trustee meetings and one emergency meeting were held in 2023. Numerous meetings were attended as members of the newly created Larger Leadership Group. This group was formed to discuss the next steps concerning the status of the annuity as outlined in the 2017 Agreement signed with BC Conference Property Development Council of the United Church of Canada. The Trustees were represented at other

information gathering meetings concerning the above as well, the outcomes of which were presented to the Larger Leadership Group, which resulted in the formal signing of the legal documents transferring ownership of the Air Spacer Parcel to the Congregation of Como Lake United Church, and the signing of the parking lease on December 19, 2023.

We thank our fellow Trustees for their faithful service to the congregation this past year.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Como Lake United Church,

Mindy Lane, Secretary

PROFILE AND SEARCH TEAM

Your Profile and Search Committee has been working hard on your behalf since early September, 2023. The committee is comprised of Angie Neville as the chair, along with Mindy Lane, Nancy Lilley, Anne Carson, Ann Ryder, Marta Taylor and myself, Ron Warneboldt.

The congregation's input was extremely valuable, and we used that information to help us complete the required Church Profile and a document called our Living Faith Story.

In Particular the committee appreciated:

- the excellent response to our Questionnaire where we had over 40 replies (some representing couples),
- and the over 40 individuals who attended our conversation cafe.

Our meetings started with our First Formal Meeting, September 5, which was an online meeting of the Profile and Search Committee with Victoria Andrews, who is the Regional Minister with Pacific Mountain Regional Council and our resource person in this search process.

Since then we have had multiple committee meetings, both in person and by zoom, where there has been a lot of healthy debate about the best path forward that will comply with the detailed requirement of Pacific Mountain Region and the United Church of Canada.

There have been a total of 7 formal meetings and almost daily emails between committee members. This includes a very important meeting on October 16th with both our Church Council and Victoria Andrews

- where roles were clarified, and
- where the committee's plans for going forward were supported.

And another meeting with Victoria Andrews on January 18th where:

- we reviewed our completed Living Faith Document,
- and where Victoria outlined all the further steps forward, including completion of the detailed Position Description for a New Minister.

So, where do we stand now?

Our major documents, including a Profile for Como Lake United Church, the Living Faith Story of Como Lake United Church, and our Position Description Document have now been submitted to Victoria Andrews for approval. Once Victoria approves those documents they will be submitted to our Church Council. Once the council has approved these documents, then they will be presented to the congregation at a congregational meeting, hopefully in mid to late February.

Once the congregation has approved these documents, all the information will be loaded on the United Church of Canada website called the Church Hub, and when those entries have been approved by the region, the Church Hub documents will be made live for all ministerial applicants to see. We will then await responses from interested candidates, and we can also approach any possible candidates and encourage them to apply. Finally, we will conduct interviews and take our recommendation to council and to the congregation for a new minister.

For your information, after much thought, input and debate, and after considerable discussion with Victoria Andrews, it has been decided that at this time we are recommending a full time lead minister with interest in development of a growing congregation.

The initial discussion around requesting an interim minister was changed:

- due to progress our congregation has made functioning for almost 3/4 of a year without a lead minister,
- in light of the signed agreement with Pacific Mountain Region,
- and with a realistic understanding of the ministers that may be available for our selection process.

Respectfully submitted by **Ron Warneboldt** on behalf of the Profile and Search Team

PACIFIC MOUNTAIN REGIONAL COUNCIL (PMRC)

Representatives from Como Lake United Church—Marilyn McCutcheon and Mindy Lane.

Communication between churches and the PMRC happened weekly online. Churches were encouraged to share information about events happening in their churches and extended invitations.

The 5th Annual Meeting of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council (June 1st to June 4th, 2023) was held both online (Whova meeting platform) and in person in Prince George Abbotsford, BC at the The University of the Fraser Valley. The key note presenter, Jacqui Lewis, engaged our theme ‘Refining Fire. Living Stones.’ in 3 sessions:

Theme 1— ‘Forged in Fire: Tools for Living in these Days’

Theme 2— ‘Unfinished Business’

Theme 3— ‘A Bold New Thing on Earth: Can you see it?’

The meeting also included: Proposal/Remit, Memorials and Service of Lament, meeting newcomers to the Region, Executive report, Naramata Centre update, and Indigenous Ministry update and report.

On Sunday, June 4th—3 new members were ordained.

Submitted by **Mindy Lane**



FINANCE TEAM

Our Finance Team members are Paul Thompson, Barb Mendt, Debbie Hall, Susan Kennedy, and Rev. Jan to June 2023.

I continue to be very grateful to the members of this team for their hard work and ongoing support. The Finance Team meets during the year via Zoom or in person to review the monthly financial statements. It has been a busy year as always and each of us contributes to ensuring that the financial information is complete. Debbie processes contributions. Barb takes care of accounts payable and reconciles the month ends. Susan assembles the monthly reports and works with CLUC groups, Rev. Jan and Council to prepare the annual operating budget. Susan and Barb work together provide yearend information for Tompkins Wozny to prepare the annual financial statements. Paul Thompson leads our Finance Team meetings, and his eagle eyes are much appreciated when reviewing the monthly reports.

Verifyle is used for the secure sharing of information. 2023 was the last year for using PowerChurch and as of Jan 2024, we are beginning to use Zoho Books. We are happy to be using an accounting program that will streamline the accounting process and provide digital document storage.

2023 Financial Snapshot

Tompkins Wozny has been engaged for the 2023 annual accounting review and preparation of the 2023 financial statements. Work has begun to start assembling the information. The reviewed financial statements are expected to be available in June 2024.

Until then, here is a brief overview of the 2023 Local Ministry fund at Dec 31 2023:

YTD Actuals	2023 YTD Actual	2023 YTD Budget	2022 YTD Actual
Income	159,220	145,925	112,699
Expense	188,007	247,680	199,795
Difference	\$ (28,787)	\$ (101,755)	\$ (87,096)

Income received in 2023 was more than the 2022 year and more than the 2023 Budget. This is made up of rental income and increased contributions. Thank you to Sharie Ford, Jacque Johnston, and Paul Thompson for putting together the Fall Stewardship campaign. Funds raised at Dec 31 2023 were \$18,938. The members of Como Lake United answered the call and showed that the presence of this community is important. Thank you!

Expenses in 2023 were less than the 2022 year and the budgeted amount as we have been back to our home for over a year now and have reduced ministerial cost beginning Jul 1st while we discern and search for a new Lead Minister. Thoughtful care is still taken with your monetary gifts to ensure that Como Lake United remains a viable congregation.

Overall, we are happy to see that the increased giving and the careful spending has resulted in the actual deficit (\$28,787) being less than the originally projected deficit (\$101,755).

Thank you to the members of our faith community who continue to contribute as generously, as they are able, to the life of Como Lake United Church!

Submitted on behalf of the CLUC Finance Team,

Susan Kennedy

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

An ad hoc Stewardship Committee (the “S” Team) consisting of Paul Thompson (Finance committee), Jacquie Johnston (Past Treasurer) and Sharie Ford (Trustee) was formed in July to start a Special Funding Appeal celebrating “100 Years of Como Lake United Church”. An appeal to honor our past and to embrace the new opportunities for our future.

This appeal was followed up with a 25c Challenge, bulletin Stewardship Corner inserts and updates, Thanksgiving and Christmas envelopes and a Christmas letter insert.

As a group, the “S” Team were excited about the possibilities of the many programs we might be able to initiate.

Stewardship is a lifelong journey. We all have something to contribute, in many different ways and we all must work together to make things happen.

If you are interested in joining the “S” Team, please speak to Sharie, Paul, or Jacquie.

Prayerfully and respectfully submitted by

Sharie Ford, Paul Thompson, Jaquie Johnston

LEADERSHIP AND ENRICHMENT

The objectives of the Leadership and Enrichment Operating Fund are:

1. To provide financial assistance to interested people of the congregation who wish to partake in an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills to further their own leadership development and growth so that they can contribute within the church community.
2. To support the desire for continued Christian growth and learning.
3. To enable groups and ministries with the church to bring qualified leaders to conduct workshops or seminars.

Contributions may be received to augment this fund.

Our unit members are Betty Inglis and Marilyn McCutcheon. We do need more members and our hope for 2023 is that we can have at least one more member join our fold.

Education for learning and skill development for congregants is a primary function of this fund. This past year there was one application to this unit, and we will be working on communication to gain members and to spread information about the fund.

The Church treasurer supplied the committee with a year-end financial statement.

Respectfully submitted
Marilyn McCutcheon

SACRED SERVICE TEAM

In 2023 we had five Sacred Service Teams, lead by Valerie Simpson, Mindy Lane, Barb Mendt, Wendy Pavilonis and Angie Neville. Each team consisted of three or four members. The teams work on a rotation, we are on duty two weeks out of a 10-week rotation. The teams work to ensure that our Worship services are a meaningful and peaceful experience for everyone in the congregation. The teams also facilitate the opportunity to gather socially with refreshments after the service.

Our duties are connecting with the minister and assisting them as necessary, lighting the candles, moving the offering box to the chancel for the offering prayer, cleaning up the sanctuary after the service, coffee and tea service & clean up and locking the doors. We also set up the elements for the Communion Service once a month and assist the minister in serving.

This is another way many of us can serve the church; greeting visitors especially those new to our church, assist anyone who need help, and making the sanctuary a warm and welcoming environment.

Respectfully submitted,
Angie Neville

PULPIT SUPPLY

As I member of the Worship Committee, I was asked to search for and invite guest ministers to lead our worship services in the absence of a lead minister. This experience has given me a wonderful opportunity to meet a variety of ministers who have brought their gift of leadership to our church each week. To make an introduction to the congregation, I learned of their background and so got to know them a little more. It has been a delightful experience for me. We have had many ministers, male and female, ordained or not ordained, young and not-so-young, all giving us an opportunity to experience a variety of preaching styles, music and scripture selections which enhanced and deepen their message.



Pastor Kevin Hegseth, Sermon December 10, 2023

Respectfully submitted,
Angie Neville

WEDNESDAY EVENING STUDY GROUP

This group of congregation members have been meeting online, using Zoom, since early in 2020. We have consistently had between 9-13 people attending weekly.

There have been several book studies; a chapter is read at leisure and review with the group each week. After an open group discussion of the chapter, we would break into small groups to discuss a couple of questions sent to us by the facilitator. We have had guest facilitators but most of the studies have been facilitated by Rev. Jan Bihl. In the first half of 2023 we reviewed and discussed 'Building God's Beloved Community: Discipleship in The United Church of Canada.' It is an excellent resource for people wanting to explore more about their faith, go deeper, to learn more.

To gather, even online, has been a wonderful opportunity to connect with one another. We have built up confidence and trust in one another to share our thoughts and views on a range of faith topics. We have laughed and shared stories, this time has brought us together more than we expected. A joy-filled experience indeed.

Respectfully submitted,
Angie Neville

PASTORAL CARE CONNECTION (Tuesday) TEAM

Pastoral Care provides emotional, social, and spirit care of the church community.

Team members were Leigh Krischuk, Marilyn McCutcheon, Elsie Wrightman and Vicki Stacey. They made phone contacts to members who were ill or who had special concerns.

Vicki Stacey sent Birthday cards to those seventy years and older, as well as "Get Well", "Thinking of You", and the first year of anniversary of the death of significant family members.

The weekly report was compiled by Leigh Krischuk and distributed to Rev. Jan and team members.

Through Rev. Jan's Friday updates we reminded the congregation to phone in concerns to Marilyn McCutcheon. Contact information for Marilyn are in the bulletin/bulletin inserts each week.

Through the Sunday bulletin, names were listed on the Prayer List. The team sent these names along and those received from the congregation.

Through our Tuesday calls in conversation we were listening and expressing our prayers for them. Members who were reached often expressed thankfulness for these supportive, caring, happy connections.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn McCutcheon

PASTORAL CARE VISITING TEAM

Members included: Leigh Krischuk, Marilyn McCutcheon, and Elsie Wrightman. These team members kept in touch through Tuesday Connection Team calls and in-person connections as appropriate. Emergent concerns were communicated with Rev. Jan, especially health issues and housing relocations. We also thank Rev. Charles Ahn and Pastor Kevin Hegseth for being available as needed.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn McCutcheon

LABYRINTH & PRAYER CIRCLE

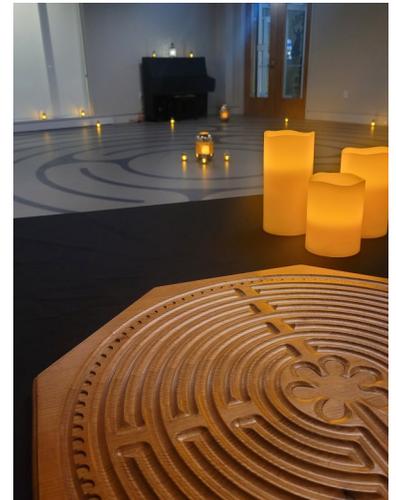
Prayers are submitted to Como Lake United Church either through Marilyn McCutcheon, or one of the Pastoral Care team members, through Michelle in the office, or via the prayer box in the Atrium. These prayers are included in the weekly Caring Connection, and referred to during our Tuesday Prayer Circle—with the expectation that the congregation prays for them. Keep sending in your prayers, and please keep praying for those listed, and those you hold in your own hearts.

“In Christianity, the labyrinth’s symbolic meaning is that the journey is challenging, filled with highs and lows, ups and downs and when one feels lost along their path, God’s salvation is at the center of life.”
unspokenelements.com

Tuesday mornings at 9:30am, a group meets in the Reflection room with a themed devotional. We then move to the Labyrinth room for a meditative walk. There is also the option of using a wooden finger labyrinth. We return to the Reflection room for community prayers and a blessing.

We also started our Lantern Labyrinth Nights in November, with the Labyrinth being open for the community to use in their own time. The Labyrinth is lined with soft lantern light, that guides your journey into the centre and back out. We held three of these evenings and one afternoon, which were regularly attended by residents of Mountain View Suites.

Respectfully submitted by **Linda Hof**



JOYFUL VOICES—COMO LAKE UNITED CHOIR



There has not been a choir at Como Lake United Church for five years. Upon moving into our new church, some congregants felt that to feed their hearts and souls, they would like to sing. An off-hand remark by a new member got several people together to see what could be done. In August 2023, seven former choir people got together to discuss a small “pop-up” choir.

A proposal was presented to the Governing Body of Como Lake United. On getting permission the “Joyful Voices” was created. We were blessed to have an accomplished pianist offer her gift of playing. We currently sing once a month and practice the hour prior to service.

Choir numbers have now increased to 12, and we are excited to see where our experiment leads us. The congregation has embraced us with many compliments and lots of encouragement.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Danbert and Elsie Wrightman

WOMEN OF THE UNITED CHURCH

The Women of Como Lake United Church continue to have six active units - Arbutus, Cypress, Daisy, Magnolia, Maple and Willow. Janet Blair has been our treasurer for many years and Janice Warneboldt continues on as our secretary.

The Women of Como Lake United Church have chosen to continue meeting with their units but also enjoy large group gatherings every three or four months.

The Arbutus Unit hosted a tea on February 7th attended by 36 women. They gave a report on their very successful December 2022 cookie sale.

Many women contributed baking for the grand opening and blessing event held in April.

On April 25th, the Cypress Unit, assisted by the Daisy Unit hosted a very enjoyable tea with a presentation by Bob and Joan Burrows about the Thomas Crosby IV mission boat. At this meeting, significant financial contributions were approved including:



- \$2000 to kitchen and hospitality
- \$4500 to contingency fund
- \$2481 to integrate the streaming connection
- \$500 to the united church crest in memory of Joan Coffey
- \$1500 to CLUC
- \$250 to mission and service fund
- \$250 to First United Church

June 7, 2023 was our Pub Night fundraiser at the John B. It raised over \$1,702.00.

During the year, a number of meetings were held to discuss bringing back our very popular Fall Fair/Christmas Marketplace which was held on November 18th and was a great success.

In conclusion, the Women of Como Lake United Church are looking forward to another active year in 2024.

Respectfully submitted by:

Janice Warneboldt
CLUC UCW Secretary

Beautiful baskets made for the
Pub Night Fundraiser

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Dear Como Lake United Church

I have grown a lot over the past 2 years—in that I have found myself volunteering a lot with Como Lake United Church. Before I moved here I would have not offered to volunteer or spoken up about things.

Living here and being right outside the church has been a Godsend for me. I love volunteering for the church and more importantly, the people that I work with, I couldn't ask for a better group of friends.

Also I have a loving and caring family. I started out doing little things for the church—now I do reception on Fridays, help with Tea Tuesdays, and volunteer at potluck dinners. I have taken a course on Earth Angels. I loved the course and Pastor Kevin Hegseth. I am getting involved in a tonne of activities and I love it! If I didn't I wouldn't be here! I very much enjoyed art retreat classes last year, and found the artist in me!

God Bless Us Everyone!

Love

Karen Luckhart, Mountain View Suites Resident

2023 was a year of immense change and growth, “The Team” looking after us every step of the way. It can be summarized as the year of reconnection with each other and ourselves, looking at our gifts and how we see those gifts being used in the life of Como Lake United Church. Congregants and residents of the Mountain View Suites continued to work together, volunteering at various events, and connecting with our wider community.

One of our first events of the year was Como Lake United Church’s Official Blessing—an official coming home—*together anew!* What a wonderful and celebratory day, giving gratitude to our Creator for walking with us, often carrying us, through the years of discernment and development, reflecting on the years it took to get to this point, appreciating our new friends, and welcoming our community to our new space. This exciting event also saw the installation of the United Church of Canada’s official crest, as well as Como Lake United Church’s new logo in the entry ways of Marmont Street and the internal doors respectively.



One of our first community partnerships was with Inlet United Church, Eagle Ridge United and Golden Ears United, to knit prayer shawls for a special Indigenous ceremony, celebrating Indigenous People’s Day and the raising of three house posts along Shoreline Trail at Rocky Point Park. Over 10 congregants and family members went to work making these beautiful shawls. Once complete, the shawls were blessed at a service at Inlet United on June 11, 2023. What an honour to be able to gift these for such a momentous occasion.

In May, Maria Antonia Trujillo helped us create a video for Pentecost , which gathered the thoughts and special memories of members of the Congregation as they recalled how they came to be at Como Lake United Church, and what the community of the church means to them today.

Rentals, which began in June 2023, became a community connection point, without having to even advertise our church spaces. We had several rentals as word of mouth spread about the beauty of our Church,

convenience, and cleanliness, of our facilities. All renters in 2023 were respectful and caring of Como Lake United Church, as a church, not just a venue in which to hold a party, and we appreciate them for their consideration. Rentals brought almost 2000 people into the doors, and have led us from one opportunity to the next, as we met more and more people through the year.

Members from our congregation ventured out to an Advanced Planning workshop, held by Fraser Health, at the new Poco Rec Centre. It was an informative and interesting look at one's life directives. We followed the workshop with a tea and chat back at church for more Q&A, then decided to host an Advanced Planning workshop again at Como Lake United. The October event was well-attended by over 40 people, and we look forward to hosting another session in 2024. Thank you Debbie Turgeon for helping us organize this event.



Rev. Jan's "Refirement" Party in July was bittersweet: to see two of our favourite people move on to new adventures was difficult, but we also celebrated, with gratitude, all the energy and light Rev. Jan and Rev. Gerhard had brought into the life



of Como Lake United Church—we have been so very blessed to have them in our lives, and we do not say goodbye, but rather "fare-well" until we meet again.

Summer did not slow us down, with several events, including the start of Art Retreat with Olga—part creative exploration, part lesson, and a lot of laughter! We impressed ourselves with paintings of horses, hummingbirds, moonlit lakes and doves! Olga also donated her efforts and materials, holding a paint day on December 23 for all ages with a snow man theme! It was the perfect activity to start off the Christmas Holidays! We thank her for her time and efforts and will look forward to reconnecting.



We closed the summer with a BBQ for Como Lake United Church and Mountain View Suites. This was one of the highlights of the year, with over 80 people in attendance. The kids enjoyed games in the courtyard, and when the August heat became a bit much to bear, we dragged our chairs into P1, finding our BBQ feel had turned very much into a friends-gone-camping atmosphere, with all of us encircled, chatting away, and enjoying the day. Thank you to FirstService and the Church for contributing their time for setup, BBQ and cleanup.

By the end of September, we had booked out every available rental day in December. Again we still had not advertised our spaces, and so we prepared for a busy few months ahead! We began to put additional support teams in place, including a Reception, Hospitality and Rental Team.

Reception has been so important in ensuring that we continue to welcome community, and support the congregation with their questions and needs. Hospitality has supported memorial services, special events, and Sunday coffee—really reinforcing the "feeling of home" that most guests experience when they visit Como Lake United Church. Our Rentals Team knows what a late night is, resetting the Sanctuary, helping with clean up, and securing the building. They have also guided renters as they setup their events, have been a welcoming presence for a variety of people from all different communities. All three of these teams know what it is to work hard, but also to have fun doing it! Nothing creates friendships quite as fast as folding round tablecloths, stacking chairs 10 high, and running a sweep over all the floors. A quick tea or coffee, if you dare, to end the night, and we head home straight to bed, thinking back on new friends we have met,

the warmth shared in our special space, and the enjoyment of families and friends who have come to love Como Lake United Church as much as we do!

During the last week of September 2023, we participated in the Truth and Reconciliation Week Public Lunch and Learns, held via Zoom, and covered the following topics:

- Indigenous peoples and the History of Residential Schools
- Unconscious bias and debunking stereotypes
- Intergenerational impacts and ongoing systemic discrimination
- Indigenous peoples' rights and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Taking action toward Reconciliation

We are so grateful for the invitation to learn more about Indigenous communities, culture, language, and history, and we will continue to learn and grow, taking these opportunities gifted to us.

October opened with our Gathering in Gratitude potluck with Mountain View Suites. It is always a good time to spend awhile appreciating what our Creator has done in our lives, and that of the community, and to acknowledge our families and friendships. This is a calm breath before the business of Advent, and so the peaceful moment to break bread together was fully enjoyed.

November was buzzing with activity as we prepared for our first Marketplace in the new building! November 18, 2023 was an unforgettable splendour of colourful crafts, fancy baskets, delectable baking, dazzling jewellery, wood worked elegance, and a tea room fit for royalty! The event brought members of the community from as far as Vancouver Island! Hundreds of people shopped the wares, stopped for a sweet treat, and bid on baskets, making this event, not only a successful fundraiser, but one of our most welcoming events of the year.



We also started our Lantern Labyrinth Nights in November, with the Labyrinth being open for the community to use in their own time. The Labyrinth is lined with soft lantern light, that guides your journey into the center and back out. We held three of these evenings which were regularly attended by residents of Mountain View Suites.



December 1, 2023, we held our Christmas Potluck with Mountain View in the Sanctuary. This was the first time we had used the “multipurpose space” for one of our own functions. It was beautifully decorated in blue and silver to match our Advent liturgical décor. The food was incredible, thank you to all those who attended. We also door prized two beautiful wreaths, donated by Linda and Kees! We listened to Christmas music, and met several new friends from the building.

We opened Advent with a light-filled Lantern Advent Night service led by Iván and Maria. It was a beautiful exploration of Colombian culture within the Christian faith. The following week Rev. John Cashore and Sharie Ford led our Blue Christmas service, which holds space for those who are walking through grief, suffering a loss, suffering through depression or loneliness, or overcoming a difficult and challenging year. The service was deeply reflective and gently accompanied by Lincoln Tatem as the musical guest.

The Carols and Bells concert was hit! Christmas carols, in all their glory, rung out by handbells from choirs all around the Lower Mainland: White Rock Christian Academy, Brock House, Sacred Bronze, and Resilience Ringers, with supporting band Avalon Valley. Tickets were sold out weeks in advance of the concert! The concert raised funds for Como Lake as well as the bell choirs, with so much success that we have decided to host two concerts next December. The only lesson to be learned is to purchase your tickets early to avoid disappointment! Thank you to Virginia Barteluk, the bell choirs and Avalon Valley, as well as our volunteers for all of the work that was put into making a magical Christmas evening!



Following the concert, we went into two weeks worth of rentals, all celebrating the holiday season in one way or another, then we enjoyed a Volunteer Tea to show appreciation to all those who gave their time, gifts and efforts to the life of Como Lake United Church throughout the year! We quietened down the week before Christmas Eve—allowing the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love of the season to resonate within us, and with our church—finishing up with a service for the Christmas Story, Carols and Candles. We loved having members of the wider community join us for our Christmas Eve services. God is good!

During our Marketplace and throughout the season of Advent, we raised food donations. Over 180 lbs of food was raised, half being donated to MLA Hon. Selina Robinson's food drive for SHARE, and half being stored on site for those who walk in looking for a food bank. They are offered food so that they do not have to wait until Wednesday to eat, and are provided with a sheet of contact and location information for local food banks and kitchens. This allows us to help in a very serious situation, where families, individuals and seniors are experiencing hunger.

Thank you to everyone who made this year such a special, successful and supportive one!

Respectfully submitted by **Michelle Andersen**

TEA TUESDAY

Twenty or so folks gathered. Some men also gathered to do projects and chat. The women chatted and set the world to rights. Tea Tuesday has also evolved into an invitation whereby newcomers and those curious about our Church come to learn more about Como Lake United Church, our Congregation, worship and events.

Respectfully submitted by **Anne Carson**

KNITTING MINISTRY

In July 2023, Como Lake United Church helped Inlet United Church with a project of knitting shawls/blankets for an Indigenous Ceremony on Shoreline Trail in Port Moody.

We continued on, doing a project for Madison Care Home on Foster Avenue, here in Coquitlam. We made fidget mats and muffs for some of the residents.

Then started to work on Prayer shawls and blankets for CLUC to take and give to anyone who needs support during an illness or from the loss of someone in their lives. They will be available for anyone to take and give away.

We are expanding the group to include anyone who wants to do a hand-work project they have or to those who want to just pop by for support or a chat.

Thank you to our knitters, Anne for coordinating our projects, and to those who donated much needed yarn, looms and needles. (Included by Michelle)



Respectfully submitted by **Anne Carson**

PENTECOST VIDEO 2023



The Pentecost video project emerged as a creative endeavour to celebrate our community's unity. It served to engage the congregation and shed light on individual narratives and the journey that led each member to Como Lake United Church.

This initiative successfully prompted the congregation to step out of their comfort zones and into the spotlight, sharing their personal stories and experiences. Through thought-provoking questions, such as the impact of CLUC

on their lives and their most memorable moments with the congregation, the video fostered deeper reflection and connection within our community.

More than a mere recording or series of interviews, the Pentecost video provided an immersive experience, highlighting our community's diverse voices and perspectives. It served to bridge the gap between individuals and the collective identity of CLUC, fostering a sense of belonging and shared history.

Looking ahead, this project holds promise for the long-term documentation of Como Lake's history, offering a valuable retrospective that will further strengthen our community bonds.

Respectfully submitted by **Maria Trujillo**

MARKETPLACE 2023

Marketplace Coordinators for 2023 were Julie Hamilton, Wendy Pavilonis and Angie Neville.

We were delighted to host the Marketplace again after a four-year absence. It was a slightly pared down event compared to earlier years, but most congregation members took part in one way or another. It was an event to invite the surrounding community to invite them back to Como Lake United Church, to see our new building and to contribute to the fundraiser. We offered a Silent Auction table, a Bake table, Jams and Jellies,

Jewellery, Wooden Gifts, Surprise packages, Christmas Items, Crafts and Nearly New table. Our Traditional Tea Room served an assortment of baked good, tea and coffee, most of the baked was donated by our baking congregants.

It was a success as a fundraiser and as a community event to bring in neighbours, friends and family from all over the area. It was a joyous event for the congregations, coming together to work and serve our church community.

Respectfully submitted,

Angie Neville



LANTERN ADVENT NIGHT



Lantern Night presented a unique opportunity to share the spirit of Christmas with the broader world, offering a glimpse into how various cultures celebrate this joyous occasion.

Against the backdrop of handcrafted blue lanterns, the event showcased diverse customs, songs, and traditions associated with the holiday season.

Each lantern served as a symbol of light, representing the beginning of life and the abundance of blessings to be grateful for. As congregants lit their lanterns, they also expressed their wishes, reflecting their desires and the collective aspirations of

the community.

Lantern Night encapsulated the essence of Como Lake in our collective consciousness—a beacon of light and goodwill, illuminating the lives of all who gather within its embrace.

The evening culminated in a heartwarming gesture of appreciation, as Colombian traditional refreshments were shared amongst attendees. This gratitude symbolized the deep sense of community fostered by Como Lake United Church, extending warmth and hospitality to all who have become part of our extended family.

Respectfully submitted by **Maria Trujillo**

COMMUNICATIONS

Following Rev. Jan's retirement, we tried our best to keep up with weekly communications, soon tweaking the template and renaming the former "Jan's Weekly Update" to "Caring Connections". The new template is still a work in progress, with small adjustments happening here and there. Caring Connections is emailed out to 181 people each week.

Tea Tuesday has also become a pivotal touch point in the work of Como Lake communications. Not only is this a time for congregants to catch up with each other, ask for assistance or check in with admin, but it has

also developed into a resource for those who are new to the church, or thinking of coming to the church to learn more about us, with a casual and inviting atmosphere.

We created our own Facebook page in February, which has been an excellent platform to promote upcoming workshops and events, our weekly services, and sharing our live stream link. Our Facebook page reached 35,000 people, and 91,300 impressions, with an impressive conversion rate for sponsored events, meaning the ads were successful in enticing people to click on the link, send a message, like, share or call for more information.

There were two major highlights for communications for the year—one being able to live stream, and the other launching our new website in December 2023. This, in conjunction with the work we have done on launching Zoho, our new data records management, bookkeeping and communications software system, has made this year a whirlwind from both an administrative and communications perspective.

Since October 2023, 4,800 people have viewed our Google profile, 600 have clicked on our website, 900 have asked for directions, and 61 have made calls to us from a Google search. Our photos on Google have had over 1000 views. This all within a few months!

Our beautiful new website is clean, simple and easy to use—with vibrant imagery. There is much more to come with a focus on blog articles, connection to our social media pages, and important video snapshots from our services. We welcome submissions from anyone who would like to contribute to its development. It was visited 1,263 times in December 2023, its first month of being active.

Our live stream has done so much to enhance how far our services can travel. Not only are we able to record and live stream memorials, weddings and baptisms so that family afar can join in the services, but we can also live stream our Church services to those who are unable to be here in person every Sunday, those with mobility issues, or those, like Marianne in the UK, who can watch the service and be a part of Como Lake United Church each week. She uses a wheelchair, and cannot go to church on Sundays, we, therefore, are her church. As we are for many others we don't actually see! In 2023 our services were viewed 1,400 times, over 164 hours, with an increase of 13 subscribers, up 30% from 2022.

If this is what we were able to do in 2023, just imagine 2024...

Respectfully submitted by **Michelle Andersen**

FACILITIES AND CONGREGATIONAL TEAMS

This year, thankfully, our Facilities management become more manageable! (Stay tuned for facilities jokes)

Thank you to all those who appeared out of the woodwork during our first 18 months after moving in. We are now able to put our energy into building on their foundation.

Thank you to all those who have stepped forward in the last few months to expand our volunteer teams for Property, Reception, Rentals, and Hospitality.

We are grateful for our AV Team: Tamryn, Faith, Iván and Maria. Michelle provides creative content and leadership for this team. We are now livestreaming our worship services. Events and rentals are beginning to use both A/V services and livestreaming; supported by our team and with Kees Hof as a volunteer.

Kim Andersen as our Church Custodian is a blessing for his adaptability and just plain unflappability.

We now have a heating system service contract with ChrisAir. We are very appreciative of Ivan and his team's commitment to problem solving the complexity of our HVAC systems. We intend to continue discussions with Don Evans and the Community Renewal Society of Pacific Mountain Region to address the lack of a cooling system for our space.

To quote last year's report, we are indeed "ramping up our use of the space for the spiritual work of Como Lake United Church— with facilities doing our best to support that work!"

Respectfully submitted by **Linda Hof**

Special Thank You to Linda Hof, who spent much of the last two years running our warrantee work with Michelle, FirstService and TL Housing. The amount of work this has added to Linda is immeasurable and she worked through all concerns and solutions with professionalism and care. Our gratitude to her during a challenging year! (Included by Michelle)

COMO LAKE UNITED CHURCH / FIRSTSERVICE RELATIONSHIP

Christian Dahl, Building Manager from FirstService Residential and Michelle Andersen continue to work well together, meeting regularly on Friday mornings for check-ins to discuss concerns and updates around the building's common space areas, and any community engagement planning. This year we held two combined potlucks, and a summer BBQ, both very successful! We thank FirstService and Christian for their partnership with us.

Respectfully submitted by **Michelle Andersen**

KITCHEN TEAM



Thank you to Anne Carson, Cynthia, Karen, Betty & Lyle and Mary Anne for their work in the kitchen over 2023. When we have church potlucks or other eating events Kees Hoff comes in and helps with the dishwasher. Everyone pitches in with cleanups. Valerie Simpson and others have bought some items very useful for the kitchen. We are going to organize a kitchen clean up soon.

Respectfully submitted, **Mary Anne Bruce**

We thank Mary Anne for her ongoing care and organization of the kitchen during each week, and her assistance at events and gatherings. (Included by Michelle)

HOSPITALITY TEAM

When we put the call out for a Hospitality Team last year, we were blown away by the response; so many willing to help with events and services that do not fall under the responsibility of our Sacred Service teams. This team helps Como Lake United feel like home to our congregation and to our community, from setting up chairs and tables, to decorating and florals, taking down, cleaning up, greeting and coffee service. Hospitality supports families and individuals of our community in their most difficult times and most joyful, supporting Celebrations of Life, of which there were seven during the year. Other events this team supported in 2023: Shrove Tuesday, our Church Blessing, Rev. Jan's "Refirement", our community potlucks, the Summer BBQ, our Advanced Planning workshop, the Advent nights, and the Carols & Bells Concert.

May 2024 see us being able to conquer "The Beast" coffee machine!

Thank you to: Mary Anne, Barb, Linda, Anne, Karen, Julie, Sharon, Cynthia, Carol, Hazel, Betty, Lyall, Maria, Mindy, Nita, Debbie H., Patt G., Debbie T., Kim, and many others who have leant a hand throughout the year, including Kees, Phil Hall & Associates, and Dave.

Respectfully submitted by **Michelle Andersen**

RECEPTION TEAM

Our volunteer Reception Team includes Anne C., Linda H., Maria T., Karen L., Cynthia C., Patt G., Debbie T., with support from Barb and Debbie H. when they are in the office.

They have been a key support to Michelle, who is often in meetings, on the phone with other individuals, coordinating events and services, and doing other administrative work. This team ensures that priority calls and inquiries, such as requests for hospital blessings, notice of someone passing, requests for funeral services and urgent church and building calls are taken and passed to Michelle to action immediately with the necessary teams. Other calls and inquiries have to then be addressed in order of priority.

This team maintains organization around the front reception area and copier room. They also fold bulletins, assist daytime event renters, and workshop setup, and manage our food bank bag collection and distribution.

We thank them for all of their hard work.

Respectfully submitted by **Michelle Andersen**

PHIL HALL AND ASSOCIATES—BUILDING MAINTENANCE

A workshop was created in the P2 storage room, with work bench, electric power extended, improved lighting, major power tools were donated, full compliment of hand tools fill 2 cabinets.

Shelving was built in the P2 storage room, copier room, Atrium storage closet and in the Sanctuary worship closet.

Crest and Como Lake United Church logos were installed at the entries.

Memorial corner stones were placed in the gardens.

Cloud of Witness Memorial Walls were installed.

A cabinet was assembled in the women's washroom to store paper supplies and cleaning products, used in the janitorial work of maintaining the cleanliness of all washrooms.

A tool chest was assembled and placed in the electrical room for easy access on floor 1, without having to rush to P2 storage.

A brush was made for the BBQ.

Metal grids were painted and installed in the Atrium, used for pinning up information and notices.

Parking signs were built.

Door stops and wedges were built.

Ladder tree shelving was designed and provided for the collection of food bank items.

Signage was created regarding the method of storing tables and chairs in the kitchen storage area.

"Socks" were built to raise the piano bench. These are removable for those pianists who prefer not to use them, so incredibly handy and versatile.

Rods for banners were installed in the Sanctuary.

A bench was made for the women's washroom.

White board was installed in the office.

Repaired kitchen island—broken track that misaligned the right wall of the island.

Installed required fire extinguisher in the kitchen.

Respectfully submitted by **Dave McCutcheon** on behalf of Phil Hall & Associates, including Phil Hall, Dave McCutcheon, Rom Pavalonis, Rod Akester, Ted Sarginson



AUDIO VISUAL TEAM

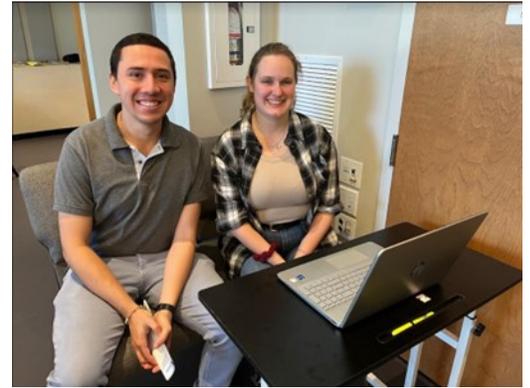
Throughout the year, the AV team has diligently overseen the procurement and maintenance of sound quality, ensuring the enjoyment and accuracy of slides, audio, and video presentations. Our support during worship services has been consistent, and the successful re-launch of streaming services is a significant achievement.

The AV team has consistently provided structured and organized support, meeting our various Pulpit Supply Ministers' needs. We are committed to expanding our reach and are proud of the growth potential inherent in our team and skill set.

We welcomed a valuable addition to our team, Kees Hof, whose expertise and experience have brought about significant improvements. Kees has enhanced our capabilities and contributed immensely to our overall effectiveness.

The AV team plays a pivotal role in enriching people's lives by ensuring access to community and, more importantly, the teachings of God. We remain dedicated to making a positive difference.

Respectfully submitted by **Iván Camilo Acevedo Marín** on behalf of the AV Team: Faith, Tamryn, Iván, Maria featuring Kees Hof.



Thank you to the AV Team for overcoming and succeeding in a challenging year! You teach us something new every day! (Included by Michelle)

CUSTODIAL

2023 brought an increase in Como Lake United Church private rentals. From a custodial perspective, all renters were respectful of the facilities, honouring our Liturgical décor, and keeping our building and furniture well-looked after. Cleaning after rentals has been fairly standard across all events, with main areas of traffic being the hallway, washrooms, and location of food service.

Supply needs are consistent, with paper products such as paper hand towels, toilet paper and paper towels being most used. At this time, these products are purchased from the retailer with the best price. New cabinet for cleaning supplies in women's washroom is both useful and convenient, saving time.

The comments from visitors to Como Lake United Church and renters of the space have been positive, all appreciating the aesthetics of our Church, as well as the cleanliness and access to tables, chairs, tablecloths, etc.

At lock up after events, renters have been respectful and grateful.

Thank you to those volunteers who have assisted with setup, take down, and some cleaning of the kitchen and tablecloths etc.

Respectively submitted by **Kim Andersen**

RENTALS

We started renting out our space for one-off private rentals, and 6 –month terms in June 2023. We had approximately 20 rentals in 6 months, all by renters who have the utmost respect for our space, the Liturgical décor and our terms and conditions.

Burke Mountain Naturalists found their way back home to Como Lake United in October 2023, holding their monthly meetings in the Sanctuary, supported by Iván and Maria on AV. They are impressed with the new space and amenities, and have now chosen to live stream their presentations. We hope to engage further with them in the future to bring more of nature to Como Lake United.

With the increasing numbers of rentals, we have started a Rental Team to assist with check-in, check-out, closing and helping renters with their questions when on-site. We appreciate all those who volunteer on this team—they know the hours can be late and often on weekends.

Rentals brought in \$12,722 in income in 6 months for 2023—\$2,800 of that in December. December also saw the Congregation vote yes to allowing specific alcohol types to be served at private rentals and Como Lake United Church events, under the regulatory laws set by the BC Government.

Thank you to Anne C., Barb M., Linda H., Kim, Karen L., Maria and Iván.

Respectfully submitted by **Michelle Andersen**

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