



# FALL GRAPEVINE 2024

## Minister's Meanderings

I was just thinking about how fitting the name Grapevine is for our congregational newsletter. Just as a tree draws nourishment from being planted close to living water (Psalm 1) so we as branches of a vine draw our spiritual and social life by being connected to the main vine which Jesus uses as a metaphor for Himself. "I am the vine. You are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit."(John 15:5)

It is a powerful image for even erstwhile gardeners. We all know what happens to a branch that gets disconnected from a tree or a vine. It doesn't happen right away but eventually it loses life and the ability to produce fruit. So, the Grapevine letter keeps the communication lifeline flowing. It reminds us of the various branches involved in being church. We can't be the church all by ourselves and thank God that, just as Paul writes in his letters to the churches in the New Testament, there are many people with different gifts and abilities that contribute to the life of the body of Christ.

As we enter into the season of Thanksgiving, we should overflow with gratitude for the privilege of being the church with each other. That we are healthy branches bearing the fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, self-control, goodness, gentleness and faithfulness.

We read in this Grapevine, articles that describe what others are doing according to their gifts. John goes on to say that Christ's love flows through the branches to those who keep His commandments. (vs. 10)

I believe that prayer should flow as well. Constant prayer for your committees, your staff and particularly those on the search teams looking for a new minister and administrator.

Healthy grapevines produce branches that produce good grapes which are made into good wine. "Wine that gladdens human hearts." (Psalm 104: 15)

We can be glad for the connectedness that encourages us with hope for the days to come.

*In Christ's Service,  
Gordon*

### Upcoming Services & Events

Nov 3	9:30 am	All Saints' Sunday service
Nov 10	9:30 am	Remembrance Sunday service
Nov 16	10:00 am	Christmas House Tour
Dec 1	9:30 am	Advent 1 Communion
Dec 4	2:30 pm	Lessons, Carols & Cookies service
Dec 8	7:00 pm	Community Carol Sing at Central United Church
Dec 24	9:00 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion service

## From the Chair of Council

A lot has happened in the four months since our last Grapevine newsletter. As a result, the Council and Committees did not take their usual summer break. Instead, they have been extremely busy making sure the work of our church is supported with the tools, programs and finances needed to be successful. We owe the members of Council, our minister and all the Committees a big thank you for their dedication and commitment.

In June, the congregation voted by a significant majority to remain independent and to search for a permanent minister. In July, a Search Committee was formed under the capable leadership of Dick Hamilton. The committee went through a training session and has been assigned a liaison minister from the Region to help them navigate the search process. The vacant position is on ChurchHub and discussions have been underway with potential candidates. We are looking to fill a part-time position and this limits the number of options, so this is likely to take some time. We are very fortunate in the interim to have the dedicated support of Rev. Dr. Gordon Crossfield. The committee was unable to get the number of people they were looking for, so I am asking that each of you prayerfully consider volunteering to help with this important task. Please contact Dick if you feel you can serve.

Unfortunately, after over 21 years of faithful and dedicated service, Patrice Walker, our Administrative Secretary is retiring. Patrice has been at the centre of all our church activities and knows more about how everything works than anyone else in our congregation. She has been an integral and vital part of our congregation, and it is hard to imagine her not being with us anymore. Patrice worked with our M&P chair, Sandra Harding and me to ensure her job description and hours required provides a thorough representation of the requirements. She has also agreed to train her replacement. The position has been advertised and the M&P committee is in the process of interviewing potential candidates.

In July, I reluctantly accepted the resignation of Diane Rawsthorn as Chair of Trustees and as a Council member. This has been a significant loss. Diane was a hard worker, a great communicator, a strong and collaborative leader with a high energy level. She is very much missed but we wish her much happiness in her future endeavours. If anyone is interested in serving as a Trustee or being a member of Council, please let me know.

The Benefit Concert taking place October 19, in partnership with Strive Studios, is an exciting event which hopefully will help us raise some money to support our programs and outreach missions. Jim Bradley, Keith Rae and Bill Outred are working with Vicky from Strive on this initiative. The Christmas House Tour is being reinstated for the first time since Covid and will be held on November 16. This will bring some excitement and energy and is always a good fundraiser. Janet Hamilton has taken the lead on this project and will be looking for volunteers to help.

The Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls and Western Ontario Waterways Regions have created a Growth Animator position that is designed to help support congregations at no charge. The salary is covered through Mission and Service offerings. The Council held a preliminary meeting with the Growth Animator and hope to pursue this further when we have more time. The idea isn't just about how we go about getting bigger, although that is considered. It is also about how we become healthier and work in sustainable ways. Those who participated in the initial session found it quite interesting.

In addition to all these projects we continue to explore opportunities to maximize the potential of our building.

In closing I would like to emphasize a couple of things.

1. Despite the upcoming staff changes which can cause anxiety and uncertainty, there is a lot of exciting work going on in our congregation. We are resilient and strong when we work together and can have fun while accomplishing a great deal.
2. We will be looking for people to volunteer on some committees, as Trustees and for some of our upcoming programs and events. Please consider how you can help. Not all jobs are demanding. Some only require a bit of time and sharing of ideas.

We don't know what the future may hold, but we know who holds the future. *"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."* Corrie ten Boom.

*Respectfully, Lyn Taylor*

### Toy Drive for Pelham Cares

Each year, Pelham Cares holds a drive to help provide toys for children at Christmas. If you would like to donate towards this drive, there is a drop box in the Fonthill Narthex where you can place your donation; **monetary donations only please, no toys**. Cheques may be made payable to Fonthill United Church. You can also send an e-transfer to [fonthilu@vaxxine.com](mailto:fonthilu@vaxxine.com). The last day for donations will be Monday December 9.

*– Sponsored by the Fonthill Worship Committee*



### "Homes for the Holidays" Christmas House Tour

On November 16 we are hosting our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual "Homes for the Holidays" Christmas House Tour. There are sign-up sheets for volunteers. I am asking you to ask your family if they can also volunteer. We have two homes that require parking attendants. We also need young family members to participate in the café to serve and clear plates and cups. It is a great way to get them involved in our Church.

This tour would not be possible without the wonderful people in our community. The decorators from local shops give their time and talent to work on our behalf. We show our appreciation to them by patronizing their stores.

This year the upper hall is going to host local artists. There will be a great variety of talent. Even if you are unable to do the tour, please be sure to give some time to visit them and invite your friends to join you. Select a new piece of art for your home or a gift for someone at Christmas.

*Janet Hamilton, Convenor*

## Fundraisers



**The Huntington Society of Canada** is selling Amaryllis kits for \$17. If you are interested in purchasing them, please contact Gail DeKoning. The kits will be delivered at the end of October.

**CONCERT – OCTOBER 19:** Snjezana Pavicevic, a recording artist and piccolo soloist with the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra has agreed to do a one hour fundraising concert in the Fonthill United Church sanctuary on Saturday, October 19 starting at 3:00 pm, accompanied by concert pianist, Vladimir Scepanovic, featuring classical music from Bach, Schubert, Chopin, and more. This opportunity to hear this renowned artist is a result of her friendship with Vicky, the music teacher in our building. During her visit to Canada, Ms. Pavicevic will also be doing fundraising concerts for the Princess Margaret Hospital, and in Philadelphia and New York. The concert is free, with a suggested free-will cash offering of \$25 per person. All funds raised are in support of various programs offered by Fonthill United Church. Please plan to attend!

*Concert at Fonthill United Church*  
**Saturday October 19, 2024 at 3:00 pm**

*Concert supported by*  
*Fonthill United Church and Strive Studios*



**Suggested free-will cash offering**  
**~ \$25 per person**

*Snježana is currently in Canada*  
*to give a fundraiser concert*  
*for the Princess Margaret Hospital*

**Snježana Pavićević**, recording artist  
and piccolo soloist  
with the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra in Serbia;  
accompanied by concert pianist, **Vladimir Vanja Šćepanović**.

Featuring classical music  
from Bach, Schubert, Chopin and more.

*A fundraiser to support the programs and outreach missions*  
*of Fonthill United Church*

## From the Finance & Property Committee

It is hard to believe that fall is now with us, and many will be thinking of what we can do for Thanksgiving and even Christmas. I know in our house there seems to be less chat about how and where we can go, simply because aging adds some complexity to those activities we used to just take for granted.

There is no question, to date, 2024 has presented Council with a series of challenges but through the guidance of the Chair, Lyn Taylor and all Council members, we seem to be making progress and hopefully we will get to our new normal when we hire a new minister.

Included in this newsletter is a copy of the operating fund statement for the period ending August 31 from which you note a surplus of \$1,934 is evident. This compares to a loss of \$18,066 for the corresponding period last year. We had projected a deficit of \$17,529 to this point. We cannot recall an operating surplus at the end of August for the past decade.

The main reason for this “good news” is a direct result of your incredible generosity. Year-to-date member givings amount to \$115,593, an increase of \$15,593 or 15% above budget, and 11% above 2023. We do have some members who contribute annually, and these amounts are included. We have also received some special one-time gifts and to those we say Thanks. Rental income is up \$2,785 from 2023 due to increases and more short-term rentals.

Expenses are closely monitored and the increase in general maintenance is due to one-time repairs including the ceiling work and painting in the Narthex. Overall expenses are \$3,228 or 2.2% below budget. As mentioned below under Property, in the near term we will be faced with some major repairs. Despite this we feel confident we will be well within the projected deficit of \$22,248. Thank you for your continuing support and commitment to our church.

### Property Activities

A working group has been created to review all areas of the building, the intent being to prioritize all repairs/improvements which should be reviewed/considered. The main issue at this point is to replace the main electrical panel. You may recall hearing during a storm last year, water got into the electrical panel along the hydro wire which enters the building. The projected cost is roughly \$10,000.

There has been considerable discussion around improving/renovating the Friendship Room and the Board Room to create a more friendly/welcome/brighter environment. Quotes are being obtained and we will keep you informed of any potential developments in this area.

We recently met with a representative of Elections Canada/Ontario to see if we would be interested in becoming a polling station for future Federal and Provincial elections. Potential rental revenue from each election is roughly \$1,500 and we do meet all their specifications. The plan is to move forward with this request.

In July, the Montessori School installed air conditioning in the lower hall, at their expense. We will benefit from this installation when we have coffee in the summer months.

We will continue to keep you informed on all property issues.

In conclusion, we sincerely appreciate your continued support and if you have any questions on financial or property issues, please ask any committee member. Thank You.

*Jim Bradley, Chair, Finance and Property Committee*

**OPERATING FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

**Year-to-date ending August 31, 2024**

	Actual	Budget
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
Operating Fund Givings	115,593	100,000
Loose Offerings	648	267
Special Receipts	0	0
Church Rentals	17,540	16,240
Fundraising	0	0
Interest Earned	5,143	6,355
United Church Women	0	0
Solar Panel Generation	5,855	5,500
Miscellaneous Receipts	118	300
United Church Grants	0	0
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>144,897</b>	128,662
<b>DISBURSEMENTS</b>		
Salaries & Benefits	79,525	80,925
Contractual Labour	830	1000
Christian Education	0	333
Worship & Membership	2,275	3,967
Other Committees	48	200
Outreach Fund Reserve	2,667	2,667
Building & Property	43,280	41,383
General Council Assessment	6,703	6,703
M&S Fund Contribution	3,333	3,333
Administration	4,302	5,680
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>142,963</b>	146,191
<b>SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>1,934</b>	(17,529)
<b>CASH FUNDS ALLOCATION:</b>		
Operating Fund	23,501.16	
Outreach Fund	6,853.08	
Memoriam Fund	7,097.28	
Building Fund	2,506.86	
Choir Fund	2,019.88	
<b>TOTAL CASH FUNDS:</b>	<b>\$41,978.26</b>	