



# JAMES BAY United Church

*Opening Doors to God's Love*

# 2025 Annual REPORT



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## **Territorial Acknowledgement**

We gather on land that has sustained bodies, hopes, and dreams for a very long time. We acknowledge the Kosapsum and Songees, Lək<sup>w</sup>əŋən peoples—all relations yearning for right relationship. And so we recommit to a complex journey toward reconciliation.

# Life of the Church

## Memberships and Transfers

Sandra Forsyth, Diane Monteith, Mark Wagner, Angela Waleski, Heinrich Unger, Marilyn Unger, Anne Manikel, Randall Manikel, Mary White, and Alexander White.

Four people transferred to other congregations.

## Baptisms

Sebastian Powell, Robin Willis, and Maximus Rogan

## Marriages

Daniel Cox & Margaret Gallant,  
Mahima Silvester & Uttam Kumar,  
Matthew Monteith Forsyth &  
Hannah Wade,  
Stephanie Sweetnam & Vernon Wilson

## Deaths

Aleksa Harkness





# Annual Meeting Minutes

**March 27, 2025**

7:00 PM – 9:25 PM, James Bay United Church Sanctuary

Attendance in person: Colleen Adair, Hazel Blennerhassett, Gary Brandstadt, Charlotte Caron (Board Secretary), Linda Clegg, Jackie Cox-Zeigler, Deborah Davis, Candis Elliott, André Fontaine, Sandra Forsyth, Carol Garceau, Karen Halliday, Sarah Hovey, Melanie Jantzen, Scott Jantzen, Ryon Johnson, Joanne Keelan, Kim Keinath, Marg Lunam, Pauline MacKenzie, Cheryl Macpherson, Anne Manikel, Randy Manikel, D'Arcy McPherson, Gordon Miller, Diane Monteith, Gwenna Moss, Colleen Nichol, Steve Nichol, Rev. Greg Powell, Joan Ryan, Franklyn Roy, Martin Stewart (Board Chair), Kim Tadei, Alan Thurston, Beverley Tracey, Catherine Traer, Brian Troutman, James Troutman, Heintz Unger, Marilyn Unger, Linda Wreggitt, Raymond Yee, Mark Zeigler, Natalia Zhuravlova.

Joining via Zoom: Cheryl Caldwell, Zunaira Mustaqueem, Barb Whitney.

Welcome — Martin Stewart opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Greg Powell led in an opening prayer.

Gordon Miller led in an adapted version of the hymn “Be Thou my Vision”

All joined in the Land Acknowledgement -

*James Bay United Church sits on land that the Esquimalt and Songhees nations used long before contact with Europeans and then others. These nations did not intend to cede the land. The history is complex and unjust, so we recommit to reconciliation and right relationship, seeing all as related.*

Meeting Covenant was offered.

*We covenant together.... to listen and speak with respect ... to express our views ... to be aware of each other and ourselves ... to be mindful of time, making room for each person to contribute ... to consider prayerfully ... to care about the life of the congregation, the community and the world ... to ask for help as needed ... to meet our commitments.*

Martin introduced the current Board members: Charlotte Caron, Karen Halliday, Joanne Keelan, Kim Keinath, Colleen Nichol, Greg Powell, Alan Thurston, James Troutman.

## **Procedural motions** (10 mins) –

1. For this motion only full members can vote.

M/S Kim Tadei/Linda Clegg - that all who are in attendance at this meeting be given voting privileges for this Annual Congregational Meeting. Carried.

2. M/S Gary Brandstadt/ Linda Wreggit -that we accept the AGM Agenda. Carried.

3. M/S Joan Ryan/Pauline MacKenzie - that Charlotte Caron be elected as recorder for this meeting. Carried.

4. M/S Carol Garceau/Linda Wreggit - that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of James Bay United Church held on April 3, 2024 be approved as circulated. Carried.

5. M/S Sarah Hovey/D'Arcy McPherson - that the minutes of the Congregational Meeting held in July 28,2024 regarding the call of Greg Powell be approved as circulated. Carried.

### **Life & Work of 2025-**

Charlotte Caron invited Team Leads to give a 90 second summary of their 2024 work using the imagery of a rose (something good), a thorn (something that did not work out), and a bud (upcoming). Colleen Nichol spoke for Greeters and Worship Team, André Fontaine for Refugees and Rainbow ministry, Carol Garceau for Healing Pathways, Kim Tadei for Pastoral Care and Offering Counters, Alan Thurston for Finance, Karen Halliday Fund Development, Kim Keinath Ministry and Personnel, Bev Tracey for Property and Hospitality, Greg Powell on behalf of Kelby McNair for the Arts Ministry, Joanne Kellan for Thursday Lunch, Zunaira Mustaqueem for Communications. Martin introduced and thanked staff members who were present: Greg Powell (Minister), Jackie Cox-Zeigler (Bookkeeper), Candis Elliott (Office Administrator), Jamie Waters (sound), Nathan MacDiarmid (live stream), and Zunaira Mustaqueem (Communications, via Zoom).

**In Memoriam** - Charlotte led a time of reflection on the lives of JBUC people who died since our last AGM: Paul Barker, Isobel Clemson, Norma Hill, Billy Page, Kris Unger, Betty Roberts, Linda Rutherford, and Marg Apolinario.

People were invited to join in groups of 3-5 people around them to reflect together for 10-15 minutes on our theme for the year “Building Bridges” using the question “What bridges could JBUC build into the neighbourhood?” Responses were written on cue-cards to be used over the coming weeks.

We returned with the hymn “And On This Path” and a short break.

Hazel Blennerhassett led the congregation through the financial report and budget and ensuing questions .

M/S Gordon Miller/Linda Wreggitt - that the 2024 financial statements be approved as circulated. Carried.

M/S Kim Tadei/Brian Troutman - that the 2025 Budget be approved as circulated. Carried.

M/S Linda Clegg/Marg Lunam - that the JBUC 2024 Annual Report be accepted as circulated. Carried.

M/S Sarah Hovey/Linda Wreggitt - that we accept the resignations of Trustees Alan Thurston; Susan Ross with thanks. Carried.

M/S Collen Adair/Gray Brandstadt - that we elect Karen Halliday; Heinz Unger as Trustees of James Bay United Church. Carried.

2025 Nominations introduced by Deborah Davis

M/S Pauline MacKenzie/Sarah Hovey that the slate of members of the Board of James Bay United Church for 2025-to the next Annual Meeting be:

Chair – Martin Stewart

Secretary – D’Arcy MacPherson

Pastoral Care – Colleen Nichol

Trustees and Fund Development – Karen Halliday

Ministry and Personnel – Mahima Silvester

Community Lunch – Joanne Keelan

Communications – Gordon Miller

Thrift Shop Liaison – Marg Lunam

Members at Large – James Troutman; Diane Monteith; Scott Jantzen Carried.

Colleen Nichol presented gifts of appreciation to Charlotte Caron who is leaving the secretary position after 5 years and to the Interim Finance Team-- Hazel Blennerhassett, Franklyn Roy and Alan Thurston--who did an enormous amount of work to bring the finances of the church into good order.

Martin Stewart offered closing remarks and Greg Powell closed with prayer.

M: Joan Ryan - That the meeting be adjourned.

Closing Hymn MV 161 – “I Have Called You By Your Name.”

~ submitted by Martin Stewart, Chair; Charlotte Caron, Secretary



# Minister's Report

Rev. Greg Powell

This has been another tremendous year at James Bay United Church.

In my view, we are faithfully responding to God's calls on our lives in so many ways. Our refugee team has done incredible work to hold our politicians accountable, to meet the immediate needs of our Afghan family, and to embody God's love and grace for people who would have ample reason to doubt it. Our Thursday lunches connect people, fill bellies, and point to the food that makes all hunger vanish: the food of the Spirit. On Mondays, guitarists of all walks of life enliven the sanctuary with their strings. On Tuesday, jazz musicians break all sorts of rules, reminding us that God cannot be contained or bound. Voices ring out on Wednesdays and Thursdays. On Fridays, board games flee from their cupboards to challenge all who dare compete and Saturdays have yoga and an artists' gathering.

And then, after all that, we have Sunday. Some reading this might think Sunday is what church is all about, and they're not wrong. But if you doubt there's more to it than that, please re-read the paragraph above. Jesus taught that God is not restricted to only the mountaintops or to Jerusalem: neither is God restricted to Sundays. To be sure, we aren't just making our space available to user groups (even though that can be a very faithful activity): our partnerships are thoughtfully and carefully nurtured such that they are Spirit-infused and Spirit-led.

Lest we think the work is complete, however, we scan the world at this time to see that the kin-dom is not yet fulfilled. Russia continues to bombard Ukraine; the US and Israel are at war with Iran; the US recently kidnapped the leader of Venezuela; the climate crisis is not contained; and too many sleep on the streets of Victoria or under the picnic tables on our patio. All is not right, yet.

And so we rely on God, and we partner with God. We hold steadfast to a bold vision of a fair world, where each has a fair chance to flourish. None is forced to flee from their home. No child fears a missile strike. Every mother knows her child will have the opportunity to live into their deepest purpose. As we teach and practice forgiveness, we embody a way of peace. As we teach and practice inclusion, we embody the end of oppression. As we teach and practice spirituality, we embody that we have enough and we are enough.

I've been taken recently by this quote: "The bicycle is a simple solution to some of the world's most complicated problems" As a cyclist, I agree with it! And as a minister, I see that we could replace the word "bicycle" with the word "church" and the phrase holds. If I may be so bold: We are the antidote to the world's ills. Regardless of creed or doctrine, the simple acts of celebrating love, of giving thanks, of singing and praying, of seeing each other through grief and joy—being church is how we take on the world's most complicated problems. We do it head-on with courage, and we do it trusting God's all-permeating force of love is asserting its agency throughout the universe. With appropriate humility, we should be proud of the work that we do and proud of the very fact that we get together to assure each other of the presence of Spirit and love in the world.

Again this year, I have been honoured to be able to lead worship, to offer pastoral care, to lead study sessions, to work closely with our other staff, to work closely with our board, and to guide us through the seasons of the church year.

To date, I have been working on a three-quarters time basis. I am very excited by the prospect of increasing this to closer to full time. In close conversation with the Ministry and Personnel Committee and with the Board, I hope to take on a more active role managing our staff and generally upholding my accountability with regards to administrative matters. I also hope there are new programs on the horizon, particularly those that address the loneliness and isolation that tend to affect our young adults. The significance of this prospect is not lost on me: many of our sibling congregations in the denomination are moving in the opposite direction, but we are blessed with the possibility of growing and further embodying God's grace and the light of Christ to more people.

What you read in this volume represents a lot of commitment and a lot of work. It also represents a certain stubbornness, and outright refusal to accept anything other than the conclusion that God's love wins every time. Jesus showed us there is always new life.



# Board Report

The James Bay United Church family continued to grow and prosper in 2025.

Guided by a responsive and engaged Board, and animated by the creativity, dedication, and care of our staff and volunteers, the life of the church flourished across all areas of ministry. Sunday service attendance increased, and there was a renewed sense of connection, purpose, and spiritual vitality within our congregation.

At the heart of this growth was our shared commitment to being a community where people are “known and loved, inspired to risk new ways and live with purpose and joy.”

## **Ministry Life and Community Engagement**

Our ministries continued to thrive, offering meaningful opportunities for worship, connection, and service:

- Ordered and Lay Worship, and Music Ministry deepened spiritual life through vibrant Sunday services, choir, and musical offerings, including the James Bay Community Chorus and SingYourJoy Children’s Chorus, welcoming participants of all ages.
- The much-loved Tuesday Night Jazz at the Church series brought exceptional musicians and the wider community together, strengthening our identity as a hub for arts and culture.
- Community-building ministries such as the Thrift Shop and lifelong learning opportunities created space for reflection, dialogue, and shared understanding.
- Our Friendship and Hospitality efforts were especially visible through the Thursday Community Lunch, where volunteers provided a warm, welcoming meal each week—an important expression of care, dignity, and belonging in the neighbourhood.

## **Care, Outreach, and Social Impact**

- James Bay United Church continued to respond compassionately to the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of people in our community and beyond:
- Through the Refugee Initiative, the congregation remained actively engaged in supporting individuals and families seeking safety and a new beginning in Canada. In 2025, the congregation advanced sponsorship efforts for an Afghan refugee family, navigating complex immigration processes while raising the financial and community support required for resettlement.
- The Healing Pathway Ministry and pastoral care programs provided spaces for healing, reflection, and personal growth.
- Outreach initiatives, including Tuesday morning prayer and volunteer-led pastoral care, extended care to those experiencing isolation, hardship, or transition.

## **Reconciliation and Climate Action**

Faithful to our calling, we continued to deepen our commitment to reconciliation with First Peoples and climate justice:

- Through the Social and Climate Justice Ministry, the congregation engaged in learning, dialogue, and action on issues of justice, sustainability, and right relationship.
- Events such as Reconciliation at Stake and environmental programming (e.g., World Water Day: “Water is Love”) invited thoughtful engagement with Indigenous perspectives and ecological responsibility.
- These efforts reflect our ongoing desire to live out our faith in ways that are responsive to the realities of our time.

## **Stewardship and Governance**

- The church managed its financial affairs responsibly and with care. Through prudent stewardship and the generosity of our congregation and community, we were able to sustain core ministries while also advancing bold and creative initiatives.
- The Board worked collaboratively and thoughtfully, balancing vision with practical decision-making, and ensuring that our governance reflects both accountability and grace.



## **Looking Ahead**

In 2025, James Bay United Church demonstrated what is possible when faith, community, and action come together. We moved forward with courage—grounded in the teachings of Jesus, attentive to the needs of our neighbours, and open to the new things God is doing among us.

With gratitude for all who contribute to this vibrant community, we look to the future with hope.

~ Martin Stewart, Board Chair

# Archives Report

## Transfer of Files from our Church to the United Church Regional Archives in Vancouver

Our Church, like all United Church of Canada congregations in the country, has a responsibility to save and store our records, such as minutes of the board, committees/teams, congregational meetings, and memberships. Each Region of the Church maintains an Archive where such records are kept in storage and used for research. The year 2025 saw us complete the transfer of a backlog of files from our Church to the United Church Regional Archives in Vancouver. Two separate transfers were made, one in May 2025 and one in September 2025. Our records are now up to date.

## Displays to Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada

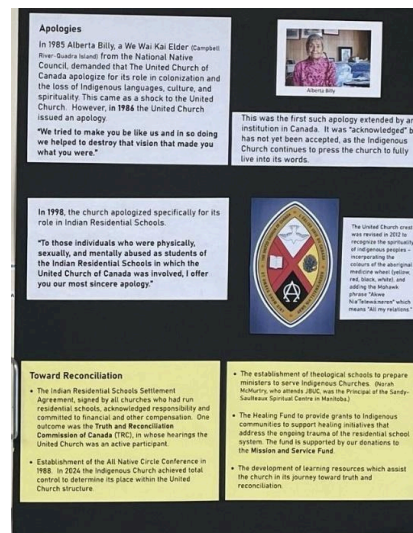
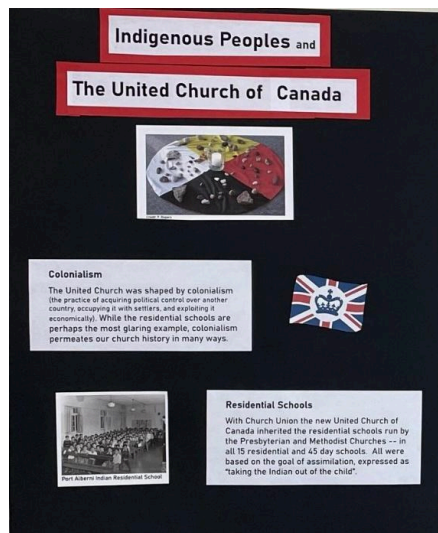
2025 saw the completion of a series of displays celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada and the history of our Church which was established in 1891 as James Bay Methodist Church. Five displays were made, bringing the total to 10 during 2024-25. The five displays completed in 2025 were:

- The Community Church - Neighborhood Engagement in the 1970s
- The Thrift Store, 40th Anniversary
- Communication and Neighborhood Engagement 2017 – 2022
- Indigenous Peoples and the United Church of Canada
- Human Sexuality and the United Church of Canada (marriage equality, membership and ordination, apology to LGBTQ+ people, PRIDE)
- Brechin United Church in Nanaimo borrowed some of our displays as part of their celebration of the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada.

## Photograph Album

During 2025, we initiated a photo record of events and activities in our Church. From time to time this album will be on display during coffee after church.

~ Respectfully submitted ~ Gwenna Moss



# Arts Ministry Report

Hello Dear Friends,

My name is Kelby MacNayr and I am thrilled and blessed to be a part of the James Bay United Church community as the Director of Arts Ministry. It is my great pleasure to share a summary of the activities of YOUR JBUC Arts Ministry over the past 12 months and where we are looking to go for the coming year.

The Arts Ministry seeks to open doors to God's love through myriad artistic practices; through the recognition of community as Sacred and integral to our human experience; collective and spiritual fulfillment; to the cultivation of holistic health and wellbeing - mind, body and spirit; nurturing our spiritual, our mental and physical health through engagement through the Arts, social connectedness and deepening our connection to one another. To this end, our Arts Ministry offers programs that bring people together through music, song, dance, visual mediums, physical and meditative practices that cultivate and support spiritual well-being.

This past year has been a time of flourishing for many of our foundational programs and an opportunity to build on those successes and serve the community in new ways.

- The Arts Ministry model at James Bay United Church is unique and through partnership with community, facilitators and our Church, our programs are stable and financially self-sustaining allowing us to reinvest in strengthening our current programs and building initiatives to further share the gifts of art, community and spirit.
- We have been excited to expand our Tuesday Night Jazz offering into further educational opportunities designed to inspire aspiring musicians young and old through frequent Guest Artist Master Classes. Music education can be an unaffordable opportunity for many families and in these sessions we bring the community together in inspiration and learning making the arts available to everyone, regardless of finances. We are also excited to have started a weekly jazz Master Class for musicians of all levels with the renowned multi-instrumentalist and respected jazz performer and teacher John Lee.
- To further expand our reach and offerings, in February, we completed an exciting pilot project with three Jazz Matinees to celebrate Valentine's Day and Black History Month. The opportunity to build a Matinee series allows us to invite people to join in community (especially during the winter months) during daylight driving hours, financially accessible to everyone through a donation model and supporting artists sharing their gifts with the community.
- We are very excited about the results and planning more for the future.
- Brand-new in January, we started a pilot program to offer an everyone welcome Saturday morning yoga class to support physical, mental and spiritual well-being in a safe, fun and accessible manner. Respected Yoga Teacher, Ida Manly, operated the Moksana Yoga Centre in Victoria for over two decades before pausing amidst the Covid pandemic. She developed with us a yoga class that is both authentic to the practises of this cultivative art form and also, inherent to the practice, skilfully offers variations to support all ages, stages and body types of participants who are interested to explore this time-honoured, fun, community practice. No Yoga Pants required :).

We continue to offer: Tuesday Night Jazz; Moving with Grace; Wednesday Morning Chi Gong Class; Wednesday Night Community Choir; Thursday afternoon Kids Choir through our partnership with *Sing Your Joy* family of choirs; Friday morning Tai Chi classes; Saturday Artists Gathering; Saturday Night Community Swing Dances (with introductory lessons) and an upcoming matinee series.

We are also finding new ways to celebrate the artists behind the scenes in the audio and video world, sharing some of the incredible work that has been done and finding new ways to share in the joys of audio, photography and film through new programs to offer mentorship and encourage creativity in our community.

Plans are in the works to expand into some exciting classical and folk music programming coming up with our first concert on April 17, 2026 featuring renowned visiting classical guitarists through an exciting new partnership with the Guitar Faculty at the University of Victoria.

We are excitedly working to collaborate with the Victoria Fiddle community and also offer some exciting new programs in group ukulele classes.

Stay tuned as together we open doors to God's love through the joy, magic, spirit and community of the Arts!



# Communications Team Report

This year the JBUC Board established the position of Communications Chair. An important moment because it signifies that we value the role of our paid Communications Coordinator enough to offer specific support at the board level.

The mandate of the Communications Chair is to provide:

- Advice, direction, or suggestions to ensure communications to all constituents is clear, concise, consistent, and effective. Constituents can include the Board, Staff, congregants, adherents, member groups, neighbours and general public. Ensures that the messaging from the Church to any group maintains a consistent tone, look, feel and accuracy.
- Specific communications advice and oversight to the Lead Minister and Board Chair.
- Specific communications advice and oversight to the Communications Coordinator.
- Communications assistance and suggestions to other staff on request.
- Assistance to M&P/HR on hiring Communications Coordinator (when position is open). This can include drafting job descriptions, reviewing applicants, and sitting in on interviews, as well as, to:
- Nurture and grow a Communications Volunteer Team, and
- Engage Ministry and Program leads in conversation about their communication needs.

This year we said goodbye and thanked Zunaira Mustaqeem for her good service over the past few years working as our Communications Coordinator from her home in Vancouver. The board moved to bring our communications work in-house, deciding we needed to have someone here at the church who is active in the community, understands our brand and has an extensive background in communications management.

Enter and welcome to Natalia Zhuravlova. As Natalia will tell you, the work of a Communications Coordinator cannot be contained to a regular set of hours and, on any given week, there is always more that could be done. But as I observe James Bay United; our email messages, posters and rack cards, public facing art, social media channels and our visibility in our neighbourhood, I can confidently say that JBUC Communications is alive and well and already off to a great start for 2026.



~ Submitted by  
Gordon Miller, Communications Chair

# Community Lunch Program Report

## Background

The Community Lunch started in December 2022 with the goals of providing nutritious meals and fostering social connections, reducing isolation and building community. We have many regular attendees and new people coming all the time.

## Who we Serve

Lunch guests average 80 per week including people on fixed incomes, seniors, LGBTQS2 and people with disabilities, the unhoused and others dealing with substance use. Many guests live with chronic health conditions or are going through cancer treatment.

Welcoming everyone reduces stigma and enables people to learn about each other's lives and challenges. For example, an older adult could be sitting next to a young unhoused person. We come from a Social Justice, non-judgmental perspective which fosters empowerment and creates safety and acceptance.

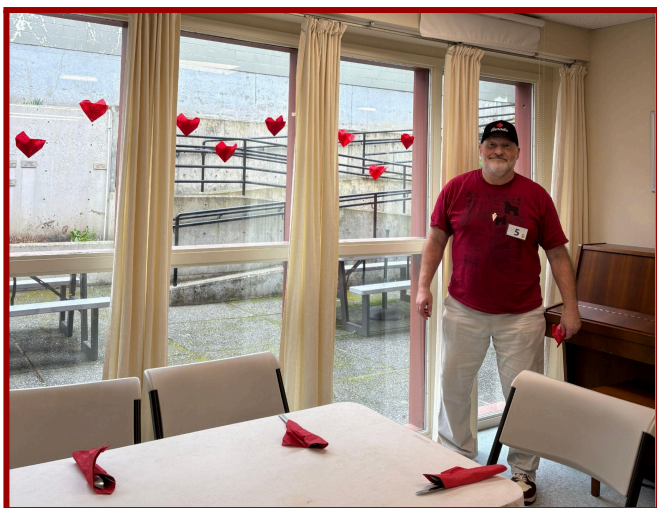
Many guests live in small apartments or rooms and cannot easily invite friends over. As one guest said, "We are seniors growing old with no family around. *The Lunch* is known as a safe, pleasant environment where people can enjoy conversation, delicious food, and share information.

## Volunteers

We are extremely fortunate to have a retired professional chef who has taken the lead since the beginning. He does all the shopping and planning of meals along with the assistant chef, also an experienced cook. John Carroll is very skilled and knowledgeable about planning healthy meals for large groups, taking sales into account and using ingredients creatively. Nothing is wasted.

John and 3 volunteers come in the day before for 3 hours to prepare a 3-course meal and return the next day to serve it.

We currently have 31 volunteers – 6 from the church and the rest from the broader community. We are known as a place that welcomes everyone and is happy to adapt to their needs and schedules. The Community Lunch provides a sense of purpose and meaning which acts as antidote to the huge problems in the world. Many friendships have been formed at *the Lunch* and continue to be made.



One arduous and very important task is doing the dishes. If we are on top of the dishes, then cleanup goes relatively smoothly. This task takes 2 people and is fairly physical. In the past it was difficult to find regular volunteers to take on this task. Fortunately, we now have a team of very capable dishwashers and assistants who take pride in accomplishing this challenging job.

We are very pleased to have a group of 3 people from Congregation Emanu-El who

joined as volunteers in 2025. It is wonderful to work with another faith community who provides help, as well as an ongoing financial contribution.

### **Foodshare**

A team of 8 drivers rotates to pick up food from Esquimalt that is operated by The Mustard Seed. The morning of *the Lunch*, they deliver it for guests to take home to supplement their meals.

### **Sources of Funding and Fundraising**

Our budget is now \$36,000 per year. With food prices constantly rising, our annual food budget is now \$21,450 which feeds an average of 75 guests. Joanne Keelan has applied for the grants and written the proposals. She is ready to hand this task over and thankfully, Heinz Unger, Trustee, has agreed to take this on with Joanne's support.

- 2024 July 1- 2025 July 1 \$30,000 – Victoria Foundation Community Grants Program
  - 2025 Congregation Emanu-El- donation of \$250 per month from October 2025 to March 2026 and possibly to continue
  - **2025 applied to Victoria Foundation Community Grants Program for \$30,000 to start July 2025 for 1 year. We were very surprised and disappointed not to receive the grant this year.**
  - 2026 January -United Church of Canada Seeds of Hope- **applied for \$18,000 but received \$5000**
  - January 2026 Blennerhassett Family Foundation- \$5000
  - private donations from individuals- est. \$4000
  - Music Ministry- \$300
- Grants applied for but awaiting decisions:**
- Vancity Credit Union Community Grants- \$5000
  - Rotary Club Harbourside- \$10,000



### **Concerns for the Future Space**

Sharing a small space under the stairwell has been challenging. Feeding 75 people weekly requires taking advantage of sales and the space to store food and supplies. We would like to purchase a small freezer so that we can buy food on sale but require a place to put it.

### **Ongoing Funding**

Funding sources are all stretched due to the economy and the numbers of agencies applying. We have witnessed and constantly receive feedback about the huge benefits of the Community Lunch. Health Canada now counts Social Contact as the most important indicator of a person's overall health, especially for older adults. Considering this, we are helping to maintain and improve the health of 80 adults plus, through serving a very economical meal. However, searching for funding and writing grant proposals takes time and skills. Time will tell if others can assist in this role.

Respectfully submitted ~ Joanne Keelan BSW, Community Lunch Coordinator

# Fund Development Team Report

The Fund Development Team explores all manners of generating revenue, whether new and creative or tried and true. The Team also considers campaigns and projects that enhance existing sources. The Fund Development Team works strategically, systematically, and in alignment with James Bay United Church's mission and values.

In 2025 we focused on 2 projects - developing a 5-year Fund Development Plan and organizing a 2026 Pledge Campaign.

## Fund Development Plan

The Fund Development Plan outlines key strategies to strengthen financial stewardship and ensure the long-term vitality of James Bay United Church. It outlines a multi-faceted approach to financial stewardship, emphasizing both revenue growth and community engagement.

The revenue generation strategy is designed to grow and build on each year's successes.



## 2026 Givings Pledge Campaign

For this year's Thanksgiving Appeal, we didn't ask for donations. Instead, we asked for pledges - a commitment of planned giving in the coming year. And what a commitment was made! Pledge card response summary is available from the office.

Together, across our many congregations, we **surpassed our goal with \$116,987 in total pledges for 2026.**

Additionally, **over 4,059 collective volunteer hours were committed** to help James Bay United Church move toward our vision.

01	Community Belonging	I am a part of a church family at James Bay United Church and want to support our shared life together.
02	Mission Impact	James Bay United Church is doing good work in the community and beyond, and my gift makes a difference.
03	Love for God and Neighbour	Giving to James Bay United Church is an expression of love and compassion.
04	Sense of Purpose and Joy	Giving to James Bay United Church brings me fulfillment, joy, and spiritual growth.
05	Inspiring Vision	I believe in James Bay United Church's vision and want to help make it a reality.

At coffee time during the 3-week pledge campaign, we asked everyone to think about why people might choose to give to James Bay United Church. They then “voted” by dropping a token (or two) into pre-labelled jars that resonated with them.

A special thank-you to the Communications Team, Candis Elliott, Colleen Nichol, and the many congregation leaders who shared our message throughout the community. During the pledge campaign, the theme of “community” - both in a feeling of belonging to a community as well as James Bay United Church's connections within the community came up in comments and discussions, which really embodies our 2025 guiding theme of “Building Bridges”.

From our Team, a heartfelt thank you to all for your generosity and faithfulness. Thank you for helping us continue building bridges of faith, love, and Community at James Bay United Church.

~ Submitted by Karen Halliday, on behalf of the Fund Development Team

## Greeters Team Report

Greeting is all about saying “Welcome — we’re so glad you’re here! May this be a rich experience for you.”

That sense of welcome begins before people even appear on the church doorstep. It begins with our two-person team of Greeters arriving early to create an inviting and thoughtfully prepared space for worship. The Greeter’s tables are provisioned with bulletins, offering envelopes, PAR cards, and our well-used name-tag baskets and name-tag sign-up sheets; chairs are reconfigured; hymn books are set out; lights and ceiling fans are turned on — and in the Fall and winter months, the heat too! The Prayer station is set up for people to light tea-candles and note down any prayer requests for us to lift up as a community.

And then the doors are opened! People are invited into our midst with ready hospitality and a warm smile. The Greeters are on hand throughout the service — available to welcome people whenever they arrive. And then once the service is over, the Team returns the Sanctuary to a state of readiness for the many others who will be using the church throughout the week.

Throughout 2025, we have been blessed with a committed team of Greeters — some of whom have spontaneously filled in when another was unable to be there at the last minute, seamlessly keeping our welcome alive. Our gratitude goes out to each and every one of them: Sandy Forsyth, Carol Garceau, Peggy Hodding, Gordon Miller, Colleen Nichol, James and Brian Troutman, Heinz and Marilyn Unger, Mark Wagner, Angela Waleski, Richard Wey, and Natalia Zhuravlova.

Part way through 2025, I transitioned out of the role of Greeters Coordinator, with Gordon Miller taking the lead. By the end of the year, Angela Waleski and Mark Wagner graciously consented to take on the Coordinators’ role. With gratefulness, we wish them all the best in this new position going forward.

There’s always room on the team for new Greeters. You would be welcomed with open arms!

Respectfully submitted ~ on behalf of the Greeters Team by Colleen Nichol (outgoing Greeters Team Coordinator)



# Hospitality Team Report

Good coffee and tasty goodies were served in the lower hall each Sunday following worship. This comes together with the help of five teams of two who are on a rotating coffee time roster. Christine Bodnarchuk, Carol Garceau, Colleen Nichol, Bev Tracey, Carol Yanisch, Deborah Davis, Mahima Silvester and Raymond Yee were the crew who made it happen. Others sign up to provide goodies. It's a fun and satisfying way to make connections with friends and to engage with folks who are new or visiting James Bay United Church. A special word of thanks to Christine Bodnarchuk and Carol Garceau who have moved on to other endeavors!

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was a huge success with a great crowd of people enjoying pancakes, sausage, and blueberries topped off with a great evening of Jazz.

Easter Sunday morning breakfast was served in the lower church hall between the early morning outdoor service and the 10:15 celebration in the sanctuary.

Easter Dinner on Easter Sunday saw thirty people coming to celebrate our new life promised by Christ's rising and enjoyed a traditional ham dinner feast.

During the summer we offered lemonade and cookies in the hall and on the back patio. The picnic tables and umbrellas made for a festive summer gathering place.

In early fall, Gordon Miller organized a Great Big Open House welcoming the whole neighbourhood into the church. Food was served from breakfast until late afternoon, programs offered in the sanctuary and parking lot, and rack cards produced to advertise all the comings and goings that happen in and through the ministries of JBUC. The Hospitality Team was happy to be a partner in this huge undertaking.

Hot apple cider and hot chocolate served at the conclusion of the *Great Big Christmas Sing* made the evening just that more festive.

With gratitude to Natalia Zhuralova and Colleen Adair who joined/rejoined the coffee roster towards the end of the year.

~ Submitted by Bev Tracey

# Healing Pathway Report

As of April 2026, the Healing Pathway Ministry has been offering and practicing together for three years at James Bay United Church.

We have 4-8 Healing Pathway Practitioners offering to the Public monthly and 6-10 HP Practitioners attending our Monthly Practice Group. On average since the Fall of 2025, we have offered 2-4 healing sessions monthly to the public. This takes place on the second Wednesday of every month at 1 pm and 2 pm.

Our Monthly Practice Group meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month and resumed in September 2025 after a summer break (June/July/August) allowing Practitioners to have a pause and integrate their learning. We ended the year with a potluck gathering in December. As of February 2026, we will be meeting from 1:30 to 3:30 pm to support practitioners who travel to participate. We are very grateful to have instruction and mentorship from Jannice Foreman who participates and shares her wise gifts with us monthly.



*A Phase 3 Communion of Saints Workshop* was offered at Bethlehem Retreat Centre in Nanaimo last June. Three HP Practitioners attended from our group with Carol being a Helper and Jannice (Coordinator/Helper) in this insightful and nourishing four day workshop with 18 Registrants, 3 Instructors and 3 Helpers. Carol thanks the church and Pacific Mountain Regional Council for their financial support to attend Phase 3 Workshop.

During the year, with deep gratitude, we said farewell to Sandy Gerbrecht who coordinated our offerings to the Public for a year and a half, and we welcomed

Charmaine Frank who graciously stepped into this role in the Summer 2025.

Carol, Charmaine and Gordon worked together over the summer to update the website pages for our Healing Pathway Ministry, as well as, an updated information sheet and rack card. A huge shout out and appreciation for Gordon's amazing work on this. The update also resulted in a new email address for Healing Pathway Ministry: [healingpathway@jamesbayunited.com](mailto:healingpathway@jamesbayunited.com).

This new email allows people interested in receiving a monthly session and/or distance healing and soaking prayer to reach out to us. Both Carol and Charmaine monitor and respond to email requests. Distance Healing is now typically scheduled during our monthly healing sessions to the public. In consultation with Pastoral Care, as we no longer offer Soaking Prayer following Sunday service, we now participate on occasion in the anointing and blessings offered during Communion, which is being well received.

In October 2025, Carol joined the Director's Circle of Healing Pathway Society which meets bi-monthly and oversees the business side of the Healing Pathway Society. Carol is planning to attend the Healing House at Naramata Centre in early August to participate in offering Healing Sessions with other Practitioners for the week.

We continue to be guided by the Light and the Pathway and are grateful to be sharing this with others at James Bay United Church.

Submitted by ~ Carol Garceau



# Ministry & Personnel (M & P)/ HR Committee Report

## Overview

The 2025–2026 ministry year has been one of significant staffing transition, structural strengthening, and careful discernment. The M&P/HR Committee’s focus has been to ensure that staffing, financial systems, and leadership structures support the mission of James Bay United Church: *Opening Doors to God’s Love*.

### 1. Bookkeeper Transition

In July 2025, Jackie Cox-Ziegler resigned as Bookkeeper, effective September 18, 2025. She completed substantial work in organizing and cleaning up past financial records and supported transition planning.

Following this, the Board engaged **Cheques & Balances Bookkeeping Services** to provide professional bookkeeping support. This shift to contracted services includes financial reconciliation, QBO setup, payroll processing, reporting, and annual filings. This change strengthens financial oversight, accountability, and continuity.

### 2. Administrative Officer Position

After formal review and discussion following a trial period, the Board accepted the Committee’s recommendation not to continue this position effective July 17, 2025. The decision reflected the seriousness of concerns regarding procedural and financial issues and the need for strong accountability.

### 3. Communications Role Transition

Zunaira Mustaqueem was on a six-month parental leave from June to October, during which time Nataliia Zhuravlova filled the role. In January 2026, the Board determined that the Communications Coordinator role required restructuring and Zunaira’s contract concluded January 22, 2026.

Nataliia Zhuravlova was engaged under a 12-month Memorandum of Agreement beginning January 22, 2026. The role includes weekly newsletters, website and social media oversight, promotional coordination, and regular reporting to the Board through the HR liaison.

### 4. Ministerial Position Review

The Committee supported Board exploration of increasing Rev. Greg Powell’s position from 0.75 FTE to 0.9 FTE.

Staff and contractor feedback highlighted the need for:

- Clearer priorities
- Stronger coordination
- Regular check-ins
- Greater decision-making clarity

The proposed increase would strengthen leadership oversight, communication flow, and ministry coordination. Final approval requires Regional consultation and congregational vote in accordance with United Church governance.

This year required difficult but necessary decisions. The Committee has worked to strengthen procedures, improve accountability, and ensure that staffing structures align with the long-term health and mission of James Bay United Church.

~ Respectfully submitted, Mahima Silvester

# Music Ministry Report

2025 was a great year for the Music Ministry at James Bay United with new initiatives, more choir opportunities, musical offerings, and ongoing work to create organizational systems to manage choir and sheet music.

In the Spring our Music Minister, Jennifer Turner, began her fourth year at JBUC, feeling ever more confident in her position and dreaming of possibilities to come. The Music Ministry strives to create an atmosphere that is meaningful, beautiful, fun, and inclusive. Music facilitates worship and is an important way to express one's intention toward the inner and outer journey.

The Music Ministry involves many personnel including our Music Minister, members of the JBUC Worship Choir, volunteer musicians, guest musicians, an advisory committee, the James Bay Community Chorus, and music mentors.

This was Rev. Greg Powell's first full year at JBUC and his presence brought great energy and stability to the Music Ministry. With the guidance of the Worship Team, Greg and Jennifer work very closely together in planning for Sunday Worship in a solid team full of trust, idea sharing, and meaningful conversation.

With the increase in Jennifer's hours April 1, 2025, to 15 hours per week new initiatives include:

- The choir is now singing monthly between September and June. The Sunday Worship Choir creates important opportunities for social connection, creativity, learning, and the giving and receiving of musical gifts.
- An invitation was sent out to the broader community to join the Christmas Eve choir. We held extra rehearsals in December and had a great turnout. People are interested in project choirs.
- We had a children's choir for the Christmas Pageant on December 24.
- We launched a vocal recital series with concerts on March 21 and June 20th .
- In August, Jennifer attended a 3 day training course in Vancouver for Choral Conductors.
- Jennifer is creating a library system for Choral music and sorting through the giant boxes of music that have been stored in the Minister's Office for many years.
- Jennifer has taken on the role of music reporting to One License.
- Jennifer, Gordon, and Christine produced a children's concert for the September Open House.



# Pastoral Care Report

*Pastoral Care* — that experience of supporting and being supported by compassionate relationships — is very much at the core of Jesus' message and way of being. And it is so much at the heart of who we are here at James Bay United Church. I would hazard a guess that at one time or another pretty much everyone has been on either the gracious giving or grateful receiving end of this faith community's pastoral care.

In addition to that 'organic' experience of tending to one another, there is a team that supports Greg in his varied pastoral care role. As we commit ourselves to this particular area of ministry. Linda Clegg (sending Christmas and Easter cards to those who are shut in), Anne Manikel (visiting those in seniors' residences and care homes), Joan Ryan (making Birthday phone calls), Martin Stewart (offering rides and visits), and myself as Team Lead (coordinating the support for those requiring assistance in times of particular need; visiting; preparing *blessing cards* for the congregation at Christmas and Easter).

Recognizing that Pastoral Care takes all sorts of forms, our Team's vision is to provide loving support in other ways as well:

- Greg's readiness to bring Communion to those who are house-bound
- Offering prayer support through our "Prayer Team" comprised of Linda Clegg, Sandy Forsyth, Cheryl Macpherson, Barb Whitney and myself as we are alerted to people's prayer requests
- Providing a Prayer Clipboard sign-up on Sunday mornings
- In cooperation with the Healing Pathway Team, offering a blessing and anointing with oil for those who wish it on Communion Sundays.

And then there is YOU!! We are so grateful when you are able to be the ears and eyes of our faith community to let one of us know of someone's need for pastoral care. This is such an important avenue enabling us to provide that loving support.

In October we hosted a Training session by Alanna Menu and Julianne Kasmer, both retired United Church ministers with considerable experience in giving these workshops. This was open to everyone and focussed on different aspects of what it means to offer pastoral care: *What is pastoral care? When do I offer it? Is there a "right" way to do it?* Short handouts were offered on *Faithful Listening, Holding Space and Self-Care* for people involved in this work.

Even as our current Team members commit themselves to particular dimensions of pastoral care, we would so welcome any others who would wish to be involved in any aspect of this important ministry.

In the meantime, know that you are being lovingly upheld by your Pastoral Care Team. You can confidentially reach out to us in person or by email via [pastoralcare@jamesbayunited.com](mailto:pastoralcare@jamesbayunited.com).

~ Submitted by Colleen Nichol, Pastoral Care Team Coordinator

## Sunday Counting Team Report

As chair of the Sunday Counters, I am pleased to announce that we had a very successful year counting the weekly givings. We now have a roster of weekly pairs of counters allowing for a shift once a month.

At this time I would like to thank my team for their diligent work. The team includes: Andre Fontaine and Pauline MacKenzie, Sarah Hovey and Janice Langley, Anne and Randy Manikel, Brian and James Troutman, Chris Bodnarchuk and Bonnie Ziegler.

We are very thankful to Alan Thurston and Franklyn Roy for their weekly support to our team. We hope our next year is as successful.

~ Respectfully submitted, Kim Tadei

## Office Support Team

Sincere appreciation is extended to Joan Ryan and her friend Barbara Walker who faithfully arrive every Friday morning to assemble the bulletins that guide the congregation through the Sunday service.

Kim Tadei has joined the team to provide backup on the rare occasion that Joan and Barb are unable to fulfill the task. Kim's availability for reliable back-up has been such a lovely offering and puts everyone's mind at ease.

~ Respectfully submitted, Candis Elliott, Office Admin



# Pride Parade Report

In 2025, James Bay United Church continued its strong and joyful commitment to celebrating diversity, inclusion, and love through active participation in Victoria Pride events and related community activities.

Throughout the spring and summer, the Rainbow (Pride) Committee, chaired by André, coordinated preparations for Pride season. Volunteers worked together to refresh the church's rainbow-painted doors, prepare printed bookmarks and handouts, and organize banners and materials for public events. Resources were also shared from the United Church of Canada to support outreach and education.

The first weekend in July, members and friends of the congregation joined the United Church of Southern Vancouver Island in the Victoria Pride Parade. Approximately ten volunteers carried banners, distributed materials, and walked together in celebration of LGBTQ2S+ inclusion and justice.

The committee also hosted a community screening of The Fruit Machine documentary on June 22, 2025. This event, organized after Sunday worship and accompanied by a shared meal, encouraged thoughtful conversation about history, justice, and human rights.

A special Pride Sunday worship service was held on June 29, 2025, in collaboration with Rev. Greg Powell and the Worship Team. This service celebrated diversity and the church's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive spiritual home for all.

In addition, a Pride display was created in June by Gwenna, helping to visually express the United Church Canada and the congregation's history and ongoing support for LGBTQ2S+ communities.

A few committee members also participated in an online United Church Affirming Conference, as part of James Bay United Church's continued journey toward becoming a fully affirming congregation for people who face discrimination because of who they are.

The Pride Committee is grateful for the dedication of its volunteers and the support of the wider congregation. Together, we continue to witness publicly to love, justice, and belonging in the James Bay community.

~ Respectfully submitted, André Fontaine Pride Committee Chair

# Property Team Report

It has been a busy year for the property team. Many ongoing tasks filled our time....

- The gardens have been beautifully maintained by the whole team with a spring cleanup, weeding and supporting plants in the garden beds throughout the summer, and a fall clean up in preparation for winter.
- Dave Helms kept our lawns and boulevards trimmed and looking good; he power washed steps and patios and kept a watchful eye over things.
- Janice Edwards faithfully spent most Tuesday mornings cleaning, patching and touching up the paint so that the sanctuary, stairs wells, washrooms, and lower hall are always looking like they have had a fresh coat of paint.
- The back patio was made ready for parties with the concrete getting a power wash and the picnic tables set up in their summer places.
- Pacific Coast Fire did their annual inspection of our emergency fire equipment.
- The maintenance of our sump pit and the pumps is an ongoing task overseen by Martin, Mark and Bev.
- Our new venture last year was to begin to create a native plant garden as part of our commitment to decolonize the land the church sits on. The team removed a tree, mulched the area for several months and then after a trip to a native plant nursery we planted native shrubs and flowers on the south side of the ramp deck. Much to our surprise the non-native tree we had removed insisted on sending up a field of babies! So 2025 saw us back to digging and watching and praying so that by early 2025 we could reintroduce the plants that had been growing in a protected garden. ... to say nothing of the endless stream of small repairs that need attention!

It has been a challenging year for the property team as several of our plans had to wait.

- The need to paint the church building and the thrift shop were put on hold until grant applications are approved.
- The plans to increase storage space in the sanctuary and to redevelop the lower-level men's washroom are in place and financial gifts are available for these projects.

Team members are: Janice Edwards, Carol Garceau, Martin Stewart, Bev Tracey, Mark Ziegler and Bonnie Ziegler, along with Ashu who joined our team this fall.

We have a great team – faithful and practical people sharing our lives on Tuesday mornings over coffee and then working well together!

~ Submitted by Beverley Tracey on behalf of the Property Team

# Reconciliation Team Report

Reconciling with Indigenous Peoples and the Land [*RIPL (v.) disturb the stillness; create movement*]

**Our Purpose:** Reconciling with Indigenous Peoples and the Land is an interfaith endeavour focusing on:

1. education and action to uphold Indigenous rights and sovereignty on Vancouver Island
2. living out our treaty responsibilities as settlers, and
3. building relationships with Indigenous communities, land and waters.

Be it with those Nations under the Douglas Treaties or those in other unceded territories on Vancouver Island, we are committed to offer educational programs and respond to Indigenous struggles that assert Indigenous rights and sovereignty Guided by TRC Calls to Action and the principles of Land Back we take direction from the Indigenous Peoples who are organizing to protect the Land and Waters in their territories.

## **2025 Highlights:**

We have continued our work of the previous 2 years, mobilizing awareness and opposition to a government proposal within the bounds of Goldstream Provincial Park that would violate WSANEC rights outlined in the Douglas Treaty, and adversely affect the ecosystem and salmon spawning habitat in this location. Our efforts included:

- Conversations with WSÁNEĆ elder, Carl Olsen; standing with him and a growing number of Indigenous youth and others on Tuesday mornings at Goldstream Park connecting with park visitors, and distributing rack cards we created (about 2000 to date)
- Informing people of the government proposal and urging people to be part of the letter writing campaign (sample letter on our website).
- Providing 2 large banners for the every-Tuesday roadside vigil
- Showing up in support of the SELEKTEL HIWEST LTE TTE XAXE SCÁÁNEW\_ –
- Honouring our Sacred Salmon -- celebration on August 26, attended by all 5 bands of the WSÁNEĆ. Since then we have come to know Goldstream by its Indigenous name SELEKTEL. <https://wsanec.com/w%cc%b1c-hosts-sele%e2%82%adte%c6%9a-hiwest-%c6%9ate-tte-xaxe-scaanew%cc%b1-gathering-to-honour-our-sacred-salmon-at-goldstream/>
- Joining the Wilderness Committee sponsored event at the Legislature in October protesting the proposed government action and lifting up the many layered significance of protecting SELEKTEL. In preparation for this event we welcomed the Goldstream Protectors public art group and friends into the church hall for a family-friendly afternoon making salmon puppets.
- Designing and purchasing 500 'Save SELEKTEL buttons for an on-going
- awareness campaign.
- Through our connections with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, we donated \$1000 in support of food for the Elders Program. Recognizing the importance of fostering relationships, we are further wondering about preparing food and showing up to share in meals together.

In the summer we agreed to pursue launching a film series, the first of which took place in November when we sponsored the screening of the NFB film *Nechako: It will be a big river again at the UVIC Cinecenta*. In all, 200 people attended, and with Lyana Patrick, the director, able to join us from Vancouver for the Q&A, it was a well received event. In fact Cinecenta Staff were so appreciative they have brought it back 3 times since! Crafting and circulating the publicity, negotiating with Cinecenta staff, coordinating with co-sponsors, the Indigenous Internationalisms BIG Lab of UVIC, were key facets of the behind-the-scenes work. We provided 30 tickets for Dakelh speaking people connected with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, and students enrolled in the Indigenous Studies class at UVIC.

The year concluded with plans to offer a zoom presentation and conversation in the new year with Simon Owen about Indigenous Laws, in particular focusing on the recent Cowichan and Gitxaala decisions that have been in the news and misrepresented in ways that have generated fear and division. Simon is schooled in Canadian law and trained in Indigenous legal research.

For more information about the two legal cases see:

Cowichan Decision - Khelsilem <https://substack.com/home/post/p-176687116>

West Coast Environmental Law: The Gitxaala Decision:

<https://www.wcel.org/blog/gitxaala-v-british-columbia-what-court-appeal-decision-Means-indigenous-rights-bcs-mining-laws>

~ Submitted by Karen Dickey for the RIPL Team,  
Ruby Berry, Karen Dickey, Kam McKim, Denise Nadeau, Bev Tracey, Carol Yanisch

# Refugee Sponsorship Team Report

In 2025, James Bay United Church continued its refugee sponsorship work alongside an Afghan family seeking safety and a new start in Canada. We worked closely with the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria to complete sponsorship requirements (including committee security checks and documentation) and to strengthen our settlement planning so we will be ready to welcome the family when travel is possible.

A key milestone this year was the family completing biometrics in May. Throughout the year, the committee provided ongoing monthly support to help the family meet basic needs while they remained in Pakistan in the face of increasing risk and instability.

As conditions worsened for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the committee increased advocacy efforts, including ongoing communication with the office of Member of Parliament, Will Greaves; Member of the Legislative Assembly, Grace Lore; and outreach to additional leaders to help move the file forward.

The committee also provided practical support to the family's second son, who was able to make his way from the United States to Canada, in August. This includes help with transportation, food support, essential medical and dental needs, while he continues to work on his immigration status and finding work. Returning to his studies continues to be a major goal.

In September, the committee hosted the "*Making Dreams Come True*" fundraiser, raising nearly \$27,000—well beyond our goal. More importantly, it connected the wider James Bay community to the family and offered meaningful encouragement during a very difficult time. They continue to be nourished and strengthened knowing that our community holds them in love and awaits their arrival in Victoria.

We are deeply grateful to all donors and volunteers whose prayers, generosity, and care make this work possible.

~ Respectfully submitted, André Fontaine on behalf of JBUC Refugee Sponsorship Committee: Raymond Yee; Marge Brown; Elvira Sentes; Karen Dickey; Bev Tracey; Marg Lunam; D'Arcy McPherson;

# Thrift Shop Report

The Thrift Shop has been a vital ministry of James Bay United Church since it opened its doors in February of 1985. Over the years, our shop has gained a reputation in the community as a place of welcome, of hospitality and a place where one can shop for quality goods at reasonable prices while making strong connections within James Bay.

We are fortunate to have a remarkable and beautiful heritage house in which to work; that is part of our charm. We appreciate the support of the church property team in maintaining our home.

Our shop is staffed by volunteers who value the opportunity to serve the neighbourhood and who love the weekly connections they make among themselves as well as with neighbours and friends old and new.

As our reputation grows, so do the donations and each week we process mountains of things that will find new homes where appropriate and appreciated. It is hard work, and our volunteers are happy to share the load. We are there Monday, Wednesday and Thursday preparing for sales days of Friday and Saturday. We are happy to contribute to other community ventures when there is a need and have formed some meaningful partnerships in this way. Recycling is a big part of the job as well; also done by willing volunteers.

Relationships are truly the heart of this ministry and remain the most rewarding part of the venture for us all. Strong relationships have grown, not only among ourselves but with our donors and our customers. In fact, new customers quickly become “regulars” and regulars often become donors and even volunteers. There is a spirit in the shop that is beautiful and contagious. Kindness and generosity are our “secret sauce”.

Sometimes we experience sadness, illness and grief and those times are when we best know the strength of the team. This year we lost a wonderful leader when Aleksa Harkness died and we grieve together as we carry on in her indomitable spirit. She is sorely missed.

We are happy each year as December comes, to recognize the incredible financial contribution we make to the finances of James Bay Church. It is a by-product of our commitment to the spirit of the shop, and plays a vital role in the ongoing work of the church.

Quotable Quote from the shop:

*"This place is magical. Everything this church does is remarkable."*  
- Shopper

~ Submitted on behalf of all our volunteers, and the leadership team,  
Judy Langford, Lenore Morrey, Marg Lunam

*This is what we're about:*

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# Trustees Report

The Trustees of James Bay United Church are pleased to report that 2025 was a year of steady stewardship, careful maintenance, and thoughtful planning for the future use of the church's physical and financial assets.

## **Property Stewardship and Maintenance**

The Trustees continued to oversee the care and upkeep of the church building and grounds, ensuring that our facilities remain safe, welcoming, and functional for worship, ministry, and community use. Regular maintenance was carried out across all major systems, including heating, electrical, and plumbing. Preventative maintenance schedules were followed to minimize unexpected disruptions and extend the life of key infrastructure. Particular attention was given to:

- Ongoing building repairs and routine upkeep
- Monitoring and maintaining safety systems
- Addressing wear and tear in high-use areas
- Supporting accessibility and usability of church spaces
- The building continues to serve not only the congregation but also a wide range of community groups, cultural events, and outreach programs.

## **Facility Use and Community Access**

James Bay United Church remains an active and valued community hub. Our spaces were used extensively throughout 2025 for:

- Worship services and congregational gatherings
- Music programs, including rehearsals and performances
- Community initiatives such as the Thursday Community Lunch
- Arts and cultural events, including Tuesday Night Jazz
- External rentals aligned with the church's values

The Trustees worked closely with staff to ensure that building use was well-coordinated, financially responsible, and consistent with our mission.

## **Capital Planning and Improvements**

In 2025, the Trustees continued to take a measured approach to capital planning, balancing immediate needs with long-term sustainability.

Key areas of focus included:

- Identifying and prioritizing future capital projects
- Assessing lifecycle needs of major building systems
- Exploring opportunities to improve energy efficiency and environmental performance
- Supporting initiatives that enhance accessibility and community use
- Planning work undertaken this year positions the church to respond proactively to future capital requirements.

## **Financial Oversight**

The Trustees maintained oversight of designated funds and property-related expenditures, ensuring that resources were used responsibly and in alignment with Board direction. All expenditures were reviewed with attention to value, necessity, and long-term benefit. The Trustees worked in collaboration with the Finance Committee and

Board to ensure transparency and accountability in all financial matters related to property and assets.

### **Looking Ahead**

As we look forward, the Trustees remain committed to:

- Sustaining the church's physical assets for future generations
- Supporting the evolving needs of ministry and community use
- Advancing environmentally responsible practices
- Ensuring that the building continues to be a place of welcome, service, and connection.

The Trustees extend their sincere thanks to staff, volunteers, and members of the congregation whose care and attention contribute to the ongoing stewardship of this shared space.

~ Respectfully submitted, Board of Trustees. James Bay United Church

# Worship Team Report

This was our first full year with Rev. Greg Powell. It has been a year of Building Bridges and making connections, within the worship team, in the congregation and among our many ministries, and into the community as a 7-day-a-week church.

Our *Bridges* theme was beautifully echoed with banners made from photographs taken of the stone bridge in Beacon Hill Park, by Deborah Davis. We acknowledge that *Love* is the bridge between us and the rest of the world. It is the foundation for everything we build here.

The Worship Planning Team includes Rev. Greg Powell, Chair Sarah Hovey, Music Minister Jennifer Turner, Recording Secretary Deborah Davis, Colleen Nichol, Gary Brandstadt, Cheryl Macpherson, Owen McCooey, and Diane Monteith, who joined us midway through the year.

In order to honour Rev. Greg's  $\frac{3}{4}$  time position we had 15 congregation-led services and three guest preachers from outside our congregation - Rev. Min-Goo Kang, Rev. Maggie Enwright and Linda Mulhall. We also had special services honouring Earth Day, Indigenous Peoples and Pride Day.

## **Church Seasons:**

### **Lent**

In order to facilitate the spiritual journey that is Lent, we offered a number of activities for people to engage in, as well as, our regular worship services. Daily Ignation-style meditations based on Sunday's scripture passage, offering the link to a five-session Lent seminar with Dr. John Dominic Crossan '*Paul the Pharisee – Faith and Politics in a divided world.*'

Five- session Wednesday '*Study and Soup Supper*' led by Rev. Greg 4:30 – 7 pm

Communications: Patio notice board with weekly sayings related to our Lenten theme.

Several relevant poems or sayings were added to the weekly newsletter.

### **Palm Sunday**

The service started with a celebration of music with Kelby MacNayr and sword-fern waving outside the church with a procession into the church with music led by Jennifer Turner.

Palm crosses made by Mahima Silvester and members of the congregation were given out. It was a lively and celebratory service.

### **Easter:**

#### **Maundy Thursday**

This was a quiet and intimate event, with folks gathered around a low table with bowls of dried fruit and nuts, bread and humous, and juice. We shared readings and singing together. Greg served Communion. We ended by stripping the altar and leaving in silence.

**Good Friday** This was a quiet, soulful service with the cross carried in and draped with black. Greg led the service with Jennifer and the choir providing the music.

**Holy Saturday** A vigil was held from 1 – 3 pm in the sanctuary. Gary Brandstadt hosted along with Sarah Hovey. Cheryl Macpherson provided a selection of poetry and some readings for meditation.

**Easter Sunday – Sunrise Service** Beacon Hill Park 7:30, with rocks for meditation, songs and anointing, as well as, participation of the children in the story. Breakfast back at the church.

**Easter 10:30 am Service** – a celebration with the choir and extra musicians, flowers, Communion and a new banner.

### **Summer Season**

Covering Greg's holiday – July 27 – Aug. 24 (5 weeks)

This summer we developed our theme in our congregation led services around the book *Holy Envy, Finding God in the Faith of Others* by Barbara Brown Taylor. Each week we explored a different faith – Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism, in relation to our own Christian faith. These weekly presentations brought up many interesting points to explore in terms of our own beliefs and how we relate to people who find a path to God in other religions.

### **Pentecost**

This year we celebrated 3 immersion baptisms in the ocean in James Bay as well as a potluck lunch after the Sunday service.

In May, Sarah Hovey, Colleen Nicholl and Cheryl Macpherson attended virtually an Art/s of Worship workshop with Marsh McFee, that was held in Nanaimo.

*Great Big Open House* September 6 – the worship team hosted an information table in front of the church.

Sanctuary decorating team: Sandy Forsyth joined Colleen Nichol, and Gary Brandstadt in the decorating team. With paintings, mandalas, plants, banners, candles, signs and other decorations they have enhanced our experience of worship throughout the church seasons. Season of Creation Sept. 14 – Oct. 12. Our theme was Christian Mysticism. We delved into the roots of this path and explored different teachers with reflections, poetry and readings. Many found this to be a surprisingly rich wellspring for our spiritual journey.

### **Advent Nov. 30 – Dec. 21.**

Each week a member of the congregation offered a brief story that explored the weekly themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. We offered a character monologue each week, between the Scripture reading and the reflection, highlighting a central character in our Christmas story. This brought the stories to life in a very meaningful way and was much appreciated. We also had SALT Project Advent devotionals for the congregation to use.

### **Christmas**

This year we offered: *Christmas in a Minor Key* (with Oak Bay United), a *Community Choir Sing*, *Neighbourhood Carolling*, a *Children's Pageant*, *Christmas Eve Candlelight Choral Service*. It was a rich and beautiful time, filled with music and love for God and each other.

The worship team is so grateful to be able to serve the ministry of this church in our community, offering meaningful and lively worship, beautiful music, and a multitude of activities as part of the services as well as ways for people to participate at home through the live-streamed services and at-home devotional practices.

We give special thanks to the members of the Worship Team who regularly contribute to the services through presiding, offering the reflection, Communion, Scripture reading, candle-lighting, anointing and singing in the choir. As well, we thank our teams of Greeters and Coffee Hosts. Many thanks to our Tech Team for bringing our services into the homes of

those who can't be with us in person. We are also very grateful for the musical support of Gordon Miller and Christine Chepyha in the event Jennifer is away, and for Joe Bradley adding to our musical experience. And last but not least, thank you to Candis Elliott and Joan Ryan for bringing us the bulletin; Natalia Zhuravlova and Zunaira Mustaqem for promoting the services in the e-news and online. It is truly a blessing to be a part of this community of faith at James Bay United Church and I am very grateful for the opportunity to be a member of this team.

~ Sarah Hovey, Chair, on behalf of the Worship Team

# Treasurer's Report

For several years running, we have struggled to produce timely accurate understandable financial reports. These reports are important to our ministry, program and team leads to help them understand what they can and cannot move ahead with. It is important also for the congregation as a whole to understand the church's financial health so that when big ideas are floated we know when to say yes and when to rein in our enthusiasm.

For two years, in the absence of a single person on the board designated as treasurer, our Interim Financial Team (Hazel Blennerhassett, Franklyn Roy and Alan Thurston) worked countless hours behind the scenes to understand our financial structure and systems. At last year's annual meeting they were able to present understandable financial statements and most importantly they presented a list of Recommendations to the Board, prepared a JBUC Financial Handbook and created supports for onboarding a new Bookkeeper. While their work showed us that we were in financial good health, their recommendations pointed to a number of areas where our tools, policies and procedures were lacking.

Since that time, and for the balance of 2025 we did not have a person come forward willing to be a member of a Finance Team or take on the role of Treasurer. Jackie Cox-Zeigler worked as our bookkeeper until her retirement in the fall and our Board Chair Martin Stewart secured an outsourced bookkeeping service (Cheques & Balances Bookkeeping) to take over that role – which they continue to fulfil today.

So here is what is happening:

- Fall 2025 Cheques and Balances Bookkeeping begins the process of reorganizing the chart of accounts for James Bay United Church to more accurately reflect our growing list of ministries and programs based on the organization chart developed by a subcommittee of the board. (this work is ongoing)
- Cheques and Balances Bookkeeping recommends a change of accounting software from SAGE to QuickBooks Online. (data entry into QuickBooks has begun for 2026)
- January 2026 Treasurer Gordon Miller confirmed at Board Meeting
- January 2026 the process of implementing all the recommendations of our Interim Financial Team begins
- January 2026 budgeting process begins in consultation with all our ministries and program leads
- January through April, the treasurer is learning the role with the help and guidance of the previous IFT members, implementing new procedures and working with C&B Bookkeeping staff
- conversational style financial updates for the congregation become part of our ENews.
- April 2026 Board sees a draft budget for 2026 and endorses it for submission at the April 16th AGM

In the Financial Reports Package Appendix 1 (handed out at the AGM) and attached by link to any online version of this Annual Report, you will find:

- [2026 Draft Budget with accompanying notes](#)
- Table of Assets (Property, Equipment, bank accounts, GIC's and Victoria Foundation Investment)
- Tables expressing the financial activities of the various ministries and programs in 2025
- Tables reflecting projected major capital expenditures and associated ways and means
- Income and Expense Statement  
(unaudited and subject to change as YE posting adjustments may be needed)
- NB: There is no Balance Sheet per se. As noted previously by the IFT we will have to work with our Accounting Firm to establish a fresh starting point (January 1 2026) so that moving forward an accurate Balance Sheet can be part of our quarterly reports.

All questions regarding church finances should go through the Treasurer. I won't have all the answers, but the process of uncovering the answers will help me with my ongoing learning and understanding of the complexities of our growing faith community.

Thanks to everyone who has supported me as I take on this role. (especially my wife Sharon)

Respectfully Submitted April 10th 2026 ~ Gordon Miller JBUC Treasurer