

James Bay United Church

Report to the JBUC Community

September 13, 2026

Scott Jantzen, Board Chair

Introduction

If we haven't met, my name is Scott Jantzen, and I am your board chair.

In June, I reported to you after the board's retreat, and I promised that you would hear from us more often. This report is part of keeping that promise.

In late May, many of you shared with us — at the lunch meeting, through an online feedback form, and through our mid-week ministries and programs. You shared what is going well, what is not going so well, opportunities that we need to keep in mind, and situations, both internal and external, that may threaten our church. Those responses were gathered into a summary that we have kept close through the summer, and that has informed the board's work.

Reading across everything you told us, we saw a few clear themes. You wanted a clearer sense of where we are headed and what we are for. You wanted to hear from the board more often. And you named real pressures around our finances and our building. Here is what the board has been doing about each of these since June.

A clearer sense of who we are and where we are going

You asked for a clearer focus — a sense of what James Bay United is for, and how our many ministries fit together. Two pieces of work speak to that, and they belong together.

The first is our governance model. At the retreat, we discerned the kind of board we want to be. Over the summer, we have been translating that discernment into a written model — describing who we are as a board, how we make decisions, the work that is properly ours (and the work that is not), and how we stay accountable to you. A first draft is now in hand, and we will bring it to you this fall.

The second is a renewed picture of how we support one another. We have around 40 ministries, programs, groups, and teams — carried with great dedication, but often on their own. The board carries responsibility for the care and oversight of the spiritual life and interests of the entire JBUC Community — and that is a responsibility we take seriously. With all of them reporting directly to the board, fulfilling that responsibility is structurally impossible: no board that meets monthly can know what 40 groups are carrying, where energy is flagging, or where support is needed. We propose to group related ministries and programs into clusters, each cluster connected to the board through a Ministry Steward: someone who walks alongside the leads in that cluster, helps name what they need, carries those needs to the board, and brings the board's response back. The aim is simple — ministries that feel supported and connected rather than isolated, and information that flows in both directions.

Hearing from us more often

You asked for more frequent, more open communication — from the board and from the treasurer. We took that to heart.

This report, and the one I shared in June, are part of that. So is what comes next. This fall, we are planning three meetings:

- The first will be an opportunity for board members, staff, and ministry and program leads to meet, to listen to concerns, and to share our thinking on the governance model and the revised picture of our organizational structure, which includes ministry and program clusters and Ministry Stewards.
- We will invite the entire church to the second meeting. During this time we will bring forward the draft governance model, the draft organizational structure, and the budget process for discussion. This is a meeting for questions and conversation, not for decisions.
- The third meeting will focus on making decisions. Again, using the same process as with our AGM, we will ask attendees to ratify the governance model and the new organizational structure. Our treasurer, Gordon Miller, will also present the draft 2027 budget.

These are significant conversations, and we want to give them room — time to breathe, time for questions, time for real listening. We will announce the dates and times soon.

Our finances and our building

You identified financial and building pressures as areas of concern. There is real progress to report on both.

On our finances: our move to QuickBooks is complete. Ministry and program leads can now get up-to-date information about the financial side of their work — a practical step toward the clearer, more timely communication you asked for. If you have a budget for your ministry or program and need a report, please email Gordon at treasurer@jamesbayunited.com.

On our building: we have submitted an application to the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust for a substantial grant toward painting the church. Painting of the Thrift Shop will begin in the coming weeks; the shop will stay open throughout — for donations and for our Friday and Saturday sales. And we are in the early stages of developing a major fundraising campaign to address the needs of our aging and much-used building. More on that to follow.

In closing

Two other concerns you raised are very much on our minds. Sustaining our volunteers is one — and we believe clearer lines of communication, and a Ministry Steward each ministry can turn to when information is needed or a concern arises, will help. There is more work to be done here. Welcoming new and younger people is another — and we have started working toward a young adults ministry, in the hope of creating community and belonging for this generation. Work on both of these areas is ongoing.

What I can tell you is that the board has been listening, and working, and that this fall is when much of this comes to you. Thank you for your honesty in the spring, and for your trust. This work belongs to all of us. I hope to see you at our gatherings this fall.