

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ANNUAL REPORT of the CONGREGATION for the YEAR 2025
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MESSAGE from our MINISTER
for the **2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”
Proverbs 3:5

As we reflect on the past year, these words from Proverbs feel especially apt. We are living in turbulent and often divisive times, marked by uncertainty and anxiety in our wider world. In such seasons, faith calls us not to have all the answers, but to place our trust in God’s faithfulness.

Throughout this year, this congregation has lived out that trust in tangible and hopeful ways. Rather than turning inward, you have continued to share God’s love beyond our walls - through Sunday Suppers, the Breakfast Bag ministry, and for the first time, by hosting the Community Christmas Day Dinner. You have supported refugee sponsorship and advocated for those who are marginalized, including unhoused people, those struggling with poverty, and those facing loneliness and isolation.

Our trust in the Lord is also expressed in the life we share together as a congregation. Groups such as Craft & Chat and the Men’s Breakfast Group offer meaningful opportunities for fellowship, and groups like the Chancel Choir, Flute Ensemble, Handbell Choir and talented individual musicians inspire and uplift our weekly worship services.

We are grateful that our church building also serves as a home for many outside groups, including the BGH Day Hospice and Grief Support Group, Guides and Embers, Alcoholics Anonymous, Line Dancing, and other community groups. Their presence reminds us that the church is not only a place for Sunday worship, but a shared space of care, healing, and connection throughout the week.

I want to thank each of you for your faithfulness and commitment to First Church and its ministry. Through outreach work, generous giving, leadership in worship, teaching, pastoral care, and prayers, you have encouraged God's power to work in and through you. Together, we have experienced growth, both spiritually and in our community impact, because of your heartfelt trust in God’s faithfulness.

As we look ahead, we do so realistically, aware of the ongoing challenges, yet grounded in faith and hope. Trusting in the Lord with all our hearts, we move forward together, seeking to share God’s love and being the Body of Christ in this community.

with gratitude,
The Reverend Marianne Emig Carr

ANNUAL MEETING of the CONGREGATION
Sunday, March 2nd, 2025

1. **Welcome & Call to Order:** Following the Service of Worship Reverend Marianne opened the proceedings with a prayer and called the meeting to order.

2. **Appointment of Secretary:**

Motion that Quentin Robinson be appointed as Secretary to record the minutes.

Moved by Lorraine Buck, seconded by Brenda Fisk,Carried.

3. **Agenda:**

Motion that the agenda be approved.

Moved by Linda Osmond, seconded by Andrew Cameron,Carried.

4. **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion that the minutes of the Annual Meeting held 17 March 2024, and the minutes of the meetings of the congregation held 2 June 2024 and 15 September 2024 be approved as circulated.

Moved by Gary Murray, seconded by Mark Leslie,Carried.

5. **Group & Committee Reports:**

Andrew Cameron asked if the gutters had been cleaned and if the steam traps for the heating system needed to be inspected. He also asked when the remaining steam pipes in the boiler room will be insulated. Christine Duncan, co-chair of Property responded.

Motion that all group and committee reports be received and approved.

Moved by Andrew Cameron, seconded by Betty McNair,Carried.

6. **Report of the Examiner of Finances for the Year 2024:**

A written report from Brittany Tinkess of Waller and Associates was circulated in advance.

Motion to receive the report of Waller and Associates on the finances of 2024.

Moved by Tamara Chapman, seconded by Eleanor Bingley,Carried.

7. Presentation of Financial Statements 2024:

Brenda Fisk, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented her report.

Motion to receive the Financial Statements for 2024.

Moved by Christine Duncan, seconded by Andrew Cameron,Carried.

8. Budget for 2025:

Brenda Fisk presented the proposed budget for 2025.

Moved by Lorraine Buck, seconded by Marie Mujahid,Carried.

9. Election of Members to the Session:

Reverend Marianne reported that the terms of Lorraine Buck, Francis LeBrun and Quentin Robinson on Session have expired. All three have been nominated for another term. Reverend Marianne asked for additional nominees for Session. There being no additional nominees the Moderator declared the three nominees acclaimed.

10. Date of Annual Meeting in 2026:

Proposal that the Annual Meeting in 2026 be scheduled on 22 February 2026.

It was agreed this be set as a tentative date.

11. Other Business:

A. Capital Project: Quentin Robinson brought an update on the project.

Suggestions for a new name of the project and a name for the apartments were on the tables. Quentin thanked people for all the suggestions and asked that people check off their favourites.

Quentin drew attention to five display boards with the architects plans of the new apartments. It was reported that a third floor will not be added to the existing Sunday School wing due to the impact on the historic roof of the church. Instead, two apartments will be added to the basement level of the addition.

The consultation on the project by the city of Brockville went well. Some concerns regarding parking and privacy but nothing to prevent the approval of the project.

Two people, Tamara Baldwin and Kim Goodman, are working on grant applications for the project. Quentin said he thinks the amount we can raise through grants is much greater than expected.

The new lift has been ordered, plans are finalized & the permit has been issued.

Construction Financing

This is taking far longer than expected to put in place. Presbyterian Church Building Corporation (PCBC) continues to be very supportive and encouraging but they are asking for more items from us. Notably a Third-Party Review of a more detailed budget and pre-approval from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) of a mortgage and possibly seed money towards building costs. This review will take three months to complete and only then will the Board of PCBC consider our application. The Third-Party review is being undertaken by SHS Consulting and the Presbyterian Church in Canada is being asked to cover a share of the cost.

We have it on good authority that it is not unusual for construction financing to take a long time. Nevertheless, Brenda Fisk is also talking with our bank, the Bank of Montreal, about doing the construction financing with them instead. They are open to this, and we may be able to get the financing in place faster through them. Here is the challenge: We are ready to install the elevator but do not have the financing on hand to pay for it. Likewise, we do not have the financing in place to begin work on the new entrance into this hall and the demolition of #16 Church Street. So, we really need to stop everything that we can stop. However, we need to pay for the architect for the completed floor plans. We need to pay Bryson & Wood, our construction manager, as they get quotes for the more detailed budget. We also need to pay two other companies who have been working on site, undertaking structural and geotechnical investigations as well as mechanical, fire safety, electrical and construction support. And we need to pay for the Third-Party review and assistance in

negotiation with CMHC if the Presbyterian Church in Canada are unable to assist us. So, while we are still working on finalizing the construction financing, we must delay physical construction. However the engineering, safety and environmental work is too far along to halt and too far along not to pay for. We are asking today for authorization from the congregation to spend up to \$130,000 if the construction financing does not come through.

Capital expenses in 2024	\$58,594.05
Minus amount approved in 2023	\$10,870.92 (Rob Thompson Realty)
Minus donations received in 2024	<u>\$8,684.00</u>
Sub total:	\$39,039.13
Projected expenses to June 30 th 2025	\$59,350.91
SHS Consulting	<u>\$31,679.55</u>
Total	<u>\$130,069.59</u>

Motion to authorize expenditures of up to \$130,000 on the capital project from church investment portfolio. Such funds to be repaid out of the construction financing once it is approved.

Moved by Brenda Fisk, seconded by Tamara Chapman,Carried.

B. Courtesies: Quentin Robinson referred to the Acknowledgements in the written reports. He added Christina Duncan who leads services at the Wedgewood and other retirement residences when Reverend Marianne is not available. Betty McNair was thanked in the MOVE report for the cards she sends out to those celebrating significant birthdays and other life events and to those who are sick. Finally, Quentin recognized those who distribute The Challenge and Marianne Bimm and Mark Leslie who distribute bulletins to those unable to attend services. Quentin thanked all those who do so much to make this a dynamic and caring church.

12. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn.

Moved by Christina Duncan, seconded by Hugh Bates, Carried.

The Moderator closed with prayer.

MEETING of the CONGREGATION
Sunday, April 6th, 2025

- Reverend Marianne Emig Carr opened the meeting in prayer.
- Quentin Robinson outlined the agenda for the meeting – welcomed Andrew Bryson and Lauren McEwen of Bryson and Wood Construction, and then Developmental Services of Leeds & Grenville, Executive Director, Tom Turner.
- Bryson and Wood
 - Plans are well underway
 - City approved the Bylaw changes – it took from November 2024 to the last week in March 2025.
 - Contractors are now being asked for quotes on the work to be done such as the sewer and water works, Hydro, heating and plumbing.
 - The quotes are taking longer to get than expected and are not always as inexpensive as we would like. They are not final quotes as they are based on the 33% completed architectural drawings.
 - Lauren McEwen is contacting interior design companies to secure samples of materials. Nothing has been signed off at this point. All suppliers are working toward Accessibility Canada Act (equivalent to the US's ADA standard) and other safety policies being implemented.
 - Floor plans and the building’s preliminary external appearance have been provided and are on the display boards on the stage.
 - Samples of the baseboard trim, handrails, painting, door handles, kitchen back splashes and plumbing fixtures are available. Towel bars have not yet been sourced.
 - Samples of the carpets for the stairs and hallways are available.
 - Flooring samples are also “a work in progress” – Lauren is looking for long lasting, easy to clean products.
 - Questions:
 - Michel LaBonte asked if the contractors being asked to quote on the project are local. Andrew confirmed that contractors being considered are based in Kingston, Kemptville, and Brockville. David Paul asked when the overall budget for the project would be available. Andrew advised that it would likely be within a month; they are awaiting the completed drawing to then secure the final quotes.

- Michel also asked about whether the materials being used for construction would also be Canadian. Andrew confirmed this was the case. The only concern would be for any steel products, however, there is no steel planned for the building. It will all be built using Canadian wood products. Pricing for materials are softening as the markets continue to react to the situation in the US. Labour costs are also softening.
- Quentin Robinson advised that the Sunday School has moved into the old Nursery. Provisions are being made for the Handbells to be housed in an area in the Sanctuary where the new elevator will be. Archives will be moved into a room on the north side of the Sanctuary once it is built.
- Quentin also advised that the entrance to the hall will be through a new entrance that is located just where the Sunday School building joins the church. Some of the original church stonework will be revealed as the new entrance is built.
- Quentin Robinson confirmed in his written report that the Presbyterian Church has provided funds to cover the cost of the 3rd Party Review that they insisted we secure prior to them processing our application for the loan of \$1.65M. The review is being conducted by SHS Consulting in Toronto.
- Developmental Services of Leeds & Grenville (DSLGS)
 - Quentin welcomed Tom Turner, Executive Director for Developmental Services of Leeds and Grenville, who are considering a partnership with First Church to help fund the development and source some of the units for their clients
 - Why is Developmental Services (DS) interested in partnering with First Presbyterian Church?
 - Tom explained that DSLGS is a social services agency that has been serving in the Brockville community for 42 years. It provides clinical and support services for people with intellectual disabilities, from children to adults, many of whom are on ODSP pensions.
 - One of DSLGS' goals is to provide innovative housing options for their clients. There are 27 people now living successfully within the community and all are assigned to a support worker.
 - Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) has a process to determine what support level a person needs. Some can live independently while others may require 24 hour care.
 - Some clients live in what is an equivalent to a "foster care home" and there are seven such families in the Brockville area.
 - Another program that DSLGS initiated was to purchase an apartment and there they trained people to live independently. However, this experiment failed because when the clients were put into their own apartment, the environment was not the same as where they were trained and so the process needed to be redone.

- Now, when a person can live independently, they are trained within their own living space and the program works much better for them.
- The whole goal for DSLG is to have clients become contributing members of the community.
- As part of the Church's application for a CMHC mortgage, 30% of the building must be "affordable" housing.
- The connection with DSLG and the Church seemed to make sense as they could be a leaseholder for 4 apartments with prearranged rent.
- The clients assigned to these apartments would have ongoing support and access to a 24/7 help line.
- DSLG would like to have a representative on the Building Committee to help ensure that the apartments are being built to meet their clients' needs.
- DSLG could also provide some support to anyone living in the other 8 units – if they are taking their clients to the grocery store, for example, they could ask others in the building if they needed anything too.
- One of the big issues for seniors as well as intellectually challenged individuals is loneliness. A supportive community may be the answer.
- Quentin commented that in his past career, taking intellectually challenged clients to grocery stores or restaurants, he noticed that they were very open and the general public seemed to respond to them warmly.
- Tom Turner commented that he has provided First Church with a support letter to help with the CMHC application for seed funding.
- Quentin commented that none of the DSLG clients would have cars and so that would free up several parking spaces for church use and other users of the building.
- DSLG's board is always looking for housing opportunities:
 - One program helps people improve their independent living skills, for example, after being hospitalized.
 - Another program helps people become active family members
 - DSLG does not have any group homes.
 - DSLG is willing to provide \$500,000 funds to help with the construction costs, although the details are still to be worked out.
- Tom Turner reported that at a recent conference of the Association for Developmental Services, 60% of those in attendance were working with or looking to partner with churches that are looking to build affordable housing.
- Questions?
- Hugh Bates expressed concern that having DSLG clients and seniors in the same building was not part of the original plan. Linda Osmond replied that in her recollection of earlier presentation, it had always been intended to have seniors mixed in with others. Tom Turner commented that there are 250 people in Brockville that are

in need of affordable housing and that the partnership with First Church would help meet some of that need.

- DSLG would vet the people living in the 4 units and if there was not a good fit, would swap the people out and put new ones in. The goal is to be good community neighbours. Sharron Jackson commented that she lives in one of the buildings that DSLG has clients living in and there are two people in the building who are not allowed to touch the stoves. They are delightful people and fit into the community well. If DSLG vets the clients well, in her experience there should not be any issues.
- Quentin Robinson commented that as people age, their behaviours change and cited the example of someone who was previously a quiet, happy person suddenly changing into a loud, swearing person. The opposite could also happen.
- Tom Turner reinforced the idea that all clients will be vetted and only those suitable to being part of the church community would be allowed into the building.
- Quentin Robinson also commented that the church already has several DSLG groups using parts of the church for cooking and art classes twice a week. Lisa Sizeland asked how would the \$500,000 help with the funding and what about the \$150,000 from CMHC?
- Quentin Robinson suggested that these funds would help reduce the amount of the loan we are looking for from PCBC.
- Parkdale United Church in Ottawa is working with five agencies to help provide funding for their new redevelopment and housing project. Their project is much bigger than the one First Church is planning.
- We are also hoping that the people in the building will participate in some of the programs that First Church provides.
- Quentin Robinson also suggested that we are looking at a number of ways to secure the construction funding.

- Andrew Cameron asked why the two lights on the north entrance to the church are left on all the time. Christine Duncan explained that at Christmas time, they discovered there were no lights on at that entrance and it posed a safety concern. A new motion detector or timer is to be put into the church spire to control those lights. That work just has not been done as yet.

- Michel LaBonte moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Gloria Bates.
- Reverend Marianne Emig Carr closed the meeting in prayer.



submitted by **Brenda Fisk**
Finance Committee Chair

ANNUAL REPORT from SESSION 2025

Offerings: The MOVE Committee recommends the designation of the special offerings taken at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas which Session normally approves.

Worship: Session approved the schedule of celebrations of Communion for the year. Session also approved sharing worship services with First Baptist in July and August. The members of Session led two services during the year.

Facility Bookings: Session approves contracts for groups using the facilities if the charges are below the approved Fee Schedule. In 2025 rental income went over budget for two reasons: first, the church was used for polling stations during both a provincial and a federal election; second, two music teachers used the sanctuary one day a week starting in February.

Personnel: The staff of the church are supervised by designated people, most of whom serve on Session. Concern for the health of staff members continued throughout 2025.

General Assembly: Early in 2025 Session wrote to government officials regarding assistance for local and global farming and migrant farm workers. Session also wrote to the Minister of Immigration regarding IRCC policies and procedures in assessing claims by Christian and other religious minorities.

In June 2025, the General Assembly approved a recommendation to boycott, divest, and seek sanctions against companies and organizations supporting illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands. Palestinians initiated the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which has expanded as they encourage Christian churches worldwide to endorse it as a peaceful opposition to the Israeli occupation.

Reverend Marianne Emig Carr has been nominated to be the moderator of the General Assembly in 2026. There are two other candidates running. The result of who is elected will be announced in April.

Insurance Review: A review undertaken by the Trustees confirmed that we are insured under the PCC national program correctly. During the year care has been taken to ensure that outside groups have insurance with First Presbyterian as a named insured. Our insurer now has an online service if any group needs insurance.

16 Church Street: In August **Brockville Together** asked Session if they could rent #16 Church Street for a family of refugees who were soon to arrive in Canada. No other suitable accommodation had been found, and 16 Church Street was empty due to the delay in the Capital Project. Session agreed to this on a temporary basis. Regrettably the previous tenants filed a grievance claiming the church acted in bad faith by evicting them. The hearing will be on May 14th, 2026.

In addition to the above-mentioned items, Session continues to receive regular reports from all church groups and committees. For example, the Chair of the Finance Committee distributes a report on the financial position of the church each meeting with the previous month actual figures compared to the budget. This year the Finance Committee also consulted Session on a new procedure to ensure payments are made directly by the bank during a postal strike.

In November I asked Session to elect a new Clerk of Session. Having been in the position for over twelve years I thought it was time for a change. In January Christina Duncan took over as the new Clerk of Session and Brenda Fisk is now the Deputy Clerk of Session.

All committees and groups have included a summary of what they did in 2025 in the following reports. Please take a few minutes to read them and to reflect on what an amazing church you are a part of.

Respectfully submitted,
Quentin Robinson, Clerk of Session

SPECIAL THANK YOUS and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Many thanks to all those who volunteered time and energy in 2025!

Thank you to the following:

Quentin Robinson who served as Clerk of Session for 12 years.

Members of the Chancel Choir and **the Hand Bell Choir** who share their musical talents with us during our worship services.

Members of the Session for their commitment, dedication and care for this congregation.

The Trustees who ensure that First Church is adequately insured and protected.

Members of our Flute Ensemble for providing music during our worship services.

Michael LaBonte (our trumpeter) and **Andrew Cameron** (our Piper) who played for our Remembrance Day service.

Moira Gilmer for her creative talents which makes “craft and Chat” a high point for many each week.

Roger and Bonnie Burke for their hard work and dedication to the “Breakfast Bags” program.

The volunteers for First Presbyterian Church who help prepare and serve meals at Loaves & Fishes and for the volunteers who prepare and serve meals at our Sunday Suppers. Your help has made these ministries very successful.

The Pastoral Visitors, whose visits continue to reach out to those members who need the support and fellowship of the congregation.

To those who assist Reverend Marianne at services in various homes for seniors.

The M.O.V.E Committee under Janet LeBrun, who is such a large part of activities like “the Big Give” and our “Spring Clean Up”, reaching out to our community.

The Archives Committee as they continue to catalogue and care for items of historical significance to this congregation and share this with us.

The Worship Committee whose thoughts and ideas contribute to keeping our worship services full of meaning and inspiration.

For those serving on the **Leading with Care Committee**, for safeguarding those most vulnerable in the church and community.

The Finance Committee who continues to review our financial statements and prepare the budget.

To **Quentin Robinson** who had been heading up our “Future Capital Project” to ensure a future for First Presbyterian Church, along with **Brenda Fisk** and **David Duncan** who are looking to the future as this moves forward.

For those who continue to support the refugee projects, bringing vulnerable people to our country and helping them to settle into our community.

David Duncan for his work on the Church Web Site.

Lorraine Buck for her work as Roll Clerk.

The Property Committee who continues to work on projects large and small to care for the buildings of the Church.

The greeters, those who ran the elevator, the readers and those who provided refreshments with a special thank you to **the LeBrun and Chapman families**.

The videographers and sound technicians who ensure our services are recorded for those who cannot join us in person.

We express appreciation to and for **our wonderful staff**: Brian Barnes for his work as the custodian, Marianne Bimm for her work as Secretary-Treasurer, Kathleen Howard in her role as Organist and Choir Director, Denise Kent who runs the church school, and Max Chapman who assists.

We would also like to thank **Reverend Marianne Emig Carr** who continues to lead us, teach us and care for us.

respectfully submitted,

Christina Duncan - Clerk of Session

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
REPORT of the ROLL for the Year 2025

The Roll of First Presbyterian Church, January 1st, 2025	121
Those received:	
- by Certificate of Transfer	1
- by Profession of Faith	0
- by an Act of Session	0
<i>Subtotal</i>	122
Those removed:	
- by Death	5
- by Act of Session	8
- by Transfer	0
	109
The Roll of First Presbyterian Church, December 31st, 2025	

Respectfully submitted,
Lorraine Buck - Roll Clerk

REPORT of the MEMBERSHIP for the YEAR 2025

BAPTISMS

Annita Jean Marie Bean

April 27th, 2025 by the Reverend Marianne Emig Carr

MARRIAGES

Christopher Paul Harris & Rebecca Jade Alarie

August 14th, 2025 by the Reverend Marianne Emig Carr

DEATHS

Laura Rienstra	Robert Bates	Madeline Austin
Christine Wilson	Joe Conway	Mary Alma Grecco
Catherine Ball	Douglas Gary Todd	Paul Beckstead
Gloria Bates	Ross MacDonald	Max Farrelly
Duncan Dewar	Joan Puddicombe	

The list above also includes names of our family members and friends who died in the year 2025.

REPORT of SEAWAY-GLENGARRY PRESBYTERY for the 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry covers a large territory in eastern Ontario, consisting of 23 churches extending from the westernmost church, St. Paul's Presbyterian in Caintown to the most easterly church, St. Paul's Presbyterian in Hawkesbury. Most are small rural churches with First Presbyterian Church in Brockville and St. John's in Cornwall being the largest. There are some two-point charges and even a couple of three-point charges.

As one family under the lordship of Christ, Christian communities have organized themselves in a variety of ways to provide effective worship, pastoral care, discipleship, and service. The Presbyterian form of government is based on **eldership**. Clergy ("*teaching elders*") and laypeople who are ordained as elders by their congregations ("*ruling elders*") share in the care and oversight of the ministry of Christ at every level of our church. There are four courts in the Presbyterian system. Most of the important decisions that affect the church are made as teaching and ruling elders prayerfully meet to discern the mind of Christ.

The Presbytery is the second of the four courts of the church. The membership of the Presbytery is made up of teaching elders and ruling elders from each congregation within its boundaries - one ruling elder for each teaching elder on the constituent roll. Retired ministers and ministers without a pastoral charge are placed on the Appendix to the constituent roll. The Presbytery is an "open" court - anyone who is a Presbyterian church member may attend a Presbytery meeting. Presbyteries provide pastoral care support, guidance and oversight to their congregations and clergy. According to the terms of the two-point charge agreement between St. Paul's Caintown and First Presbyterian, the ruling elder representative alternates between the two congregations. Janet LeBrun is the current representative elder from First Presbyterian Church. Among the Presbytery's many responsibilities are the standing committees of Congregational Life, Mission, and Ministry. Every member on the constituent roll must serve on one of these committees.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE - This Committee's responsibilities include Christian Education, Ruling Elder training and support, stewardship and Presbyterian Sharing, Leading with Care policies, regular visitations with congregations, property, and reviewing the rolls and records of each congregation.

MISSION COMMITTEE - The Mission Committee's responsibilities encompass mission education (Canadian and International), promotion and sponsorship of at least one mission event each year, being proactive in discovering/researching opportunities for new church development, social justice issues, Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D), and planning and implementing a Presbytery-wide connectional event at least every five years. Refugee sponsorship is also this committee's responsibility.

MINISTRY COMMITTEE - The Ministry Committee's responsibilities include responding to vacancies (including exit interviews), relations between congregations and ministers, 'one year of service' visits with ministers, pastoral care of ministers, promotion of ministry as a

lifelong vocation, oversight of candidates for ministry, oversight of students on annual appointments, study leave, and theological reflections on worship.

PRESBYTERY MEETINGS - The Presbytery meets in September, November, January, March, May, and June plus meetings for any emergent issues that may arise. The meetings generally occur in various churches throughout the Presbytery, beginning at 9:30 am. and ending in the early afternoon (although the January and March Meetings now take place on Zoom to avoid winter weather issues). The Presbytery holds an education time at each Presbytery meeting. The Presbytery sends Commissioners (teaching and ruling elders) to the annual General Assembly (the highest Court in the PCC). The Presbytery has grants and loans available for various local initiatives and can help congregations apply for loans and grants available through the national church.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet LeBrun - Representative Elder

REPORT of THE M.O.V.E. COMMITTEE for the **2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

The acronym M.O.V.E. stands for Mission, Outreach, Visitation and Education. Committee members include Janet LeBrun (Chairperson), Reverend Marianne Emig Carr, Francis LeBrun, Bonnie Burke, Doris Hallett, Pam Dewar, Kathy Loughrey, Gwen Paul, Bob Walroth, and our two newest members – Jennifer Wood and Ellen Purvis.

MISSION

Non-perishable and monetary donations are collected on the first Sunday of each month for the Loaves and Fishes Restaurant on Front Avenue. This restaurant serves low-to-no-cost meals for anyone to enjoy. Our Church has helped in many ways since the beginning.

The Brockville and Area Food Bank is also generously supported by this congregation through food items, monetary donations and volunteering, since its beginning many years ago in the basement of this Church.

Through the M.O.V.E. Committee, monthly donations were distributed to a wide variety of Brockville and charities and outreach groups including, the United Way Urgent Needs Fund, R&J Youth Services Connection Program, Special Olympics Brockville, Cycling Without Age, Sherwood Park Manor, Queen Care Prenatal and Postpartum Support Group, John Howard Society (Coldest Night of the Year), St. Vincent de Paul Weekender Program, the Cooperative Care Center, the Brockville & Area Food Bank, and the LLGAMH Drop-in Center.

With the approval of Session, the M.O.V.E. Committee designated the special offerings for Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas in support of PWS&D, Presbyterians Sharing/Brockville & Area Food Bank, and Loaves & Fishes/Presbyterians Sharing respectively.

OUTREACH

Our church website, <http://pccweb.ca/firstchurch-brockville/>, managed by David Duncan, with assistance from Reverend Marianne and the website committee, is up to date and informative with many pictures and articles. Thank you to all who contribute to this site. It is always being improved to reach more people. Reverend Marianne manages our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, keeping them fresh and interesting.

The Challenge, our newsletter, is published at least three or four times a year. It is always a well-put-together publication and all involved work hard to make each edition an informative and enjoyable read. Thank you to Marianne Bimm, our editor-in-chief and everyone who contributed articles, jokes, pictures, recipes, poems, etc.

Our Sunday services are being livestreamed and are also available on YouTube, Facebook and Cogeco Cable TV. A lot of people contribute to making this excellent professional production. The services are printed weekly and delivered to those of our congregation without internet access. Although not part of M.O.V.E.'s mandate, it is a vital outreach. The efforts of all involved are greatly appreciated.

P. A. Day Camps continue, capably led by our Sunday School Coordinator Denise Kent. The crafts, lessons and mission projects are fun, educational and the children always enjoy participating. The camps are usually full to capacity.

Two children were sponsored to week-long summer camp experiences at Gracefield Camp and Conference Centre on Beaver Lake in Quebec in summer 2025. Many thanks to those who contributed to the bursaries that helped to cover the costs for each camper.

Our Breakfast Bag Program for the Food Bank continues to be a big hit. Paper bags are filled with breakfast items such as cheese, fruit snacks, granola bars, juice boxes, etc. Thirty bags are filled three times monthly and taken to the food bank for distribution. Many thanks to Roger and Bonnie Burke (assisted by Gwen Paul) for their dedication to this project and to the congregation for their generous support.

In April, members of the M.O.V.E. Committee and friends participated in the Brockville Community Cleanup. Our assigned area was the little park on George

Street. It sure looked a lot better when we were done. After, we gathered at the church for hot chocolate and cookies. A great big thanks to all who helped.

Through the M.O.V. E. Committee our church participated in The Big Give on the first Saturday in June. This event involves many churches who use the day to give to the community for free, whether it be haircuts, barbecues, baked goods, rummage sales or other things. We held a rummage 'sale' and cookie give away. The event was a great success thanks to all the donations we received and the hard work of all the volunteers.

Our Sunday Supper ministry continues in partnership with St. Paul's Anglican Church. We are looking for another church or group to partner with. Approximately 150 suppers are prepared and served in the church hall or given out at the door. Thank you to all the people who support this necessary outreach ministry through volunteering and monetary donations.

The Committee and friends participated in the Brockville Santa Claus parade in December. It was fun! Thank you to Lisa Sizeland and Marie Mujahid for providing a trailer and vehicle and for the volunteers who walked the route and handed out candy.

VISITATION

Pastoral visitation is an extremely important mission at First Church. Many who are unable to come to Sunday services, due to various circumstances, are still made to feel a part of our congregation by Reverend Marianne and a few-but-mighty dedicated visitors from our church, including Mark Leslie and Marianne Bimm who hand deliver printed orders of service. Reverend Marianne and Christina Duncan conduct worship services at various long-term care and retirement homes.

In December, the M.O.V.E. Committee and the Craft & Chat group got together to package plates of cookies and write Christmas cards to be delivered to over thirty recipients. Everyone was very appreciative and there were lots of great conversations at the door. Thanks to all who baked cookies, assembled packages, wrote cards, and delivered them.

Betty McNair sends cards to those who are ill, in hospital, at home or who just need to know we are thinking of them. She also sends sympathy cards and cards to those celebrating special life events. Thank you, Betty, for doing this important part of our ministry. Please let Reverend Marianne, Betty or anyone on M.O.V.E. know of someone who needs a card, a visit, is in hospital, or moved from their home to a facility. If you do not tell us, we will not know.

EDUCATION - Reverend Marianne leads two study groups each year - one during

Lent and one during Advent. People can participate in person or online. They are always interesting and there are always new things to learn.

Denise Kent teaches Church School and organizes P.A. Day Camps. She keeps the children interested and entertained with bible lessons and crafts. Max Chapman has been hired to assist Denise in the classroom and to comply with Leading With Care requirements. The children present a Christmas pageant during Advent and make and sell crafts during Advent in support of the PWS&D Gifts of Change project. They raised over \$400.00 this year – an effort that was matched by a member of our congregation.

Each year brings changes and 2025 was no different for this committee. We thank the Lord for his inspiration and unfailing, loving guidance in all that we accomplished in 2025, and all that we will do in the coming year. If anyone would like to join an interesting and dynamic committee, or has any ideas about our areas of responsibility, please speak with any member of the committee. You and/or your suggestions are most welcome.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet LeBrun

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP GROUPS for the 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

In response to the Syrian refugee crisis in the fall of 2015, our church, along with our community and the Canadian public, became acutely aware of the plight of thousands of refugees fleeing persecution and violence in their home countries and seeking a better life for their families. First Church continues its efforts to bring new refugees to Canada, as well as assisting those previously sponsored to continue adjusting to Canadian life.

This report is to update the congregation on the status of the current sponsorships with which the congregation is involved.

Open Arms Brockville

The Open Arms Brockville group consists of the following churches:

First Presbyterian Church, Brockville

Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Brockville

First Baptist Church, Brockville

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Caintown

Open Arms Brockville began a new private refugee sponsorship in partnership with a local Sudanese family to sponsor a refugee family of five who fled Sudan due to the ongoing civil war. The family will be living with the co-sponsor, who is related to them and will be

supporting them financially. The family passed their eligibility interview with the Cairo Visa Office in May 2025 but are still awaiting their permanent residence visa and confirmation of travel arrangements.

Brockville Freedom Connection

Brockville Freedom Connection welcomed Reginah Kyazike and her children, Michael and Angela, in August 2024. The group concluded the financial obligations connected with the sponsorship in July 2025, although group members still stay in touch with Reginah and provide social and community support. Reginah took a PSW course through the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario's adult education program and is now working full-time as a PSW at St. Lawrence Lodge.

Brockville Together

In October 2024, Brockville Together welcomed Mohammad Idris, a single Syrian man, through the Blended Visa Office Referral (BVOR) program, where Canada accepts for resettlement refugees who have been screened by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). Many of you have met Idris during church worship and Sunday Suppers. He is now working full-time at the EEC as an employment coach.

Idris has also been "paying it forward" and helping Brockville Together's newest refugee family, Roushin Hannan, a single mother from Syria with four children. Roushin and her family arrived in Canada in September 2025 through the Blended Visa Office Referral (BVOR) Program. You likely have seen Roushin and Hadi, Sonia, Celina and Mohammad, as they are currently living at #16 Church Street.

The family have been settling in well. Bank accounts, utility accounts and a SIN have been set up for Roushin. Hadi is going to school at BCI, and the younger children are attending the new Swift Waters Elementary School. Hadi is also being supported with volunteer math tutoring to help him catch up gaps in his education.

The family have also been seen by a doctor and dentist and have been registered for Canada Child Benefits (and Healthy Smiles for the children). Volunteers from Brockville Together have been providing Roushin with ESL lessons (as TR Leger in Brockville is no longer providing ESL Classes). The family obtained warm winter clothing through the Kinsmen Snowsuit Drive, and celebrated Christmas with generous gifts from a local refugee supporter and the Salvation Army Christmas Assistance Program. They are still getting used to the cold and snow this winter!

Next steps will include filing Roushin's income tax return (so she is able to continue receiving her government benefits) and starting to help her look for work (she was working in Iraq as a hairdresser).

Asylum Seekers in Brockville



Many of you have noticed or have helped with providing furniture and household items for newcomers to our community. Brockville has welcomed several newcomers who have claimed asylum in Canada due to persecution and violence in their home countries. These individuals do NOT come as “sponsored” refugees.

Asylum-seekers and resettled refugees come to Canada through different immigration streams, so those who are claiming asylum upon arrival in Canada are not taking the place of refugees who are coming to Canada from abroad for resettlement, nor those arriving through other immigration streams. Their claims are reviewed by the Immigration and Refugee Board to ensure they are entitled to asylum under Canadian and international law. If their claims are accepted, then they are granted “protected person” status and may then apply for Canadian permanent residence status.

All asylum-seekers undergo health and security screening, including biographic and biometric checks as well as the initiation of security and criminality checks. They are given work permits, basic health care and ESL training while their claims are being assessed. These newcomers are all gainfully employed and eager to be contributing members of our community.

respectfully submitted, **Reverend Marianne**

REPORT of the DIRECTOR of MUSIC for the 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

2025 has been a year of change for the music ministry at First Church.

The Chancel Choir welcomed Heather Dundas as a new member, and Ellen Purvis, who returned after a few years away, said goodbye to Lea Wassink, who moved away, and lost Gloria Bates very suddenly in the summer. And Kathy Loughrey has recently decided to “retire” after many years. The Choir continues to faithfully contribute to the music of services. I am very grateful to all the members for sharing their talents.

The Handbell Choir continues to participate in our music. In 2025 the Handbells also participated in the Caintown Country Christmas and the Spencerville Choir Christmas concerts. Both were extremely well received. Unfortunately, we suddenly lost Peri Howlett, a long-time and very accomplished ringer. The Flute Ensemble continues to present beautiful service music several times a year.

And we have a roster of wonderful musicians who participate at various services throughout the year. Many thanks to Andrew Cameron (Bagpipes and Flute), Christina Duncan (Flute), Reverend Marianne Emig Carr (Vocal Soloist), Michel LaBonté (Trumpet), Karen Mahon (Flute and Small Pipes). It is a joy and a blessing to work with all these people.

As always, new members for all ensembles would be warmly welcomed.

Kathleen Howard, Director of Music



Kathleen Howard, Andrew Cameron
Karen Mahon



Lea Wassink – Cello & the Chancel Choir

for

MEN'S BREAKFAST the 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

There were only five breakfasts in 2025. All were at “Stacked” Restaurant.

Attendance ranged from four to eight men. Regardless of numbers those who turned up enjoyed the food and the fellowship.

Scheduling is a challenge but hopefully we will have a few more gatherings in 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Quentin Robinson

LEADING with CARE for the 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

As a community of faith, First Presbyterian Church provides Sunday worship, church school classes, nursery care, P.A. Day Camps, Sunday suppers, and home and hospital visits. Those served by these ministries include children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Their vulnerabilities may include health concerns, age, and physical and mental challenges.

The Church building is also used by various outside groups, including an Embers/Girl Guides Group, the BGH Day Hospice Program, BGH Grief Support Groups, Girls Inc.,

AA, and other groups on an informal basis. Many of these groups also serve vulnerable persons.

The *Leading with Care* committee reports to Session on its activities. Activities of the Leading with Care Committee this year included:

- Continued updating of Police record checks, stored in the locked office safe, for volunteers working in First Church ministries that include vulnerable persons and for our community refugee sponsor group members.
- An annual in-person “fire drill” review during worship.
- A review of the facilities and the church premises, which were found in compliance with respect to smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting and illuminated signs. Well-stocked First Aid kits are available in the Church kitchen and upstairs in the Red Room. There is also an AED device in the Church Hall, and naloxone kits in the kitchen.
- The Sunday Supper volunteer team took naloxone administration training in 2025, and there are two naloxone kits in the kitchen.
- The Leading with Care Committee will continue to provide input during the Capital Project to ensure that the building is up to date with respect to accessibility.

Sincere thanks to the members of the Leading with Care committee: Janet LeBrun and Lloyd Osmond, and our caretaker, Brian Barnes. More members would be most welcome!

respectfully submitted,
Reverend Marianne, Convenor

WORSHIP COMMITTEE for the 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The Worship Committee continued its efforts in 2025 to support all aspects of worship. The Committee works with the Minister and the Music Director to deliver a planned and consistent worship experience. The Committee also seeks feedback from the congregation on the worship services, including new worship suggestions and ideas.

Members of the Worship Committee continue to be very active with music planning, worship modifications for online viewing, and scripture reading. The Committee is very thankful for the hard work of Kathleen Howard, Michel LaBonte, Quentin Robinson, Reverend Marianne, the scripture readers, ushers and greeters, and musicians that enhance worship for everyone.

Special services in 2025 included:

- Presbyterians Sharing Sunday
- Orange Shirt Sunday
- PWS & D Sunday
- Maundy Thursday
- Holy Humour Sunday
- Mission Awareness Sunday
- Rally Sunday
- Recovenanting Sunday
- Anniversary Sunday
- Remembrance Sunday
- Legacy Sunday
- Longest Night (held jointly in 2025 with St. Paul's Anglican Church)
- Family Christmas Eve Service at 4:30
- Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols Service at 7 pm.



The Reverend Ian Johnston welcomed as Minister in Association with First Presbyterian Church.

Communion was celebrated nine times during the church year: first Sunday of January, first Sunday in Lent, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Trinity Sunday (June 15th), World Communion Sunday, Anniversary Sunday and the first Sunday in Advent.

Sincere thanks to all the members of the Worship Committee for their hard work and support through 2025: Kathleen Howard, Director of Music, Marianne Bimm (*ex officio*), Lorraine Buck, and Janet LeBrun.

New members are welcome!

respectfully submitted,
Reverend Marianne

WEBSITE COMMITTEE for the 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

A strong online presence is essential for churches today. A well-maintained website enhances the church's credibility, provides visitors and potential congregants with clear information about ministries and activities, and supports meaningful engagement for both newcomers and long-time members.

In an age when people instinctively look online for information, a church website serves as a vital point of connection. Without one, opportunities to welcome visitors, share our story, and encourage involvement are diminished. With one, we open the doors widely inviting people to explore our community, discover programs, and join us in worship.

Throughout 2025, the Website Committee continued its work to ensure that the First Presbyterian Church website remains current, informative, and engaging. The committee met five times during the year and collaborated regularly to provide updates, photos, and stories that reflect the life of our congregation.

We extend our sincere appreciation to:

David Duncan, Webmaster, for his ongoing leadership and technical expertise.

Reverend Marianne, for her support and contributions regarding church activities.

Quentin Robinson, for his diligence and creative insight.

We are also grateful to the many members of the congregation who shared photos and videos of church events. These contributions help us document and celebrate the vibrant life of First Presbyterian Church.

The committee remains committed to ensuring that the website continues to be a valuable resource for members, visitors, and community partners. We encourage everyone to explore the site regularly and stay connected with the many activities taking place. If you have photos, stories, or ideas for content you would like to see featured on the website, please forward them to David Duncan at daveduncan@bell.net. Your input is essential to this ongoing work.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Fisk

CRAFT & CHAT

for the 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The Craft and Chat Group get together, on Tuesdays, in the Parlour, with between 8 and 15 ladies attending. Some work on their latest project, while chatting and others just enjoy chatting or listening.

At 3 we put away the crafts and stop for some refreshments, that's when the serious chatting begins, mixed in with lots of joking and laughter.

We continue to make prayer shawls and lap rugs which are distributed to members of the congregation and others, to remind them that we are thinking of them. Mitts and toques are also made for distribution.

If you are having a problem with a needlework project one of our group might be able help out and new members are always welcome.

Respectfully submitted,
Moira Gilmer



The Craft & Chat Gals and Friends
Christmas 2025

PROPERTY COMMITTEE for the 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The Property Committee's work in 2025 focused on a smaller number of projects than in previous years, allowing us to concentrate our efforts on several important improvements.

Our primary undertaking was the replacement of the steps at the South entrance and the reconstruction of the light posts at the North entrance. These upgrades are being completed entirely by volunteers. While the work has taken more time than originally anticipated, the cost savings and the spirit of shared effort have made this approach both practical and deeply meaningful. We extend our sincere appreciation to Tony Ierullo, Quentin Robinson, David Duncan, and Andrew Duncan for their dedication and hard work in bringing this project toward completion.

Further work on the entrances is planned for the spring, including the reconstruction of the remaining walls once weather conditions permit. The Committee has also begun planning for the refinishing of the South doors to restore their appearance and ensure their long-term durability.

In addition, we are researching appropriate methods and associated costs for restoring the limestone at both the North and South entrances, with the goal of preserving these important architectural features.

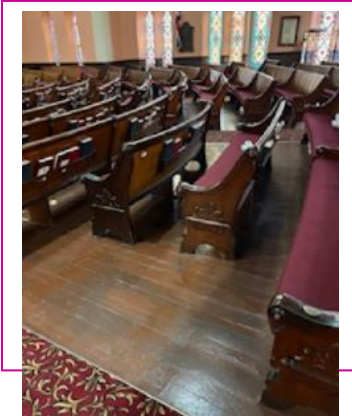
In addition to this primary project, the Committee continues to manage routine and emergency maintenance across the church property, including essential servicing of the boiler to ensure dependable heating during the winter months.

A special thank you is extended to Brian Barnes for his ongoing commitment to the daily care and upkeep of the church. His efforts are invaluable.

The Property Committee remains a small but committed group consisting of Don Everson, Brian Barnes, David Duncan, and Andrew Duncan. While we do not meet regularly, we are always grateful for additional support. Anyone interested

respectfully submitted,
Christina Duncan, Property Co-Chair

in joining the committee or assisting with specific projects is encouraged to speak with a member of the Property Committee.



ACCESSIBILITY SEATING!