

*First
United
Church,
Truro*



*October
2021*

*Community of Faith Profile
&
Recommendations for Moving Boldly
Into the Future*

Table of Contents

	Page
A Letter to the Congregation	3
Preamble	4
Who We Are Now	5
Resources	6
Truro, A Place to Live	7
Our History, Today, Statistics	8
Who We Are	10
Church Council Chart and Mission Statement	12
Recommendations	13
Governance	14
Worship	16
Music	17
Children and Youth	18
Office Administration	19
Communication	20
Creating a Safe and Welcoming Place ...	21
Outreach	22
Pastoral Care	23
Structural Changes to the Sanctuary and Hall	24
Rental of Sanctuary and Hal	25
Proposed Ministry Team	26
Profile Team Scenarios and Financial Analysis	29
References	33

October 20, 2021

A Letter to the Congregation

Dear Friends:

It is in the spirit of love, hope and even, daring that the Profile Team presents this report to you today. Seven months ago we were given the mandate at a Congregational Meeting to discern who we are and where we are going as a Community of Faith. In our journey, we have come to appreciate anew the richness of our congregational life and at the same time, have taken into account that in that mandate you charged us to dream, to envision and to challenge ourselves as we look to the future.

From the onset, Regional Minister Rev. David Hewitt acted as our Liaison with the Region and has been invaluable to us. As we approached each meeting time together, we were led in prayer by Jennifer. It felt at first, like a 'wandering in the wilderness', but as we assimilated all the things you had to say to us in your responses to the Questionnaire and in the open conversations in the parlour, on the lawn and in Zoom rooms, a vision slowly emerged. Along the journey, we read the documented stories from our own past. We read about and talked with other faith communities facing the same challenges today as we are. We learned from their stories as well.

The first part of this document deals with "Who We Are Now" as a community of faith, and how we are 'being a church' in this world today. The second part, "Recommendations for Moving Boldly into the Future" is where we put into words what we have learned on our journey, and where we suggest what actions we might take together. To act upon some of them will be easy and without controversy. To act on others will require us to think not just react, to risk not just play it safe, and to do it all in a spirit of love for one another. It will also require us all to re-think how each one of us wishes to engage in our faith community here at First United. In the end we will need to ask ourselves, "Will we move into the future ruled by caution, or will we take calculated risks and move purposefully into the future with optimism and hope?"

In Peace and Love,

Alison MacLean , Chair
Joy Hewitt
Jennifer Jordan
Grant Langford
Jud Pearson

***...With a sense of renewed hope
they found who they could be
and from their journey we can learn
to grow and change and see.***

From *Exodus* by Valerie Payton Kingsbury

Preamble

“For surely I know the plans I have for you”, says the LORD,
“plans for your welfare and not for harm,
to give you a future with hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11

Yes, your Profile Team is ready to present their report to you on what you and your Team think should be considered as a plan for the future of First United.

This report is a result of seven months of discussion with the church staff, all of the committees of the church and a questionnaire designed to give everyone a chance to give their opinion on the present and future direction of their church. As you can imagine, it took this time to gather all of the information. Once we had it, we very carefully looked for common threads that pointed us in the direction the church might consider for future growth. As a result, you will find recommendations that we feel will take us from where we are now to a new and brighter future. It will require change, which is never easy, but let's think of it as “short term pain for long term gain”.

Part of this report goes beyond the church itself. As Reverend Valerie has often told us "we are the hands and feet of Jesus". We want to keep our community around us as part of our master plan and so enhance our strengths to make it a better place for everyone.

Seems like a lot of changes, doesn't it? Yes, but remember, “Rome wasn't built in a day!” Research needs to be done first and then tackle the priorities one at a time. In this way First United will be here for generations to come.

When you read this report, stop and think about it and then read it again. It will require all of us to consider what is best for our church to sustain itself and to make sure we are here for many years to come.

Who We Are Now

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Our Living

Faith Story

Resources

First United Church presently employs one fulltime Minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care, a fulltime Minister of Music, a halftime Minister of Children and Youth, a fulltime Office Administrator and a half time person in charge of maintenance and upkeep. We recently lost our much-loved Minister of Faith Formation, who had a devoted following in his Bible Study and Film Outreach Groups.

The sanctuary seats approximately 850 people and is wheelchair accessible with an audio-loop projector system. We have a small kitchen at the back of the church used to facilitate fellowship time following worship. Upstairs there is a toddler room that parents are free to use and in pre-COVID times we provided supervision during worship. There is also a station at the rear of the sanctuary for children and for nursing mothers.

In Memorial Hall you will find a gymnasium that is used by the faith family and the community for a variety of programs. Just off the Gym is our kitchen. We have a designated Sunday School area in the lower level. You will also find the Choir Rehearsal Room and the Studio of local indigenous Artist Alan Syliboy. On the main level there is an office shared by the Minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care and the Minister of Music. Next to that is the office of the Administrator which is equipped with computer, internet, photocopier and all other office supplies. This floor also has the Ladies Parlour which serves as a gathering space for small groups and committees. It houses the large screen TV. The Minister of Children and Youth and the Faith Formation Minister have offices on the upper level. They are furnished and have internet and phone. The Upper level is also home to the church Library, the Archives and the Youth Room.

The Congregation uses Voices United hymn books and More Voices, as well as a compilation of hymns by Valerie Kingsbury and Chris Bowman copyrighted under Tidal Bore Music. The Sunday School uses *The Seasons of the Spirit* curriculum.

We operate on a team model of ministry. The staff work collaboratively, supporting one another in the ministry of the church. There are regular weekly team meetings to help in this process. Under the Council System there are fifteen committees that involve approximately 70 people in the work of the church.

A group of volunteers help with the Sunday School and Youth Groups, mid-week groups, Bible Study, Film Group, Study Groups, Paint Group, Mental Health Group and Vacation Bible School. All these programs are well advertised on our website, in our weekly Church Bulletin, on our various bulletin boards and in the local media. A church newspaper is published three times a year and distributed to the members and adherents.

The sanctuary uses a 3-manual Casavant organ, a Yamaha C7 grand piano, and 5 octaves of Schulmerich handbells. We also use a Kawai baby grand piano, a Yamaha U1 upright piano, and an electric keyboard in our rehearsal spaces.

Truro, A Good Place to Live

First United Church is centrally located in Truro with its congregation attending from many bordering areas. It is a quiet but active town with city life only 60 minutes away in Halifax. It is a safe, beautiful place to live.

While the population of Truro is only 13,000 people, surrounding communities boost the number to approximately 50,000 people. Truro is known as the Hub of Nova Scotia and is easily accessed by major highways. Halifax International Airport is only 45 minutes away. A variety of shopping is available in the historic downtown core, at the three mall locations and at the Power Centre Development.

A full education program is offered in Truro with pre-school and modern public schools. Our high school, Cobequid Educational Centre, has a fine reputation for sports, music, musical theatre, art and academic excellence. French Immersion, Acadian and a private Christian School are found within the community. Truro has the Nova Scotia Community College and the Dalhousie Agricultural College. Truro provides a complete range of health services to meet any requirements including alternative health. A full service hospital, The Colchester East Hants Health Centre, opened in 2013 and is located within the town.

Truro's entertainment has an inviting small town atmosphere with amateur theatre, choirs, bands, music festivals and art programs. The Marigold Cultural Centre provides vibrant encouragement of the arts in our community. Our own Music Under the Steeple program hosts its own busy concert series which draws its audience from the community, as well as the congregation.

Truro boasts the beautiful Victoria Park in the centre of town, with trails and biking trails, winding through more than 3,000 acres of natural woodland and past cascading waterfalls. The Cobequid biking and hiking trails and skiing at Wentworth are 30 minutes away. The Rath Eastlink Community Centre is a multi-purpose sports facility in Truro with an NHL sized arena and competition-sized swimming pool. Within Truro, or nearby, are several golf courses, tennis courts, skating and curling rinks, bowling alleys and opportunities for hunting, fishing and boating.

Further information about the town and surrounding area can be found at the following websites:

Truro - <http://truro.ca/>

Millbrook First Nation – <http://www.millbrookfirstnation.net/>

Glooscap Heritage Centre: <http://www.glooscapheritagecentre.com/>

Statistics Canada Community Profile of Truro – <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census>

Our History, Today, Statistics

Our History

The formation of First Presbyterian Church was begun in 1760 with the arrival of settlers from New Hampshire. Their first task was to establish a church in which to worship but it wasn't until 1769 that they were able to attract an ordained minister from Scotland, the Reverend Daniel Cock. The church was erected on a site which is now the Robie Street Cemetery. As the center of activity for the town shifted, property was purchased and a new church erected on the corner of Lorne and Prince Streets. The new church, erected in 1854 faced Lorne Street.

In 1913 the church burned to the ground and was rebuilt on the same site but with it facing Prince Street. The new church was opened in 1916. This was a remarkable achievement as Canada was in the middle of World War 1. First Presbyterian became First United at the time of Union in 1925. A church hall was built in 1951. The hall and the church continue to stand today. At its peak 1000 souls worshiped weekly in its sanctuary.

Today

The current staffing of First United consists of a Minister of Word Sacrament and Pastoral Care, Valerie Kingsbury, Minister of Music, Chris Bowman, Minister of Administration, Tracy Boutilier, grounds Keeper, Don Lamond, and Youth Family Director Adam Bray. In early 2021 our Minister of Faith Formation, Reverend Roger Moore passed away. He is deeply missed as he was a kind and gentle man with a great sense of humor and an incredible knowledge of the Bible. He had built up a loyal following in his Bible studies and his film group. And it is with his passing that we are reviewing the Profile of First United Church.

Ten years ago the church switched to the Council system of governance from the Official Board style. This resulted in a reduced number of required attendees at Council meetings. As intended, it resulted also in a wider involvement of the congregation in the work of the church through the members of the various committees. Committees were empowered to carry out their work and the chairs reported to and attended Council meetings. Council included the Chair of Council, the Vice Chair, the Treasurer, the Secretary and the Chairs of the 14 committees that make up the Council. A Quorum of 50% plus one is 10 although regular attendance has often been much higher than that. Of course, no matter what system we use it is mandatory that a First United Church minister be present at all meetings. Over the intervening years, two committees were combined (Worship and CE) One was dropped (Youth Ministries) and one was added (Stewardship), resulting in 14 committees presently serving the congregation.

An engineering study of the church structure in 2012 indicated a number of areas of concern including the 16 large windows, the tower, the fascia at the roof line and the roof resulted in a fundraising campaign to pay for these much needed repairs. Over the years 2013 to 2018 about 1.1 million dollars was raised with 80% coming from the congregation. As the money was being raised the work began and was completed in 2018. Shortly after this the sprinkler system failed and had to be replaced. The heating system is also in bad shape with parts no longer available

for this very old system. Money has now been set aside to replace this system but as yet a firm quote has not been received. It is expected that a new system will cost in the order of \$250,000.

Statistics

First United currently has 407 (active) persons under Pastoral Care as outlined in the 2020 Annual report. There are 374 members and adherents as of December 31st 2020. The average number of envelopes used for local givings during the year was 54 while 92 persons were on PAR. The church is a strong supporter of M&S usually equaling or exceeding the budgeted amount each year. Statistics also show that there are approximately 33 young families in the church membership with a potential of 44 children and youth for our Sunday School and Youth programs. The year 2020 saw 4 weddings, 1 new member by transfer, 22 funerals and 1 child baptism.

COVID-19, in 2020 and 2021, created difficult years for the church resulting in its closure for a significant time in both of those years. This resulted in the streaming of services which were actually much harder to produce than regular services due to the increased technology required. When church was open it was necessary to block off many pews so that social distancing could be respected. People were required to phone in their intention to attend church. During this period attendance averaged 75 to 85 people per week with a few Sundays slightly over 100. Maximum allowed was about 110. During regular services in 2019 regular attendance was in the order of 130 to 150.

Thanks to the efforts of our Treasurer, Susan Dixon Dyke, we were able to obtain funds from the government to offset the payroll costs as no one was laid off. While givings were down expenses were also down with the result that considerably less money was required to offset the deficit that had been occurring in the past several years.

Our annual budget is in the order of \$400,000 with salaries, fuel, United Church assessment, insurance and utilities being our five major costs. These five costs represent 85% of our budget. Pre COVID-19 we were taking about \$50,000 to \$90,000 from the Trustees of which about \$38,000 came from the dividends and interest from our investments. The remainder came from capital (Remarkably, during this period share values increased substantially with the result that our capital did not proportionally decrease.) However, the drawing down of this capital from discretionary funds cannot go on indefinitely. A more detailed analysis will be shown later in the report.

Who We Are

We are people of faith striving to enhance the lives of those in our church, our community, and our world, through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

We continue to strive to be a church where all people, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or economic circumstances are welcome to be actively involved in the life of the church.

Ours is a long-established Church with a bold history. Our congregation is an active population with varying backgrounds. To this we are attempting to add a new and vibrant component including more young families as well as newcomers to the area-

At First United, we endeavor to provide many opportunities for fellowship. Time for fellowship before, during, and after our services offers the chance to welcome newcomers and get to know the members of our church family. The annual Sunday School BBQ, and annual newcomer's dinner are occasions to celebrate together and provide opportunities during the year to just get together for lunch after church.

We have been successful in establishing mid-week groups, including line dancing, chair yoga the Craft and Conversation Group and the Eagle Sunrise Breakfast Club at Smitty's, as well as a Men's Fellowship Group that meets in the Hall. Conversations in the hall and on the lawns are opportunities to interact directly with our minister in interesting and sometimes in- depth theological discussions. There is a well-established Sunday School Program and a senior Youth Group. Adult Bible Study and a Film Group are held weekly during the fall and winter months.

Under the umbrella of the UCW our women gather monthly for fellowship, prayer and study. They offer support to many aspects of the church's life from fund raisers to decorating, to care for the physical plant.

In conjunction with other churches in our area, we provide Ministry and Music to several local nursing homes and a Pastoral Care Team provides regular visits to members 80 years of age or older.

Music is an integral part of our worship at First United. The Minister of Music is an enthusiastic, dedicated, and gifted individual who is creating a dynamic and varied music environment that reaches out to people of diverse backgrounds, interests, and ages. The Mixed-Voice Church Choir, and the Hand Bell Ensemble take turns providing music for the Sunday morning services. The Joyful Noise Choir, an ad hoc choir, also provides music during worship from time to time. Our Minister of Music also directs a community choir, Cantabile, which provides support for the Cantabile Boys Choir and The Truro Youth Singers, all under the Cantabile 'umbrella'. These three choirs rehearse at First United and perform regularly in the Sanctuary in concerts for the community of Truro. These events are often significant fundraisers for the church.

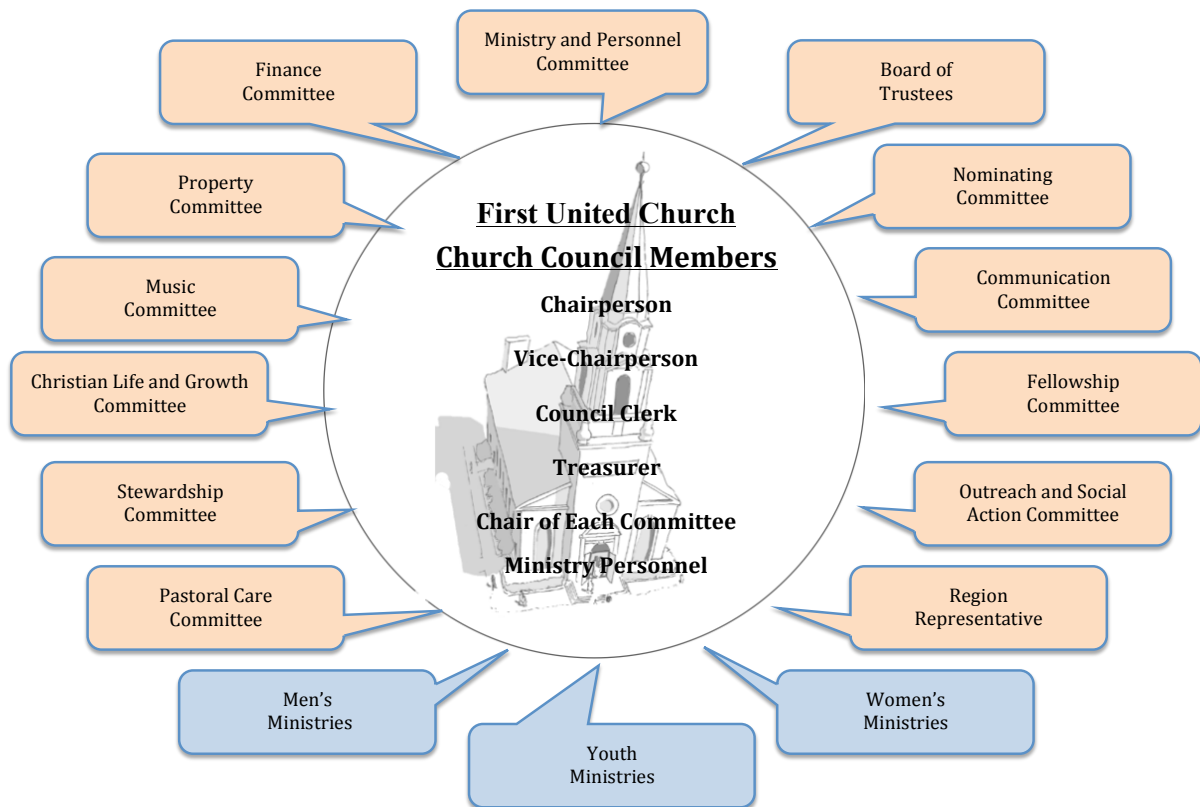
Our Outreach Committee enthusiastically and tirelessly reaches out to help those in our Community who are disadvantaged by participating in free community dinners with other

churches. Our 'Change for Change' program has allowed us to support three young girls to attend The New Hope High school in Rabinal, Guatemala. Support is also given to the annual Christmas Index Program, the Food Grains Bank and Refugee sponsorship program. Through our minister's involvement, we support the Hospice society, the Fire Department, community funerals and are able to offer quiet support to marginalized members of society. We recently joined with four other local churches in Truro to hold a World Food Day event with the theme "Women in Agriculture". We also contribute annually to the UCC Mission and Service Fund, with monies coming from Congregational givings and from the UCW

Our journey continues as we search for ways to play a more active and supportive role in the community-

***Our Mission:
To glorify God while striving to be
an inclusive, welcoming,
friendly, teaching congregation
committed to serving our community and our world.***

The Church Council is made up of a Council Executive with fifteen committees, involving around seventy volunteers from the congregation. A description of each committee's mandate and responsibilities can be found on our website at: www.firstunitedtruro.ca



***Recommendations
For Moving Boldly
Into the Future***

Governance

Preamble

First United Church moved from the Official Board model of governance or organization to the Council Model (described in the United Church Manual) in 2010. A Council Booklet was created by a duly appointed committee of First United's congregation and has been amended by Council and reprinted every two years (most recently in 2018). The Booklet sets out in detail the composition of the Church Council, the terms of its members and the roles of its committees. It has been available as a resource and guide during the past decade.

In conversation with the Profile Team, the present Chair of Council and the Chairs of CL&G and Music Committee described the strengths of the Council model in the following way: It empowers committees to do their own work, to act on their own quickly and to report to Council what has been done. With four Council Meetings a year, there is a good representation of the committees at Council Meetings. This, along with the policy of publishing Council Minutes makes it possible for people to be informed of important issues in the church.

A need to examine the governance of the church was raised in a discussion with the Chair of Nominating and later other members of the Nominating Committee. They are finding it more difficult to fill Council roles. There are many roles to fill and fewer people to fill them. The Chair of Council and the Chairs of CL&G and Music Committees also recognised this difficulty and suggested that perhaps it will be necessary to amalgamate some of the existing committees (as was done in 2018).

In forming the past few Councils it became necessary to abandon the 'ideal' (Council Booklet, page 1) of having "each Committee member...limited to serve on only one Committee").

It is time for a re-examination of the roles of the committees and how they carry out their responsibilities. Are we limiting people's interests by putting them in roles that may go on for years? Should the length of terms be adjusted? There is much to be said for experience but with clear objectives people could take on projects that are in their areas of interest one project at a time.

It is important that the mandate of each committee be clearly defined and that the relations and communications with others are understood. There was some feeling of disconnect between staff and the governing body as well as the congregation during the Pandemic. Is there a way for this disconnect to be minimized and the staff made to feel better supported? Is a stronger input from M&P needed or could the Council Executive take a bigger lead here?

During these conversations, it was noted that many people do not like meetings. Perhaps greater use of Zoom might be a good approach to minimize the time in meetings. It was also noted that people like projects. There is a strong level of satisfaction when one is called on for a project, to achieve the objective, gain a level of satisfaction with a project well done and then step back. A recent example of this was the group which gathered to write an application to the National Heritage Funding Project, resulting in winning a large sum of money for the church restoration.

Through various conversations it became apparent there is a wish that consideration be given to the possible amalgamation of some Council Committees. M&P and Trustees are mandatory and

should not be amalgamated. Many of the others might be viable under a larger umbrella. Could the Council Executive take on a greater role in the governance of the church?

Recommendations

1. The Council review its structure with a view to improving its effectiveness by bringing it in line with the people resources now available. Could this be achieved by the amalgamation of committees and the reduction of the size of each committee and by exploring the possibility of exchanging some meetings for projects?
2. The Council consider the structure and role of the Council Executive and each member of that Executive, particularly the role of the Vice Chair who has not been given a strong role at the moment. A discussion with the Nominating Committee would be helpful.
3. The Council revise the Council Booklet in line with the recommendations above.
4. A committee be struck to make this study with a view to completion before the end of January 2022.

Worship

Preamble

The questionnaire responses indicated a strong level of satisfaction with our worship services. There was appreciation expressed to the ministry team for providing meaningful and creative worship experiences. It was noted that the presence and participation of the children (pre-COVID) is a vital part of our worship services. There was recognition of the fact that we are an aging congregation, with a few young families, and a wondering about what more we might offer young families today.

Many mentioned the excellent services streamed on-line during COVID, and commended the Ministerial Team for having done a superb job in keeping us connected.

Many spoke of the need for more lay participation in the services, representing all age groups. A few responded that they would like to hear more scripture passages read from the Bible.

Recommendations

1. That there be more regular lay participation by people of all ages in the worship services.
2. That consideration continue to be given to balancing readings from Scripture with readings from current theological resources.
3. That we recognize the technology aspect of our Sunday services and that Technology become an annual budget item, to the tune of \$4,000.
4. That videos of the Sunday morning service be continued and available on-line as they were during COVID.
5. That Continuing Care Homes be kept informed of the availability of these services so that they could be played in the common rooms for interested residents.

Music

Preamble

The Questionnaire responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the music program at First United. This included the annual Candlelight Service, Choirs for Comfort, summer lunchtime concerts, Music Under the Steeple concerts, as well as music provided as part of the Sunday morning service. The positive impact and reach into the community through the various music events, was acknowledged. One comment raised the concern that the cost of concert tickets, though reasonable, is prohibitive to some, thereby drawing a line between those who can afford to take part in some musical events at the church and those who cannot.

Again, appreciation was expressed for the Ministry Team with specific comment made about the meaningful Christmas Services and the composing gifts of Chris and Valerie.

There was gratitude expressed for the work of the Hand Bell Ensemble and of the Adult Choir. Many people noted the variety of musical genres, as well as the variety of talented people who share their music with us. There was appreciative comment about our Minister of Music's own gifts and his seamless moving from piano to organ to voice to choir direction and for the on-line Tuesday Tunes during COVID.

While the wide variety of music was generally recognised, there were a few comments suggesting more of the 'good old traditional (Southern Gospel) hymns and anthems, and those would like to hear some 'Contemporary Christian Music', with the thought of appealing to the younger generation. There were those who would like to hear more instrumental and vocal soloists in our Sunday morning worship, as well as hearing the Sunday School children sing sometimes.

Recommendations

1. That the Outreach Committee and/or Music Committee take on the challenge of thinking of ways to 'even the playing field' regarding the sale of concert tickets; to explore ways that would make it feasible for all to enjoy concerts regardless of ability to pay.
2. That consideration be given to widening the scope of genres included in the worship services, both hymns and anthems.
3. That the practice of inviting guest performers (bands, instrumental and vocal soloists, children's choir) be expanded.
4. That the mid-week Hymn Sing be continued as time allows, on-line and/or in person.

Children and Youth

Preamble

Through responses to the questionnaire and in conversations, many people indicated satisfaction with the programming for our children and youth and that it was an important and critical part of the work of the church. They liked seeing the children in church on Sunday mornings involved in story time and 'Change for Change' (pre-COVID). Many others indicated that they didn't know much about the programming as they have no family involved. It was suggested that it would be a good thing to have the Youth take part occasionally in a Sunday Service, or that time in the service be provided to inform the congregation about the programming for the Youth Group and Kid's Club. There was appreciation expressed for the work of our Coordinator of Children and Youth, and in particular with the young children. It was noted that the children seemed enthused and to be enjoying their church family. Concern was expressed that we have 30 young families connected to the congregation and that we need to find ways to involve them – 'they are our future'. Perhaps Sunday morning is not the best time of the week for them to participate.

Recommendations:

1. That ways be found to keep the congregation better informed about the programming and associated activities for Sunday School, Youth Group and Kids Club.
2. That consideration be given to planning a mid-week Family Night and that the young families connected to the congregation be contacted directly.
3. That the Sunday School children's time with the Congregation during the Sunday Services be re-instated as soon as COVID protocols allow.
4. That group members and their families be asked for their input on programming.

Office Administration

Preamble

The administration of the office is perceived by most to be running efficiently. People find interactions are handled in a friendly, competent manner.

In the case of any church office administrator, there are traditionally many 'bosses' in and out of the office on any given day. Sometimes we as members of the congregation can lose sight of how challenging that can be. Through the various conversations held by the Profile Team, it seems that it would be helpful to have a specific liaison person from M&P assigned to each staff member, with the purpose of checking with them regularly and to offer moral support when needed.

There was recognition that the system set in place for daily financial activities could to be fine-tuned to both assist and protect the administrator.

Through various conversations held with Committees and staff, the Profile Team came to the conclusion that there was often difficulty for M&P and staff in interpreting the revised United Church Manual as it related to some administrative issues, and that it would be helpful to have some guidance from the Regional Minister. This was done several years ago, but since then, we have new members of M & P and a newly revised Manual.

Recommendations

1. That the Office Administrator remain a full time position (35 hours/week).
2. That a liaison person from M & P (or a mutually agreed appointee of M& P) be assigned to each staff member with the intent of offering support when needed and keeping in regular touch with how things are going.
3. That the office administrator and a member of the Finance Committee work to 'fine tune' the system for financial activities in the office.
4. That the M & P committee arrange a time with the Regional Minister to review The Manual as it relates to administrative issues.

Communication

Preamble

Communication is an integral part of any organization. We at First United have always tried to be transparent and open about the activities of the church, and have developed several effective strategies for maintaining open communication. That being said, it was discovered through the questionnaire that perhaps we are not sharing as much as you, the members of the congregation would like. People would like to be informed more often of the activities of various committees. There were quite a few answers of “I don’t know” or “I am not really sure what ‘they’ do exactly”. With a little focused effort, we think this could be easily remedied.

Recommendations

1. That the Communication Committee review its duties as described in the Council Booklet, particularly in regard to “promoting awareness and generating interest within the congregation and community”.
2. That the Communication Committee invite a representative from each Committee of Council to offer periodic updates on its activities during a church service (perhaps a monthly ‘Spotlight’ on a particular committee). This could also be included in the Bulletin and the Church Newspaper.
3. That the online streaming of our services be maintained. This provides great communication with the folks who can’t attend for a variety of reasons.
4. That we continue to use Facebook to inform the community about the mission of the church and activate Instagram and Twitter to widen the platform. That the Communication Committee look for a person with an aptitude for communicating on these social media platforms.
5. That the bulletin board on the front lawn be revitalized by adding a humorous or catchy line each week.
6. That the Congregation be reminded occasionally how they can keep abreast of what is happening in the church and with its efforts in the wider community.

Creating a Safe and Welcoming Place for Persons of any Ethnicity, Age, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, Disability or Economic Status

Preamble

From the questionnaire and from the various conversations the Profile Team had with members of the congregation, we have learned that many in the congregation value the need for, and hope that our church home is regarded as “a safe and welcoming place for all”. There is much good will to make this true any given Sunday morning. Our Mission Statement speaks of “striving to be an inclusive, friendly, teaching congregation....” We have created an inviting space at the back of the sanctuary to provide a space for young families during worship. We have removed pews to make space for wheelchairs and built ramps to improve access to the Hall and Sanctuary. We have invited speakers from the LGBTQ+ Community to speak to us of their journeys, we have provided a place for the Homeless for a number of years and now we take part in the annual “Longest Night” Walk in February to help raise funds for the Homeless Shelter.

A few suggested that we become an Affirming Congregation. Others have spoken of wanting to create a place where there is no judgement, no hate or entitlement and a respect for diversity. A few have called for more education around racial diversity, gender identity, Truth and Reconciliation, the 94 Calls to Action and poverty.

As part of our ‘striving to be a friendly, welcoming and inclusive, teaching congregation’, we need to continue to educate ourselves about these, and other issues of social justice.

Recommendations:

1. That a committee be struck to work with Ministerial Staff to initiate study groups to deal with a variety of social justice issues, one at a time, over time.
2. That the Christian Life and Growth Committee, in consultation with the Ministry Staff, take the lead in finding ways to recognize and celebrate Black History Month, The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Pride Sunday and Family Day and other special Sundays as they arise throughout the church calendar year, including hanging the appropriate flags.

Outreach

Preamble

First United Church participates in many outreach projects in the community and beyond. (See the section *Who We Are*) In the interviews and surveys conducted by the Survey Team people said they would like to know more about what we are doing for outreach and made suggestions for what more we could do, especially in this changing landscape of COVID life. As an aging congregation it may not always be possible to volunteer at outreach events, but our church family can 'advocate' for policy changes in the area of social justice. As a congregation in a downtown church, we are called to reach out to different groups of people in our community.

Recommendations

1. That the Outreach Committee consider advocating for those who cannot advocate on behalf of themselves and that the Congregation be involved in this learning process. We could begin with 'advocating' for rent control or affordable housing, for instance.
2. That the Outreach Committee attempt to 'spread the net wider' by recruiting volunteers for specific projects as they arise.
3. That the Outreach Committee keep the Congregation apprised of other charitable organizations that need support. It would also be an idea to have a 'drop off point' for these organizations at the church.
4. That the Outreach Committee consider hosting two Community Dinners annually, instead of one, provided sufficient volunteers can be found from the Congregation.
5. That the Outreach Committee acknowledge and offer help if needed, to other outreach programs taking place, such as the Paint Night and the Mental Health Support Group.

Pastoral Care

Preamble

First United has been blessed with excellent Pastoral Care over many years. This was enhanced with the appointment of Reverend Valerie Kingsbury in 2011 as Minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care. A team of about 10 volunteers comprise the Pastoral Care Team who regularly visit those members of the church who are 80 years of age and older.

An annual “Spring Fling” has been held each June for this special age group providing entertainment, fun, fellowship and refreshments to some 75 to 80 individuals on a Sunday afternoon. Christmas and birthday cards are also sent to this group at the appropriate times of the year. Of course, COVID-19 did not permit this event in 2020 and 2021.

This team of volunteers has performed its work well over the years but there are some things that might help to enhance their support to the congregation.

Recommendations

1. That the Pastoral Care Committee be permitted to set up a taxi service for those individuals who would like to come to church on Sunday morning but are unable to because they have no means of transportation. This service would be available free of charge to those 80 years of age or older.
2. That the committee be offered training in the area of Pastoral Care to enable them to handle all manners of situations they might encounter including knowing when to seek professional (Valerie) help.

Structural Changes to the Sanctuary and Hall

Preamble

The church building at First United is one of the most beautiful landmarks in the town of Truro. With the addition of the hall they are a truly multipurpose facility that is used by our whole community. Both buildings have been kept to a high standard with many improvements over the years.

The reality today is that to be able to have these buildings for our use and that of the community you have to continually upgrade. This is a huge challenge for First United but it's nothing we can't do with a lot of creative ideas and research to have them used to their full potential.

The Profile Team has heard from you and we want to challenge you to think about what needs to be done.

Recommendations for the Sanctuary

1. Continue with plans for a new or improved heating system
2. Improve accessibility (Including the washrooms, doors)
(Legislation in the future may require this)
3. Find additional ways to open our sanctuary for rentals (for concerts, meetings, etc) which would provide a rental stream.
4. Retrofit the sanctuary by replacing the pews with chairs, taking out the pews in the choir loft and extending the platform for the grand piano.
5. Hire a tech person to coordinate use of our sound and visual equipment.

Recommendations for the Church Hall:

1. Improve accessibility (ramps, elevator, washrooms)
2. Set up a rental plan such as used by other churches (some take in \$35,000 to \$50,000 a year)
3. Consider developing low income housing in a section of the hall.
4. Create new office space for the staff .
5. Consider forming an ad hoc committee of Property, or of Council, to look at ways of funding and redeveloping the use of the buildings.

Note: The Region needs to be consulted and to provide approval for any property expenditures over \$10,000. The United Church has recently created a United Property Resource Corporation which provides expert professional property and real estate support services. Contact Executive Minister Faith March-MacCuish, staff support to property and finance, for more information.

Rental of Sanctuary and Hall

Preamble

Part of our outreach to the community through the years has been providing our space to other organizations or businesses in the Community, usually at a very basic rental fee. For many years the Scouting program was based in the hall. Now the Girl Guides have use of the gym on a weekly basis.

For a number of years, the Truro Homeless Outreach Society offered a space from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. on a daily basis. Many years ago, a daycare business operated out of the Hall. These are only a few of the programs which have found a home in the Hall.

There are significant untapped opportunities for renting the Hall, as well as a renovated Sanctuary. By reaching out we would be offering a space to organizations in need of one and also creating a revenue stream.

Beacon United in Yarmouth, one of the best examples of an iconic church in our Region, is making creative use of its space. It raises over \$30,000 to \$50,000 annually, depending on the year, through renting to community groups. It generates another \$30,000 annually in grants available for organizations offering space to the community.

As we have invested considerable money and effort into maintaining and restoring our buildings over the past decades, and as some parts of the hall and the sanctuary are empty at various times each week, it seems prudent to reach out to the community in an effort to make better use of them for the benefit of all.

Through the efforts of our Minister of Music and Music Under the Steeple, our Sanctuary has served as a concert venue, to great advantage to the Town of Truro and to our congregation. With increased usage, rental monies could provide financing for further changes to the Sanctuary, making it a more flexible space for concerts and for meetings.

Recommendations:

1. That a committee of Council be formed to look into Rental possibilities within the town, as we attempt to better serve the community; that this committee establish Rental Rates and draw up Rental Agreements.
2. That the building assessment be lowered to 'fair market value', as this affects the tax rate, for those renters who are taxed (such as a day care).
3. That a link be created on our website to list Facility Rentals, Rental Rates, Rental Agreements (See the Beacon United website)
4. That the Office Administrator's schedule be revised to dedicate 3 hours a week to co-ordinate use of the buildings and the rental agreements.

Our Proposed Ministry Team

Preamble to Ministry Team Proposal

The key recommendation in the Profile Team Report is the hiring of a full time Minister of Faith Formation for all Ages. As with most mainstream churches today who are struggling with finances we are not unique and the recommendation sounds counter intuitive. Actually it is not. We live in a vibrant, growing community and the more we are involved in this community the more we are likely to attract people to a vibrant, active community supporting church that offers a diversity of interests and activities and support to the community.

Literature shows that churches that reduce their ministry staff tend to decrease in size. While some groups that we interviewed were concerned for our finances a number of respondents to the questionnaire were in favor of two ministers. There was also significant support for continued programming in Faith Formation and with Children and with Youth. Other scenarios were examined but we felt this one provided the greatest likelihood for success.

It is the view of the Team that we must do all we can to make First United Church a vibrant, active community church and that we must take bold action to make that happen. It won't be an easy future but it will be an exciting one.

Recommendation

We recommend that we keep in place the Minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care, an Ordained Ministry Position and the Minister of Music, a Congregational Designated Ministry Position, as full time positions, with minor changes to their job descriptions. It is our hope that Rev. Valerie Kingsbury, and Mr. Chris Bowman would remain in these positions.

We recommend the former positions of Minister of Faith Formation and the Co-ordinator of Children and Youth be combined into one fulltime position and that the congregation seek Ministry Personnel (Ordained, Diaconal or Designated Lay Minister) for the position of Minister of Faith Formation for All Ages; and we request that the Regional Council approve the creation of this position.

We recommend that the congregation dissolve the Profile Team and form a Search Committee for the position of Minister of Faith For All Ages.

* * * * *

Position Description for Minister of Faith Formation for All Ages

The Minister of Faith Formation for All Ages will be responsible to:

- Develop Biblical and Theological Literacy within the whole Faith Community and explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus in this world of pressing social justice issues.
- Develop programs to enhance these areas of Literacy through Sunday School and children/youth midweek groups, as well as adult programming such as bible study, film group, book study, issue-based study groups, etc.)
- Work with the Christian Life and Growth Committee to recruit and train teachers/leaders for the Sunday School and Youth Groups. Select resource materials related to the literacy goals described above.
- Seek ways to reach out to young families in the Congregation and in the wider community to identify their needs and what forms of engagement they would welcome for their children, for themselves.
- Discuss with middle-aged adults what program needs they would like to see for that age group.
- Attend meetings of Christian Life and Growth Committee.
- Attend weekly staff meetings.
- Attend Council Meetings
- Provide guidance and support for the following Committees : Christian Life and Growth, Outreach
- Participate in the worship life of the church. In consultation with the ministry team and provide leadership in worship services as needed.

- Participate in the life and work of the Regional Council.
- Be open to other duties and responsibilities as mutually agreed upon by Church Council and Minister.

Qualifications

- Masters of Divinity and ordained in the United Church of Canada , **or** a Diploma/Degree in Diaconal Ministry, **or** a Diploma in Designated Lay Ministry from a recognized United Church Theological School.
- Theologically progressive
- Open to a variety of learning styles
- Skilled and knowledgeable in programming for Faith Formation for all ages
- Ability to be self-directed
- Excellent communication skills, and ability to relate well to staff and congregants

Skills Requirement

- Ability to work productively in a team setting, and to recognize and promote the skills and gifts of all team members.
- Skill in collaborating and working with other United Churches and Denominations in the area.
- Ability to motivate, encourage and support lay members in sharing their own gifts to support the Ministry of Faith Formation for all ages.

Remuneration

- Remuneration is in accordance with the guidelines as outlined by General Council of the United Church of Canada based upon years of experience.
- Study Leave of 3 weeks
- One month vacation (5 Sundays)
- Pension and group insurance as assessed
- Travel expenses for work-related travel
- Basic home telephone and cellular with e-mail service
- Secretarial support - access to the full time Church Administrator
- Education Allowance
- Moving expenses
- Internet service in the office
- All other benefits per the United Church polity

Profile Team Scenarios

Financial Analysis

The essence of the Profile Report is to look at where we have been and present a plan that looks into the future costs of our proposals. “Where we came from and where we need to go”. Based on our research this is what we believe to be the best way forward.

Assumptions

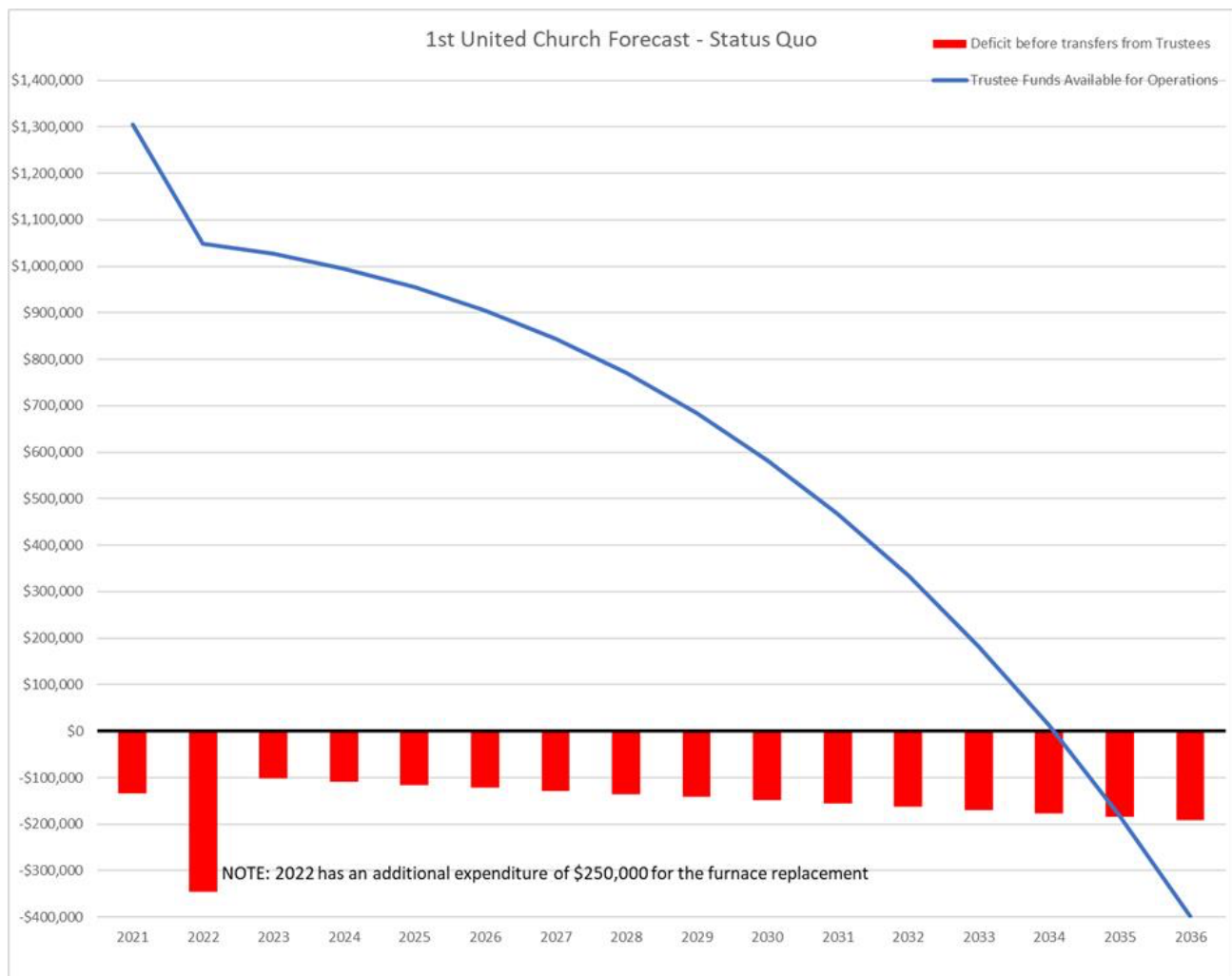
- The base line figures are from the 2021 budget with some adjustments for pre COVID-19 expenses
- All expenses have been inflated each year at the rate of 1.5%
- Givings have been flat lined going forward
- A new heating system will see fuel costs drop to \$28,000
- \$10,000 has been added to the current janitorial budget to allow for a return to normal times and full use of all the facilities.
- Regular maintenance has been increased by \$12,000.
- An allowance of \$250,000 has been provided for 2022 for the new heating system. Any figure above that allowance will have to be obtained by grants or fund raising. No additional allowance has been made for major capital expenses
- A new Tech support person has been recommended and an allowance of \$4,000 has been provided for that. CL&G has taken action in this area and are currently paying a student out of their budget.
- We currently have about \$1.3 million in unrestricted reserves. Despite taking significant money out over the past number of years our reserves have actually gone up dramatically. That is not likely sustainable in the future.

Scenarios

Number 1

Scenario 1 is the status quo:

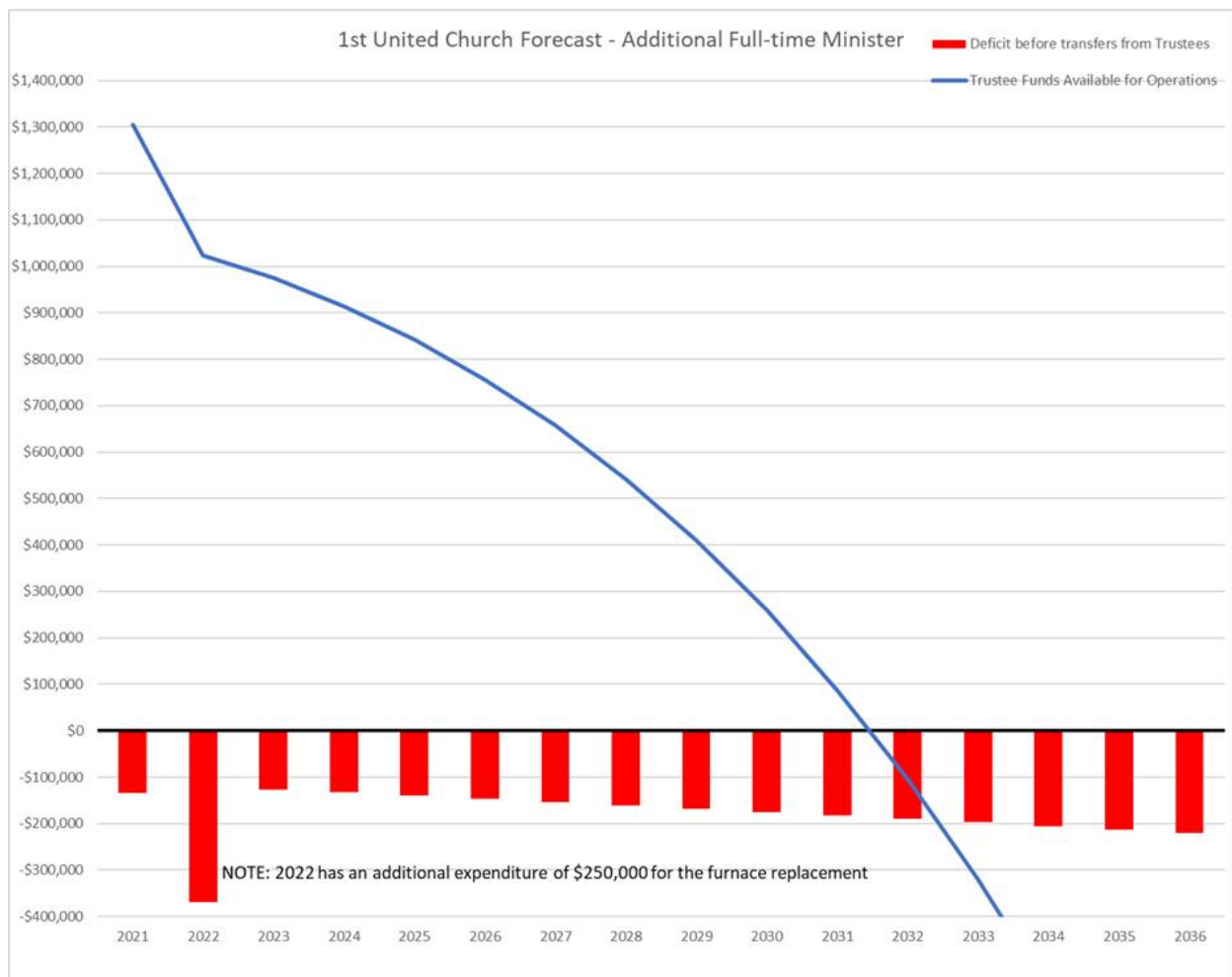
- The staffing level stays as it was before Roger Moore passed away. Thus we would hire a part time (25%) minister for essentially bible study and occasional support to the ministerial staff. The Coordinator of Children and Youth would remain at his current 50% position.
- Chart 1 shows what will happen to our reserves
- They, in fact, reduce to zero by 2034.



Number 2

Scenario 2 is the Profile Team's recommendation which involves the addition of a full time minister and the elimination of the position of Coordinator of Children and Youth.

- A full time ordained, Diaconal or Designated Lay Minister would be hired to be responsible for Bible Study, Film Group, Sunday School, Youth groups and to provide complementary support to the expanded work of First United Church.
- The estimated cost of this position including all benefits is \$65,000. Note that the salaries of The Minister of Faith Formation and The Coordinator of Children and Youth would subtract about \$40,000 from the total increase in salary expenses of about \$25,000.
- The cost of salaries and benefits represents about 69% of total budget. This is in line with 4 churches we contacted in NS. Their ratios vary from a low of 64% to a high of almost 70%
- Chart 2 shows that the impact of a second minister is minimal if everything stays the same. The timeline goes to zero by 2032. **But the premise of the Profile Team is that it won't stay the same.**
- **The Profile Team anticipates that the ministry of the church will grow the church as indicated by our readings. It is expected that a chart showing a downward trend will in fact be a horizontal straight line going indefinitely into the future.**



Yearly Transfers of Money from Trustees.

Fed. Gov.	Dividends &	Discretionary	Total
Wage Subsidy	Interest	Capital	

	Federal Gov't Wage Subsidy	Dividends and Interest	Capital	Total
2016		33.9 K	58.0 K	91.9 K
2017		34.4 K	42.5 K	76.9 K
2018		42.4 K	13.8 K	56.2 K
2019		43.8 K	52.2 K	96.1 K
2020	81.8 K	0.3 K		82.1 K
2021 YTD	41.5 K	30.0 K	20.0 K	91.5 K
Total	123.3 K	184.8 K	186.5 K	494.6 K

Conclusion

The sum of money taken from the Trustees over the 6 years of 2016 through 2021 amounts to about \$371,000. Before COVID we were averaging 80,000 per year. Of that \$80,000, dividends and interest account for about \$40,000. That leaves a drawdown of about \$40,000 per year. This is what is eroding the capital reserves. Therefore, we will need to raise this amount of money by grants, fundraising, rentals etc. to keep the church viable indefinitely into the future.

This will be an exciting time for the Stewardship Committee. They will be tasked with spearheading the raising of money through grants, fundraising events and looking for means of obtaining rentals for our space and perhaps collaborating with groups to transform the church into one more suitable for concerts and other major events.

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Beacon United Church, Yarmouth, Zoom Conversation with Stephen and Janet Sollows

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