

LENNOXVILLE UNITED CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Credit: Dreamstime

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA CAME TOGETHER IN 1925,
THROUGH A UNION OF METHODIST, PRESBYTERIAN,
CONGREGATIONAL, AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
– ONE OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL UNIONS IN THE WORLD TO
BRING TOGETHER MAJOR CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS
INTO ONE BODY.

"WE ARE NOT ALONE," IS THE FIRST LINE OF "A NEW CREED,"
ONE OF OUR STATEMENTS OF BELIEF.
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA HAS A LONG HISTORY OF
WELCOMING PEOPLE OF ALL BACKGROUNDS
AND ORIENTATIONS
– WHEREVER YOU ARE IN YOUR FAITH JOURNEY.

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Letter from the Minister

To the Community of Faith at Lennoxville United,

Greetings in the name of Christ; may we continue to follow the peasant Jew who calls us to follow in love trusting that God is with us as we go. This past year included great struggle, much challenge, and a worrisome dose of fear; and we, as a community of faith, responded to this unknown with hope, love and the willingness to show others that “we are not alone.” 2020 will be forever known as the year that we experienced church exile. In March, the World Health Organization declared the Covid-19 pandemic, and out of caution we moved our Christian practice out of the church building. This past year, Lennoxville United Church has continued to serve our community, while fostering spiritual growth through the challenges created by the pandemic. Your creativity has been impressive, as we brought new visions to life. We resisted simply adopting a survival mode of operation, and instead trusted in the Holy Spirit’s ability to help us to thrive despite the struggle. This past year was not ‘business as usual’ and I continue to trust that Lennoxville United Church will be better for it.

I am grateful for the work and care given by many leaders within our community of faith. Our Church Council held their first internet meeting on Zoom at the end of March, and continued to provide leadership during uncertain times. In July, we added a temporary committee to our list of Ministry Teams, and the Covid Building Team continues to guide how we mitigate risks in our building. The Worship Team gathered small groups to worship both outside and in the Upper Hall, and created a different order of worship holding 2 “Parades of Offerings” that gave us the opportunity to serve our community while offering comfort through the familiarity of our church sanctuary. The impressive collaboration of the United Church Women, the OutReach Team, the Worship Team, and the Family Ministry Team created an Advent Season that spread the Christmas spirit all over Lennoxville. We moved parts of the Bazaar online, we provided Christian worship, and we made Queen St. a little brighter with our outdoor Community Christmas Tree. Despite the struggle, despite the darkness, Lennoxville United Church shone the light of Christ while being witnesses to the truth that “we are not alone.”

The story told within the prophet Jeremiah is of trust in a God who moves with us as we face the struggles of living. We have been living through a sort of exile, but as Christians we trust that there is much to learn even in the suffering. We have learnt how to gather our hearts in prayer, even while we must remain apart. We have reached out with care, even while keeping our hands to ourselves. We have been witnesses of God’s love for all Creation. May we continue to follow Jesus into the unknown, and may this time of struggle lead to transformation for the sake of the whole people of God, remembering that “we are not alone.”

“I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (Jeremiah 31:33)

Blessings, Rev. Linda D. Buchanan



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In Memoriam

Shirley Bassett.....	Feb. 2020
Jean Stefano.....	June 2020
Ruth Gillam	Sept. 2020
Geraldine Swallow.....	Sept. 2020
Gwen Berry.....	Nov. 2020
Florence Gagne.....	Dec. 2020

Church Membership

Received by Certificate of Transfer or Other	0
Received by Profession of Faith	0
Removed by Certificate of Transfer	0
Removed by Death	6
Total Resident Membership	239
Total Non-Resident Members	77
Total Resident and Non-Resident Membership, Dec. 31, 2020	316

Staff Members

Church & Minister's Office - 565-8449
Ordained Minister: Reverend Linda Buchanan – 514-691-7529 (cell)
Executive Administrator: Debbie Harrison - 569-8489 (Home)
Organist/Choir Director: Maryse Simard - 845-3420 (Home)
Custodian: Eric Nutbrown - 566-4951(Home)

Ex-Officio Members

Memorial Fund Treasurer - Patricia Smith - 823-8497
Benevolent Fund Treasurer - Beverley Ross - 346-5943

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Council Report

Unprecedented, this is the word most used as a label for 2020. Our very first council meeting following the Annual Congregational Meeting in 2020 was held virtually via Zoom, a novelty then, but commonplace now.

Council met nine times this year, focusing primarily on meeting Covid-19 protocols, identifying and implementing new spiritual practices for our faith community, ensuring the financial health of our church, all while navigating the constantly changing pandemic environment.

Weekly worship moved to Facebook live, small outdoor services were held when possible, and “Parades of Offering” appeared, allowing brief but meaningful visits to the sanctuary.

It is not the year we were planning for, but given the circumstances, we have been able to proceed safely for our congregation. We see light at the end of the tunnel, with vaccines now in distribution.

We have experienced isolation, unemployment, illness and fear of illness. We have been asked to sacrifice, to hope and to act with compassion. I wonder what our world, and our faith community, will retain from this past year? I have noted throughout all this that although we are all in it together, we are not all impacted equally. I, for example, am an introvert, I live with my wife and son, my family is near, and I have good health. I have worked from home in a well-equipped office for years, suffered no loss of employment during the pandemic, nor did my wife, daughter and son. I have a lovely home equipped with patio, pool and pets. Few have all these comforts to cushion the effects of the pandemic.

I have also reflected that the hardships we are experiencing, as a result of the pandemic, are not new to many people. Before Covid-19, people were isolated, lonely, without family, without employment, struggling to pay bills, and were vulnerable to, and lived-in fear of illness. There were funerals with empty funeral parlors. The tragedy was there before Covid-19 and it will still exist when this pandemic is a memory. Having experienced the hardships of our pandemic, will we be more conscious of the continued suffering of others? Will we be more compassionate and act as God urges us to act? With what we have lived and seen, we should.

I would like to thank our members of Council whose insight I am very grateful for: Reverend Linda Buchanan, Esther Barnett (Secretary), Jack Noble (Treasurer) and Debbie Harrison (Recording Secretary); with representatives from each team and committee: Bob Davidson (Board of Trustees), Frankie Noble (United Church Women), Sandy Davidson (Buildings and Finance), David McCormack (Ministry and Personnel), Carolyn Leonard Gilchrist (Family Ministries), Pam Wilson (Outreach) and Bruce Gilbert (Worship). I would also like to thank the many people who serve our community of faith daily: Debbie Harrison our office administrator, Eric Nutbrown our church caretaker, Maryse Simard our organist and choir director, Bruce Durrant who maintains our web site, Jamie Crooks and his talented friends who have had such a great impact on our Parade of offering. Finally, we are thankful and appreciative of Reverend Linda Buchanan, who has proven to be adaptive and innovative in bringing us the teachings of Christ despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Respectfully submitted: Douglas Blair, Chairperson, Lennoxville United Church Council

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Ministry & Personal Committee

Mission Statement: To facilitate interactions between the staff and the congregation, to ensure contract obligations are met, to ensure there are positive working conditions and to help resolve any issues brought before the committee.

Membership Information

Officers (Team Members):

Rep. to Council: Dave McCormack

All Members: Claudia Demers, Pierre Demers, Carolyn Leonard, Kristan McKercher, Dave McCormack

Membership Statistics:

Members at beginning of the Year: 5

New members: 1 Members Leaving: 1

Members at the end of the Year: 5

Age range of members from: 59 - 74

of Meeting during 2020: 6

Average attendance at meetings: 5

Resume of Team's Activities During 2020:

The committee met bimonthly during the year to discuss such business as may have come before it. Meetings were held mostly via ZOOM with two being face-to-face at the Demers' home.

At the committee's suggestion the office locations of the Minister and Secretary were moved and communications and technology updated.

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Board of Trustees

Mission Statement: Manage financial assets for the Lennoxville United Church Endowment Fund and the former United Steeples Church Endowment fund.

Membership Information

Officers (Team Members):

Chair: Rev. Linda Buchanan

Chair designate: Robert Davidson

Rep. to Council: Robert Davidson

Treasurer: Larry Everett

All Members: Rev. Linda Buchanan, Larry Everett, Ron Husk, Robert Davidson, Dale Smith, Gloria Stronach

Membership Statistics:

Members at beginning of the Year: 6

New members: 0 Members Leaving: 0

Members at the end of the Year: 6

Age range of members from 36 to 88

of Meeting during 2020: 1

Average attendance at meetings: 4

Missions and Ministries upheld by Team

Manage the investments and deal with any issues related to the property.

Resume of Team's Activities During 2020:

Met with our investment firm RBC Wealth Management – Dominion Securities to review our portfolio. (Virtually)

Reviewed and changed the broker for our insurance, to Racine Chamberland, effective December 1 2020.

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Building and Finance Team

Mission Statement: To maintain and enhance the buildings of Lennoxville United Church and to safeguard all aspects of its financial operations.

Membership Information

Officers (Team Members):

Chair: David Drew

Rep. to Council: Sandy Davidson

Treasurer: A. Jackson Noble, CPA, CA

Secretary: Frances Noble

Emergency Response Team: Jean Dion, Robert Evans, Mahlon Grapes,
Joe McKercher and Eric Nutbrown

Members: Rosemary Butler, Philip Davidson, Debi Giroux, Deanna McNab,
Diane O'Shaughnessey, Kenneth Porter

Membership Statistics:

Members at beginning of the Year: 15

New members: 0 Members Leaving: 0

Members at the end of the Year: 15

Age range of members: From: 31 to 85

of Meetings during 2020: 2

Average attendance at meetings: 12

Events lead/hosted by Team: NIL

Missions and Ministries upheld by Team

*To be responsible for the on-going maintenance and repairs of the Church's physical properties; to create and schedule teams of people to count, record and deposit the Sunday offerings; to be charged with ensuring the proper financial management of all funds available to the Church.

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Resumé of Team's Activities during 2020

Building:

The Team continued to implement its list of 2020 Repairs and Maintenance Priorities and relocated all the items previously stored in a room to the left of the stage to a newly-created storage area in the large Sunday School room, thanks to the efforts of Sandy and Bob Davidson. All items are now stored in labelled containers provided by the UCW. It was determined that the safety bars in the two washrooms are adequate and that all interior door locks have been removed. The Emergency Response Team (ERT) has been formed and their contact information has been posted. Following a request for tenders it was decided to engage Ricky Loiselle to replace the Manse Roof as, at \$6,000., his was the lowest bid received. It was agreed to discontinue purchasing bulletin covers for an annual saving of \$869.

Finance:

One mandate of our Team was to ensure that the day-to-day and long-term financial obligations of the Church could be met in a timely fashion given that the amount of regular income received in 2020 substantially decreased due to COVID-19 closures. Therefore, it was deemed prudent to apply for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy which permitted the financing of salaries. To date, Lennoxville United has received \$57,384 from this subsidy which Treasurer Jack Noble applies for each month. However, it was still necessary to accept a \$5,000. transfer from the UCW at the start of the year. It has also been helpful that many parishioners contributed through PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) with others being willing to use the on-line donation service "Canada Helps".

We are blessed that so many members give so generously of their time, energy and talent in undertaking many of the repair and maintenance projects which otherwise would necessitate paying for these services. It should be noted that Mr. and Mrs. Donald Wright asked to be replaced as outdoor maintenance providers and to this end, Sandy Davidson obtained the services of the Manse tenants who agreed to assume this task for a mutually agreed-upon reduction in their rent. We are also grateful to Jim Davidson for clearing the snow in the parking lot.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions it was not possible to pursue negotiations concerning a potential rental agreement with the Huntingville IOOF.

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COVID-19 Task Team

Mission Statement: To be responsible for the gradual and safe re-opening and use of all church facilities in accordance with the guidelines and timelines established by the United Church of Canada and the Quebec Department of Public Health.

Membership Information

Officers (Team Members):

Chair: Rev. Linda Buchanan

All Members:

B&F Team rep.-David Drew, Joe McKercher, Jean Dion and Sandy Davidson

UCW rep. Carolyn Gilchrist, M&P rep.-Kristan McKercher

Council and Worship Team rep. – Doug Blair

Administration – Debbie Harrison, Minister – Rev. Linda Buchanan

Membership Statistics:

New members: 9 Members Leaving: 0

Members at the end of the Year: 9

of Meeting during 2020: 5

Average attendance at meetings: 8

Resume of Team's Activities During 2020

The COVID-19 Task Team was formed in late June in response to Regional Council's request to have plans and protocols in place as churches progressively reopened after various degrees of being locked down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The key activities of the COVID-19 Task Team in 2020 were:

- Working through and helping Debbie to complete the questionnaires, to develop plans for each Phase of reopening and aiding in the drafting of required protocols for Regional Council this included changing the lock for the Church St. door.
- Mapping the Upper Hall and the Sanctuary for "safe" bubble seating;
- Determining the safe flow and rules for allowing people to attend mini worship services music events, the Parades of Offerings and Christmas Eve services. The latter included making movable plexiglass dividers to be used by soloists and worship leaders.
- In progress is the investigation into the equipment required to be able to hold "Hybrid" services i.e., online and in-person services at the same time.

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Family Ministries Team

Mission Statement: "Gather the Children of God"

Membership Information

Officers (Team Members):

Chairperson & Treasurer: Heather Gilchrist

Rep. to Council: Carolyn Leonard-Gilchrist

All Members: Heather Gilchrist, Jean Porter, Bernice Keats, Gloria Stronach, Rev. Linda Buchanan, Georgia Barrett-Lamey, Carolyn Gilchrist

Membership Statistics:

Members at beginning of the Year: 7

New members: 0 Members Leaving: 1

Members at the end of the Year: 6

Age range of members from 20 to 70

of Meeting during 2020: 2

Average attendance at meetings: 6

Events lead/hosted by Team: 4

Approx. # of people ministered to: 50

Approx. # of volunteers ministering: 12

Missions and Ministries upheld by Team:

*Sunday school program - monthly program 9 months of year (no program held during summer)

*Messy Church - 6 events organized and held at LUC; 3 travelling Messy Church Events - leadership and volunteers for first events in each parish (Magog and Richmond completed so far)

*Oversee registration and sponsorship for camps for youth and young adults- both local and provincial

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Resume of Team's Activities During 2020:

The Family Ministries Team oversees the Sunday school and Youth Group programs as well as Messy Church. Georgia Barrett-Lamey acted as Youth Ministries Leader and was responsible for overseeing the planning, coordination and actual Messy Church Events. The intention was to plan monthly Messy Church events for the core 6 month period, of which included "Travelling Messy Church".

The first "Travelling Messy Church" of 2020 was held in January at the United Church in Richmond. The Messy Church event took place in Lennoxville United on February 23, 2020 was that of the Sleigh Ride, followed by refreshments and fellowship. Approximately 35 people attended.

The onset of the Pandemic in March interrupted all events planned for both Sunday school programs and Messy Church. Two zoom Messy Church events were attempted in April and June but put on pause for the duration of the Pandemic however well worth the attempt.

The Family Ministries Team held a short meeting on September 22, 2020 to touch base and explore various ideas that would help stay connected with our young families and those who attended Messy Church.

Considering that Messy Church is an "open event" it was deemed rather difficult to set up an effective means of reaching out to all families. It was said that if anyone learns of a family in need of support to cope during the Pandemic, or would appreciate some form of Pastoral Care, to inform Rev. Buchanan. Rev. Buchanan sent a "back to school" message to all families and post High School students who are connected regularly to Messy Church or otherwise.

All Sunday school and Messy Church activities were suspended. This proved to be quite challenging but was an important experience. Rev. Buchanan hosted a "children's Nativity Christmas Eve service" on Facebook, on Christmas Eve. No other children's services/activities on a virtual platform have been attempted but families have been able to connect to Shanna Bernier's "Children's Live Church" on Facebook on Sunday mornings.

Considering the fact that we were not permitted to put the traditional Advent program of readings and the lighting of candles in the Advent Wreath this year due to the Pandemic, an Advent Tree was added outdoors and all families and the community at large were invited to bring a decoration to add to the tree every Sunday. The lights were set to light up the tree each day at 4:30pm and the star was lit on Christmas Eve. The 15 foot tree was beautifully adorned with colored lights for the duration of the Season of Advent, with decorations added each Sunday, surrounded by "Peace, Love, Joy and Hope" signs that were made by Kristan and Joe McKercher. This project was successful due to the unanimous collaboration of various people representing the various Teams of Lennoxville United.

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Out Reach Team

Mission Statement: Opening our doors to the wider community

Membership Information

Officers (Team Members):

Chair: Nancy Baldwin

Rep. to Council: Pam Wilson

Other: Benevolent Fund Coordinator:
Bev Ross

All Members: Kristan McKercher, Nancy
Suitor, Pam Wilson, Gloria Stronach,
Doug Blair, Bev Ross, Marilyn Magwood,
Nancy Baldwin, Rev. Linda Buchanan

Membership Statistics:

Members at beginning of the Year: 8

New members : 1 Members Leaving 0

Members at the end of the Year: 9

Age range of members From 36 to 75

of Meeting during 2020: 1

Average attendance at meetings: 7

Events lead/hosted by Team: 2

Approx. # of people ministered to: 50

Approx. # of volunteers ministering: 8

Missions and Ministries upheld by Team:

*Student Hospitality Suppers

*Talent Show

*Service of Hope

*You are not Alone service

*Food Bank and White Gift Sunday

*Ecumenical Outreach

*Operation Backpack

*Campus Ministry

*Carpet Bowling

*Battle of the Churches

Resume of Team's Activities During 2020

We held one student supper in February before the lockdown.

Operation Backpack supplied 100 backpacks to students from Lennoxville Elementary and Alexander Galt.

Helped to connect the "Parade of Offerings" to the community food bank.

United Church Women (UCW) Team

Mission Statement: To unite the women of the congregation for the total mission of the Church and to be a means by which we may express our loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ in Christian witness, study, fellowship and service

Membership Information

Officers (Team Members)

Chair: Carolyn Leonard Gilchrist

Rep. to Council: Frances Noble

Treasurer: Gloria Stronach

Secretary: Frances Noble

All Members: Rosemary Butler, Karen Clark, Allison Connelly, Sandy Davidson, Linda Donnachie, Wendy Durrant, Gladys Fisk, Kathy Gibson, Carolyn Gilchrist, Glenys Groves, Debbie Harrison, Bernice Keats, Gail Lloyd, Vi Mackey, Marilyn Magwood, Wendy Mason, Donna McKell, Kristan McKercher, Deanna McNab, Frankie Noble, Bev Oakley, Jean Porter, Bev Ross, Isobel Sarrasin, Christina Smith, Patricia Smith, Gloria Stronach and Margaret Young.

Membership Statistics:

Members at beginning of the Year: **28**

New members: **0** Members Leaving: **0**

Members at the end of the Year: **28**

Age range of members: From **40** to **80**

of Meeting during 20: **3**

Average attendance at meetings:

Events lead/hosted by Team:

Missions and Ministries upheld by Team

To care for those in our Church who need our love and support; to foster the relationships and interactions that are built when we gather, talk and eat together; to support, physically and financially, the efforts of others who work to improve every aspect of our Church community.

Resumé of Team's Activities during 2020

The UCW met only three times in 2019 due to COVID-19: regularly constituted meetings on January 20th and February 17th and an ad hoc meeting on November 5th with only five members (Carolyn Gilchrist, Sandy Davidson, Wendy Durrant, Gloria Stronach and Kristan McKercher) in attendance, thus a quorum could not be established. As a result of proposals made at this meeting absent members were asked to vote by e-mail on these proposals due to their financial implications. The membership thus agreed to make a donation of \$500.00 (in goods or money) to the Mental Health Estrie's HUGS project. It was decided to assume all costs related to the installation of an (outdoor) Advent Tree, and Church and community members were invited to bring and install decorations on the tree, which was erected on Sunday, November 29th. Members also agreed that the Sanctuary carpet be professionally cleaned and this expense was kindly covered under the LUC's Maintenance budget. All of the decorations previously stored to the left of the stage in the Upper Hall were relocated to a special storage area created by Sandy and Bob Davidson, in the rear section of the large Sunday School facilities. UCW members also decorated the Sanctuary (and the Upper Hall) for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Due to COVID-19 our regular fund-raising projects could not be held and it was therefore agreed that the UCW sponsor an on-line Bake Sale and an on-line Auction. Coordination of the Bake and Candy Sale, held from Nov. 17th to Dec. 2nd. was assumed by Sandy Davidson and the on-line Auction was organized by Carolyn Gilchrist and held from November 29th to December 13th. Both events were very well-received and patronized. Like the presence of the outdoor Advent Tree, these fund-raisers, while not as financially rewarding as our regular events, injected a dash of Christmas Spirit into a community that had been finding the season decidedly un-Christmas-y!

We have tried to continue our outreach services and to remember our Church family during times of illness and sorrow as well as in times of joy and celebration.

Several of our members also sit as members of various other LUC Teams and as the Representatives to Council from these various Teams.

Worship Team

Mission Statement: To create a welcoming space on Sunday mornings where, together, we can experience insightful, impactful stories, taken from scriptures of old and made relevant for today. (We are invited to encounter wonder, to glimpse the possibilities that lie beyond, so we can see where God is leading us. Stepping back into daily life, we want to transform the wisdom we have gained, moving it from theory into practice – that of caring for each other and the planet.)

Membership Information

Officers (Team Members)

Chair: Linda Buchanan

Secretary and Rep. to Council: Bruce Gilbert

Members: Doug Blair, Barbara Boire, Tracie Dougherty, Debbie Harrison, Nancy Rowell, Didi Gorman, Maryse Simard.

Worship Team Membership Statistics:

Members at beginning of the Year: 8

Members at the end of the Year: 9

Age range of members From 37 to 67

Number of Meetings during 2020: 6

Average attendance at meetings: 7.5

Worship Statistics:

Pre-Covid Church attendance: 30-45.

Average Sunday Attendance at Facebook services: 160+, including 1200 for the first Facebook live service.

Resume of Team's Activities During 2020

- During the pre-Covid part of 2020 the Worship Team was active in the implementation of the significant changes to worship life: pre-worship coffee in the sanctuary, greeters and welcomers, the removal of front pews to create better space, etc.
- The first outdoor Ash Wednesday service was held on February 26, 2020. Some 10-15 worshipers gathered around a fire pit on the front lawn of the church for a service led by Reverend Linda Buchanan. The hope is that this service would constitute a new tradition.
- When Covid arrived the Worship Team was just beginning discussions on several other themes: the possibility of having wine as well as grape juice in communion, and of an Abenaki Land Acknowledgment in the bulletin. All these discussions are suspended until we return to in-person worship in the sanctuary.
- With the onset of Covid in mid-March all in-person worship activities were cancelled, and Rev. Linda began regular Sunday morning live services on Facebook. These services continued all year, and have been very well attended.
- Starting in late summer and continuing through the early fall six small backyard services were held, with date, musicians, location and (number) as follows:
 - Sept 12 Maryse & Norma @ McCormacks (8)
 - Sept 17 Maryse & Eleanor @ McCormacks (6)
 - Sept 19 Kylie & Mike @ Barbara B., led by Bruce (6)
 - Sept 22 Maryse & Anna @ McCormacks (7)
 - Sept 30 Francine Hamel @ Durrants (10)
 - Oct 3rd Kylie & Mike @ and led Bruce G. (8)
- These services then switched indoors to the Upper Hall, with the first held) on October 15. Several more were held on Tuesday, but proposed services on Saturdays never had enough people signed up to attend and were all cancelled.
- Several joint Zoom services were held with Georgeville, St Paul's, Beulah, and Plymouth Trinity including for Palm Sunday, Pentecost on May 31 and World Communion Sunday on October 3.
- There were two walk-through "Parade of Offerings" services, both very well attended, the first on Thanksgiving Sunday and the second on for the beginning of Advent on November 29.
- There were two Christmas music services held on December 13.
- A "Community Christmas Tree" was erected on the lawn and decorated by the community, with its star lit during a service on Christmas Eve.
- On Christmas Eve there was also a morning children's' Facebook service, two in-person afternoon services, the star lighting on the tree at 7:30pm and an 11pm Facebook service—all well attended.