

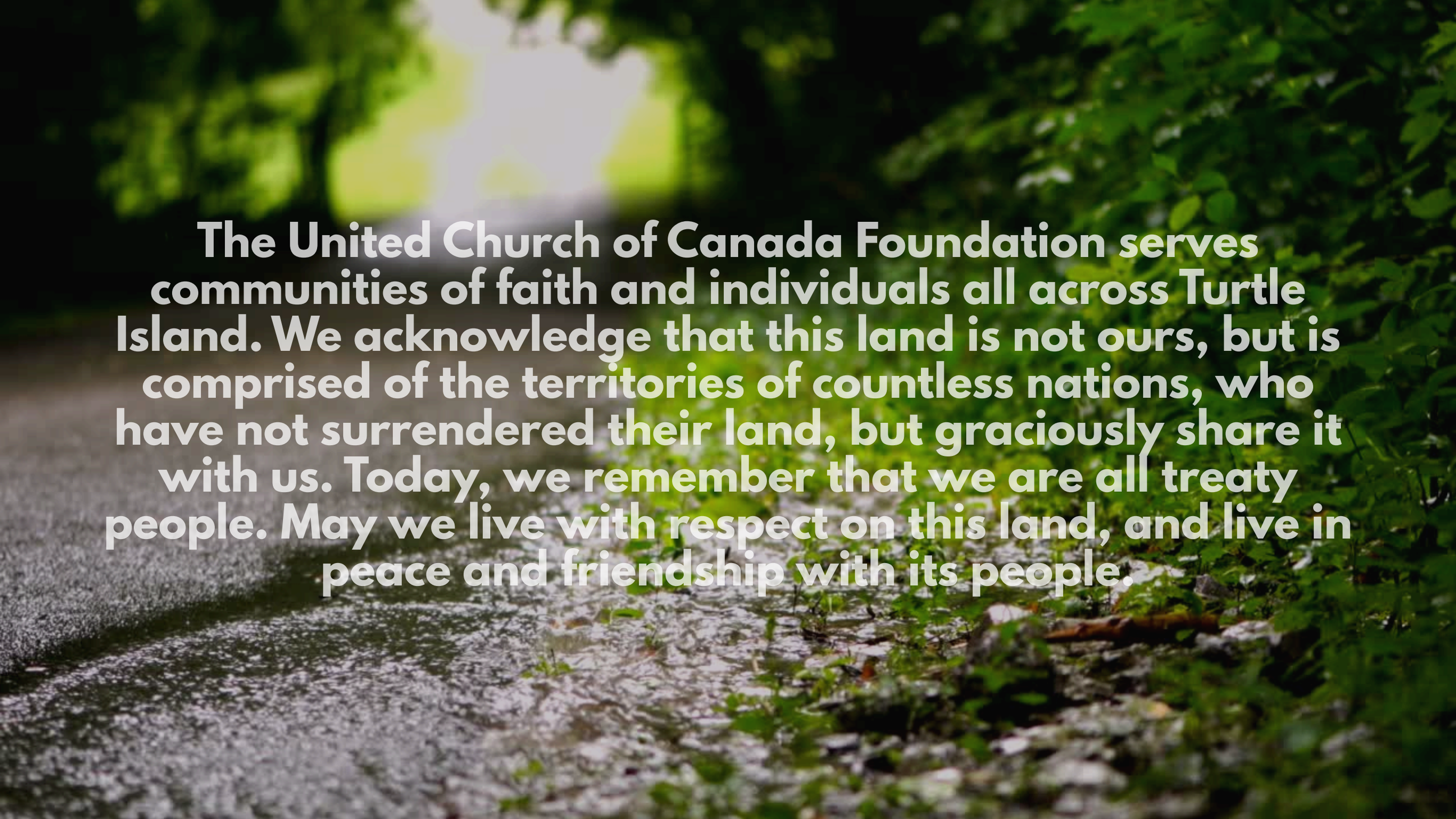


THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
FOUNDATION

2024 Annual Report

"everything coming together for good"

Philippians 4:6-7



The United Church of Canada Foundation serves communities of faith and individuals all across Turtle Island. We acknowledge that this land is not ours, but is comprised of the territories of countless nations, who have not surrendered their land, but graciously share it with us. Today, we remember that we are all treaty people. May we live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with its people.



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Jim Simpson, Foundation Board Chair, with United Church of Canada Moderator The Rt. Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne at the SHARE Investor Summit in Vancouver. In February 2024, the Foundation joined SHARE's engagement program.

Coming together for: *Purpose Purpose*

The United Church of Canada Foundation's purpose is to foster deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice by attracting and deploying financial resources. Through capacity building, convening, granting, and careful stewardship of funds entrusted to us, we support congregations, ministries, and programs that enrich The United Church of Canada, create a more just planet, and celebrate God's abundance in the world.



Sarah Charters

As we reflect on the past year at the United Church of Canada Foundation, the words from Philippians 4:6, “everything coming together for good”, have resonated deeply with me. The world continues to face complex challenges, but our shared commitment, faith, and collective generosity are leading us to a place of hope and unity through God, who makes all things possible!

The past year has been a testament to the resiliency and creativity of the United Church community. We came together in so many ways in 2024!

In 2024, the Foundation implemented innovative programs, responding to the needs of the communities we serve. Each program has been designed with the understanding that, indeed, everything is coming together for good.

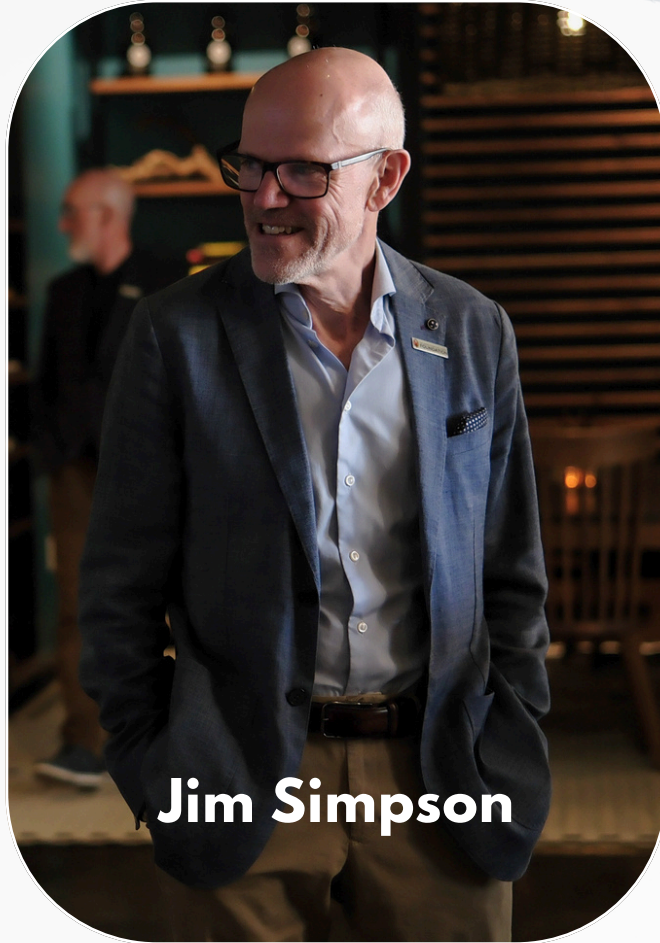
The year was not without loss, however. In April, we grieved the death of former Foundation President David Armour. David dedicated his life, in his words, to “supporting those who care for others”. And in September, we joined the church to mourn the passing of the Very Rev. Dr. Lois Wilson. We continue to help move forward the work Lois championed throughout her life.

A message from the Foundation President

Looking forward, the Foundation remains committed to fostering a spirit of inclusiveness and equity, ensuring that our efforts align with the vision of a more just and compassionate world. Together—United!— we are making strides toward healing, understanding, and shared purpose.

Thank you for being a vital part of this journey. With your generosity and faith, we will continue to work toward a future where everything truly comes together for good and God’s love is felt and known.

Blessings,



Jim Simpson

*A message from
the Board Chair*

What a journey we've taken over the past year at the Foundation! The words from scripture, "everything coming together for good," really are an apt description of our shared work.

This year's annual report is a compilation of what we came together for in 2024, but I'm also inspired to look at it from the other end — to remark on who and what all of this good work brought together!

For example, a highlight from last year was our board gathering in Ottawa. Our annual reception attracted colleagues, donors, church and non-church grant recipients, engaged community members, and even a Member of Parliament! MP The Hon. The Rev. Dr. Rob Oliphant spoke to the gathering on the role of our church and leadership in today's world. The energy and enthusiasm across the spectrum of guests reaffirmed my belief that we are on a path where everything is coming together for good.

While in the capital, we toured an affordable housing project with Multifaith Housing Initiative and had a morning of jazz and fellowship during 'Music and Meditation' at MacKay United Church. 'Coming together' from across Canada to experience the good

work that the Foundation supports is so meaningful to our Board team.

In 2024, we also celebrated an incredible recognition: being named one of the top 50 most equitable funders in Canada! This honour is a testament to our ongoing efforts to create a more just planet and celebrate God's abundance in the world. We've also expanded our focus on impact investing, using our financial resources as a powerful tool for social change. We remain dedicated to harnessing opportunities to create meaningful change, believing that every effort we make contributes to a greater good.

None of this would be possible without the dedication, care, and commitment of our staff team under the strong leadership of Sarah Charters and we thank them for their ministry. I also want to express my appreciation for the dedication of the Foundation directors and committee members who serve in this way.

As we prepare for a time of celebration in our United Church, I know we'll continue to see everything coming together for good in the year ahead.

Blessings,

2024 at a Glance



\$117,197,973

total assets as of
December 31, 2024



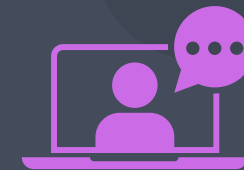
513

Long-term funds are
managed by the
Foundation



\$5,221,912

Processed through
403 gifts of securities



1,367

registered participants
across 14 webinars
hosted



\$542,160

granted to 91 projects
through the Seeds of
Hope program



\$196,274.70

granted to 35 individuals
as part of 35
scholarships and bursaries



\$344,182

granted to 35 projects
through other granting
programs



\$1,633,013

granted to
Mission and Service

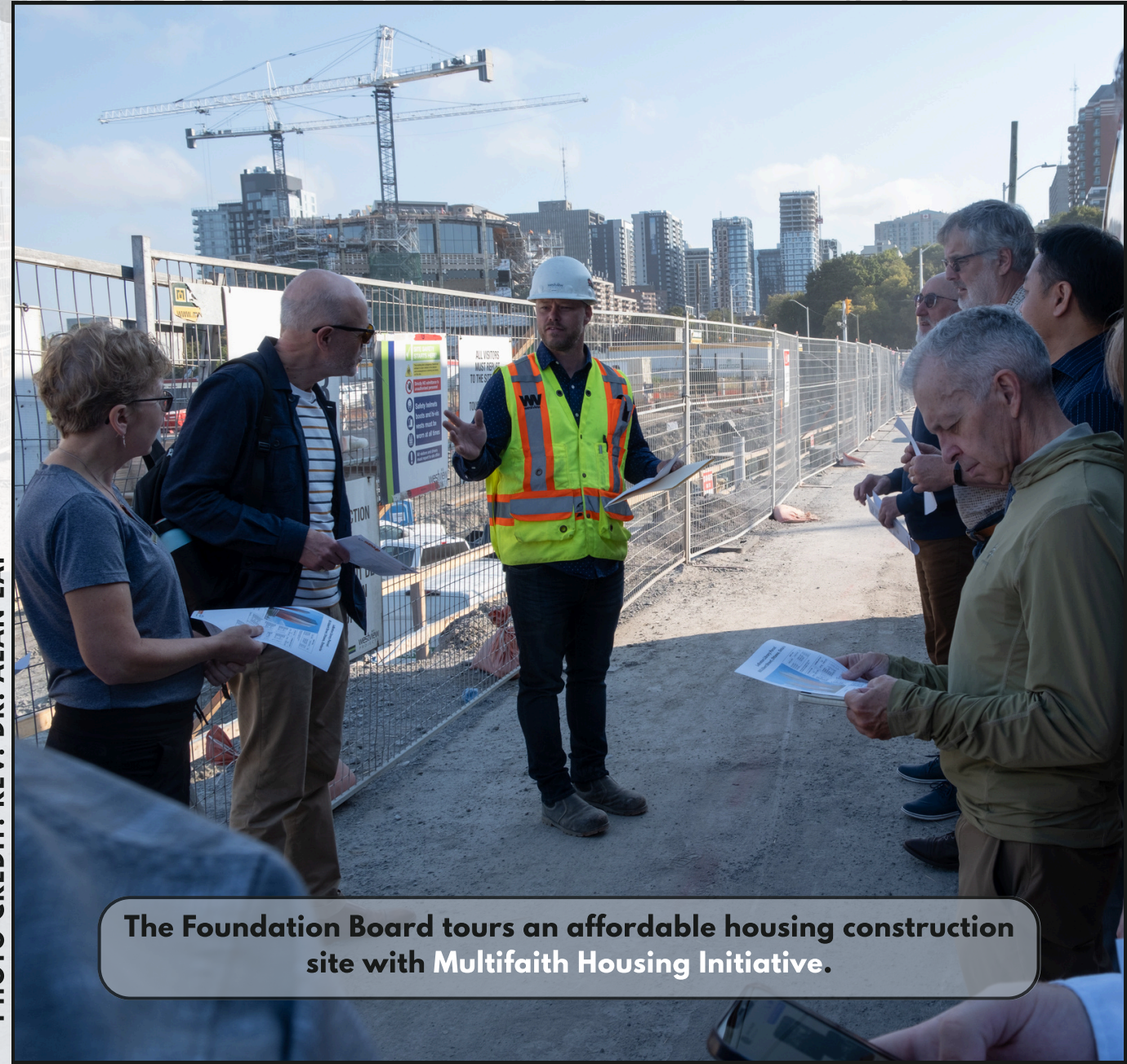
Coming together for: *equity*

In October 2024, the Foundation was proud to be included in the prestigious list of the **2024 Top 50 Equitable Funders** in Canada, coming in at number 7! This recognition underscores the Foundation's commitment to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion practices in our grantmaking activities.

The Top 50 Equitable Funders in Canada ranking recognizes organizations that have implemented innovative practices, policies, and initiatives to advance equity and inclusion in their funding activities. The annual research and ranking, compiled by Future of Good and QuakeLab, highlights organizations that have demonstrated notable progress in promoting equitable funding practices and fostering positive social change.

It's an honour to be recognized among the Top 50 Equitable Funders in Canada, but it isn't just about recognizing achievements; it's about envisioning a future where equity isn't aspirational but foundational to every act of grantmaking driving meaningful change for generations to come.

PHOTO CREDIT: REV. DR. ALAN LAI



The Foundation Board tours an affordable housing construction site with Multifaith Housing Initiative.

Coming together for: *our Priorities*

Our four Board-named priorities continue to provide focus and meaningful context to the Foundation's ministry: anti-racism, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, climate justice and support for communities of faith.

The impactful stories that follow show how we came together for good in this work throughout 2024.



\$98,000

granted to 13
projects to
support
**reconciliation
with Indigenous
peoples**



\$69,700

granted to 13
projects to
support **anti-
racism** initiatives



\$101,150

granted to 10
projects to
support **climate
justice** initiatives



\$493,107

granted to 74
projects to
support
**communities of
faith**

Coming together for: *reconciliation*



In October 2024, Inlet United Church (Port Moody, BC) hosted a celebration, marking the successful completion of its transformative 3-year 'The Springs' Art Wall Project.

The Art Wall Project resulted in a stunning 42-foot by 42-foot Coast Salish mural, designed and installed by Kwantlen Nation artist Nash'mene'ta'naht (Atheana Picha). This mural, featured on the exterior of The Springs, was unveiled during a traditional Blessing Ceremony and followed Coast Salish cultural protocols. They incorporated meaningful rituals such as the cedar sweeping to cleanse the artist from her work and the giving of gifts to acknowledge the contributions of Indigenous elders and participants in the event.

Building trust takes time. The group developed a deeper understanding of what it means to truly welcome others. In Coast Salish tradition, welcome extends beyond people, encompassing all aspects of creation –animals, plants, water, and the very earth itself. This broad understanding of connection enriched the experience for everyone involved and fostered a deeper sense of unity and appreciation among participants.

Through this project, Inlet United Church has not only created a beautiful piece of public art but also established a lasting legacy of respect, reconciliation, and connection. It has proven that by working together, communities can heal, grow, and celebrate their shared history and future.

Coming together for: *reconciliation*

In collaboration with Kâpapâmahchakwêw Wandering Spirit School, Evergreen (Toronto, ON) hosted a series of Drum Feasts to engage Indigenous youth with land-based practices, ceremony, and cultural teachings.

In Fall 2023, Evergreen received a Seeds of Hope grant from the United Church of Canada Foundation to support the Drum Feasts initiative. The grant came from the Watkins Fund for Innovative Programs and Projects in Addressing Poverty and Children at Risk.

Drum Feasts at Evergreen Brick Works have been a vital initiative designed to foster deeper connections between urban Indigenous youth and the land. This allowed for community engagement beyond the specific ceremony days, offering the community increased access to the land. The events were successful in introducing younger generations to ceremony. They also promote a sense of belonging and connection to both culture and the land.

The Drum Feasts have left a lasting impact on both participants and the broader community. One Kâpapâmahchakwêw Wandering Spirit School educator shared, “These land-based events foster deeper connection between Indigenous youth and their peers, their Elders, and their families. The events also offer youth a greater sense of connection to the land in Toronto, boosting their health, self-esteem, and well-being.”



Evergreen Brick Works Kâpapâmahchakwêw Community Drum Feasts

Coming together for: *anti-racism*

A group of diverse women, primarily Black, are singing in a church choir. They are wearing various colorful dresses and headwraps. The background shows wooden church pews and a microphone stand.

St. Paul's United Church Intercultural Ministry

With help from a Seeds of Hope grant, St. Paul's United Church (Thunder Bay, ON) has fostered a growing diverse, intercultural community!

St. Paul's has witnessed remarkable growth over the last few years. "The context and the texture of the church [have] changed because, in the history of St. Paul's, there were no people of colour coming to church," explained Rev. Desire Tiriwepi, "But since these intercultural services started, we have seen an influx of people coming in."

In 2023, St. Paul's received a Seed of Hope grant from the Foundation for their Inter-Cultural Immigrant Community of Faith initiative. "Ever since the funding, we have been able to organize prayers, meet together, and come together as a diverse community of Thunder Bay," shares Rev. Desire. There has been an increase in the number of people attending services, particularly people of colour. "It's fostering an atmosphere of community, and we really thank the Foundation for helping us in that," Blessing, the church's Musical Director shared.

From sharing food, to wearing uniforms for performances, having access to instruments, and going on picnics as a group, these experiences have helped build a deep sense of community. "We are blessed to be part of this group," said Pamela, a member of the African Praise Choir. "We have a sense of belonging and community and we've learned a lot." While youth participation has been one aspect of the program's success, the choir has expanded beyond that. Blessing emphasized, "We've not only been able to encourage youth participation in this program, but we've also been able to invite a wide array of people from various walks of life."

Coming together for: *anti-racism*

A retreat for ministers engaged in outreach to new Hong Kong immigrants was held at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre (Winnipeg, MB) in Spring 2024. It proved to be a transformative experience for all involved.

Designed as a safe and collegial space, the goal was to foster connections, support each other's spiritual journeys, and share outreach ideas, particularly in light of the recent political turmoil in Hong Kong and the influx of new immigrants. The retreat was supported by a trust-based grant from the Foundation.

One participant remarked, "It seemingly achieved nothing and yet, has achieved all the goals we had ever desired," beautifully encapsulating the essence of the event. It became evident that this gathering forged powerful connections, as participants began reflecting on its extraordinary impact. What made this retreat unique was the nurturing environment of a theological school training Indigenous ministers, which deepened discussions about cultural experiences across Hong Kong and Canada. In this space, trust flourished, leading to heartfelt and authentic conversations marked by moments of laughter, tears, and profound insights. Participants, each with diverse backgrounds in faith and leadership, engaged in powerful collective storytelling that fostered regeneration and healing.

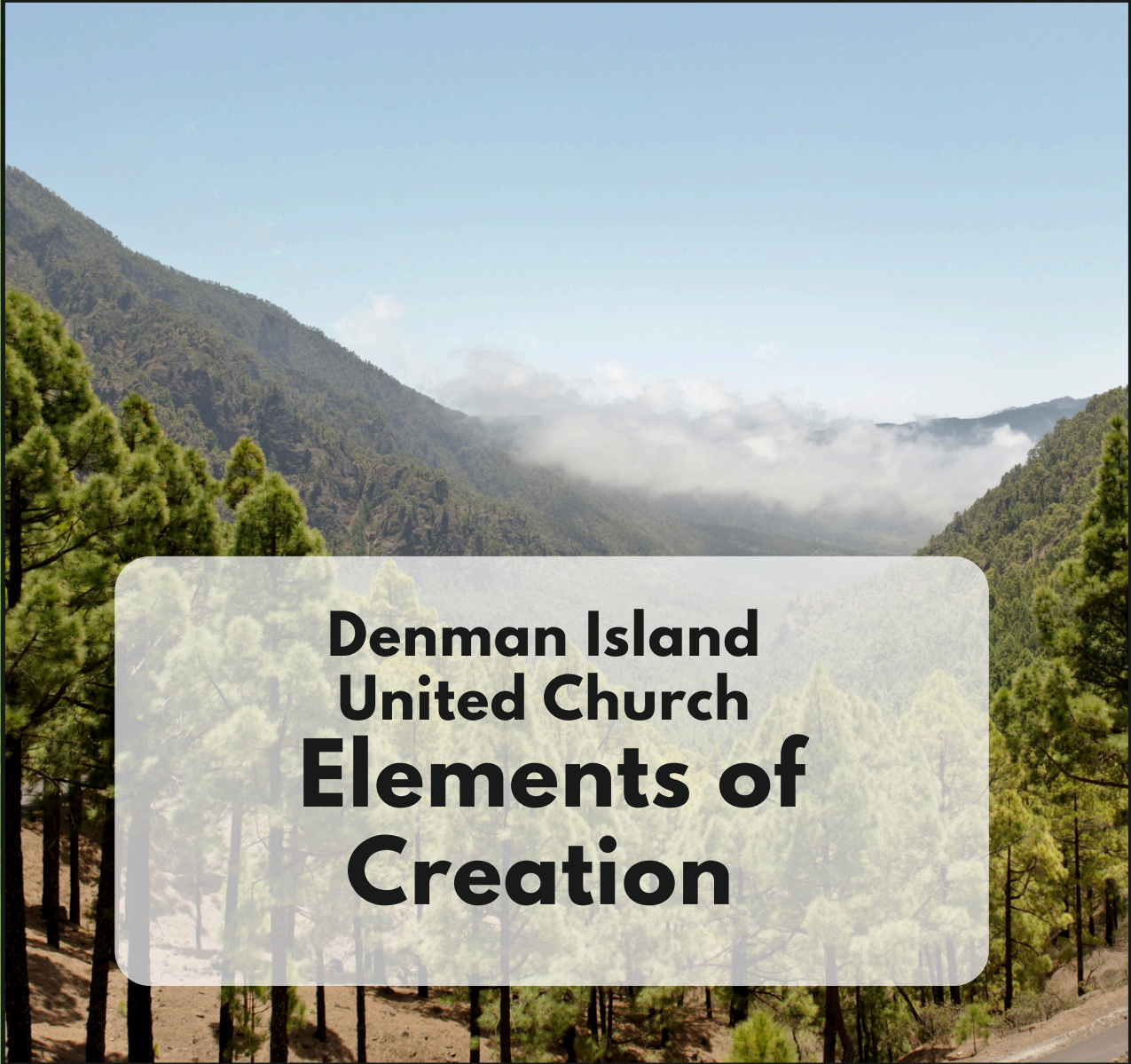
The planning team noted that organizing the event was both joyful and challenging, and that the Foundation Board's enthusiasm for the idea "empowered [them] beyond measure, creating a memorable experience that will resonate in the participants' hearts for years to come".



Caring of the Soul for the Ministry of Justice & Resettlement Spiritual Retreat

PHOTO CREDIT: REV. DR. ALAN LAI

Coming together for: *climate justice*



Denman Island United Church Elements of Creation

In October 2023, Denman Island United Church (Denman Island, BC) hosted a workshop with support from a grant from the Environmental Fund and the Living Spirit Fund.

The transformative 3-day workshop, Elements of Creation, focused on connecting with the sacred Elements of Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit. Spirit, as the Quintessence of these elements, represented the essence that binds all the components of Planet Earth together. The workshop offered a unique opportunity to build a deeper relationship with these Sacred Elements, fostering awareness of Spirit in all of Creation and uniting individuals from various spiritual paths. There were 24 participants, underscoring the strong interest in the Denman Island community for what the Reclaiming Tradition has to offer.

A highlight of the workshop was the overwhelming sense of community. Attendees engaged in a highly participatory manner, tapping into a common spiritual ground that fostered unity. Shared meals allowed for reflection and connection. The goal to create a healing space for those with negative church experiences, was successfully realized as participants found commonality through the Sacred Elements.

In addressing the climate crisis, the connection with these Elements provided grounding experiences, enhancing the work of local climate action members. A poignant moment was the ritual for the Element of Water, where participants pledged protection to significant bodies of water. Overall, the workshop nurtured community bonds and sparked collaborative relationships, fostering a renewed commitment to the Earth and all of Creation.

Coming together for: *climate justice*

The Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the University of Toronto is advancing inclusion for all and care for Creation through their Young Adult Social Justice Initiatives. The project was supported by a Seeds of Hope grant from the C. Jean Moore Endowment Fund.

Their goal is to facilitate university student leadership and community building in social justice. The project focuses in the areas of eco-spirituality and queer Christian spirituality.

Jeanette Unger, associate chaplain, said that by developing regular programming and creating spaces for support and connection, two key themes emerged, “the unique intersection of faith and environmental justice and the importance of building community”.

Highlights from a successful year include a student thrift-store initiative, a thought-provoking movie night, and a contemplative nature walk. During the nature walk, students reflected on questions like, “How do we connect our faith with our surroundings?”. Many found the experience grounding and rejuvenating.

First-year undergrad Chloe Kim was hired to work on ecology and spirituality programming. She credits the success of the program to the unique intersection of faith and environmental justice, noting the many environmental groups on campus and emphasizing the importance of intentionality in bringing Christianity into ecological conversations. “When I introduced our group, people were intrigued...It’s more than just an environmental initiative; it’s for your own spirituality as well.”



**University of Toronto
Ecumenical Chaplaincy
Eco-Spirituality
Initiatives**

Coming together for: *communities of faith*



Oasis United Church Holy Imagination Art Show

Buoyed by a grant from the Watkins Fund for Innovative Ministries with Senior Adults, Oasis United Church (Penticton, BC) hosted an art show as part of their Holy Imagination initiative, engaging their community through creative opportunities and exploring the theme of Transformation.

“This was a wonderful community event. People brought their art from all over the community. The majority of the people who took part had never exhibited art in a public show before,” Oasis minister Rev. Keri Wehlander shared. With over 90 pieces displayed, participants ranging in age from 4 to 91 years old showcased their creativity. The event fostered connections and learning, as many were surprised to discover the artistic talents within their own congregation!

Keri recounted the impactful stories of participants, including a woman whose spouse with Alzheimer’s created a series of paintings that reflected his journey from detailed realism to abstraction. “Every one of them felt like they were offering something that people appreciated,” Keri stated. Dot, a first-time exhibitor, expressed her joy: “I never thought I’d be good enough... It made me feel a lot stronger... all I can do is thank God! Becoming an artist made me appreciate and recognize our Creator.”

Member Margot Newton expressed gratitude for the grant, noting the community's enthusiastic participation. “It was a real delight,” she said. Fellow Worship Team member Nancy Wise echoed this sentiment: “A huge, heartfelt thank you to the United Church Foundation for making something pretty amazing possible.”

Coming together for: *communities of faith*

With the support of a grant from the Foundation's Convening Fund, Gower Street United Church (St. John's, NL) has welcomed many new faces to their "architectural treasure" during their Open Doors initiative.

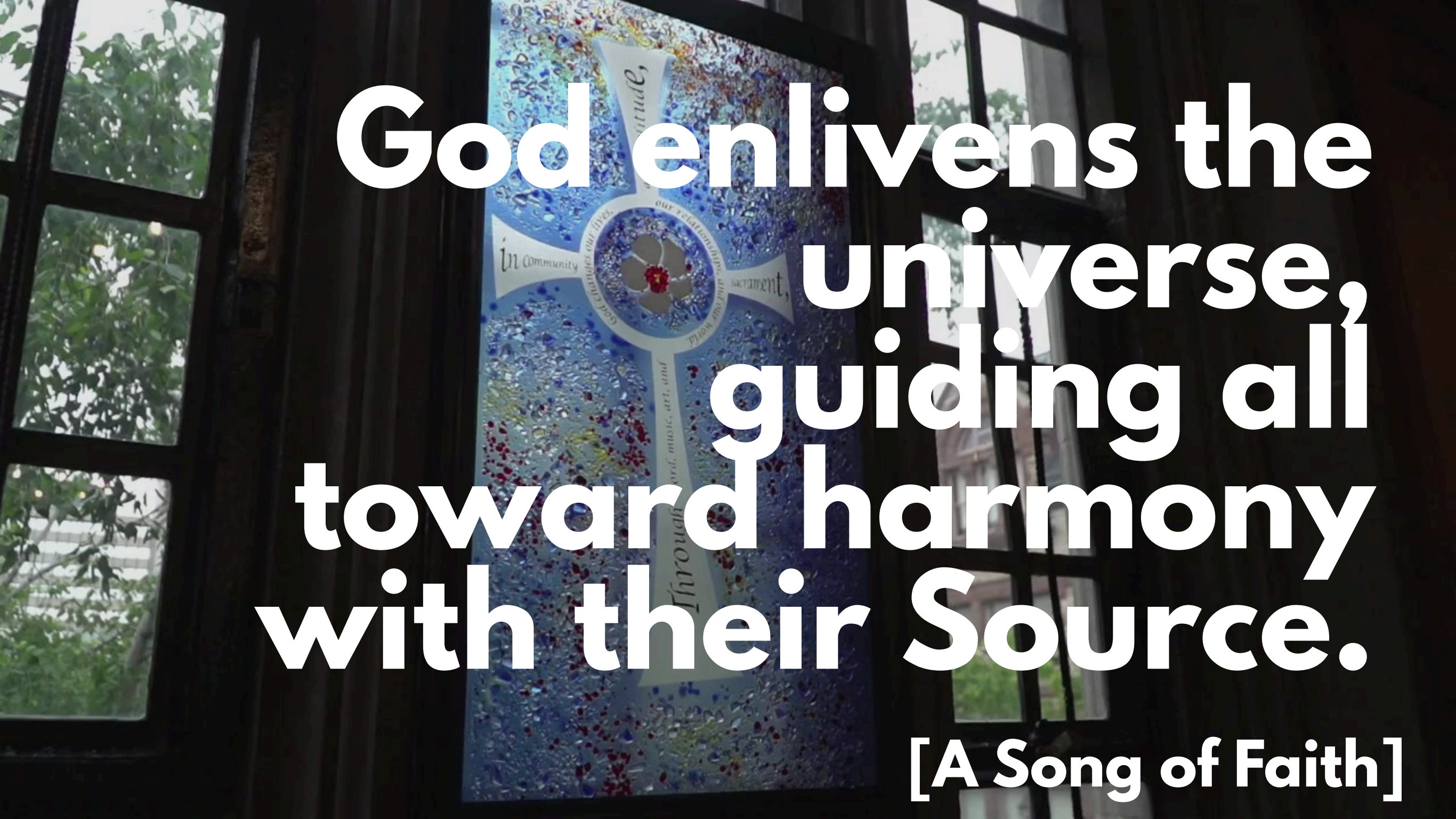
Gower has opened its doors to hundreds of visitors at times the church sanctuary would usually have been closed. During Open Doors, guides lead visitors and answer questions, telling about their Methodist origins, the beginnings of the congregation and their story since, including the bold decision in 1925 to join the United Church of Canada... 24 years before Newfoundland became a province!

From the start of the program, they opened their doors on more than 40 days, welcoming over 1,200 visitors, most of whom would never otherwise have experienced this "hidden treasure" (as many have called the church!) or learned about the congregation's heritage and history. A program volunteer said, "Nearly all our visitors remark on the church's unique architecture. Many ask questions about Gower and the United Church – our history and architecture, our beliefs, our social engagement, and frequently about our Pride flags. Some sit and meditate or pray for a while before they go."

The main objective of the program has been to present Gower and the United Church to communities beyond their doors and borders. Said a volunteer, "Opening our arms in this way has given much wider access to our historic church, to the nearly 210 years of our material and spiritual heritage, and to our hopes and prayers for the future."



**Gower Street
United Church
Open Doors
Project**



**God enlivens the
universe,
guiding all
toward harmony
with their Source.**

[A Song of Faith]

Coming together for: *impact*

Impact investing continues to be a cornerstone initiative of the Foundation. We're challenging the long-held views that social and environmental issues should only be addressed through donations, and that investments should focus exclusively on achieving financial returns. Four principles guide our approach: **alignment to our mission of doing God's work, complementing and enhancing our granting priorities, meeting our financial obligations, and measuring impact.**

Through our investment partner Genus, investments focus on our priorities, supporting Indigenous projects, green-focused businesses, and initiatives working to achieve economic justice for racialized and newcomer communities.

Of note in their most recent reporting:

- By mobilizing accessible capital for Ontario food and farm enterprises, **Fair Finance Fund** is stimulating local economies with the creation of over 240 jobs.
- Support from our Green Bond is helping **RE Royalties** power 82,434 homes annually.
- Using an Indigenous culture-centred approach, **Raven Indigenous Capital Partners** has granted more than \$250,000 in scholarships to Indigenous youth.

PHOTO CREDIT: REV. DR. ALAN LAI



Anu and Abhi Potdar, Directors of Nutrition Blocs, with Foundation Lead Erik Lo Forte at our Annual Reception. SNACK, Nutrition Blocs' school lunch program for children living in "transitional" housing, is supported by a Seeds of Hope grant.

Coming together for: *inspiration*

In September, the Foundation was at **ReVITALize**, a conference for ministry leaders and lay people across various denominations and faith traditions to get together, refresh, learn, be supported, build community, and get inspired.

Hosted by former Foundation Board Chair The Rev. Dr. Jeff Crittenden, ReVITALize focused on congregational growth, innovation and partnerships a natural fit for Foundation support!



Board member Ryan Baxter on stage at ReVITALize in London, ON in September.
At left, Sarah Charters with United Church of Canada colleagues Marlene Britton and Jennifer Henry.

Coming together for: *conversation*

Dalton Room

201

DEC 10-11, 2024

TORONTO,
ONTARIO, CANADA

Ecumenical Foundation Leadership Gathering

WHO

Presidents, CEOs, and
senior leaders in
denominational
foundations

WHAT

Frank conversations
on important topics,
context, and relevant
themes to support and
improve our work

WHY

Peer Support
Knowledge sharing
Analysis and Insight
into difficult issues
and trends



The 2024 Ecumenical Foundation Leadership Gathering took place in December at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Toronto. At right, Sarah Charters, Erik Lo Forte, and colleagues from various denominational foundations.

Together with The Anglican Foundation of Canada, we welcomed 20 Foundation and church fundraising leaders to Toronto for the annual Ecumenical Foundation Leadership Gathering in December.

We came together to discuss our work, learn from each other and spend time in fellowship and support. The conversations were fruitful, Spirit-filled and a wonderful reminder that we are all working towards ensuring God's love is present in our world.



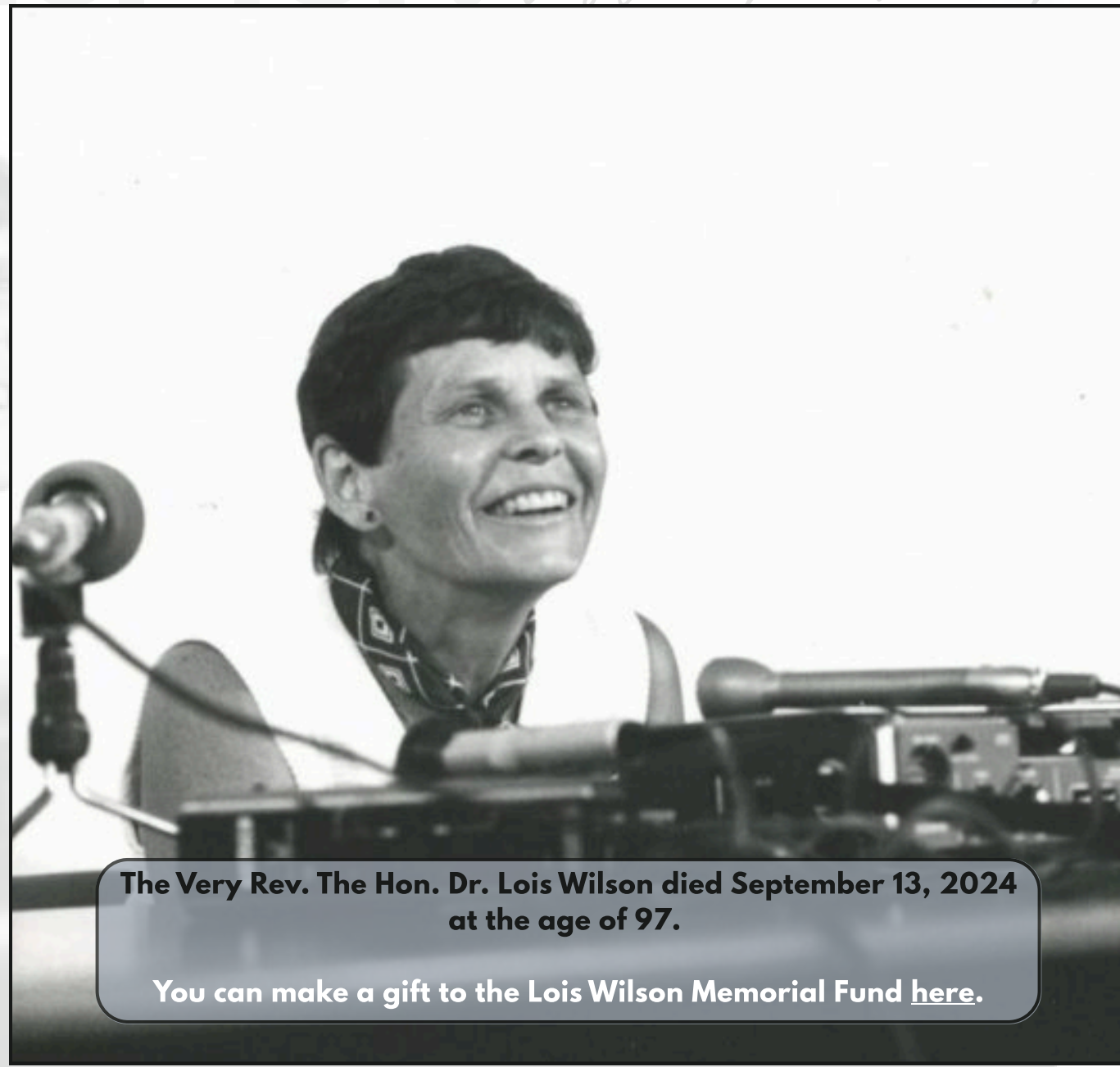
Coming together for: *lasting change*

The Very Rev. The Hon. Dr. Lois Wilson was deeply devoted to making real change through (and in) the church and community, her convictions always rooted in her Christian faith. She was dedicated to advancing human rights work, ministry, climate and economic justice, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Keenly aware that we can accomplish far more together than any of us could do alone, she often told us, "There's a lot of work to be done!". True to this, Lois established an endowment fund at the Foundation to further this ministry for future generations.

The Lois Wilson Memorial Fund will now support United Church of Canada ministry and programmatic work related to social and economic justice, reconciliation, and climate change mitigation.

Lois was a force and a great friend to the Foundation. We are grateful for her wisdom and witness; she will be deeply missed. Through The Lois Wilson Memorial Fund, her legacy will continue to inspire and bless so many.



**The Very Rev. The Hon. Dr. Lois Wilson died September 13, 2024
at the age of 97.**

You can make a gift to the Lois Wilson Memorial Fund [here](#).

Coming together for: *opportunity*

In June, we were thrilled to announce three exciting new grant programs that would begin granting during the Fall 2024 grant round. It has been a joy to connect these new opportunities with people and projects carrying out important work across our church.



Trust-Based Grants

“**United, We**” is our new dedicated trust-based granting stream! In 2024 and 2025, up to \$100,000 will be available through United, We to support impactful existing work at United Church organizations and partners who otherwise would not qualify for funding through current granting programs. Groups are not required to undertake new or innovative work to be eligible, nor tie the funds to any specific project.



Marketing Support

Owing to the generosity and creativity of Foundation donor Jack Scoffield, the **Promotion Project Fund** provides up to \$10,000 to support United Church of Canada congregations in their marketing efforts as they seek to attract members, promote their vital ministries, and retain a strong community presence.



Centennial Celebrations

As the United Church of Canada approaches its Centennial, many communities of faith are planning activities in celebration. As an expression of solidarity, support, and celebration, we proudly present the **Centennial Granting Fund**, providing funding for events designed to mark the milestone moment! United Church ministries holding special Centennial events are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$5,000.

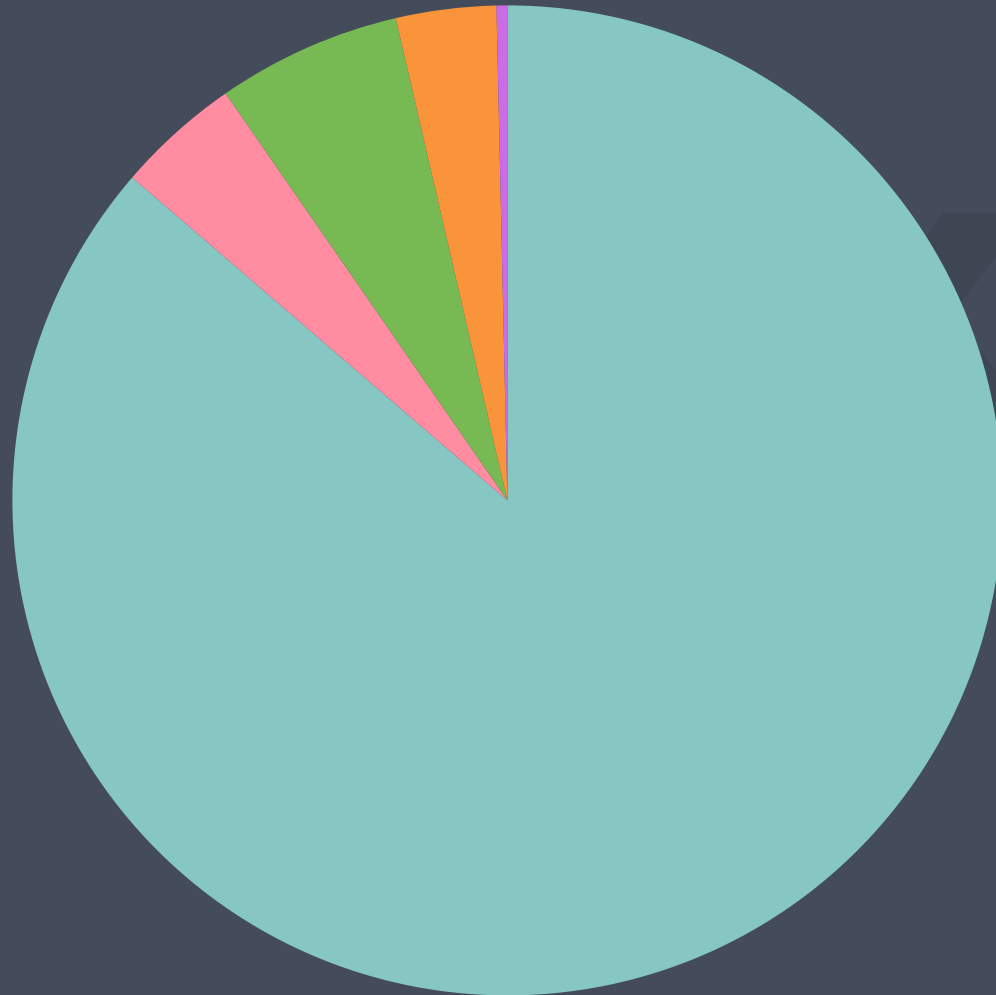
A photograph of two men playing instruments in what appears to be a church or sanctuary. The man on the left is seated and playing an acoustic guitar. The man on the right is standing and playing a violin. In the background, there is a wooden altar with a purple cloth and a gold emblem. A wooden chair is visible in the foreground on the right. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**we
are partners
working together
for God,
and you are
God's field.**

1 Corinthians 3:9

2024 Expenditures

\$11,777,411



■ **Grants**

\$10,165,053 • 86.3%

■ **Charitable Activities**

\$477,198 • 4%

■ **Management & Administration**

\$708,604 • 6%

■ **Fundraising Expenses**

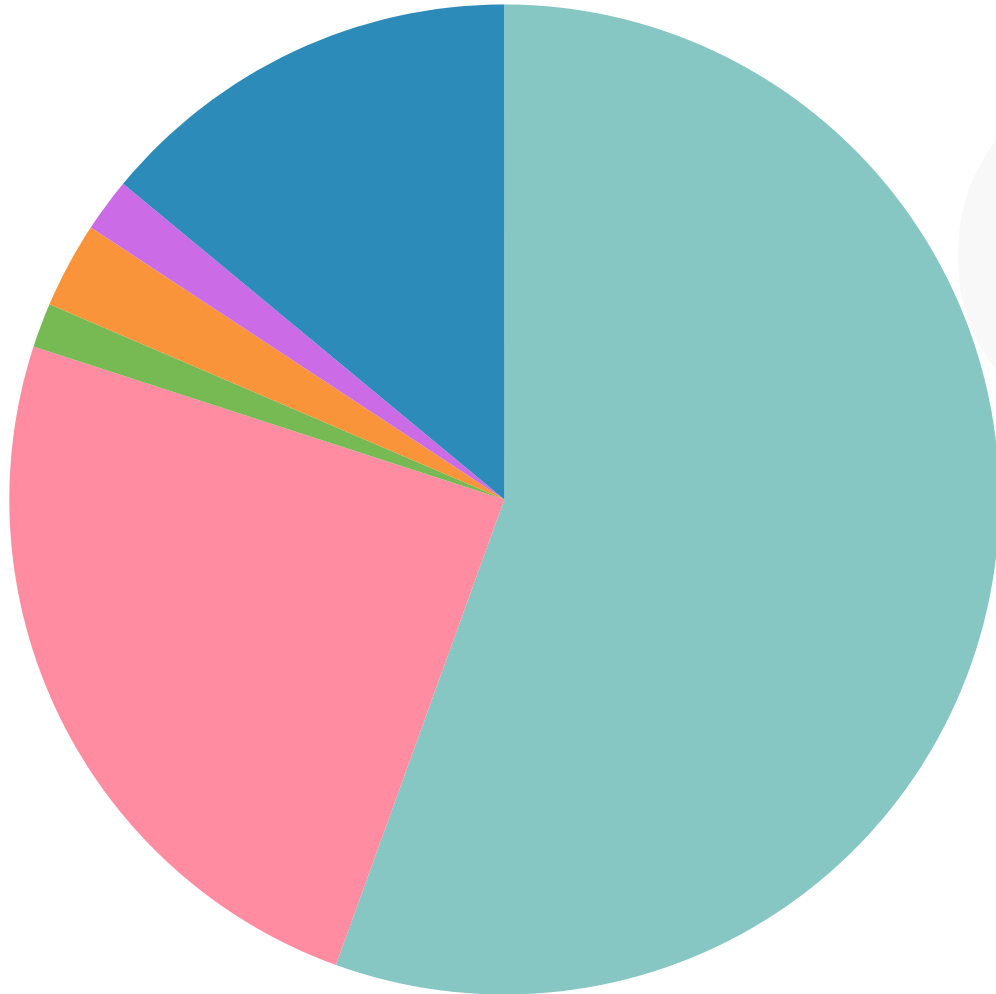
\$384,927 • 3.3%

■ **Special Projects**

\$41,629 • 0.4%

2024 Grants

\$10,165,053



■ Congregations

\$5,644,188 granted to 340 congregations

■ General Council & Regions

\$2,487,668 granted for GCO & Regional Council initiatives

■ United Church Camps

\$147,689 granted to 14 camps

■ Community Ministries & Ecumenical Partners

\$285,475 granted to 17 organizations

■ Theological Schools & Retreat Centres

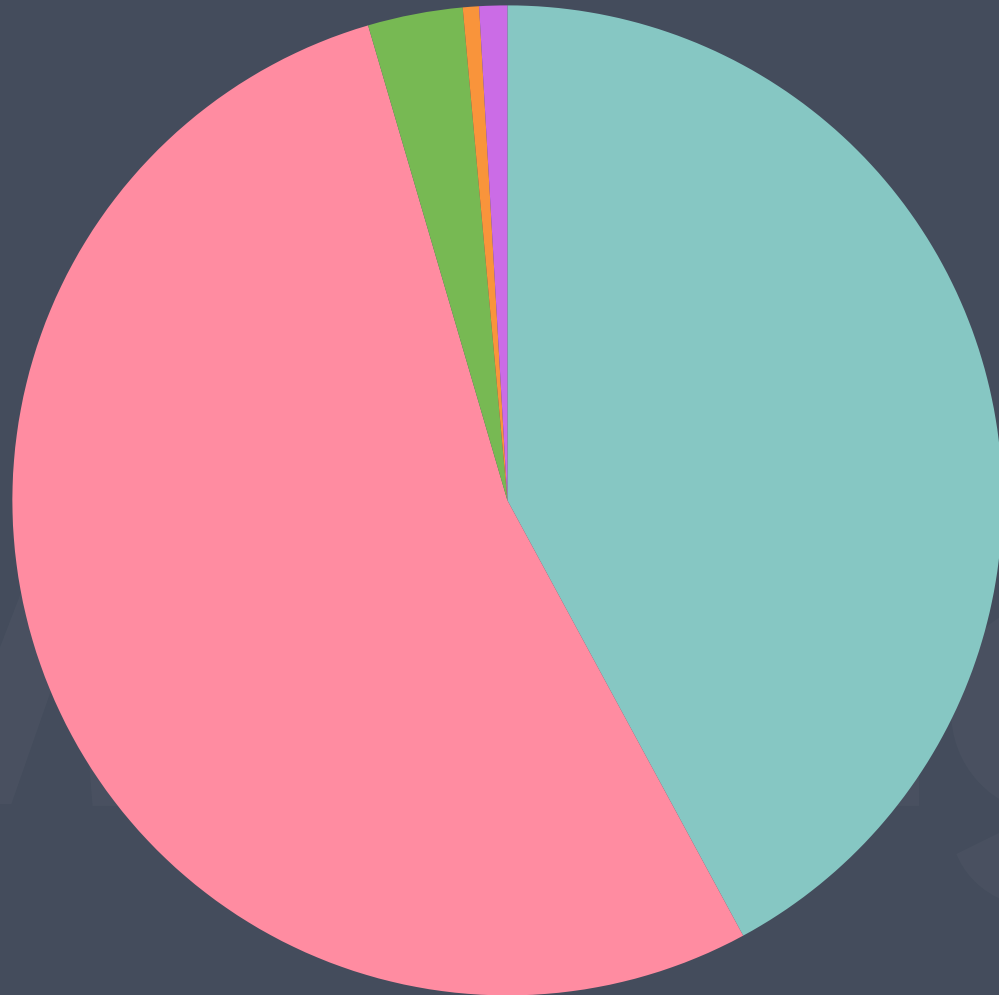
\$177,733 granted to 17 organizations

■ Other Ministries & Charitable Organizations

\$1,422,300

Assets Under Management

\$116,415,361



■ **Endowed Capital**

\$49,009,165

■ **Externally-Restricted Funds**

\$62,120,483

■ **Internally-Restricted Funds**

\$3,609,187

■ **General Operating Funds**

\$616,139

■ **Gift Funds**

\$1,060,387

The Year Ahead

What's on deck for us? There is so much happening at the Foundation in 2025 as we celebrate 100 years of The United Church of Canada. Check out what we're getting up to this year.



Racial Equity Audit

We proudly support the rich contributions of racialized people through grants, giving opportunities, impact investing, and our anti-racist commitment.

To strengthen our efforts, we are undergoing a **racial equity audit** to review our programs and practices. Our goal is to understand how we can improve and promote racial equity more effectively.



Endowment Guidebook

Our new resource **Faithful Futures: Endowment Guidebook** will be a must-have for all United Church congregations, offering valuable insights and step-by-step instructions to help your congregation thrive for the next 20, 50, or 100 years.

Whether you're new to investing or already have endowments, this workbook is an essential tool!



Centennial Campaign

We're leading the way in the **Centennial Legacy Campaign**, a national initiative celebrating The United Church of Canada's 100th anniversary.

The campaign seeks to ensure the financial sustainability of congregations through legacy gifts, helping to carry forward the church's ministries, values, and impact for future generations.

Contact



Some of The United Church of Canada Foundation Board and staff together at MacKay United Church.



unitedchurchfoundation.ca



facebook.com/UnitedChurchFoundation



instagram.com/UCCanFoundation



bsky.app/profile/uccanfoundation.bsky.social



threads.net/@uccanfoundation



linkedin.com/the-united-church-of-canada-foundation/



1 866 340-8223



fdn@united-church.ca



**3250 Bloor Street West, Suite 200
Toronto, ON Canada M8X 2Y4**



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
FOUNDATION