



FAIRLAWN

Connect with what matters in life.

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

I went to get my eyes checked this past year. I needed a slight adjustment (to my prescription). Small changes may not be noticeable but they do help. They ease the strain and increase the clarity of your vision.

“Do you want new frames? We can get lenses to fit your old frames.” Ah, vanity; new frames of course. Except. Except the old frames have not let me down. They haven’t broken, are easily adjusted, and I still like them.

“These newer frames will make you look younger.” Ouch.

When it comes to communities of faith, they do not recreate themselves overnight. They do not become new and younger and unrecognisable quickly. Best to keep the old frames and adjust the lenses so you ease the strain and increase the clarity of your vision. Eventually, you might see so many possibilities for change that you have to settle on new frames. Not to look younger, but because you need larger lenses.

“Do you want progressives? They can be used in more than one setting, reading, driving, wherever.” When you attempt or embrace change in a community of faith, some see it as abrupt and disruptive, like wearing an older pair of bifocals. Others note the differences and want time to adjust, but they want to be progressive. Progressive as in adaptable to a changing world, attentive to new points of view, curious about new ways of thinking about their spirituality, even their faith.

When you get new glasses from a reputable place, they tell you to give time for your eyes to adjust, and, if you are struggling after a week or two, to come back for a re-evaluation. Fairlawn is the same way. We try new things here and there. Some seem larger than they do to others. Some become natural and seem like they’ve been around all along (coffee in the Sanctuary, for example). Some we will abandon after we have learned more about ourselves.

OLD FRAMES, NEW LENSES

It’s not unintentional to say we are seeking a new vision for Fairlawn based on what we have and what we want to be. In a way that doesn’t strain us beyond our capacity. I asked people in January 2024 what they had energy for, and it was a serious question which received serious answers. The report at the AGM will represent a vision that looks to possibilities which are within our capacity to explore. With a challenge to see what we can do.

There is a difference between what we *can* do and what we *will* do. The way to discover what we are called to do is to try some things. See if they fit. See if they help us see. See what we want to embrace—knowing we are embraced by each other and the Holy One.

Early in my days with you I described communities of faith as being perspirational, aspirational or inspirational. I made bold to say that Fairlawn is the latter, not believing for a minute that we weren’t all of the above. You will be presented at the AGM with a plan that is aspirational, based in part on things we have identified as arising from our old, invaluable frames. There have been a number of times when I have had to deal with the perspirational. We love to ponder things at Fairlawn, at great length. Worse, the aspirations (aka expectations) are suited to a larger staff. We need to address that in order to continue to treat my co-workers with integrity.

We’re inspirational too. People who stop to chat with me while I am serving lattes on the lawn on a weekday like what we are about. As do the folks who know us in the local shops, and the people who sit on our benches. We are known as Welcoming and Affirming. We are known for our care for people who struggle. That may not bring people in the door, but we have a good reputation. That means the hardware in our frames is gold.

Okay, enough of the very extended metaphor. Let’s see where the Spirit takes us. Or, in the words of Jesus in Matthew 10.29-31, “Here’s looking at you, kid.”

– Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts

GOVERNING COUNCIL

As with any other year, Governing Council (GC) was responsible for the oversight of everything Fairlawn. Councils are represented and GC is the communication hub for a wide range of administrative roles and leadership initiatives. That role continues.

In January 2024 we began a process of setting priorities for Fairlawn for the next few years. We took into account the resources we have, our energy as a Community of Faith, and recent expressions of plans (i.e., Fairlawn Forward). We arrived at three foci:

- 1. Discovering what we can do for the local LGBTQ2IA+ community:** We have begun a pilot project to see what the needs are and what we can offer, particularly for youth. You will see details of this in our Affirm Committee's Annual Report. This arose from our Affirm Committee, and the approach will inform what we do with our other possibilities. The learnings from the pilot project can be used for the two subsequent foci.
- 2. Discovering what we can do for our Fairlawn youth:** We want to know if and what we can do to offer to our current young people and what they would suggest we might offer to others. We want to offer, through a few volunteers, a conversation with them, that may lead to things that give them more of a sense of belonging at Fairlawn.
- 3. Discovering what we can do for seniors in the area:** We want to know if and what we can do to offer to people within our Community of Faith and beyond: programs, etc., to enrich their lives. We want to offer, through a few volunteers, a conversation with them, then see where that takes us.

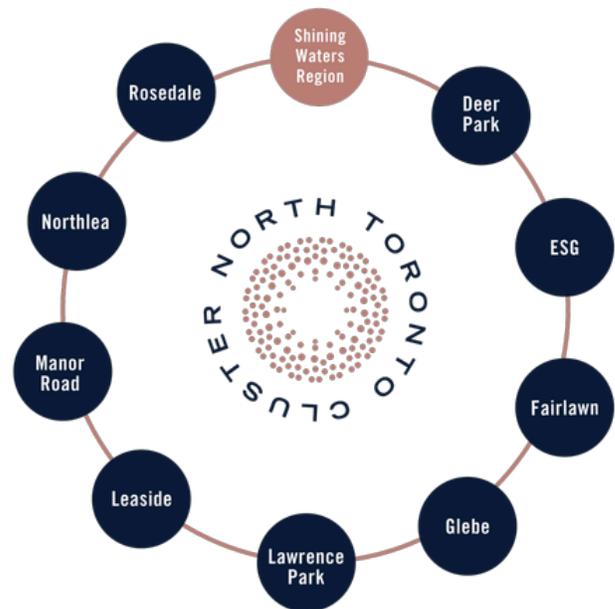
In each focus, we anticipate that we will discover what we might do. It may or may not lead to something. We won't know until we try. We also want to encourage other possible opportunities for learning and service and developing spirituality.

In 2024 GC functioned with the Minister as its Chair, but with different members chairing meetings. We are in search of someone to become the Chair for 2025 – someone who would be prepared to focus their energy and attention on leading Governing Council in developing and supporting the three above foci.

Our thanks to Steve Dunk, Amanda Hancox, Allan Hux, Judy Langstaff, John Ryerson, Tom Salisbury and Vicki Stuart for their dedicated work for our life together.
– Chair, Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts, Minister



Fairlawn's Governing Council 2024



The North Toronto Cluster of Churches (consisting of nine United Church churches), in addition to other churches in the Shining Waters Region and across Canada, acts as an anchor in Fairlawn's pursuit of innovation and collaboration to be more impactful in our neighbourhoods.

EXPLORE SPIRITUALITY MINISTRY

Most of what Fairlawners experience as a Community of Faith is the result of the work of the Explore Spirituality Council and appears to focus on our times for gathered worship. The members of the Council bring a deep commitment to ensuring that when you come to Fairlawn you find yourself in the Real Presence of the Creator and Holy One, and in the midst of a community of people who care for you. If worship comes alive for you, it is because of the conviction and intention of Joanne Christie, Eleanor Daley, Scot Denton, John Kimmel, Laurie Kimmel, Ambury Stuart, and our two newest members, Jessica Baugniet and Heather McPherson.

In the past year we have shifted our role to include other opportunities for you to continue to explore your spirituality. We have begun to plan and offer Sunday Seminars, the first of which was how to be supportive of someone who has chosen a medically assisted death, with the Director of MAIDHouse, Tekla Hendrickson. In the first half of the year you had an opportunity to delight in the insights of Jean Ward's book studies. With her departure mid-year, Cam attempted to step into the breach and was rewarded with time with you and your curiosity and wisdom as we studied Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* and John Shea's *Starlight: Beholding the Christmas Miracle All Year Long*.

And, of course, we continue to be a resource for our small group ministries.

– Chair, Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts, Minister



Eleanor Daley is awarded the Order of Canada



A Father's Day Anthem

MUSIC MINISTRY

Music at Fairlawn, under the direction of Eleanor Daley, continues to touch our hearts and raise our spirits. On a weekly basis, we are treated to the offerings of our 36 choristers and soloists. Guest musicians join the choir on Remembrance Day and Easter Sunday, and during our two annual Special Music Sundays. In 2024, we were gifted with Mark Hayes's *Requiem* in the spring and the Canadian premiere of *Magnificat* by Taylor Scott Davis during Advent, both with chamber orchestra. And our dynamic piano duo of Doreen Uren Simmons and Anne Fraser continues to delight!

In 2024, we said goodbye to long-time baritone section lead Doug MacNaughton who moved to New York City to join his wife, and to tenors Luca McCauley and Curtis Zhang. We welcomed Dion Mazerolle, our new baritone lead, as well as Rachel Vogel and Lynda MacKenzie who returned after a lengthy hiatus. We will continue to make a Joyful Noise!

– Eleanor Daley and Kathy Salisbury

EXPERIENCE BELONGING MINISTRY

If you're looking for a welcoming, supportive community, Fairlawn is the place for you. Look at what we've been up to!

Our **Prayer Shawl Knitters** who meet monthly for knitting, tea and friendship, created and distributed 28 shawls in 2024 (making a total of 600 of these symbols of love and connection since the Ministry began in March 2011).

Our **Visitation Team** keeps in contact with seniors who cannot attend Sunday services regularly. They make personal visits and phone calls and recognize special events such as birthdays and Christmas. If you know someone who would appreciate regular visits, please let us know: pastoralcare@fairlawnavenueunited.ca

Our **Breast Friends Cancer Support Group** meets once a month on Zoom. We are a mix of those recently diagnosed and in various stages of treatment. There is laughter, tears and everything in between.

Our **Widows' Support Group** met in their homes throughout 2024, offering support and laughter over tea and treats. New members are always welcome

Fairlawn's well-loved **Afternoon Tea**, honoring seniors in our faith community, returned June 2024. Friends and volunteers gathered in the sanctuary to enjoy conversation and share in a service of hymns and Communion, followed by light refreshments.

Our **Tuesday Lunch Crowd** meets monthly via Zoom. Among our 2024 sessions we enjoyed excellent presentations by Philip Blackford on Gibimishkaadimin; Jan and Gary Schlee on their three-month cruise; and Lorne Opler on the MIND DIET which is based on research concerning the impact of healthy foods on our health. We also had an animated conversation about the U.S.A. presidential election.



61st Annual Book Sale clean-up crew



Afternoon Tea

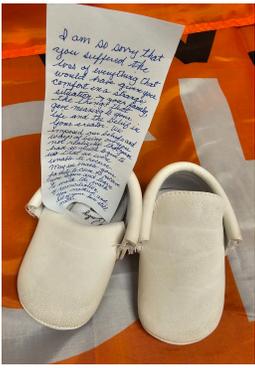
Our **Broadview Discussion Group** meets eight times a year on Zoom, following *Broadview Magazine's* National Online Reading Club schedule. We choose recent articles dealing with ethical and justice issues that inspire discussion and can link us to the broader United Church.

Fairlawn's 61st Annual Book Sale, a beloved neighbourhood tradition, raised \$21,000! For three days in April, Fairlawn was the place to be. Words of appreciation for the wonderful selection of books and the parting comments of 'see you next year' were heard over and over. Our faithful army of volunteers made this happen. Thank you!

In 2024 members of the **Men's Basketball Group** congregated for a Christmas dinner, the Jays' home opener, a June BBQ, and an Escape Room outing. The regular Monday Zoom calls continue.

In the last few years the **Quilters** have moved location several times. Now we are in the office area, which makes it easier for some of us to manage without stairs. There are six of us, four of whom quilt and two cross-stitch. We all gab! Poor Cam next door and Joanne two doors down tolerate our talking and laughter. Join us!

The Men's Group gathers in the church library once a month (except for summer months) for fellowship and to discuss whatever is on their minds. All are welcome!



The Embrace Action Ministry had an active and impactful 2024

EMBRACE ACTION MINISTRY

Fairlawn's Embrace Action Ministry operates with bifocal vision – acting on the close-up issues of our community and city as a way to faithfully bear witness to the broader social justice issues of equity, equality and inclusion.

Your generous support of the Embrace Action (EA) Fund enables us to build strong partnerships with Fred Victor, Gibimishkaadimin, L'Arche, Red Door Family Shelter, Regent Park Ministry, Street Health, Saint Luke's Out of the Cold and Fairlawn's own Walk-in Support – social service agencies/programs supporting people with the greatest needs in our city.

A notable highlight of 2024 was the increased North Toronto participation in EA Fund-sponsored events like the Street Health and Roehampton Basket Drives, Carols Around the Crèche in support of our Red Door Toy Drive, and the Advent screening of Against the Grain's Messiah/Complex.

In 2024, we offered a webinar series titled *Acting Kindly in an Unkind World*, that featured local experts who shared practical ways to engage in kindly acts and advocacy, even in challenging situations like addiction and mental health. Our final guest speaker, former Toronto City Counsellor Joe Mihevc, left us pondering the idea of the "anger of hope" as a cornerstone of compassionate justice. To view the session, please go to <https://www.fairlawnchurch.ca/action>

Lastly, we introduced a new program called *Fairlawn Goes Exploring* which provides Fairlawners with a chance to get together for fun and fellowship while visiting Toronto sites that help deepen our understanding of social justice. Our first outing had us touring the Aga Khan Museum and discovering firsthand the wisdom of 13th Century Persian poet, Rumi.

In this time of disruption, it is essential to look for and see the injustice in the world around us – and then to ask ourselves, how strong a prescription of support is needed going forward?

– Co-Chairs, Sandy Giles Byrne and John Ryerson

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP MINISTRY

On April 7, we celebrated the end of our formal 12-month sponsorship of Emmanuel. Subsequently, we were able to provide a full toolbox to assist in his future work. In addition to his construction/project management skills, Emmanuel speaks several languages and has been employed on a casual basis as a translator for the Refugee Board.

We are eagerly anticipating the arrival of our next sponsored newcomer, Yamen, who completed his Immigration Medical Exam (IME) overseas in December. His support team is in place and has met twice. We are also awaiting news about a Syrian family of six. Processing times continue to be very slow but we remain hopeful.

– Chair, Kathleen Magladry



We welcome our WIS guests

WALK-IN SUPPORT MINISTRY

If you go by the church on the first Tuesday of the month (except July and August) around 8:45am, you may see a line of people outside the east door of the church. At 9:00am the door opens and the people go down to the Assembly Hall where they are welcomed to sit at tables and receive breakfast. They are called to see a volunteer who listens to whatever they wish to share, offers them a prayer and a \$15 gift card redeemable at Loblaws.

At Christmas we provide a gift to each visitor – in 2024 it was a pair of socks, always welcome during the cold of winter. During the year we received an average of about 65 guests each month.

This outreach is made possible by your contributions of money and by the enthusiastic volunteers who order the food and gift cards, prepare and serve the food, talk with our guests and clean up afterwards. We thank those who support this worthwhile outreach program with gifts of their money and time.

– Co-Chairs, Rev. Rob Metcalf and Doug Knights



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Some of the members of the Walk-in Support Team

AFFIRM MINISTRY

Creating Safe Spaces. Fairlawn's Affirm team entered 2024 with renewed focus and energy, thanks to a strong mandate from our Community of Faith to enhance this ministry. Thus, the "old frames, new lenses" analogy is especially apt for us.

Building on our successful 2023 International Day of Pink event, Fairlawn hosted over 100 attendees at the only public GTA Day of Pink event in 2024. We also began work on our vision to create a safe and inclusive space at Fairlawn for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in our area. Paisley Sears, the Program Coordinator for the successful Scarborough queer youth drop-in program Toby's Place, spoke at our Pride service in June. We were impressed by Paisley's passion and experience and with the program run by Rainbow Community Places (RCP).

After speaking with other agencies who work with 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in Toronto (RCP, Pflag, Lumenus, and Planned Parenthood) we focused on developing a proof-of-concept initiative to gather evidence to support the feasibility of creating a queer youth drop-in program in North Toronto. We applied for, and received, funding support from the United Church of Canada Foundation and from Fairlawn's Social Justice Fund.

Although the first phase of the initiative is to begin in January 2025, by the end of 2024 we had already developed supportive and practical relationships with the above-mentioned agencies. The initiative will include piloting the queer youth drop-in program and providing information sessions, panels, and workshops to the broader community. This will help us assess needs and gaps in North Toronto programs and services for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and those who support them.

– Chair, Kevin Doe



IDOP Visibility Tour 2024 Volunteer Team

PROPERTY COUNCIL

We are the people tasked with keeping the frames safe and in good working condition, ready to accept whatever lens we are given.

2024 ended with our completion of the Fire Code work. We started with the inspection and approval of that work by the Fire Department to the effect that we are now in compliance with the Ontario Fire Code. We were advised that our fire panel was obsolete so we replaced it. The new fire control panel is in the boiler room and the annunciator panel is located by the east door.

A great deal of time and effort was spent this year on welcoming Maplewood Academy to Fairlawn. In preparing for their arrival, there was major effort to empty each room including moving the grand piano to the Assembly Hall, and totally emptying the servery kitchen. All spaces were then deep-cleaned.

In preparing to change the entrance for Walk-in Support to off the parking lot, John McCarthy and Iliff Peck worked to refinish the doors from the parking lot.

During the year negotiations continued on the lease to the Air Cadets organization for space to hold their meetings. They expect to start in April 2025.

The lawsuit brought by the woman who slipped and fell on our front steps was settled by our insurance company on a negotiated payment for her damages. There was no direct cost to Fairlawn but we learned that there is now a higher level of competence required of people doing maintenance work. It also made us take a hard look at the condition of the outside benches used by the public.



East doors refurbished by Iliff Peck and John McCarthy

This year we completed the multi-year project of replacing all of the flat roofs by doing the last one above the Kimmel Room. The HVAC unit which was at the end of its life span had to be removed from this roof and so was removed and replaced.

Not so noteworthy, perhaps, but just as necessary, was attending to these matters: repairs to the outside sign; repairs to toilets, taps and basins; replacement of toilets; repair of a leak in the southwest sanctuary; installment of two fire-rated doors in the kitchen annex; and mounting of a new Pride flag and staff.

Many thanks to Joanne for her participation in our work by scheduling and monitoring contractors and countless other regular duties. Many thanks, also, to Iliff Peck for his many years of being on Council and acting as Secretary.

– Chair, Vicki Stuart



The gallery wall was moved to the Sanctuary from the Birch Room by Tom Gifford



Easter Wreath by John Kimmel

HUMAN RESOURCES & RELATIONSHIPS

Human Resources & Relationships (HR&R) had a productive year. In the spring it worked with staff to bring onboard two new members. First, we hired Celine Cheung as a part-time Administrator to help support Joanne Christie's role as our Church Administrator. Second, we contracted the team of Josh and Amanda Dela Cruz as our Creative Content Developers to record Sunday worship services, post online services, and increase the church's presence on social media.

In the fall HR & R hosted a coffee hour to welcome staff back and remind them of how the Committee can provide support. Other accomplishments included tasks such as arranging annual salary increments and ensuring performance reviews were completed for all staff.

– *Co-Chairs, Allan Hux and Barb Steep*



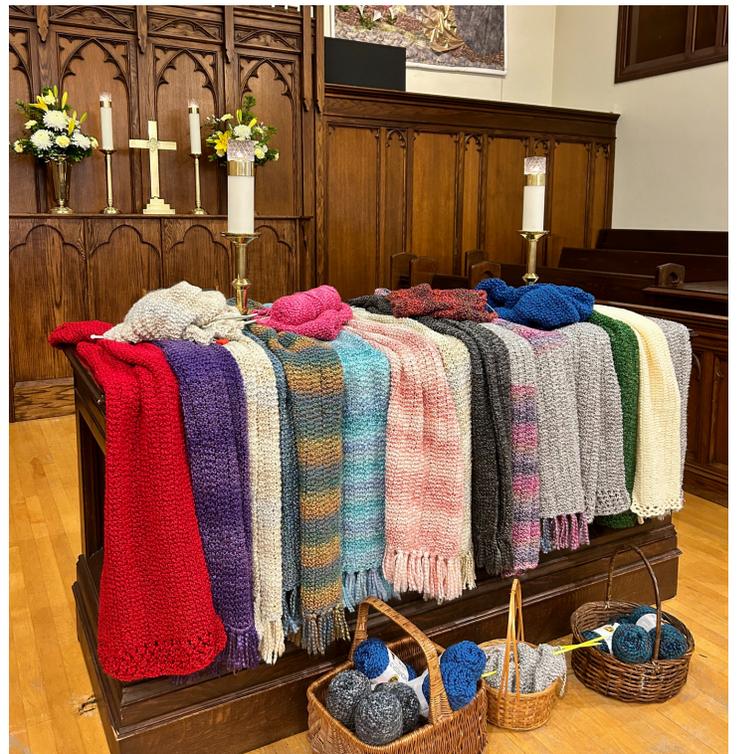
Farewell gathering for Rev. Jean Ward

IN MEMORIAM 2024

Pauline Hill	March 13, 2024
Wally King	March 25, 2024
Don Urquhart	March 25, 2024
Catharine Picard	April 4, 2024
Anne Barber	May 26, 2024
Andrew Peck	June 25, 2024
Marilyn King	July 11, 2024
Milly Saeger	August 8, 2024



Blessing of the Animals Service



Blessing of the Prayer Shawls

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Fairlawn's Trustees hold the building at 28 Fairlawn Avenue in trust for the congregation and oversee the congregation's investment portfolio of roughly \$3.6M. This includes funds set aside for specific purposes (e.g. Social Justice; the Lucas-Sanders Fund, which this year provided \$500 to each of six post-secondary students), as well as the support of Church operations through our Legacy Fund. The overall portfolio grew significantly in 2024, despite transfers to Church in support of operations.

Major bequests to the Legacy fund totaled \$60,000 this year. These generous individuals will all be acknowledged at the Annual General Meeting, and we are deeply grateful to them. Please do consider the possibility of leaving a bequest to Fairlawn, as part of your own estate plan.

– Chair, Tom Salisbury



Basketball Group



Women's Spirituality Group II



Christmas at Fairlawn

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Fairlawn had an interesting financial year in 2024. The Operational Deficit for the year was \$(195,229). The budgeted deficit was \$(192,060). The offerings were down \$19,521 from budget and \$20,449 from the prior year. We received \$161,223 in rental revenue verses a budgeted \$176,668. We had a very successful Book Sale that raised \$20,708. Expenses were under budget by \$17,601.

When consolidated with the Trustees accounts and changes to the restricted funds, the excess of revenues over expenses for 2024 was \$350,149.

Thanks to all of the Fairlawners who continue to support our Ministry. The Operating Highlights are as follows:

	2024 BUDGET	2024 ACTUAL
Congregational Offerings	\$333,000	\$321,740
Rental Revenue	176,668	161,223
Other Income	22,000	27,935
Total Revenue	531,668	510,898
Total Expenses	723,728	706,127
OPERATING DEFICIT	(\$192,060)	(\$195,229)

We were blessed with two generous bequests in 2024 totalling \$60,000. We are thankful for the bequests from the Estate of Anne Barber (\$50,000) and the Estate of Zenovia Skibinski (\$10,000).

Contributions to the various restricted funds were \$97,538, a decrease of approximately \$33,000 from the prior year.

The Refugee Fund donations declined by \$15,600 and St. Luke's by \$18,000 given that no specific campaigns were held for these funds in the year.

The largest funds were Embrace Action (\$45,775), Camp Scugog (\$10,980), and Eleanor Daley Special Music Fund (\$17,775).

Mission and Service donations decreased to \$33,209 (2023 - \$37,269).

We had net positive results from the activities that the Trustees oversee.

Interest and dividends (net of expense)	\$133,063
Realized net gains & change in investment value	407,997
Other income and expenses*	(60,492)
Donations received by Trustees	68,880
TOTAL	\$549,448

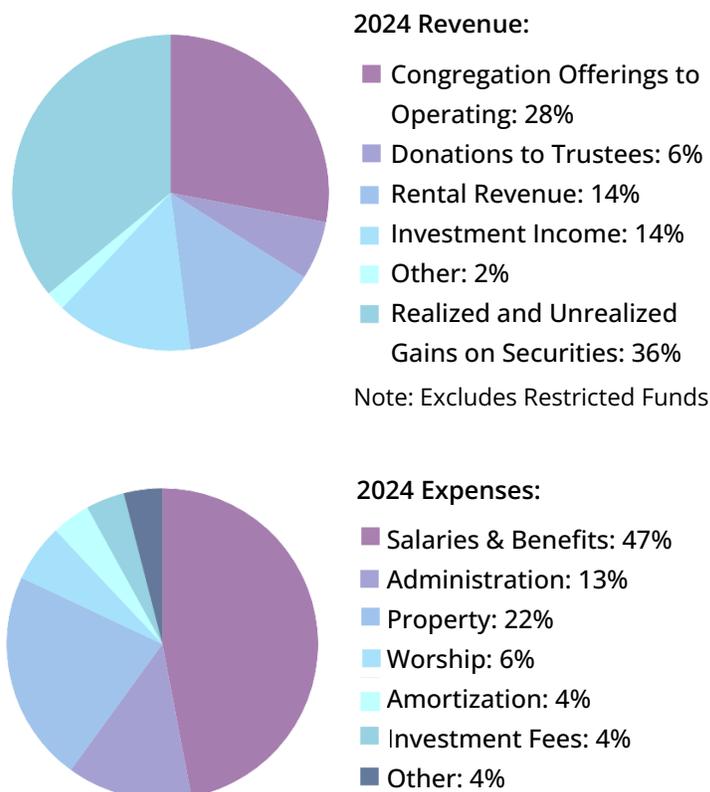
*Includes amortization of fixed assets of \$30,179. Capital expenditures in the year were \$136,685 (2023 - \$35,098). The major capital expense was roof repairs.

The combined Operating and Trustee results for 2024 are included in the financial statements, which are provided together with the operating budget for 2025.

We engaged Koster, Spinks & Koster LLP to conduct an independent audit for the 2024 year. Their report is included with the financial statements.

- Chair, Steve Dunk

The following is a breakdown of our operating and investment revenues and expenses by category:





Fairlawn's Guiding Principles

To build our future as a faith community we commit to one another to:

- care for each other with kindness
- encourage dialogue by listening to learn and speaking to foster relationships
- value and support the richness that comes with our differences
- work together collaboratively to find creative solutions
- support each other in times of change and transition

FAIRLAWN CONTACT INFORMATION

Affirm	affirm@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Book Sale	booksale@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Breast Cancer Support Group	bcsupport@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Camp Scugog Team	scugog@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Communications	communications@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Directory	directory@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Embrace Action	ea@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Experience Belonging	eb@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Explore Spirituality	es@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Gift Cards	giftcards@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Greetings!	greetings@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Governing Council	gc@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Finance	finance@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Human Resources & Relationships	hrandr@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Pastoral Care	pastoralcare@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Prayer Shawl Ministry	prayershawl@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Property Committee	property@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Quilting Group	quilters@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Refugee Ministry	refugee@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Trustees	trustees@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Volunteer at Fairlawn	volunteer@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Walk-In Support	wis@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Widow Support Group	widowsupport@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Rev Dr. Cameron Watts	cameron.fairlawn@gmail.com
Eleanor Daley, Director of Music	eleanor@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Joanne Christie, Church Administrator	joanne@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Celine Cheung, Admin Support	celine@fairlawnavenueunited.ca
Heather de la Rua, Bookkeeper	heather@fairlawnavenueunited.ca



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Fairlawn Avenue United Church

28 Fairlawn Avenue

Toronto, Ontario

416-481-6848

fairlawnchurch.ca