



Mission *and* Service 2023

*Helping transform lives.
Inspiring meaning and purpose.
Building a better world.
Together.*



The United Church of Canada / L'Église Unie du Canada



Moving Forward

Sarah Charters
Executive Officer of Philanthropy

In so many ways, 2023 felt like a beginning. With widespread vaccinations and health authorities lifting restrictions, life began to seem more normal. In-person church services happened again, without masks. Supply chains started to recover from the massive shocks that the Ukraine war and other conflicts had caused. And midway through the year, there was some cautious optimism.

Unfortunately, as is so often the case, new natural disasters occurred. Floods, droughts, and wildfires became more common. Conflict erupted between Israel and Hamas, resulting in ongoing warfare. And the list continues.

Through it all, you, the people of The United Church of Canada, continued to care and to make a difference. In 2023 Mission and Service givings totalled \$20.84 million with bequests, other planned gifts, and emergency appeals, bringing the total donations for our shared work to just over \$24 million.

This accountability report will show where your gifts were used and what a difference they made. We have included a few of the many stories of hope, compassion, and healing that your generosity provided. People of faith are sustained by stories such as these. We hope that you read them and recognize the part you have played in transforming lives, inspiring meaning and purpose, and building a better world—the world God wants for all our relations.

Blessings,

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that we live, worship, and work on Indigenous lands.

We are committed to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and recognize that this includes aligning ourselves with the values of living with respect in creation.

We continue living and praying together on this great land and together we support each other's journey.

Learning, Teaching, and Loving

Donna Nelson is no stranger to the hard and rewarding work that comes with welcoming someone to Canada. In the late 1980s, she had recently become a member of The United Church of Canada when her friend Barb asked her to help host two young Vietnamese men through the Regina Open Door Society. “That was all it took to get me hooked,” Donna shares.

At the time, she was a single parent to her four-year-old daughter Vicki. Together, they celebrated birthdays with their new friends, shared meals, visited tourist attractions, and enjoyed good friendship until the men moved to another province.

Since then, Donna has helped host refugees from countries like Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, and Vietnam. Vicki and some newcomers learned Canadian geography together so the newcomers could pass the citizenship test. Donna even taught some newcomers to drive! At times life got busy, but Donna found herself called back to helping families.

Currently, Donna is actively involved with the refugee committee at Knox-Metropolitan United Church in Regina. She says, “The refugee ministry at Knox-Met is one of the most tangible and urgent ministries of welcome the congregation offers. We all benefit with the richness newcomers offer to our city and this community.

“United Churches are so well placed to support refugee families. We have both financial and community connections. It is a collaborative relationship—local congregations welcome families and provide the financial backing, and the national church helps with the bureaucracy. I am grateful to The United Church of Canada and Mission and Service for the support over the years.”



Photo Provided by Donna Nelson

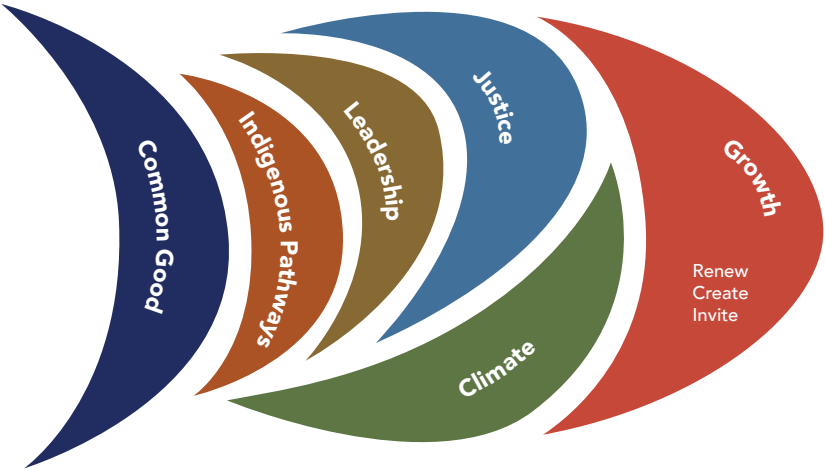
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Our Work Together in 2023

2023 was a year with many challenges. In Canada inflation, wildfires, increasing secularization, and a rise in homelessness and food insecurity faced us all. Globally, climate change, ongoing and new conflicts, and natural disasters occurred with disturbing frequency. It is a credit to all of you that, throughout the year, communities of faith continued to support those in need both locally and around the world.

In 2023, Mission and Service provided grants both globally and across Canada, including \$180,000 allocated to each of the 13 United Church Regional Councils for local initiatives.

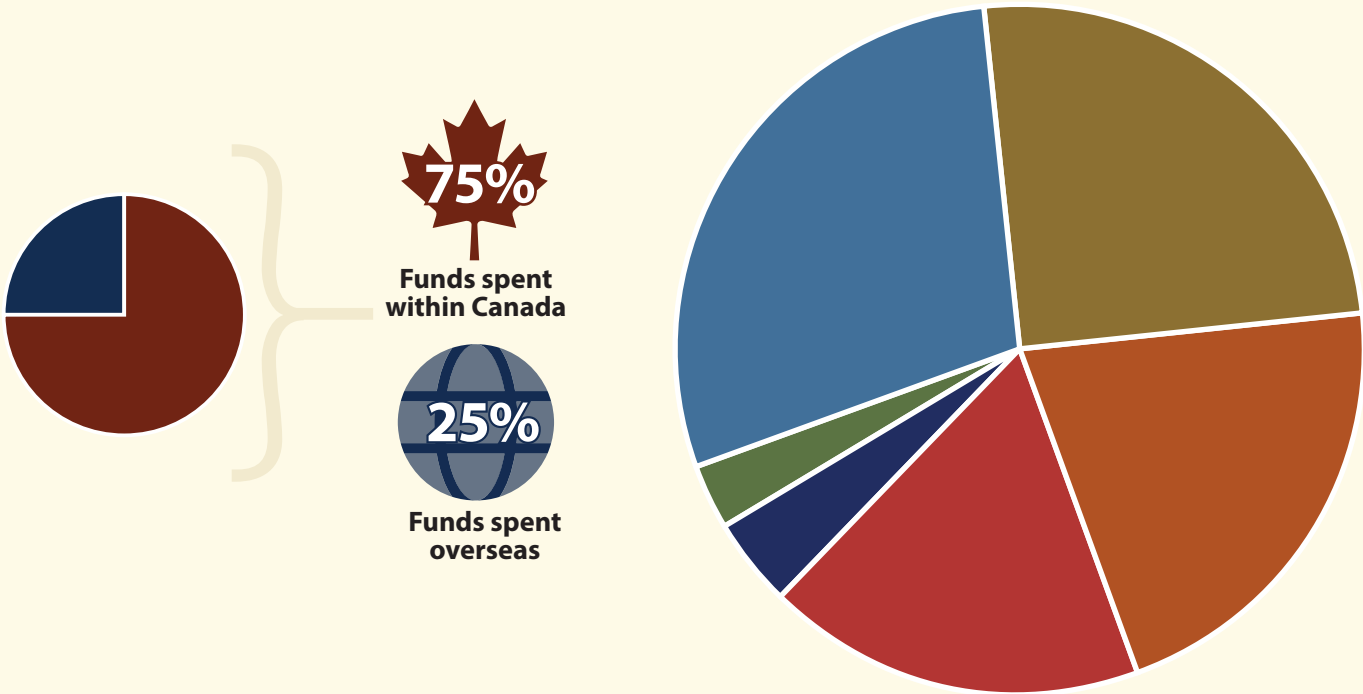
Thank you for your compassion and generosity.



In 2024, we are reporting the 2023 results in alignment with the Strategic Plan Objectives. These are the ways your United Church of Canada is moving forward into the future.

This Past Year We Committed...

Just over \$24 million to support those in need in Canada and around the world.



29%

Embolden Justice: Collaborating to Mend Church and World

Make meaningful collective progress on Indigenous justice, racial equity, and Two Spirit or LGBTQIA+ rights both in the church and world, while demonstrably deepening bold effective solidarity on other justice issues, through ecumenical collaboration and denominational networking.

25%

Invigorate Leadership: Adapting and Innovating for Bold Discipleship

Renew a vision of leadership based on the call of the denomination—deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice—and align discernment, recruitment, training, and support of ordered and lay leadership, to this vision.

21%

Journeying Indigenous Pathways: Forging Right Relations

Deepen Indigenization and healing in The United Church of Canada towards self-determination and the possibility of reconciliation.

18%

Growth – Strengthen Invitation: Humility and Confidence in Sharing Faith

Develop and implement effective and connected regional and national strategies that result in growth within existing ministries, and by seeding and sustaining new expressions of communities of faith.

4%

Nurture the Common Good: Equity and Sustainability in Resources

Significantly increase denominational capacity and will to make decisions on properties and resources focused on the ministry of the whole church, enhancing equity, sustainability, right relations, and administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

3%

Deepen Integrity: Living Climate Commitments

Amplify and integrate current initiatives in a bold, hopeful denominational climate strategy that accelerates reductions towards the goal of an 80% decrease in emissions by 2030.

Thank you for helping build a better world.

Rising above Tragedy to Transform Lives



Photo: Asian Rural Institute

Each year, the Asian Rural Institute (ARI), supported through your Mission and Service gifts, invites 25–30 grassroots rural leaders from Asia, Africa, and Latin America to learn sustainable agriculture techniques at their Rural Leaders Training Centre in Tochigi, Japan.

Saidath Murorunkwere is one of ARI’s most recent graduates. Like many other Rwandans, the 1994 genocide left scars in her life. In just 100 days between April and July, an estimated 800,000 to 1,000,000 Rwandans were killed, the majority of whom were Tutsis.

“Of Saidath’s extended family of nearly 200, only two aunts and a few of her siblings survived. When the Rwanda Patriotic Front forces finally stopped the genocide, Saidath, her mother, and her remaining siblings had to start over with absolutely nothing. Everything was either burned or stolen, including their 42 cows and other livestock,” ARI reports.

To make ends meet through the following years, her mother sold charcoal and Saidath worked as a bus driver’s assistant, opening doors for passengers and collecting fees. Many days they went without eating. Still, Saidath was determined to finish secondary school. She became a secretary and eventually studied at the University of Rwanda, where she graduated with a degree in journalism.

Despite her education, the pay was low so she began to work as a farmer and a social worker with Dufatanye, a non-governmental organization that works to fight HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, and poverty while promoting organic agricultural practices. In that role, Saidath worked with 60 farming families to build kitchen gardens. Inspired to make an even bigger difference, she applied to ARI.

Whether it be environmental conservation, providing education, initiating microfinance programs, attaining rights for women and children, or organizing aid for refugees, each student of ARI graduates with the intention to make a positive difference.

Saidath’s goal is to develop more cooperatives in the community where she can pass on the skills she has learned. “With better nutrition, health will improve and children can go to school,” she says.

“Nearly 40 percent of the population in my area lives in poverty. Small-scale farming is the major occupation, and I wanted to learn techniques and skills from ARI that I could share.”

Your Generosity for Those Most Impacted by War



Illustrations: © Yupiter Group | Dreamstime.com

There were a growing number of conflicts in 2023. The Ukraine war has continued and is now in its third year with casualties in the tens of thousands and millions displaced. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas is threatening the lives of untold innocent civilians.

These are just two of the emergencies that have received relief thanks to your generosity. In 2023, \$1.06 million was sent to our partners to help people whose lives have been destroyed by war and conflict. Families and children who are fleeing war are given food, clothing, shelter, medical supplies, and a place to be safe. This is what happens when Christian compassion is lived out.

Thank you for your generosity!

Photo: Simon Chambers/ACT



Leading Generations

Becoming a parent or guardian is a complex experience that doesn't have a one-size-fits-all answer. As kids, we looked to adults for guidance. As adults, we recognize that we're still figuring things out as we go, and there's always an opportunity to grow our skills and minds.

In London, Ontario, Mission and Service partners with the London Community Chaplaincy as they respond to parents and guardians wishing to build a network of support and develop new skills as they navigate raising children in a low-income setting. Together, these parents are working hard to build a positive future for their children and families.

Each week London Community Chaplaincy provides a welcoming and safe social setting for adults to connect—learning how to guide a child through critical stages of development while managing financial stress, food insecurity, and more. Gathering with other adults in a similar situation allows participants to share their struggles and triumphs, building a sense of community.

Photo: London Community Chaplaincy



Thank you for helping build a better world.

Three ways to make a gift!


 Call 1-800-465-3771

 Donate today at united-church.ca/donate

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Questions? Feedback? Let's talk.

Give us a call or drop us a line at
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