



### Message From Leadership



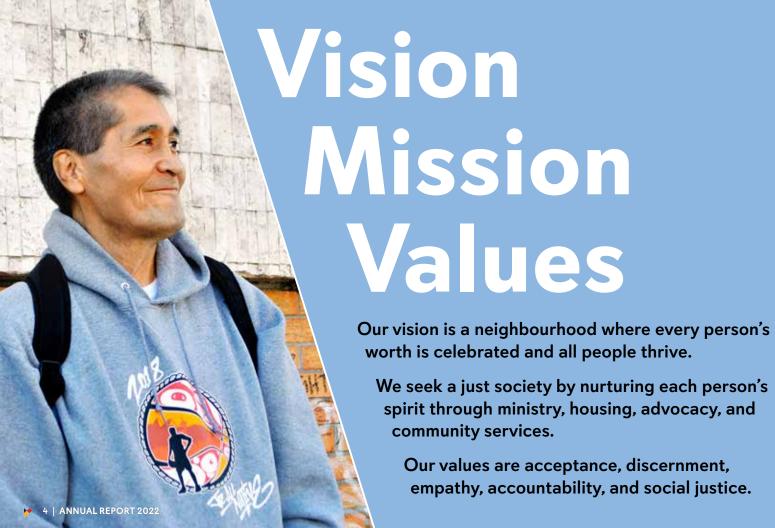
This was one of the most significant years of change in FIRST UNITED's 137-year history: we said goodbye to our well-worn but beloved building. Throughout the years, we've always faced change head-on by adapting to the present and growing needs of the community, led constantly by our vision. But to make our vision a reality, we knew we needed to replace a building that was no longer safe or suited to our work and the increasing demand for our services.

In this past year, we went through plenty of changes that required planning and patience to prepare for our redevelopment. We moved our programs, kitchen, shelter and administrative office into six locations around the community and launched an innovative food truck to ensure we could still serve meals. We also experienced a leadership transition, while navigating other promotions and subsequent shifts in staff positions.

We did our best to manage each change with discernment and compassion. We saw that robust plans, capable leadership and strong communications made these shifts much smoother. As an organization, we embraced operational change while continuing to respond to the needs of the Downtown Eastside. Whether serving on the frontlines during a global pandemic, providing shelter or petitioning for drug policy and housing reforms, we were there to serve and advocate for systemic change.

We know we couldn't have gotten through this last year of transition without your support and shared belief in our vision of a neighbourhood where everyone's worth is celebrated and all people thrive. This important work requires courage, perseverance and a strong support system. Thank you for being on this journey with us.

> Amanda Burrows, Interim Executive Director Dr. Heather F. Clarke, Chair, Board of Directors



### New Leadership, Familiar Faces

In August 2022, our staff said, "See you in a little while," as the Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne became the Right Reverend when she humbly accepted the position of Moderator of the United Church of Canada (UCC) in an uncontested election.

Carmen felt confident that she could take on the role (which requires a three-year leave of absence from her position as Executive Director) thanks to the hard work and strategic changes she—with the support of the Board of Directors, staff, and our bargaining unit UFCW1518—had put in place to help FIRST UNITED thrive.

The Board of Directors appointed Amanda Burrows to serve as Interim Executive Director of FIRST UNITED for the duration of Moderator Lansdowne's three-year term as head of the UCC. The transition was seamless as Amanda had already been serving as Acting Executive Director for four months while Carmen was on sabbatical. Prior to taking on the role of Acting Executive Director, Amanda was Director

of Development and Associate Executive Director. With a familiar face at the helm, Amanda's proven leadership capabilities and a strong succession plan, our team was able to navigate this transition with ease.

We also saw three new additions to our leadership team this fiscal year. Natalie Gobis Cutayne became the Director of Human Resources, leading the HR team through numerous recruitments and other HR projects. Rev. Jennifer Goddard-Sheppard joined staff as Interim Spiritual Care Director, and was seconded from the Board of Directors to lead the Spiritual Care program. After serving as Acting Director of Development, Katie Koncan was promoted to Director of Development and Communications. Katie led the Development and Communications team in achieving and surpassing ambitious fundraising targets and in growing the organization's profile publicly.

# We are ON THE FRONTLINES



For nearly 140 years, **FIRST UNITED CHURCH COMMUNITY MINISTRY SOCIETY** has sought to build better futures in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside by providing essential services, community connection, and healing. Shoulder to shoulder with our community, we operate from a harm reduction perspective. As a faith-based service provider, we welcome and affirm every individual from all walks of life without exception. At our core is the mission, ministry, and call to social justice of the United Church of Canada.

#### FIRST UNITED Board of Directors 2021-2022

- Dr. Heather F. Clarke. Chair
- The Rev. Dr. Brian Thorpe, Vice Chair
- Jean Budden, Secretary (through March 2022)
- David Walkem, Secretary (as of March 2022)
- John Christie. Treasurer
- Jacob Black-Lock
- The Rev. Jennifer Goddard-Sheppard (on leave as of June 2022)

- Scott Griffin
- Jeremy Hermanson
- Elizabeth Kerklaan
- **Kathy Kwon** (through June 2022)
- Dave Munroe
- Paul Mitchell-Banks
- Laurie Schultz (through April 2022)
- Aaron Wilson



### Non-voting board member:

▶ **Treena Duncan,** Executive Director, Pacific Mountain Region, the United Church of Canada

#### Leadership Team 2021-2022

- The Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, Executive Director (on leave as of August 2022)
- Amanda Burrows, Interim Executive Director (as of August 2022)
- Mayleen Ahoy, Director of Housing
- Dr. Cheryl Bear, Director of Community Ministry (on leave as of January 2022)
- Natalie Gobis Cutayne, Director of Human Resources
- The Rev. Jennifer Goddard-Sheppard, Interim Spiritual Care Director (as of September 2022)
- Keely Hale, Director of Programs
- Katie Koncan, Director of Development and Communications
- Rob Vandermey, Director of Finance and Administration





### **Programs and Services**



In preparation for the redevelopment of our site at 320 East Hastings, we moved our programs to six satellite locations, all while continuing to provide essential services, community connection, and healing to the Downtown Eastside community. With the transition also came adaptations to our programs.



### **Food Security**

Our Community Meal Program is one of our longest-running programs to date. As far back as the Great Depression, we've been promoting food security, ensuring that members of the community get nourishment and comfort through free accessible meals. Today, we provide three nutritious meals a day to shelter residents, ensuring that no one goes hungry.

In June 2022, we launched our FIRST Food Truck program, serving over 200 meals to the Downtown Eastside (DTES) community every weekday. The team cooks from our kitchen on Clark Drive, where they load up the truck with the meal of the day and head straight to the heart of the DTES. The truck parks across from our old church building, making it easy for members of the community to find us if they're in need of a mid-day meal.



#### **Community Help Desk**

Our Community Help Desk moved to its new temporary location at 501 East Hastings in May 2022, but still remains a hub where members of the DTES can drop by to access essential items like socks, underwear, toiletries or harm reduction supplies. Many also stop by to access our Mail and Phone Program, where they can send and pick up mail or make phone calls. Access to these services gives community members the ability to do important tasks like apply for jobs and identification, or connect with family and friends. Our staff at the Help Desk are familiar faces who provide frontline support, compassion, and dignity.



#### Shelter

We believe that everyone deserves a dignified space to sleep. That's why our inclusive low-barrier shelter has no requirements or restrictions, meaning that we don't turn away folks who are actively dealing with addiction or using substances and we don't have a time limit on how long residents can stay. In June 2022, we finalized the move of our shelter to its current location at 467 Alexander Street. It features 49 beds so that community members in need of emergency shelter can have a warm, dry and comfortable place to sleep. Shelter workers build strong rapport with residents, and the case planner helps find long-term housing solutions.



#### Taxes

Our Tax Program has been around since the '80s and helps thousands of low-income individuals and families file their taxes every year. This important service can be a lifeline, allowing folks to access housing, their pension benefits, and social assistance programs. The tax team processes thousands of tax returns each year, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in returns. In 2022, the Tax Program operated from its new location at 501 East Hastings. During the year, the team worked hard to process a higher volume of tax returns, achieving an increase of 200% in total dollars returned to folks who accessed our services. This was in part due to an increase in demand for tax support, and due to the COVID-19 credits made available through the government.

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### Legal Advocacy

Since the '70s, we've been providing free legal assistance, representation, and advice to low-income individuals in the community. The team of legal advocates support the most vulnerable in our society, giving community members a chance to access justice and uphold their rights on issues related to income security, housing, debt, family, criminal, immigration, human rights, or employment. The majority of clients seek help with tenancy issues—reflecting the impact of the affordable housing crisis. From our Advocacy office at 542 East Hastings Street, we also started an eviction mapping project to study the impacts of evictions in B.C.

### **Spiritual Care**



Our Spiritual Care team operates from their new location at 360 Jackson St. The program is inclusive and available to anyone, regardless of faith background or walk of life. The team is comprised of BIPOC women who are trauma-informed and trained to offer culturally-safe care, which is essential to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of those in the DTES. Spiritual Care provides support in the form of pastoral care, memorial services, and hosting community gatherings as an opportunity for connection and healing.

### SYSTEMS CHANGE

**FIRST UNITED** has always been on the frontlines. providing essential services to meet the most pressing needs of the community. While our immediate response work is crucial and life-saving, we know that we need to advocate for a more equitable society in order to realize our vision of a neighbourhood where everyone's worth is celebrated and all people thrive. That's why we've taken strategic steps to include systems change in our work, focusing on upstream solutions to address homelessness, the overdose crisis, criminalization of poverty and reconciliation. We want to remove societal barriers that keep individuals trapped in a cycle of poverty. The housing and overdose crises are two key issue areas that we made progress on during the year.

Sarah Marsden was hired as Staff Lawyer to take on provincial law reform and launched the first phase of an innovative eviction mapping project. The aim of the project is to understand the impacts of evictions in B.C. through survey responses, which will be visually represented on an interactive map. The data will then be

used to make an evidence-based case for law reform. with the goal of creating stronger protections for B.C. renters. Ultimately, we want to prevent homelessness and support those most vulnerable to the ongoing housing crisis through long-term policy solutions.

To address the ongoing overdose crisis that continues to take a significant toll on residents of the Downtown Eastside, we launched a letter-writing campaign in conjunction with International Overdose Awareness Day (August 31). We rallied individuals to take action by sending a pre-written letter to their MLA asking for immediate and effective changes to drug policy to save lives. In just over a month, 344 individuals from across the province sent a letter to their representative asking them to take political action to increase access to safe supply, increase the cumulative threshold for decriminalization, and address the intersecting challenges of homelessness and poverty, mental and physical health, trauma and racism.

### Saying Farewell to First United **Church Social Housing Society**

At the end of 2022, we closed a significant chapter in our organization's history, but this ending is followed by a happy new beginning. After 41 years, First United Church Social Housing Society (FUCSHS) and the three affordable housing buildings it operates have transferred ownership to Sch'eyk Housing Society, operated by Lu'ma Native Housing Society. This decision came after careful consideration and negotiation between the FUCSHS Board and staff leadership and leadership from Lu'ma. This means that FUCSHS will no longer exist and will be fully operated by Sch'eyk, which will allow for greater capacity, access to resources and building upgrades, improving the overall experience for tenants.

FUCSHS was established in September 1981 in response to the shortage of adequate and affordable housing in Vancouver. When the province announced several

major urban renewal projects in preparation for Expo 86, including the construction of B.C. Place, thousands of lowincome residents were swiftly evicted from their homes. This was either due to tenants being unable to meet the sharp increases in rent that followed quickly after the announcements, or due to their place of residence being demolished for redevelopment. At the time, FIRST UNITED had been serving the community for nearly 100 years and the Housing Society was developed to become part of the solution, taking on the commitment of providing affordable housing. This resulted in the development and opening of Bill Hennessy Place in 1984, Jennie Pentland Place in 1987, and Ledingham Place in 1989.

In 2022, FUCSHS served 225 tenants, including individuals and families, not just providing affordable housing but



also creating a sense of community and inclusion. Every Christmas, FUCSHS ran a series of programs for tenants including a Christmas Market (to provide items that tenants could gift to family and friends), a Secret Santa program, and other festivities like gingerbread house-making.

As we say farewell to our former colleagues at FUCSHS, we wish them all the best, knowing that they'll still be here in the neighbourhood. Their four-decade run would not have been possible without the support of individual donors, partners, and volunteers; nor would it be possible without the Board members who built FUCSHS and those who served on the Board throughout the years. Included is a list of outgoing Board Directors and Program Partners.

#### 2022 Board of Directors

- Elizabeth Kerklaan, Chair
- Christopher Munroe, Vice Chair
- Lauren Telford, Treasurer
- Rosemary Collins, Director
- Andrew Jones, Director

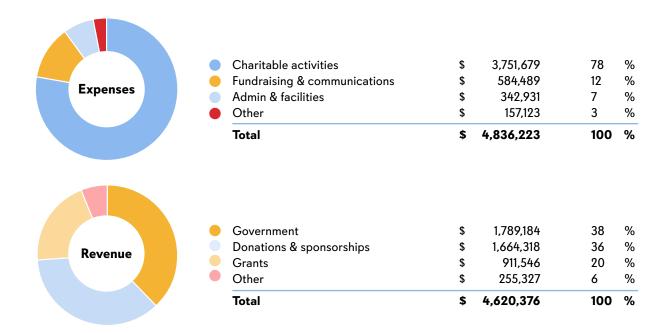
#### **Program Partners**

- Article Furniture
- Canadian Memorial United Church
- Dakeryn
- Fortis BC
- First United Church Community Ministry Society
- Greater Vancouver Food Bank
- Highlands United Church
- Kerrisdale Community Centre

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### **Financial Statements**



#### **Shelter Financials**



Our shelter has provided immediate, emergency, and life-saving support to thousands of community members since its inception in 2008. What you may not know, is that the shelter is fully funded by BC Housing, and represents the 94% of the "government" revenue as part of our financial statement.



The shelter shortfall will be reviewed by BC Housing. As a longstanding and trusted partner, we feel confident that all or most of the shortfall will be reimbursed to FIRST UNITED in the current fiscal year.

This year, we chose to break out the shelter budget to better illustrate why our fiscal year is showing a shortfall, and to demonstrate that it is isolated to when we receive payments from BC Housing. We did this so as to not detract from the strong financial position that we found ourselves in last year, which otherwise would have left us with a surplus of \$243,056.

FIRST UNITED CHURCH COMMUNITY MINISTRY SOCIETY | 15 14 | ANNUAL REPORT 2022



### **Moving First Forward**

This year was an eventful one for our capital campaign. With the public launch of our First Forward Building Connections campaign near the start of the fiscal year, everything we spent months and years planning was finally put into motion. The public was invited to help us move First Forward, and a few months later, we started the interior demolition. Throughout the year, one thing was evident: we have a strong community of support behind us, helping make all these milestones possible.

Before publicly launching our campaign, \$22 million was secured, including over \$1 million collectively pledged by the First Forward Cabinet and FIRST Board members. Just a month and a half after the public launch, our community had contributed an additional \$584,000! Our Communities of Faith showed great support for the campaign. By the end of the fiscal year, the total amount gifted by Communities of Faith, through both donations from United Churches and third-party fundraisers hosted by members of congregations, came to an incredible \$8.4 million.

We are pleased to share that we closed the fiscal year with \$25 million secured. Thank you to our First Forward Cabinet, Communities of Faith, businesses, foundations, and individuals who have supported this campaign.





#### Remembering Our 57-Year-Old Building

Just before the start of remediation, we held a decommissioning ceremony to say goodbye to the building that had been home to our organization—and many in the community—for 57 years. Nearly 40 members of our Communities of Faith joined us to remember the work that took place within the walls of 320 East Hastings. We also held a special ceremony to move the totem pole that had lived in the dining hall of the building for 12 years. In 2010, master carver Bernie Williams (Skundaal), of the Haida Gwaii Nation, led a team of First Nations carvers to create the piece in memory of murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. It was gifted to FIRST UNITED in the spirit of reconciliation and stood in our dining hall until the day of the ceremony. Staff were in attendance to hear Bernie share memories about the totem pole. Later, she helped guide staff in carefully lowering it so that it could be transported in the traditional way. In a beautiful display of teamwork, our staff worked together to carry the 12-foot totem pole from 320 East Hastings to our administrative office at 368 Powell Street, where it is being temporarily stored until the completion of our new building.

#### First Forward Cabinet

We'd like to thank the members of the First Forward Cabinet for supporting our capital campaign and being champions of this ambitious project. Thank you for helping us move First Forward!

- Mike Harcourt, Honourary Chair
- Rudy Kerklaan, Co-Chair
- > The Rev. Cari Copeman-Haynes, Co-Chair
- The Right Reverend Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, Executive Director (on leave as of August 2022)
- Amanda Burrows, Interim Executive Director and Campaign Director
- > Trista Baldwin, Campaign Manager
- Dr. Heather F. Clarke
- Don Evans
- Jim Fletcher
- Mark Paetkau
- Randy Smallwood
- > The Rev. Nancy Talbot
- Nancy Trott

## It's Thanks to You

It takes a wonderful community to help us accomplish everything we have this year. Thank you to every individual, business, Community of Faith, foundation, partner, and volunteer who has joined us and believes in our work. Because of your collective support, we are able to help thousands in the Downtown Eastside each year, saving lives and helping people thrive.





### Frontline Monthly Donors

Frontline Monthly Donors provide the stability that we need to continue to serve the community. The reliability of monthly donors has always been invaluable but has been especially helpful to us during our building redevelopment, allowing us to plan for adaptations to our programs during this transition period. Their ongoing support gives us the ability to meet the immediate needs of the community, and plan for the future.



376 Monthly Donors

\$43 **Average Gift** Amount

\$182,206 **Collectively Given Through Monthly** Gifts



### **Communities of Faith**

Communities of Faith have been vital supporters of our frontline work, coming alongside us to respond to the call for justice and healing in the community. Congregations that are part of our Communities of Faith program have been faithful allies to the most vulnerable in our society. We've listed Communities of Faith who've given \$5,000+ to support our programs and services.



- Canadian Memorial United Church
- Highlands United Church
- Mt. Seymour United Church
- Trinity Memorial United Church Abbotsford
- United Church of Canada
- West Vancouver United Church Women





### **Friends of First**

Friends of First have made an incredible demonstration of their life's values, choosing to leave a gift for FIRST UNITED in their will. We are so grateful to our Friends of First and their commitment to helping FIRST UNITED and the Downtown Eastside for generations to come. Thank you!

- 27 Anonymous Friends
- Bill Booth & Tom Hutchinson
- Florence Brownridge
- Bob Burrows
- Dr. Heather F. Clarke
- Eileen Cole
- Jan & Joan Drabek
- Colleen Dunn
- Don Evans
- Doreen Gardner Brown
- lan & Billie Housego

- Nancy Jefferson
- Sharon Johnson
- Diana Matrick
- Lawrence & Jean Matrick
- Bob Miller & Barbara Rendell
- Janet Reid
- Brian & Heather Smith
- Robert & Margaret Smith
- Gordon & Daphne Squire
- Gordon Tolman
- Floyd Wartnow

#### **Realized Bequests**

We'd like to honour the following Friends of First who've left us in the past year. While they are no longer with us, their legacy gift demonstrates their care and compassion for the DTES, and will make it possible for community members to experience hope and healing.

- Trinity Memorial United Church Abbotsford from Mrs. Pat Pederson
- United Church of Canada Foundation Rev. Gordon and Mrs. Evelyn Hyde
- > Two Anonymous Bequests
- Arthur Adamson
- Janet Cawley
- Joan & Ken Fowler

- Barry LePatourel
- Joan MacDonald
- Joan McLagan
- Kathleen Mitchell
- Florence Paterson
- Rae Rennie
- Ailsa Zaenker



### **Community Partners**

Community Partners are businesses who believe in our mission and have chosen to use their resources to make a direct impact in the Downtown Eastside. We're so thankful for our community of like-minded and values-aligned businesses who want to see the neighbourhood thrive.































### **Community Funders**

Community Funders are our partners at foundations and within government. With their generous support, we're able to provide the life-saving services that thousands of Downtown Eastside community members rely on every year.































One Anonymous Funder | Charles Johnson Charitable Fund | Lotte & John Hecht Memorial Foundation | The McClean Foundation

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy | Sant Jalaram Charitable Foundation of North America

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### **Community Donors**

Community Donors are essential to the work that we do at FIRST UNITED—almost 50% of our revenue comes from donors and funders. We're honoured that Community Donors choose to support our programs, helping us provide survival supports to those who call the Downtown Eastside home.

Part of the Community Donors is the Leadership Circle; philanthropists who have given \$5,000+ during the fiscal year. We'd like to acknowledge the Leadership Circle to thank them for their support and belief in our work.

- Seven Anonymous Donors
- ▶ Loretta & Daniel Bogert O'Brien
- Florence Brownridge
- Bob & Joan Burrows
- Mary and Gordon Christopher Foundation
- Michael Cormack & Jennifer Drake
- Ariel & Hugh Creighton
- Alma Van Dusen Fund held at the Vancouver Foundation
- Chris Grauer
- Hieros Foundation
- The Lightburn Family Fund held at the Vancouver Foundation

- Pauline Higgins
- ▶ Ian & Billie Housego
- David Jiles & Carol Denny
- Fletcher Family Foundation
- Heather & Trevor Johnstone
- Elizabeth & Rudy Kerklaan
- John & Dianne Lane
- Sandi McIntosh-Kocaba & Jan Kocaba
- McGrane-Pearson Endowment Fund held at the Vancouver Foundation
- Rudolph & Patricia North
- James Pond
- Bill & Heather Riedl
- Amanda Hill & Dr. Barry M. Segal
- Schein Foundation
- The Shewan Foundation
- Donald & Jane Shumka
- Scott & Michelle Stove





### Thanks For Funding the **Future of FIRST**

By the end of our 2022 fiscal year, over 500 donors contributed to our First Forward fundraising efforts. Together these donors helped us reach \$25 million by September 30, 2022. Thank you! To those who made major and leadership gifts, listed below, we truly couldn't have gotten this far without you.

#### **Leadership Gifts**

625 Powell Street Foundation Pacific Mountain Regional Council St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church Wheaton Precious Metals Corp.

#### **Transformative Gifts**

Two Anonymous Donors Aldergrove United Church Carol Smallwood Comart Foundation Connor, Clark & Lunn Foundation Denny-Jiles Family Gilmore Park United Church Heather Clarke The Lightburn Family Fund held at the Vancouver Foundation

The McGrane-Pearson Endowment Fund held at the Vancouver Foundation The Peiman Family Randy Smallwood Rudy and Elizabeth Kerklaan The Sullivan Family United Church of Canada

### **Inspirational Gifts**

Five Anonymous Donors Amanda Burrows Bill & Pat Sexsmith The Bouskill Family Brian & Gilly Marshall Brian Thorpe

**Brvan & Gail Atkins** Carmen Lansdowne Charles & Cynthia Hou Dave Munroe Derpak White Spencer LLP

Doug Smart & Merrilee Thompson

Eleanor J. Reemever The Fllis Foundation **Eveline Burman** 

The Fletcher Family Foundation

Gibsons United Church

Janet A. Prowse Jovce Brown Katherine Paton Ken & Catherine Sully Laurie Schultz

The Lindsay Family Fund Mark & Maureen Paetkau Mt. Seymour United Church

The Munroe Family R. & V. Dunsterville

Rob & Cari Copeman-Havnes

Rob Vandermey Roger & Sharon Brain Russ & Barb Quinn Schein Foundation Sharon Copeman

The Shewan Foundation Shirley & Lyall Simpson

St. Stephen's United Church - Delta

Stan Lanvon Tremayne E. Perry

United Churches of Langley

Vincent Santacroce Law Corporation

Ward Branch

West Point Grev United Church

### **Champion Gifts**

15 Anonymous Donors

Aaron Wilson Allan Stronach Andrew Lew Ann Wilkie Anne Benson

Arlene Clark Barbara Filewych

Barry Stadey Bernice Bell **Bob Burrows** Bonnie Meehan

Brian A. Brown Chervl Barnetson

Chervl-Ann Johansen

Cowan & Doreen McKinney

Dal McCrindle

Darvl & Karen Diamond

David Ansley David Walkem Dennis Ewasiuk Don Evans Donald Haskins Douglas Querns Duncan Etches Judith Clark Fileen M. Noullett Judith Frev Fllen Muirhead Frank Luba Kathy Kwon George Garrett Ken Fanning H. Patricia Mitchell Kirsten Harkins Henry Goldbeck

Highlands United Church in memory of Bernice Lil

Ian Paterson Isobel James J. Chris Lav

James Fraser

Jane Davidson Janet Denham Janet Gear

Janet Pritchard

Jennifer Goddard-Sheppard Jeremy & Diane Hermanson

Jim Massey Joan Cass

Joanne Melville & Sidney Mindess

Joanne Skeates Jocelvne Cottier John Flynn

John Freer Katherine McKav

Knox United Church - Vancouver

Laird Saunderson Leighton Lydiard Charitable Gift Fund

Linda L. Henriksen

Linda Quan Lois Brassart

Lvnn Vallev United Church

Margaret Clarke Margaret King Marie S. McFadven Mariorie Garside Marlene Parsons Mary E. Graham MaryLou Harrigan Michael Hetherington

Mt. Seymour United Church Muriel Hemmes Norma Smith Orval Chapman

Peggy Jensen Richard Soutar Robert F. Smith Robert Poole Ron Wilkinson Sharon Johnson Simon LeSieur

St. Andrew's United Church - North Vancouver Susan Alexander

Thomas Tam

Treena Duncan & Will Sparks

William D. Mathieson

This list includes donors who have contributed \$1,000 or more and whose gift or initial pledge payment was received on or before September 30. 2022. Later gifts will be recognized in our 2022-23 annual report. We do our best to honour recognition preferences, but mistakes happen! If we've made an error, email us to let us know at donations@firstunited.ca.







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