



Fearlessly Forward

A strategic plan for the future
of Wall Street United Church

2024-2027

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**This
strategic
plan is
focused
on five key
themes:**



Spiritual Vibrancy

Increase opportunities for people to grow in their faith journey. This would include midweek opportunities to intentional spiritual growth pathways, leading people to become more like Jesus. A faith connection to everything that goes on at Wall Street would be established; help people – already attending, new to the church and not yet connected – to deepen their faith. This is Wall Street’s primary goal.



Intergenerational Engagement

Foster cross-generational connections and increase opportunities for involvement of youth, families and seniors, both on Sundays and midweek.



Community Outreach

Strengthen the church’s role as a centre for community, engaged in making Brockville and the wider world better for everyone with a congregation deeply invested in making a difference beyond the walls.



Leadership Empowerment

Cultivate a leadership culture that values intergenerational input, spiritual growth, and long-term viability by distributing leadership responsibilities and creating a decentralized leadership structure. Strong emphasis is placed on intentionally raising young leaders and providing leadership development and training.



Operational Sustainability

Ensure the church’s infrastructure and operations support its mission effectively. Maintenance and repairs of the facility, along with more defined use of spaces, will help the church serve the congregation and community well into the future. Funding requirements necessitate a long-term financial strategy with focused attention to diversifying sources of income.

Executive Summary

The following strategic plan outlines the key objectives and actions for Wall Street United Church as we seek to further our mission “God loves ALL. So do we.”

The plan is intended to guide the church’s leadership as it makes decisions over the next three years from 2024 to 2027. The hope expressed through this plan is the ability to sustain and strengthen the ways Wall Street can make a difference in the lives of individuals and the broader Brockville community.

In 2028, Wall Street will celebrate 200 years of ministry in Brockville.



Introduction

***The Meaning of These Stones* recounts the history of Wall Street United Church from the time the congregation was established in 1828.**

My copy of the book is filled with colourful tabs, highlighted text and scribbled side notes. I love it and reference it so often I have one copy at home and one in my office. But it was published in 1997— more than 25 years ago — and, it was published just on the cusp of a time of major change for this congregation. It was written before we were an intentionally inclusive church, before we had a church band, screens and projectors in the sanctuary, an elevator, before we had outreach ministries like our Sunday Suppers and Celebrate Life ministry with the Recovery community and before we named and claimed the tag line: **God Loves ALL. So do we.** It amazes me how much this church has changed in a quarter of a century of ministry.

In 2028, Wall Street will celebrate 200 years of ministry in Brockville and we find ourselves in the midst of another major shift. This is a societal-wide shift where fewer and fewer worship for an hour on Sunday or call themselves Christian and where churches are closing in record numbers across the country. Society has changed and we are called to adapt so that we can continue to be a church that shines God's light.

The foundation of the first 175 years and the following 25 years of ministry are still with us along with the rock on which this church stands:

“God is building a home. He’s using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he’s using

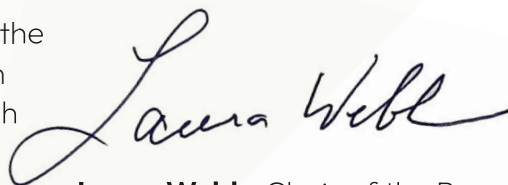
you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day—a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home.”

EPHESIANS 2:20-22 THE MESSAGE

We have an unchanging hope in changing times. It has been meaningful and deeply important to spend more than a year praying and discerning God's vision for Wall Street United Church as we move into the next century of ministry. Laura Webb and I are grateful to Chris Vacher, Hollie Charlebois, as well as the Board and everyone who prayed and participated in Phase One, Two and Three of our *Fearlessly Forward* visioning process. We have emerged from this time with a renewed call on our church.



Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath, Minister



Laura Webb, Chair of the Board

Process

The development of this strategic plan was broken into three distinct phases.

Chris Vacher Leadership Solutions, a consulting group which helps churches faithfully realize their God-given vision, was contracted to guide the church's leadership through each phase. The church's board reviewed the proposed process and received reports and updates along the way. The church's minister and the chair of the board also engaged in several additional video calls throughout the process with Chris Vacher and his associate, Hollie Charlebois.



PHASE 1 Gathering Input

This phase focused on exploring the congregation's perspectives and opinions on Wall Street's current strengths, challenges, and opportunities. A survey was presented to the congregation along with an invitation to participate in a facilitated Vision Discovery Day.

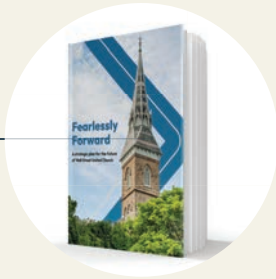
The survey was sent to 104 people with 81 people completing it anonymously between July 31 and September 22, 2023. 84 people indicated they would attend the Vision Discovery on September 23, 2023.

A digital version of the report prepared for the board and the congregation at the conclusion of Phase 1 can be accessed by contacting the church office.

PHASE 2 Developing the Future

The second phase was rooted in the Vision Discovery and survey participation from the congregation earlier in the fall. The input gathered on the mission, vision, and values of Wall Street shaped the contributions of a group of leaders from the church who gathered together on December 7 & 8, 2023. This facilitated exercise was designed to collaboratively explore the church's 10-year future, 3-year vision, and 1-year outlook.

A digital version of the report prepared for the board and the congregation at the conclusion of Phase 1 can be accessed by contacting the church office.



PHASE 3

Creating the Plan

Based on the input from the congregation in the survey and the Vision Discovery, as well as the two-day long-term planning exercise, the third phase focused on developing this strategic plan.

Bringing together the priorities expressed by the church along with the opportunities the church is able to pursue, this plan identifies five key themes with several key steps to move forward along with the expected required resources for the plan to be successful.

Thanks to Shirley Avery, Paul Bullock, Lynne Galvin, Lois Grubb, Steve Lauridsen, Penny Johnston, Neil Matheson, Petra Heath, and Joan Johnson for their participation in Phases 2 or 3.

No strategic plan ever goes quite the way things are predicted. In fact, we plan for the plan to not go according to plan. This is why the exploratory work around strengths, challenges, and opportunities as well as the church's values and how those are expressed is so crucial.

As new challenges are faced over the next three years, the plan gives the church's leadership a map to follow. But the map is not the terrain. The on-the-ground decisions and day-to-day leadership of the church mean the plan provides milestones and beacons to direct a way forward rather than a scripted set of activities to execute.

Outcomes

This strategic plan identifies the previously mentioned five key Themes where Wall Street has an opportunity to move forward:

- 1 Spiritual Vibrancy**

- 2 Intergenerational Engagement**

- 3 Community Outreach**

- 4 Leadership Empowerment**

- 5 Operational Sustainability**

For each Theme, there is an Objective to describe the input and contribution of the church toward the development of that Theme. As well, a Future State for each Theme is identified based on the collaborative exercise in Phase 2. Within each Theme, there are Key Actions to move from where the church is now to where they desire to go. Finally, Resources required for each Objective are identified based on current understanding and awareness.

1 Spiritual Vibrancy

Spiritual Vibrancy is Wall Street's primary goal.

This was affirmed again and again during our visioning journey. The congregation values and desires opportunities to grow and nurture their faith. We lift up the fact that this is already happening in our church and at the same time we see opportunity for growth.

In particular the morning and evening worship services are areas of great strength: the preaching, the excellence in music, the volunteer support and the online/digital ministry will continue to be a focus. We acknowledge many opportunities for discipleship that currently exist with Bible Study, Christian Meditation and book studies. We also note new developments in the Faith and Fitness program and online prayer gatherings.

Our hope is that we might create a clear discipleship pathway for people to take their next steps on their faith journey.

OUR OBJECTIVE

Increase opportunities for people to grow in their faith journey. This would include midweek opportunities for spiritual growth, leading people to become more like Jesus. A faith connection to everything that goes on at Wall Street would be established; help people - already attending, new to the church and not yet connected - to deepen their faith.

This is Wall Street's primary goal.

Future State

- Wall Street has a **clear discipleship model** and structure for spiritual growth and transformation, both in person and online.
- There's a person and a pathway in place giving leadership to **helping new people and volunteers connect** at Wall Street.
- Integrating the discipleship pathways, ministry to newcomers and our goal of Community Outreach, Wall Street seeks to find ways to **intentionally encourage people beyond our walls to discover a deepening of faith** and a transforming relationship with Jesus through community at Wall Street.

Wall Street is intentional about reaching people *Beyond the Walls* with a message of God's love.

KEY ACTIONS

Year One

A definition of discipleship at Wall Street is being intentionally pursued:

- Minister to set aside time to think, pray, and read about discipleship pathways or frameworks from other churches.
- Discuss implications on existing and future ministries, and programs.
- Identify what Wall Street currently offers in the way of Christian Education, book studies, spiritual practices, evangelism and discipleship-deepening opportunities.
- Initiate conversation with retired clergy and other current leaders connected to Wall Street to learn their interest and willingness to participate and assist in leading small groups, workshops or courses on specific discipleship opportunities.
- Identify other congregation members who may have gifts to lead future courses, programs or pathways.
- Identify current sources of funding and determine what kind of budget would be required for the future.
- Connect with the wider United Church of Canada to discover existing resources and programs.

Newcomers to the church are identified and intentional follow up is happening:

- Create an info package that provides information about the church and opportunities for involvement.
- Develop a follow-up process that includes personal contact and integration into church activities.

- Identify a team of people with a leader responsible for contacting and connecting with new people.
- Encourage the team to host an annual or semi-annual newcomers lunch or tea.

Year Two

A definition of discipleship at Wall Street is being intentionally pursued:

- Explore hiring a Christian Education Coordinator.
- Bring a reflection/proposal to the board for direction.

Means and models for evangelism and marketing of Wall Street United Church are explored:

- Identify a team (perhaps the same team as the Newcomers team) with a leader responsible for thinking about and planning faith outreach and marketing opportunities.

REQUIRED RESOURCES:

- Budget for Christian education programs (online or materials like books), advertising and funds for lunches or teas.
- Budget for hiring of CE staff if deemed a priority.
- Minister's time.
- Leader for newcomers and outreach/ evangelism team.

2 Intergenerational Engagement

With this theme we acknowledge the reality that ours is an ageing congregation. While the community is also an ageing community, the church is not reflective of the average age of the community.

According to the Statistics Canada 2021 census, the average age of the population of Brockville is 48.4, significantly younger than the average age of the congregation. The congregation is also significantly underrepresented for age 15 to 64 (32% in the congregation compared to 58% in Brockville) and for under the age of 14 (2% of the congregation compared to 12% in Brockville).

We realize that younger people crave greater meaning and deeper connections and we also understand that if we don't make room for younger people and families that our church will cease to exist within a few decades. At the same time, we acknowledge the gift seniors bring. With new seniors' buildings being built adjacent to the church and the increased number of retired people moving to Brockville from larger cities, our desire is to be a congregation who values, engages and meets the needs of seniors. This is already a gift and we look to the partnership we have with the Brockville 50+ as an example of our support for seniors.

We also see an increased need for Pastoral Care and for people of all ages to feel a sense of belonging and connection at the church.

OUR OBJECTIVE

Foster cross-generational connections and increase opportunities for involvement of youth, families and seniors, both on Sundays and midweek.

Future State

- Family programming is established with **parents, youth and kids considered in all decision-making**, creating clear opportunities for families to stay engaged at Wall Street.
- Connections and care in place for **seniors**.
- A **digital ministry plan** is in place.

KEY ACTIONS

Year One

Families are considered in all existing programs, events, and church activities:

- Consider how all current programs, events, and activities can be more family-oriented.
- Consider increasing the number of Sunday morning services led by the children/youth: perhaps once a season. The Music Director would be invaluable here.
- Consider organizing a picnic in the park in which all generations can participate.
- Invite youth to assist with activities which help them accrue needed volunteer hours.
- Research additional programs, like Messy Church, and evaluate for benefits to families.
- Recruit or hire people to provide childcare to pre-schoolers during Sunday morning service.
- Consider hiring a part-time Children's Ministry leader.
- Develop a job description in consultation with the Board and communicate to the congregation. Give consideration to candidates with an interest and capability in using music as a part of their delivery.

Pastoral care for the church is provided by a volunteer-led team to meet growing congregational needs:

- Communicate care opportunities and resources to the congregation.
- Communicate to the congregation what is happening re: Pastoral Care.
- Identify all current expressions of caring and connection with congregation members.
- Establish an umbrella team, Care and Connect, that brings each of these activities together.

Creation of a digital plan:

- Evaluate the church's current digital ministry resources including technology, hardware, people and the programs offered.

Year Two

Families are considered in all existing programs, events, and church activities:

- Creation by Governance of ways for families and youth to have a voice and be involved in committees and decision making.
- Consider partnering with Crosstown Impact.
- Consider sharing responsibility for children's ministry with another church.
- Invite people to participate in providing care. For example: "Partner a senior" or "Partner a younger member".

Creation of a digital plan:

- Explore digital ministry opportunities.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Budget to hire a Children/Youth Ministry leader.
- Budget to hire or find volunteers for childcare during Sunday service.
- Budget for upgrades related to Children's Ministry. For example: fence installed in Godly Play room to avoid children falling.
- Budget for increasing digital ministry.
- Budget for food-related activities.
- Leader for Pastoral Care team.
- Education and training on programs like Messy Church. technology, hardware, people and the programs offered.

3 Community Outreach

Reaching *Beyond the Walls* is a high value at Wall Street.

Wall Street is not just a church in a community, it is a church that cares about the community and the world beyond. We are aware that while God continues to love all, we will be more effective if we focus our efforts around particular causes to which we are uniquely called and where we believe we can make a real difference. We all know the church has been a great facility for hosting community programs and there is a strong desire for this to continue to happen.

OUR OBJECTIVE

Strengthen the church's role as a centre for community, engaged in making Brockville and the wider world better for everyone with a congregation deeply invested in making a difference beyond the walls.

KEY ACTIONS

Year One

- Form a team to identify causes for intentional partnership. Examples of such causes might include food insecurity, homelessness, Addiction and Recovery, LGBTQ+ inclusion, refugee sponsorship.

Future State

Three specific causes are identified for partnership focus, defining the value Wall Street brings, and providing clear guidelines for what the church chooses to support.

A faith connection to everything that goes on at Wall Street will be established.

Year Two

- Explore potential partnerships with local organizations that align with our key causes.
- Evaluate proposed causes against the church's mission and resources.
- Establish connections with relevant organizations for each cause to see how Wall Street could provide value and receive benefits in the partnership.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Community Outreach team and leadership
- Cause-related training resources

4 Leadership Empowerment

We acknowledge that some people are carrying significant leadership responsibilities and that as we move forward this burden needs to be shared among more people.

We also realize that it needs to be a priority to create opportunities for Next Gen leaders. We also see that the current governance structure is cumbersome and hindering rather than helping to accomplish the mission and that we need to explore different, more efficient, nimbler, models that can meet our needs.

OUR OBJECTIVE

Cultivate a leadership culture that values diversity, intergenerational input, spiritual growth, and long-term viability by distributing leadership responsibilities and creating a decentralized leadership structure. Strong emphasis is placed on intentionally raising young leaders and providing leadership development and training.

KEY ACTIONS

Year One

- A survey is done to gather volunteer interest, skills, and abilities with opportunities to connect people to clearly defined serving roles.
- Create a database of volunteer skills and match them to current and future church needs.
- Analyze survey results to identify opportunities in volunteer engagement.
- Invite survey respondents to explore serving opportunities within their area of interest.
- Offer a Spiritual Gifts workshop.
- Communicate the desire for change in governance structure to the congregation, explaining the current challenges and where there is opportunity to move forward.

Future State

- There is a **governance structure** in place with clearly defined leadership accountabilities, roles, and expectations.
- The staff and leadership of Wall Street has grown to become **intergenerational** with newly defined roles for Pastoral Care/ Seniors, Children and Youth and Fundraising. There are established apprenticeship processes in place for current and future leaders.



- Review current governance structures and identify areas for efficiency improvements.
- Create a plan for additional staff with a focus on the first new hire.
- Consider additional staff required and decide on the sequential priority of those hires.
- Once the top priority is identified, M&P drafts a job description for the new staff position and communicates to the board.

Year Two

- Research governance models from other churches and create a Governance Restructuring Team (GRT).
- Create relevant job descriptions for key volunteer roles.
- Consider using “*Hero Maker*” by Dave Ferguson as material for a leadership book club.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- Possible budget for education and training.
- Possible budget to hire staff.
- Education of possible governance structure options.
- Course/training on apprenticeship for leadership development.



5 Operational Sustainability

We acknowledge the gift and the burden of our church facility. The building is an incredible asset and, as the needs of the congregation and community change over time, the role the building plays also needs to change.

It is important for us to be aware of how the facility serves the mission of the church and that we have a responsibility to maintain its effectiveness. Maintaining and enhancing this large facility comes at a significant financial cost. As costs of building, staffing and programming increase, ensuring financial stability of Wall Street is critical as we look to the future.

OUR OBJECTIVE

Ensure the church's infrastructure and operations support its mission effectively. Maintenance and repairs of the facility, along with more defined use of spaces, will help the church serve the congregation and community well into the future. Funding requirements necessitate a long-term financial strategy with focused attention to diversifying sources of income.

KEY ACTIONS

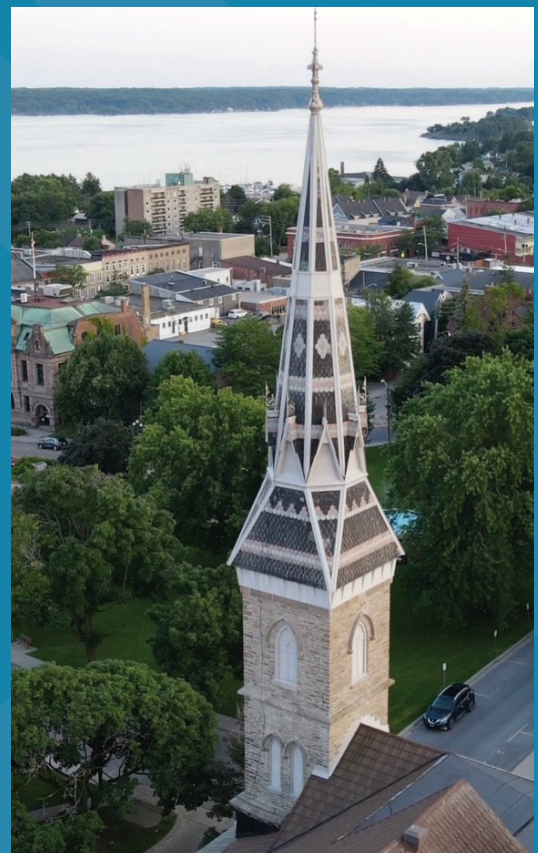
Year One

Every space in the building has a clear purpose:

- Review the use of each space within the church building.
- Match each space with a defined purpose that aligns with the church's goals.
- Make necessary adjustments to the spaces to fit their defined purposes, which may include clean-up, minor renovations, or reorganizations.
- Review and maintain the short/long-term maintenance plan.
- Perform an accessibility audit of the current facility.

Future State

- Decisions are being made on big ticket priorities and **funding solutions** related to the facility.
- An **intentional fundraising strategy** is developed and being implemented to meet the church's financial needs.



Create a team giving leadership to Wall Street's stewardship strategy, securing financial stability for the future:

- The team explores financial needs and funding opportunities through grants, donors, legacy gifts, and other potential sources.
- Consider contracting the services of a professional to augment volunteers for aspects of this program if volunteer skills are not available.

Year Two

Consider longer term solutions to the property:

- For example, divesting a portion of the property, converting space to higher value rental income that is year round, or other action that reduces long-term upkeep obligations yet maintains sufficient space for our primary role.

Required Resources

- Budget to hire or contract a professional to lead the development and execution of a long-term financial strategy.
- Key volunteers.
- Significant financial resources required.





Summary

Fearlessly Forward is the title of our strategic plan: it is God's invitation to trust that we are uniquely called to share God's transforming love with many in our church, in the community and *Beyond the Walls*.

This strategic plan invites us to see the gifts and resources Wall Street United has currently, but also to be brave as we look at the challenges ahead, considering the risks of continuing our ministry "the way we've always done it."

God has a call on Wall Street United Church to be a church where young people, families and seniors can deepen their faith in Jesus; to be a church where we develop and share leadership gifts, find and offer authentic community online and within our historic building; and, to be a church where we partner with others and reach out beyond-the-walls with actions of love and justice.

We believe this strategic plan offers the clarity, alignment, and inspiration for us to be that kind of church.



Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God,

We come before You with hearts full of gratitude and anticipation as Wall Street United Church embarks on a new chapter in its mission to embody Your love and grace. We thank You for the rich history and the steadfast foundation upon which this church stands, and we seek Your guidance as we move forward with our strategic plan.

Lord, we pray for **Spiritual Vibrancy** within our congregation. May we find new and meaningful ways to prioritize our faith journeys, growing closer to You and becoming more like Jesus. Help us to see Your hand in all that we do and to make our faith the cornerstone of our lives.

We ask for Your blessing on our efforts towards **Intergenerational Engagement**. Foster deep connections across generations within our church family. May the experiences of our children inspire and enrich the faith of their parents and grandparents, creating a vibrant and unified community of believers.

Guide us as we strengthen our **Community Outreach**. Help us to be a beacon of hope, justice and love in Brockville, deeply integrated into the life of our community. May our actions reflect Your love and make a tangible difference in the lives of those around us.

Empower our leaders, Lord, as we focus on **Leadership Empowerment**. Cultivate a culture that values the input of all generations and prioritizes spiritual growth. Raise up young leaders and provide them with the wisdom and training they need to guide our church into the future.

Finally, we pray for **Operational Sustainability**. Grant us the wisdom to manage our resources effectively and to maintain our facilities in a way that supports our mission. Help us to develop a long-term financial strategy that ensures the continued vitality of our church.

As we move forward, may we always remember that You are the cornerstone of our church. Use us, brick by brick, to build a holy temple where You are at home. We trust in Your unchanging hope in these changing times and commit ourselves to living out the vision You have called us into.

In Jesus' name, we pray.
Amen.



WALL STREET
UNITED CHURCH
God Loves ALL. So do we.

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