
Westview Christian Fellowship Year in Review
January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

Part I. Ministry Life of the Organization

2020 has been an unprecedented year requiring much innovation and imagination. At our Centre, this work began in March when the first shutdown forced us to start handing out bagged lunches and groceries. At our church, 2020 called us to transition to an online service and then to a hybrid service that now includes the occasional outdoor service.

As leadership, this year has seen us make significant progress on governance as we work with the Niagara Community Foundation to improve policy. Grazia Shepard, first time board chair, led with grace and courage. She kept us going through the tremulous year. Although our board is not yet at the point we'd like to be in terms of governance and policy, COVID has only slowed us down, we're on the right path.

Finally, despite all these challenges we've been blessed with financial success. With the payment of our mortgage in full, by a generous donor, and the increase in tithes, we are now closer to financial sustainability than ever before.

Thank you to those who continue to give of their money and time, and who share love, despite the struggle, pain, and isolation. We see you on zoom, we hear you at Church, we welcome you at the Centre, we love you.

A. Fast facts and list of leaders

How many baptisms did you have? _____0_____

Has attendance grown, declined or remained constant?

☐ Grown ____X____ ☐ Declined _____ ☐ Constant _____

How many funerals did you have? _____2_____

Who is the current church treasurer? _____Kristina Nickel_____

Who is your current leadership group?

Name

Position

Erika Klassen

Lay Pastor

Grazia Shepard

Board Chair

Vern Martens

Board Member

Rose Sherwood

Board Member

Sam Allcock

Board Member

Brenda Krumrei

Board Member

Kristina Nickel

Treasurer

Jennifer Symonds

Board Member

Staff:

Jane LaVacca

WC4W Executive Director

Caleb Ratzlaff

Convener

Maureen Rea

Administrator/Bookkeeper

B. Impact story from the Westview Community

Grazia's story:

My name is Grazia Sheppard and here is my story. I must say I'm feeling somewhat vulnerable to share my story as I've only ever shared bits and pieces to a handful of people. I suffer from clinical depression and anxiety. Most of my life I always felt a little down and out and could never figure out why. Even when things were good, I'd always feel sad.

Things really came to a head for me in 2011. I lost my job. My whole world came tumbling down I couldn't get myself right again and I spent 7 weeks in bed. I was hospitalized in 2012 for 5 weeks. All I thought was people like me shouldn't be in there. I was always the person people came to when they were down and out.

At one point I had a girl in the hospital ask me if I was a social worker that the hospital had put in place to socialize with all the people. What a laugh. I was the same person that later was sitting at the office crying on the floor because my meds were late.

I was filled with unimaginable despair, the thought if someone offered me a million dollars it would not cheer me up. After being discharged, I thought I was cured. I figured my 5 weeks in the hospital and new meds was just what I needed.

The psychiatrist recommended group therapy. Who me? I didn't belong in a group. But come September there I was, attending group therapy. I still felt like I didn't belong there. I had no idea how badly I isolated myself and how my group friends would become my life line. I started looking forward to going to group, but there was still something missing. I was sad and alone.

Then a friend from the group introduced me to Westview Centre4Women The first time I went it was their Christmas party. I walked in thinking everyone would stare at me and know I was sick and nobody would talk to me. Boy was I wrong.

I actually stood up that night, in front of a hundred women, and thanked everyone for welcoming me so much. I became a regular, going every Thursday but pretty much just sticking to my one friend. I wasn't sure if I had anything to talk about that anyone wanted to hear so I never ventured further than the table I sat at.

As I came more often, I was astonished at all the services that were provided at Westview. I actually got my hair cut for free, something I had been putting off because I didn't feel well enough to go to a hairdresser. I also got fed very well there. There was always a hot breakfast and a hot lunch and it was always free.

I would go home and tell my husband about this great place I went to. I know he was glad to see some of the sparkle come to my eye. Wish my story ended there with a happy ending but it was not to be. Getting out one morning a week wasn't cutting it for me, not that I had the energy to go anywhere else anyway.

Again the odd patterns fell into place. Sleeping day in, day out, not showering, not communicating with anyone. I just didn't care. After a long time of this I became hospitalized again. It became a series of what medication would work and what wouldn't. This time I spent 7 weeks in hospital. I was actually embarrassed to go to Westview again because I felt like such a loser. But once I stabilized I did go back. Westview has given me a purpose again. I was able to get clothes for free, food from the pantry at a reduced cost. I started attending Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. What a great place this had become for me. I participated in crafts, I had never done that before. I got to go on a women's retreat for a whole weekend. That's where I branched out and started connecting with other women at the centre. These women became my friends. I was starting to feel alive again.

Then I started volunteering at the program. I was hesitant at first. I didn't know from day to day how I would feel so I was afraid to make a commitment that I may not be able to keep. I worked at sorting donations and

filling the pantry every week. I also paid attention to new people coming in. I wanted to embrace them and let them know it's ok. I wanted to tell them to grab a coffee, you can just sit and visit, meet new people or just read a book. I'm very happy to educate them on all the free services that are provided from guest speakers, to garden plots, learning how to do canning, employment and housing support, free haircuts and access to the plentiful pantry. Today I consider myself in remission. I have not had an episode in 3 years. I am currently the program director at Westview Centre4Women and I couldn't be more proud of this position. I also Chair the Board of Directors which has been a very rewarding position.

I want to be the person who welcomes the person that I used to be. Westview has given me my life back.

C. How WV relates to the community.

Westview Centre4Women

COVID has created some challenges from the way the Centre operates. When the pandemic forced us to close our doors, staff and volunteers decided to prepare and hand out bagged lunches along with bags of groceries for anyone in need (men and women). We ended up providing over 500 lunches and 300 bags of groceries a week until the lockdown was lifted (13 weeks). Demand forced us to expand hours of operation and hire a social distance "encourager" to help maintain safety in the lineup outside the take-out window.

Due to the closure of many services during lockdown, places folks living rough used to cool down in the summer were closed. As a result, we opened the sanctuary as a cooling station for anyone who needed to escape the heat. In May, we recorded a short video talking about how the Centre had adapted to the pandemic, you can find it here: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=634065230782901>

Since restrictions have relaxed, the Centre has begun opening up many of its services and serving lunch again, with social distancing precautions in place. We currently welcome 40 women in the morning before allowing another 40 women to visit in the afternoon with a 30 minute closure to sanitize in between visits. The need for a #sherecovery after and during this pandemic is greater than ever, especially with the closure of most extracurricular activities for kids. COVID is still creating great difficulty for many who depend on in-person services for their social physical well being. Social isolation is a plague with devastating effects that match COVID ailments.

Support from restaurants, farmers, churches, home stores, wholesalers, allied services, government bodies, and countless individuals have continued to flow into the Centre. The support from the community and fellow MCEC churches has allowed us to continue to address a need that has outstripped the capacities of many groups working in and around Queenston St. The encouraging words, goodies for our frontline staff, and financial contributions from our community kept our spirits high.

December is a difficult month for many who struggle with mental health and social isolation. As a result, we want to make sure the Christmas feast can be one thing women you make up our community can count on. To do this safely we're gearing up to serve Christmas dinner over 5 different seatings. The work is hard, but the community is worth it.

Queenston Round Table (QRT) "Everyone has a gift to contribute."

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- *The Queenston Roundtable is led by a group of people who work, play, or live in Queenston. With an eye on the assets that currently exist in the neighbourhood, our work is driven by the idea that residents are key to lasting development.*

COVID forced all our meetings to go online and the cancellation of all our events. However, going online has also meant that more folks are able to join us, so we're seeing over 20 individuals — neighbours and service providers — joining monthly. It's also been a year that the Convener has been able to (forced a bit by circumstance) step back from his duties as chair. Thankfully, many other community leaders are rising to the occasion and providing fresh leadership to the group. The community garden that Westview's Convener manages was able to continue this year and has had the highest and most sustained participation since we started managing it over three seasons ago. Perhaps it was COVID and the lack of available recreational opportunities, but, the 50 garden plots grew more fresh produce than ever before. Nature's therapy has been on double duty during this year of social isolation.

Westview@Night (Impact Story)

Every Thursday evening we are open serving a hot meal, providing hygiene products, clothing and support. We are most excited to be able to offer a hot shower to sex workers and homeless women. This is new and we are so grateful for the donation of a shower room. On Thursday evening this was written, we had over 16 women coming, so the need continues and is urgent.

This year has been like no other for Westview@night. Because of the Covid pandemic the first few months the drop-in was closed. We did however hand out sandwiches, hygiene products and groceries through the kitchen window. Many came to receive help including homeless men.

With all directives from Public Health, nightly drop-in opened at the beginning of the summer. At first, we found our numbers down but slowly they are increasing. As we look towards the change in weather we continue to be concerned about the many homeless.

F. A few of the things WV has done in the last year to strengthen your relationships with other MCEC churches:

Westview had the pleasure of participating in our national church's [live service](#) during the Spring. It was great to see our contribution featured alongside Welcome Inn and other similar MCEC communities of faith. It was an honour to give folks from across the country an update on what's happening in our small part of the nation.

Each year we have a service in the forest with The Commons. Although The Commons has recently decided to close its doors, the relationships we've built with this wonderful group will surely continue.

The Convener was honoured to be invited to preach at First Mennonite Church this Fall. Many of their members donate to the Centre and it's always a pleasure to connect with them in-person.

We've also had speakers come from other parts of the MCEC world to share at Westview including Caleb Redekop from Waterloo Ontario who shared a message titled, "Nice People Do Drugs."

Finally, we've kept other churches and members informed on how the congregation and Centre have been coping with COVID through regular email updates. The MCEC churches of Niagara help fund the convener position at Westview, and we're hoping to arrange a meeting of some of the church leaders who oversee this partnership to discuss how it's gone over the last three years and plan for the future.

G. A dream for WV this coming year:

In 2019 we expressed a dream of finding money to expand our child-minding services, 2021 looks like the year this dream could become reality. Working with a generous donor we're setting the preliminary stages in motion, dreaming about what this expansion might look like in concrete terms. Stay tuned, 2021 is going to be an exciting year and we hope to create lots of ways for you to be involved.

H. Some answers to prayer in the past year:

- We give thanks that this last year the Centre's Executive Director, Jane Lavaca was declared cancer free.
- We give thanks that a large donor paid off the remainder of our mortgage, giving us greater financial freedom.
- We give thanks that Caleb Ratzlaff, our current convener, has successfully started the TiM program and began the ordination process with MCEC.
- This year we voted to accept our Clarity Statement on the affirmation of LGBTQ+ folks in our congregation.

I. Prayer requests for 2021:

Queenston St. is experiencing two simultaneous pandemics, the COVID virus, and the OPIOID crisis. They affect us in different ways. COVID amplifies common ailments such as social isolation and the lack of services. How do we continue to create space for the strong social community among women in and around Queenston St. who have limited access to technology and depend on in-person services? As drugs continue to get deadier, the risks to users become far more life threatening. How do we continue to support addicts when it's increasingly difficult to check on them and provide physical support? Although different, both pandemics are deadly. For both crises, we ask for prayer.

In addition to the pandemics, like many churches, we ask for prayer as we navigate questions concerning the nature of church. What is church? What should it look like? How do we continue to be the church virtually or otherwise? What will the church look like "after" COVID? For all these hope charged anxieties, we ask for prayer.

Part II. Financial Report

A. General Comments:

The budget below reflects income that comes primarily from tithes, partner churches, MCEC, and monies designated from grants for administration. What isn't included in this budget are financials associated strictly with activities of our Women's Centre, Westview Centre4Women.

Because of increased tithes and the generous donor who paid off the remainder of our mortgage this Fall, we are looking at a surplus. What we do with that surplus will be carefully considered by the board and staff in the new year. But we're excited by the possibilities.

B. Summarize your budget below.

WESTVIEW GATHERING*	2019 (actual estimate)	2020 - Draft Budget
Income		
Individual Contributions (tithes)	57681	58,000
Building Use	23760	20200
MCEC	6875	7000
Churches (Local Niagara Cluster)	25000	20,000
Retained Income	2864	2864
Garden grant	0	0
Total Income	116180	108064
Expenses		
Administration (incl Office Admin & Bookkeeper)**	31212	28500
Building and Grounds (incl. Janitorial & insurance)	25128	30500
Mortgage (interest + principal)	5151	0
Program Delivery (incl. expenses associated with church gatherings + garden)	921	2000
Minister (Convener)	28623	29000
Total Cashflow Accounts	4310	5000
Total Expenses	95344	95000

A. List the sources of income in the funding of your ministry

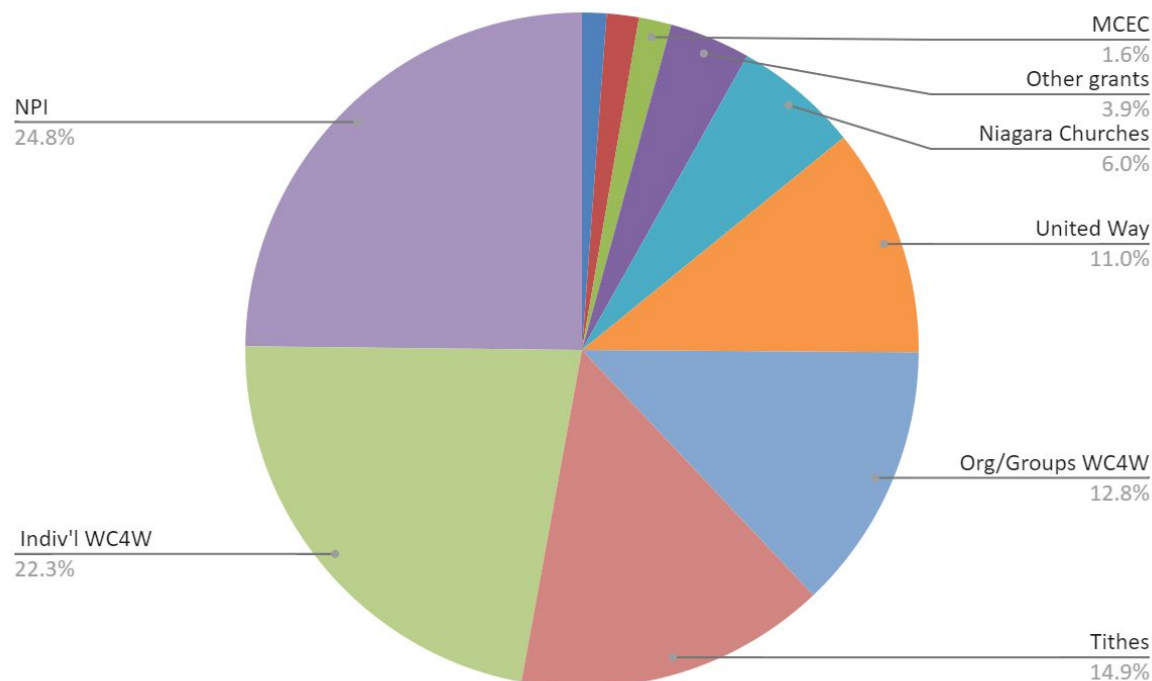
WC4W

- United Way
- Niagara Prosperity Initiative
- Anonymous foundations, trusts, community groups, and churches
- Private donations
- Income from the “Plentiful Pantry” in the Center
- Income from garage sales by Center women
- Income from laundry services at the Center

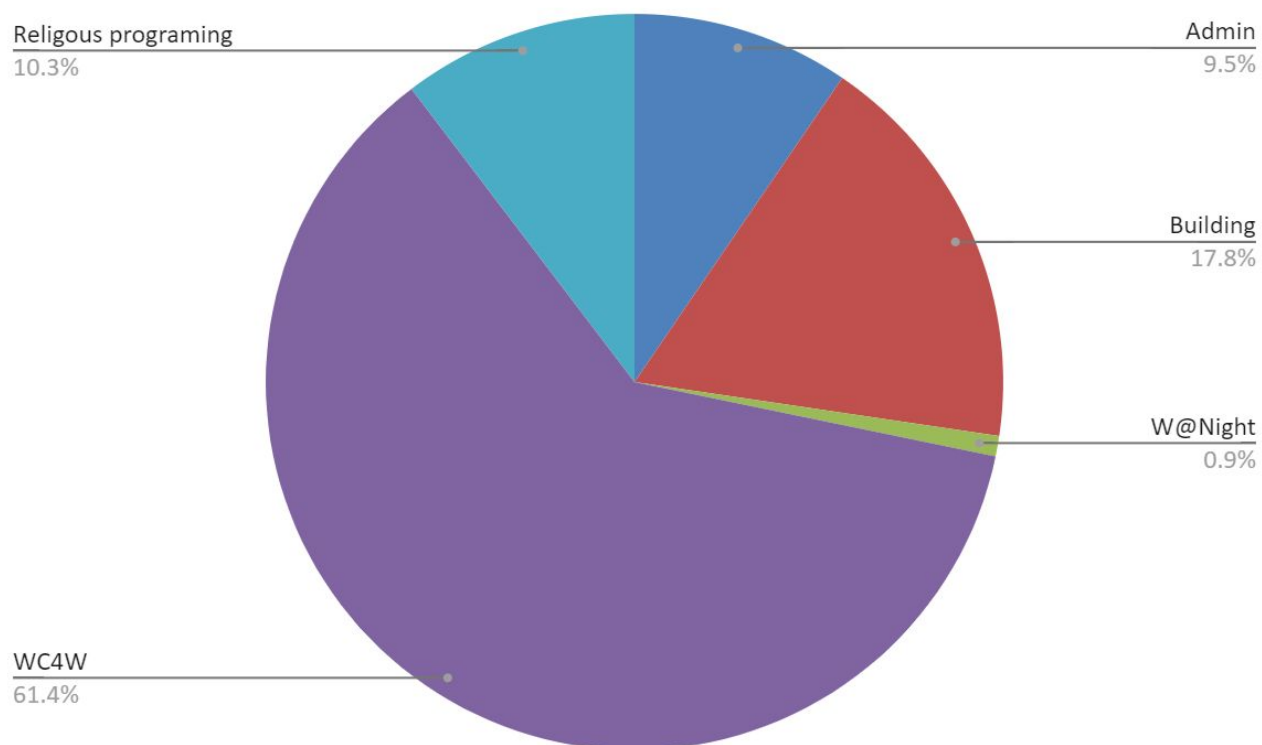
WV

- Donations and rental payments for building-use by many local community organizations
- Tithes & offerings - both large and small
- MCEC
- Niagara United Mennonite Church
- Vineland United Mennonite Church
- First Mennonite Church Vineland
- St. Catharines United Mennonite Church
- Grace Mennonite Church

Income Jan. - Oct. 2020



Expenses Jan. - Oct. 2020



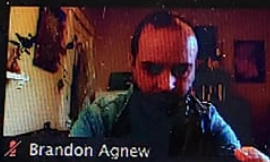




Turn on Original Sound



Tim Shields



Brandon Agnew



SVenditti



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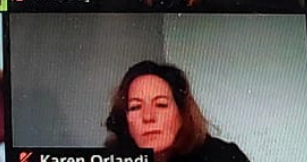
Talia Storm



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Erin Walters



Karen Orlandi



Erin Riseing



Paul Paradis



Jennifer Symonds



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Michael Mondloch



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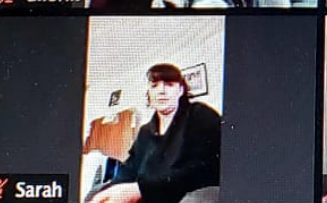
Admin Login



Paul Shtogryn



Maureen's iPad



Sarah



Ratzlaff



Councillor Greg Miller











				
				
				
			<p>lindagoerzen</p>	<p>Erika's iPhone 6</p>
<p>Fort Elgin</p>	<p>Lucy Neufeld</p>	<p>vernmartens</p>	<p>Jennifer Symonds</p>	





