



# FIRST UNITED CHURCH M.A.P

Mission Articulation Plan for the next 3 years



NOVEMBER 13, 2024  
FIRST UNITED CHURCH  
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This document has been developed by the MAP (Mission Articulation Plan) Committee to outline strategic focus areas for First United Church over the coming years. It represents several months of dedicated effort, beginning in May 2024, by a committed team under the leadership of project manager Kyle March-MacCuish. Committee members include Colleen Martin, Scott Parsons, Kelly Tuck, and Joan Winsor.

Former committee member Ian March-MacCuish, who initiated the volunteer recruitment drive in 2019 just prior to the onset of COVID-19, was integral to the formation of this team before his current medical leave. In early 2024, Joan Windsor reached out to the original team, inviting members to reconvene and move forward with creating this mission plan for First United Church.

The committee united promptly, drawing inspiration and guidance from the United Church of Canada, to collaboratively craft a vision for the future focus of First United Church. This document reflects the MAP Committee's considered recommendations and aspirations for growth and impact.



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# Mount Pearl Community Profile

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Mount Pearl is the second-largest city in Newfoundland and Labrador, with a population of 22,477 as of the 2021 census. The city provides urban comforts while maintaining its natural beauty and offers some of the finest recreational facilities in Atlantic Canada. Known for its strong community spirit and volunteer base, Mount Pearl is one of Canada's most beautiful and neighborly cities.

## History

The city's history dates back to 1829, when Commander James Pearl arrived in Newfoundland and was granted 1,000 acres of land by the Crown for his distinguished service in the Royal Navy. In 1830, Pearl built a house on the most elevated section of his estate, initially calling it "Mount Cochrane" in honor of Governor Sir Thomas Cochrane. After the governor's departure, it was renamed "Mount Pearl" (Wikipedia, 2024; Pitt & Pitt, 2015).

## Development

In the 1930s and 1940s, Mount Pearl became a popular meeting spot for affluent society members and horseracing enthusiasts. It soon evolved into a summer resort for St. John's residents. Increased year-round population growth led to residential and industrial development. Mount Pearl was incorporated as a town on January 11, 1955, with a population of 1,979 (Pitt & Pitt, 2015). On July 21, 1988, Mount Pearl became the third city in Newfoundland and Labrador (Pitt & Pitt, 2015).

## Arboretum City Concept

Mount Pearl is the world's first "arboretum city," an initiative that began in the 1990s to ensure a wide variety of trees are planted throughout the city. The project aims to promote environmental stewardship among residents (Pitt & Pitt, 2015).

## Geography

Mount Pearl covers an area of approximately 15.65 square kilometers (Wikipedia, 2024). It is located on the Avalon Peninsula, southwest of St. John's, and is part of the St. John's metropolitan area (Sen Nag, 2019).



## Climate

Mount Pearl has a humid continental climate, with short, mild summers and long, snowy winters. The climate is influenced by the Atlantic Ocean, even though Mount Pearl is inland (Wikipedia, 2024; Come Explore Canada, 2024).

## Demographics

The 2021 population of Mount Pearl was 22,475, which represents a 2.1% decline from 2016. Over the same period, the entire province saw a population decrease of 1.8%. The median age in Mount Pearl was 46, compared to the provincial median of 48 years old (Statistics Canada, 2021).

## Migration

In 2020, Mount Pearl had a Residual Net Migration rate of -2.06%, representing a loss of 450 individuals, compared to a provincial net migration rate of -0.13% (660 individuals). Net migration is calculated by subtracting the current population from the previous year's population while adjusting for births and deaths (Community Accounts, 2024).

## Marital Status (2021)

In Mount Pearl, there were 9,260 people who were legally married (not separated), 1,150 widowed, 1,720 divorced, 490 separated, and 9,870 singles (never legally married). Additionally, 3,430 people were under 17 years of age (Community Accounts, 2024).

## Births and Deaths

In 2022, Mount Pearl saw 175 births, a 10.3% decrease from 195 births in 2021, with a total birth rate of 7.8 per 1,000 people (province: 6.9). In contrast, there were 190 deaths in 2021, an 18.8% increase from the previous year. The median age of death was 77 in both Mount Pearl and the province (Community Accounts, 2024).

## Income

In 2021, the gross personal income per capita in Mount Pearl was \$44,400, higher than the provincial average of \$41,900. Median male income in Mount Pearl was \$47,500, while females earned \$38,700. For couples, the median family income was \$108,400, while lone-parent families earned a median income of \$56,600. Mount Pearl's income levels were generally above both the provincial and national averages (Community Accounts, 2024).



## Employment and Labour Force

In 2021, 13,330 people in Mount Pearl reported earnings from employment, with an average gross income of \$49,700. The employment rate was 54.6%, and the unemployment rate was 10%, compared to a provincial unemployment rate of 15.2% (Community Accounts, 2024). Despite a slight decrease in employment over the past few years, Mount Pearl's labour force remains active and engaged across a variety of sectors.

## Self-Reliance Ratio

In 2021, Mount Pearl had a self-reliance ratio of 81.8%, which indicates a lower dependency on government transfers such as pensions and income support compared to the provincial average of 77.2% (Community Accounts, 2024).

## Dwellings

According to the 2021 Census, Mount Pearl had 9,930 dwellings, an increase from 9,605 in 2016. Of these, 4,505 were detached houses. Single-family households accounted for 6,720 dwellings, while multiple-family households and non-family households made up the remainder. In 2016, 72.5% of homes in Mount Pearl were owned, compared to 76.8% for the province and 67.8% nationally (Community Accounts, 2024).

## Real Estate

- **Residential Statistics:** According to the 2021 census, Mount Pearl had 9,931 private dwellings (Wikipedia, 2024).
- **Market Prices (2021):**
  - Average price for a new single-family home: \$358,833.
  - Average price for an existing home: \$300,000.
  - Rental market (2-bedroom apartments): \$800 per month (Wikipedia, 2024).

## Education (2021)

As of 2021, 88.5% of residents aged 15 and over in Mount Pearl had at least a high school diploma, which was higher than the provincial rate of 79.6%. Additionally, 18.6% of the population aged 15 and over held a bachelor's degree or higher. Among residents aged 25 to 64, 93.4% had at least a high



school diploma, with 23.3% having a bachelor's degree or higher (Community Accounts, 2024).

Mount Pearl is part of the Eastern School District and offers both primary and high school education and hosts the Ross King Memorial Library. The library offers extensive resources, including internet access, children's programs, and a special Newfoundland collection (Come Explore Canada, 2024).

## Health Care

Mount Pearl residents have access to major medical facilities in neighboring St. John's, as well as community health organizations within the city (Wikipedia, 2024).

## Crime Statistics (2021)

In 2021, the violent crime rate for the Northeast Avalon RNC Region, which includes Mount Pearl, was 16.77 per 1,000 people, an increase of 7.8% from 2020 (Community Accounts, 2024).

## Municipal Services

Mount Pearl offers a wide range of municipal services, including:

- Snow clearing, garbage collection, water and sewer services, street maintenance, fire protection, and public bus services through Metrobus (Wikipedia, 2024).

## Transportation

Mount Pearl operates a subsidized public bus system through Metrobus, which connects to St. John's. There are a variety of taxi services in neighbouring St. John's that operate in Mount Pearl (Wikipedia, 2024).

## Banks and Lending Agencies

Mount Pearl is served by major Canadian banks, including:

- Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), Toronto Dominion Bank (TD), Scotiabank, Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union, and Simplii Financial (Wikipedia, 2024).

## Churches

Mount Pearl is predominantly Christian, with several denominations represented, including Coptic, Seventh-day Adventist, Anglican, Baptist,





Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, United Church of Canada, Wesleyan, and Salvation Army (Wikipedia, 2024).

## Shopping

Mount Pearl has three major shopping areas and stores open seven days a week, with Sunday hours being reduced compared to other days (Come Explore Canada, 2024).

## Arts and Culture (not an exhaustive list)

- **Eastern Music Camp:** A high-quality music program providing instrumental and choral instruction for students aged 8 to 18.
- **O'Donel High School Patriots Jazz Band:** Recognized nationally and provincially, this jazz band frequently performs at community events and festivals.
- **Mount Pearl Show Choir:** An audition-based group that has performed across North America, including Walt Disney World and the Millennium Magic celebrations (Come Explore Canada, 2024).
- **Mount pearl hosts many dance studios:** Mount Pearl School of Dance, Dance Studio East, Steffen Dance Studio, Revolutions Dance, Moving Pictures Dance Studio, Vibe Studio of Dance
- **The Association for the Arts in Mount Pearl (AAMP):** Encouraging people to explore their creativity and have fun with the arts.

## Admiralty House Communications Museum

The **Admiralty House Communications Museum** is not only a historical site but also a hub for various community events throughout the year. It is surrounded by 2.1 acres of gardens and hosts exhibitions on Newfoundland's naval history, along with performances and community gatherings (Pitt & Pitt, 2015).

## Community Activities and Events (not an exhaustive list)

- **Frosty Festival:** A ten-day winter event held in February that fosters community spirit with over 80 events, ranging from outdoor activities to family-friendly entertainment (Come Explore Canada, 2024).
- **City Days Celebrations:** A weekend celebration in July to commemorate Mount Pearl's city status. It includes family events,



entertainment, and fireworks to highlight community togetherness (Come Explore Canada, 2024).

- **Mount Pearl Soccer Association (MPSA):** Offering soccer programs for all ages, from youth to adults, MPSA runs community leagues and hosts annual tournaments, promoting a love for the sport within the city.
- **Mount Pearl Marlins Swim Club:** A swim team that provides both competitive and non-competitive swim programs for youth and adults. They participate in regional competitions and encourage fitness and team spirit.
- **Mount Pearl Lions Club:** An active service club involved in community outreach programs and charitable events to support various causes in the city.
- **Mount Pearl Minor Hockey Association:** Organizes hockey programs for youth and holds annual tournaments, fostering a love for hockey and teamwork in the local community.
- **Mount Pearl YETI (Youth Engaged Towards Inclusion):** A youth-led initiative promoting inclusion and diversity. They organize events and programs focused on social justice and youth engagement.
- **Campia Gymnastics:** A not-for-profit gymnastics organization that helps athletes build a strong foundation for fundamental movement through the fun and exciting sport of gymnastics.
- **Oktoberfest:** CRAFT BEER FEST, dive into a sea of craft brews from the best local breweries.

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## Pastoral Charge Profile - First United Church

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A church is a living body; it is more than a compilation of its component parts, more than the physical building, the ministerial team, and the Board of Management. Our church membership consists of a congregation from our oldest senior to the youngest infant, from the choir members who share their special talents to the volunteers who help in the Sunday School, from the clergy with their special theological training to those from whom life and living has been a consistent challenge and from those who have been blessed with financial success and employment to the single parent who struggles with limited resources to bring a sense of purpose and value added Christian dimensions to the family life. It is the collective "You" and "I" acting together compassionately and sincerely to fulfill God's work.

First United Church, is located in an established neighborhood noted for its larger building lot, well groomed lawns and the newly constructed Peace Garden. The congregation, comprising approximately 500 families, maintains a commitment to core values and is exemplary for the formal and friendly ways the focal messages of love, caring and sharing from the spoken word to programs of Christian actions.

The core programs at First United Church in Mount Pearl mirror most of our associate church families across the province and the nation. We have one regular worship service every Sunday morning with additional special services during the year.

### Sundays at Church

Regular attendance for the Sunday morning 11:00 am worship before covid was 200, but since covid we are approximately 100; however, special occasions such as baptism, Christmas and Easter bring higher numbers. The morning worship is traditional in structure, however there is a strong commitment and acceptance of inter-generational and alternative approaches to worship. One Sunday per month our worship services are signed for those in the congregation who are hearing impaired.

Communion and Baptism are celebrated during the year. There are approximately 12 children registered in Sunday School, with 4 - 6 attending on a regular basis. The Sunday School participates in worship at least twice a year. The Youth Group conducts services twice a year as well. The Men's Fellowship Club and the United Church Women conduct occasional services throughout the year. We have a strong sense of lay leadership in worship.



## Church Groups

Church groups and organizations add significant focus to our Church Family. The United Church Women, with an enrolment of 30, play a very vital role in the congregation. They meet once per month, on the second Monday from September through May. In addition to their dynamic participation in the Bakeless Bake Sale, they take responsibility for ushering in July, regularly collect for the area Food Bank and support outreach programs of the East District's Stella Burry Corporation, Carew Lodge and Iris Kirby House. They also participate in a prayer chain, operate a "Quilts for Comfort" project.

The Men's Fellowship Club, with an enrolment of 30, meets on the first Monday of each month from September to June. Known for their expertise in food preparation, this club brings fellowship and a sense of belonging to its members and to the congregation. Several times each year the "Male Choir" conducts or participates in worship. Skills in carpentry and music keep club members active with a sense of togetherness and fulfillment.

The Church's Youth Group has 14 teens registered (including leaders) and approximately 10 attend on a regular basis every Sunday evening from October through May. The usual range of activities include outreach through a recycling program, theme night, games night, Christmas bags for inmates at HMP, and conducting occasional services. Valentines are made and distributed to the nursing homes in Mount Pearl

We are blessed to have two regular choirs at First United Church, The Senior Choir forms the core of our music program. An A Capella group blesses us with their occasional singing.

First United also has a quilting Group and a Book Club where a core group of 6 - 10 people enjoy quilting and reading and discussing a wide selection of books on a monthly basis.

First also has established a garden club planting and maintaining vegetables. They also plant flowers for the folks to enjoy while they sit in the new peace garden. Along with the garden they host coffee time Sunday mornings for fellowship.

## Outreach

First United Church and six partner churches in the St John's--Mount Pearl region have joined in a collective sponsorship of Bridges to Hope Inc. The first Sunday of each month has been designated "Food Bank Sunday" at First United, also we have a couple of food drives on a weekend to help out Bridges.



First United has partnered with the churches in Mount Pearl to help out with serving community suppers every two weeks.

First United is host to multiple AA group meetings, who utilize the church to meet weekly.

First United is a very active congregation. As a family of God's children, and the belief that all of us have a role in the ministry, we are facing the future with faith and confidence.

## Church's Life Cycle

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As part of the Mission Articulation Plan, we sought to analyze our pastoral charge's current stage within its lifecycle, building on insights from the previous section. This analysis is informed by Tom Morgan's book, *The Unstuck Church: Equipping Churches to Experience Sustained Health*, which offers valuable perspectives on fostering lasting vitality and growth.

The number of confirmed members at First United has dropped from 1090 in 2017 to 1071 in 2023. The number of envelope holders at First is 499. The last confirmation was in 2022. Baptisms, marriages and funerals have also decreased during that period. Interestingly, 2022 saw higher numbers for all three than the previous two years and higher than 2023. There have been some new members in recent years mostly because of another local church closure.

In 2017, the total annual revenue was approximately \$273 500 in contrast to \$213 800 in 2022. The expenses for the same time remained fairly stable - approximately \$245 000 - but were lower during the COVID years (2020 & 2021) due to savings realized from government grants and loans. It is interesting to note that in 2023 both the total revenue and total expenses were higher than trending patterns suggested. This seems to reflect the activities and energy of the congregation in its anniversary year. There were also the capital works projects to re-shingle the main part of the church and the addition of the Peace Garden.

It seems 2022 stands out for some reason. The bump in numbers for Baptisms, marriages and funerals, the revenue to the local fund was also higher in 2022 than previous years and that of 2023.

These findings lead to the conclusion that First United Church is in the Maintenance Stage according to Tom Morgan's seven stages of a church's life cycle. The higher number than average baptisms and marriages in 2022



may be explained by the post COVID catch-up and the desire for people to have a church connection for significant life events. This church connection may also account, in part, for the success of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary events, roof repair and installation of the Peace Garden in 2023.



## Priority areas for First United Church

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### Social Outreach and Community Engagement

Over the next three years, our congregation's primary objective should be to strengthen community engagement. While we actively support initiatives like the Bridges to Hope Foundation, our Mission and Service Fund, and various other efforts, much of our work remains within the view of regular attendees. However, a significant segment of the Mount Pearl community may hold reservations about church, have negative perceptions, or simply be unaware of our existence.

By enhancing community engagement, we can build stronger connections within Mount Pearl and extend our reach beyond. This strategy could not only help attract new members, addressing our ongoing decline in attendance, but also enrich the spiritual lives of current members, offering meaningful social interactions as emphasized in scripture. While attending Sunday services is foundational, true spiritual fulfillment comes from engaging directly in our community, in alignment with our teachings.

Prioritizing community outreach will foster a welcoming and inclusive environment. Rather than focusing solely on church-centric events, we should aim to host broader community initiatives that are initially non-religious in nature. Engaging too directly with religious activities can sometimes be a deterrent, pushing people away rather than inviting them in. By hosting community events or actively participating in existing ones, we can demonstrate our commitment to the community, gradually building a comfort level for church involvement.

Focusing on community engagement promises not only to attract new members and increase attendance but also to offer our current congregation a deeper sense of purpose and fulfillment. Through active community involvement, we can embody our values and positively impact those around us.





## Bridging the Generational Gap

Addressing the generational gap within First United is a key area for focus in the coming years. To truly bridge this gap, we must commit to inclusivity for younger generations, valuing their perspectives and ensuring they feel welcomed without judgment or exclusion. While we may pride ourselves on being open and inclusive, we sometimes fall short by not engaging with younger newcomers, failing to seek their input on projects, or unintentionally making them feel uninvited. This lack of inclusivity can manifest in unwelcoming behavior, from overlooking newcomers to making remarks that may make them feel out of place.

One step forward would be to establish First United as an affirming church, visibly welcoming individuals from all backgrounds. Although we see ourselves as inclusive, this message needs clear, external communication. Simple gestures, like warmly greeting newcomers and particularly younger attendees at events, can profoundly influence their perception of our church. These small acts of kindness foster a genuine sense of welcome.

Acceptance of all individuals, regardless of appearance or prior experiences with church, is essential. For younger generations who may view religion negatively due to media portrayals or historical issues, we must actively counter these biases. In the years ahead, we aim to open our hearts to those who may look or think differently, gently educating the younger generation that church is a supportive community. We will emphasize that attending church is about being part of a community, regardless of personal beliefs.



## Specific objectives pulled out of the priority areas

### Priority Area #1: Community Outreach & Engagement

**Objective #1:** Create a Church Logo for merchandise to sport while performing volunteering activities within the community of Mount Pearl.

**Who will take the lead:** Membership and Social Action Committee

**What resources will be committed:** Cost of shirts and other small merchandise to be used. (Sportscraft source for sports, in the box.) A survey to be sent out to gauge if the church would like to keep the current logo or update. Volunteers to take in the surveys and verify the top choice. Volunteers to then get the items made and sent out.

**What is the timeline:** To complete this Objective we would focus on hopefully a 6-month timeline. Developing a Logo, bringing it to our Board of management for approval, and then printing Merchandise.

### Priority Area #2: Bridging the gap between our Younger and Older Church Members

**Objective #1:** To assess the needs of the younger and older members of our congregation, by developing a survey to try and promote ways of socializing between the generations.

**Who will take the lead:** Membership and Social Action Committee

**What resources will be committed:** Volunteers to create the survey questions and use an online method such as google forms. Volunteers to print paper copies for folks who can't access online. Volunteers to then receive the surveys and compile the stats.

**What is the Timeline:** To complete this objective within 6 months, all survey information would be returned to the Committee then reported to the Board of Management. All information would be then provided to our members and plan put in place to start within an additional month to have the generations communicating and fulfilling needs.



**Objective #2:** To Host an evening led by youth, showcasing simple technology functions to those of the senior population. (emails, spam, photos, facetime, etc.)

**Who will take the lead:** The youth and tech efficient members of the church and community. Organized in coordination with Christian Development.

**What resources will be committed:** The Multipurpose room, which uses the projector and screen. Tablets to be brought by members who attend/lead. volunteers to organize and create a curriculum.

**What is the Timeline:** To be determined after the survey has been returned and can be assessed.

The Specific details of each of these above objectives are to be discussed and followed through with the committees or groups that spearhead the objectives. The M.A.P team has left the objectives specifically vague so that the committees can take the objective and organize and follow through in a manner that works for them.



## Developing our vision and mission statement

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In developing the Mission Articulation Plan, we focused on crafting a vision and mission statement to guide First United Church's direction over the next three years. We began by reviewing our current statement and found that, while we deeply value its message, its broad nature aligns more closely with a vision statement than a mission statement. This existing vision, originally crafted in 2015, provided a strong foundation from which we developed a new mission statement to accompany it. Both statements are outlined below.

### Vision Statement:

"We are a welcoming, spirit-filled community of Christians, spreading the love of God through worship, caring, sharing and outreach."

### Mission Statement:

"Our pastoral charge seeks

1. **TO** nurture a compassionate and connected community, grounded in God's love,
2. **BY** offering inclusive worship, providing social outreach, and fostering programs that engage and bridge all generations,

**FOR** the people of our congregation and the wider community we live in, building relationships that promote care, support, and unity for all."

When put this together our mission statement is as follows:

"Our pastoral charge seeks to nurture a compassionate and connected community, grounded in God's love, by offering inclusive worship, providing social outreach, and fostering programs that engage and bridge all generations, for the people of our congregation and the wider community we live in, building relationships that promote care, support, and unity for all."



# Identifying First United Church's core values and beliefs

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The final component of the Mission Articulation Plan involved identifying the core values or beliefs that guide the actions of our ministry. While these values may not represent those of every individual in First United Church, the MAP Committee has defined them as foundational beliefs for our community. To determine these core values, we began by identifying the strengths that our church currently embodies. From this foundation, we developed a series of statements that reflect the enduring values we believe First United Church will carry forward in the coming years. Below, we first outline the strengths we identified, followed by the core values we derived from them.

## Strengths

- 1. Community Outreach Programs:** Programs that actively engage with the local community, such as Bridges to Hope.
- 2. Online Presence:** A strong online presence through a website and social media platforms to reach out to a wider audience and connect with members virtually.
- 3. Contemporary Worship Services:** Offer worship services that blend traditional elements with contemporary music, relevant sermons, etc.
- 4. Embrace Diversity and Inclusion:** Foster an inclusive environment that welcomes people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles.
- 5. Financial Transparency:** Transparency in financial matters to build trust and accountability among members, ensuring that donations are used responsibly.
- 6. Environmental Stewardship:** Incorporate environmentally sustainable practices into



church operations and promote awareness of environmental issues within the

congregation.

**7. Continual Learning and Growth:** Encourage ongoing spiritual growth and education

through service clubs (UCW, Men's Club, Quilting group, book club? etc.).

**8. Adaptability and Flexibility:** Remain open to change and innovation, adapting to

evolving needs and trends.

## Core beliefs and values

We believe...

First United Church is more than just a building. It is a community of people that are there to uplift anyone that needs it.

That by coming together during the best times and even more so the worst times we can accomplish anything.

First United Church is a community that preaches their faith at all times and when necessary, uses words.

First United Church embraces change and looks to the future with curiosity not doubt.

Building on these foundational beliefs, the MAP Committee encourages each member of First United Church to take time to reflect on the outlined values and consider any additional values that you feel represent the core of First United Church for you personally. We invite you to share these insights with the Church Board, contributing to an evolving and inclusive community of faith that honors the diverse perspectives within our congregation.