

## Topsail United Church Profile



### *“The Church by the Side of the Road”*

Address and contact information:

Topsail United Church  
P.O. Box 13010, Stn Topsail  
Conception Bay South NL A1W 2K1

Phone: 834-4567

Fax: 834-6200

Email: [office@topsailunitedchurch.nf.net](mailto:office@topsailunitedchurch.nf.net) [www.topsailunitedchurch.nf.net](http://www.topsailunitedchurch.nf.net)

[www.topsailunitedchurch.nf.net](http://www.topsailunitedchurch.nf.net)

### **Mission Articulation Plan (MAP), 2019 – 2021, Team Members:**

Paul Burt, Chair

Noel Brissard

Lloyd Hobbs

Valerie Howe

Judy Powell

Revision Date: February 6, 2020

**Our inspiration** for completing Mission Articulation Plan can be found in the following passages.

**Revelation 21 1-3: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.... 'See, the home of God is among mortals. God will dwell with them as their God; they will be God's people, and God will be with them'."**

In this famous statement we see the Incarnation - the Divine plan achieved by all. The achievement of the Cosmic Christ in all creation is the purpose of the sacrificial life and death of Jesus Christ for all.

**Revelation 22:13 .... "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."**

We as disciples of Christ are being asked in this pivotal time in Christianity to create new wineskins (containers) to hold new wine - the awakening of the New World Order given to all by the historical Jesus so long ago. For God so loved the world.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**To offer to all the opportunity to come to know God as revealed in Jesus Christ;**

- **To care for each other and all of God's creation; and**
- **To encourage and empower each other to use our talents within the Church.**

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The **Vision Statement** also captures the essence of the **Mission Statement** as defined for the **MAP** as:

"What are we trying to achieve, what do we need to do to achieve this, and who are we doing this for?"

We do not have plans to develop two separate statements.

Topsail United Church strives to be the spiritual and community centre for all people of the United Church faith in the church's pastoral area. We offer the opportunity to grow in faith through programs designed to use the talents of all members; facilities offering access to worship for all, and outreach and community service initiatives.

Topsail United Church will enhance its capability in meeting the spiritual needs of the congregation and community by drawing upon our (past) experiences, (present) successes and (future) initiatives.

*(The **Vision Statement** above was developed during a Topsail United Church Strategic Planning initiative in 2011 and remains valid today.)*

## VALUE STATEMENTS

The distinctive core beliefs which guide the actions of the Ministry of Topsail United Church include the following:

- **Discipleship** – we recognise the importance of discipleship in enhancing the spiritual depth of our community and lead by example to teach others to live the way God wants us to live.
- **Inclusiveness** - we respect people, value diversity and are committed to equality for all.
- **Participation** - we value and recognise the contribution of volunteers within organizations and communities.
- **Outward Focus** – we strive to reach outside our church walls to fulfill local community-based needs and support the Mission and Service work of the United Church of Canada.
- **Youth Oriented** – we believe that youth are a valuable part of our church ministry and invest resources to both engage youth and enhance their spiritual experience.
- **Openness** - we are committed to a culture of welcoming everyone to our church community, members and non-members alike.
- **Uplifting** – we use our worship, music, outreach and community involvement to uplift the congregation and community in a grace filled manner.

## **COMMUNITY PROFILE**

Topsail United Church serves two of the fastest growing communities in Atlantic Canada: Paradise and Conception Bay South, both found on the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland and Labrador. Both communities are a part of the St. John's Metropolitan Area and are near the capital City of St. John's, the City of Mount Pearl, and the Town of Portugal Cove-St. Phillip's. The area has become the community of choice for families wanting to establish long-term roots. Its favourable climate, rural feel, close proximity to urban amenities, offshore servicing projects, and natural resource processing create an ideal location to live and work on the Avalon Peninsula. This area has an excellent transportation network to the airport, downtown St. John's, and major health care facilities. Residents can also avail of numerous local health-related clinics within the town.

### **Paradise**

With a population of approximately 21,000, the Town of Paradise is proud to be one Atlantic Canada's fastest-growing municipality with the youngest average-aged population in Newfoundland and Labrador.

With four schools, community centres, parks, walking trails, sports facilities, fantastic double ice surface arena, and so much more, extracurricular activities run the gamut from sports to intellectual and artistic pursuits.

### **Conception Bay South**

CBS is a family-oriented community with affordable real estate, excellent schools, recreation facilities, and an ideal mix of rural and urban amenities. The town is focused on creating a healthy and sustainable community. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, a safe environment, and some of the best weather in the province.

This community of 27,000 features pristine walking and hiking trails, parks, playgrounds, beaches, marinas, and spectacular ocean views alongside excellent schools, major health care facilities, a commercial port, an industrial park, and a thriving business sector. The town Municipal services include curbside waste collection and a recycling program, two 24/7 fire stations, a provincial police detachment, and a municipal enforcement unit. The Town has two modern and well-equipped high schools, two junior high schools, and five primary/elementary schools. The College of the North Atlantic's Seal Cove Campus (the College's petroleum training center) also offers entry level and continuing education programs.

For more information on the municipalities of Conception Bay South and Paradise, please visit the following websites:

<https://www.conceptionbaysouth.ca>

<https://www.paradise.ca/en/index.aspx>

## **Community Pressures**

Community pressures potentially affecting the **MAP** (Missional Articulation Profile) and recruitment strategy for Topsail United are common to both CBS and Paradise.

In essence, the challenges presented pertaining to church attendance and involvement for both individuals and families stems more so from the “success and growth” that is being experienced in these areas, versus the decline that is being seen in many other urban and rural areas of NL. A combination of extensive and readily accessible recreational/community facilities and programs; high employment rates and household income; young families; and sprawling municipal geography resulting in considerable time spent commuting to St. John’s for work/leisure means that many residents of our catchment area suffer from the syndrome of there simply not being “...enough hours in the day...” to fulfill their modern lifestyles.

There also appears to be a growing tendency to place the wants and needs of children and adolescents higher in family priorities as seen by the recent growth in organized sports and activities such as dance, figure skating, hockey travel teams, etc. and the resultant success of organizations and community facilities that cater to these activities such as MAX Arts and Athletics, the Paradise Double Ice Rink and Community Centre, the new CBS Arena, etc.

With almost 11,000 youth and adolescents residing in our catchment area (25% of population) and with this group now exerting greater influence versus parents in family decisions regarding the allocation of finite leisure time, “church” is less likely to be in the evoked set of family activities. This is likely contributing to declining attendance at many “traditional” churches across the region...and even across the nation.

In summary...the biggest external challenge we would appear to face from the community at large would be a growing need to appeal to new and younger family decision “influencers” and overall family time constraints.

## **MINISTRY PROFILE**

History of Pastoral Charge Topsail United Church – “The Church by The Side of The Road” – had its beginning in 1837 with the formation of a small Wesleyan Methodist Meeting House. But even before this, the early settlers, with assistance from visiting clergy from St. John’s, had been holding church services in various homes throughout the small community. Land for the Meeting House and cemetery was donated by the Butler family. Throughout 1836, people of the community erected a small church building measuring 30 ft. x 18 ft. and constructed from local timber.

By 1860 though, this church was getting too small for the growing congregation and it was decided to construct a larger church building. This new building was opened in 1871 and contained two rooms – the church sanctuary and the Sunday School. Services were conducted by Rev. William Faulkner, minister of Gower Street Church in St. John’s. This little church became a well-known landmark throughout Newfoundland and was given the name “The Church by The Side of The Road.”

In 1886, the Topsail Church hired its first resident minister, The Rev. Dr. Mark Fenwick, and at the 1886 session of the Newfoundland Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada the Topsail Church was constituted as a separate parish or, as it was called in those days, a separate circuit. Under the ministry of Rev. Fenwick, a minister’s residence was started but was not completed until after the arrival, some three years later, of the Rev. Samuel Snowden.

In 1925, the Topsail Methodist Church, along with all other Methodist churches in Newfoundland, joined the newly established union with the United Church of Canada. As time passed, the Topsail congregation once again outgrew their church and a new larger building, which exists to the present time, was opened for worship in 1977. The old brass bell was moved from the old church, and still rings out from its tower on Sunday mornings.

In 2002 the Manse was sold and the Offices (Minister & Office Manager) were moved into the church. A two story addition to the rear of the building provided the Offices and a Conference Room to the upper, Sanctuary, level and a new kitchen, caretaker’s closet, coat check, elevator and stairs to the lower, basement, level.

### **Membership**

Currently we list 304 actively supporting families, 133 of which do so through PAR.

A further 120 families are retained as “Households under Pastoral Care” as known United Church families and seniors in our Pastoral Charge.

The attendance varies from 100 - 140 people in Sunday worship with up to 200 for special services. In 2019 the three Christmas Eve services brought in over 600 people.

The Sanctuary seats approx. 200.

## **Service Schedule**

Worship services take place at 10:30 am every Sunday in the church. Following the service, there is a fellowship social time downstairs in the Church Hall. The monthly service schedule follows the format below from September to June:

- First Sunday of the month: Communion Sunday with Senior Choir
- Second Sunday of the month: Worship with men's Choir
- Third Sunday of the month: Family Service with Youth Groups and Youth Choirs
- Fourth Sunday of the month: Baptism Sunday and Worship with Senior Choir

Throughout the year, special services are held including:

- Moving into Lent
- Cemetery Flower Services
- Anniversary Hymn Sing
- Longest Night Service

## **Types and Condition of Properties/Facilities**

One church building is maintained by our congregation.

The building is of wooden construction with a full basement in 1977 and was extensively renovated in and expanded in the late 90s. Both the building and adjacent paved parking area are well maintained, and both are in excellent condition for their age.

### **Cemeteries**

Topsail United Church owns and maintains three cemeteries located within the municipality of Conception Bay South, all of which have designated "Heritage Status" by the town. These cemeteries are all in good condition and annual maintenance is performed at all three locations which includes grass cutting, brush control, and fencing maintenance/repairs as necessary.

The three cemeteries and their status are as follows:

- Topsail Cemetery (active with limited space remaining)
- Long Pond Cemetery (inactive)
- Upper Gullies Cemetery (active)

## Formal Committees

Topsail United Church has the following formal sub-committees of the Official Board:

- Christian Development Committee
- Pastoral Care and Membership Committee
- Ministry and Personnel Committee
- Outreach Committee
- Property and Trustee Committee
- Worship and Sacraments Committee
- Finance Committee At present, the following two special sub-committees of the board are in place:
  - Fundraising Committee
  - Mission Articulation Plan (MAP) Committee

## Church Groups

The following groups meet on a regular basis at Topsail United Church and volunteer to support worship, fundraising, pastoral care, church events, and other initiatives:

- Men's Club
- Women's Coffee Group
- Adult Study Group
- Men's Choir
- Mixed Choir
- Courage Choir - Grade 1 to 6
- Inspiration Band - Grade 6 to 12
- Sunday School - Preschool to Grade 5
- Crescendo (ages 6-12, parents welcome)
- Encounter (ages 13-19)

There is growth in the senior demographic of our congregation, mainly brought about by grandparents moving to this area to be close to their families who have relocated for work to the St John's region. Proximity to medical services is also a large factor in their decision. Housing in our Pastoral Charge area is cheaper than that of the capital city and travel convenient.

A dwindling U.C.W. gave rise to a less formal morning "Coffee Group" where new people find fellowship and have become involved more quickly in the life of the congregation.

The Men's Club has a long history of fellowship and service within the church



## Pastoral Care

Topsail United Church provides chaplaincy related to the senior care homes in Paradise and Conception Bay South. As well as providing worship services, pastoral care is a large component for many of the residents of the homes.

## Partnership with External Groups

- Paradise/CBS Community Food Bank
- Conception Bay South Ministerial association.
- Out in Faith Committee which supports the LGBTQ+ community as it relates to faith issues.
- World Day of Prayer

## Topsail United Church provides space for community groups:

- Ti Kwon Do: Wednesday at 5:00 pm
- Tai Chi by the Sea: Monday and Friday at 9:30 am
- Speedy Sprouts: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 am
- Weight Watchers: Thursday at 6:00 pm
- Girl Guides: Tuesday at 6:15 pm
- Community Choirs
- Local Music Groups

## Volunteer Resources

Topsail United Church has a large complement of volunteers who both serve on committees and/or support the work of committees and groups in meeting the needs of the congregation and community.

## Current Financial Situation

Topsail United Church is fortunate to be in a positive financial position.

In 2019 there were 304 families listed as financially supporting the church.

## Personnel

Topsail United Church has a **full-time Minister** and 6 part-time contractual staff:

- Office Manager
- Youth Program Coordinator
- Caretaker
- Organist
- Adult Choirs' Director