# Friends of The Spire

# Annual Report 2023



**Our Vision:** **To support a core community building valued as an important contributor to Kingston's cultural and economic landscape, providing access and opportunity to foster community hope, inspiration, and creativity.**

**Our Mission**: **Friends of The Spire is an incorporated charitable organization with these aims:**

- **Maintain The Spire as a community hub that fosters the arts, social justice, and spirituality.**
- **Develop and provide safe, inclusive spaces for rehearsals, meetings, exhibitions, and performances by community members of all ages, and workspaces for not-for-profit organizations.**
- **Restore, protect, and enhance the heritage building to expand its community use.**

## Milestones 2023:

- **General Manager Sam MacLeod completed his first full year in this challenging and rewarding role.**
- **We expanded our provision of rehearsal and performance spaces for concerts, becoming part of the Rainbow Registry. Several self-help groups, Kuluta Buddhist Centre, Rotary, Helen Tufts Child Outreach Program, Lionhearts, Grapevine Theatre, Queen's Swing Dance club, Seniors for Climate Action, Orchestra Kingston, Kingston Choral Society, all found a welcome in our spaces. Rental revenues reached a new high of $135 000.00.**
- **We continued planning and fundraising for capital projects to ensure the sustainability of our building and its long-term community use. We are implementing significant technical enhancements to the Performance Hall: lighting, stage monitors for the chancel area, sound, projection, assisted hearing, roaming camera, streaming capabilities all feature top quality professional equipment. Other complete capital projects: new exterior lighting off Sydenham Street, informative posters on the Narthex Story Wall, new storage cupboards off the Lower Hall and Conference Room, second AED unit. GM MacLeod and FOS board members oversaw the majority of these projects.**





An open, active community building: audiences are back; Kingston Choral Society concert; GM Sam MacLeod and some new equipment..

## Bringing Our Vision and Mission statements to Life:

### 1. A core community building.

**In 2023 we continued our role as a community hub offering support and physical spaces for many organizations and programs. Our doors invite people to come inside our safe, affordable building. Hundreds of people enjoy our spaces each week. As the year progressed, some newcomers joined our building's community.**

### 2. A shared community-building space.

**Our commitment to community building is unwavering. As 2023 unfolded, The Spire's many spaces were alive with the sounds of children's voices, choirs rehearsing, self-help groups gathering. Live music reverberated in the Performance Hall. Audiences welcomed Cantabile Choirs, Kingston Choral Society, Orchestra Kingston, Kingston Youth Orchestra, Communications and Electronics Garrison Band, Harmonia Greek Theatre and Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. We are open to the community.**

### 3. A well-maintained community-building space.

**Ongoing projects at The Spire are providing users and tenants with improved facilities and amenities, including new stairs at the main entrance off Sydenham Street and lighting for the walkways off Sydenham Street. Many donors continued to support capital projects including an AED centre, new storage cabinetry, theatre lighting, a sound board, sound system, sound monitor in the chancel, improved storage off the Lower Hall and Conference Room. The gleaming Performance Space is ready for artists of all ages and disciplines.**

### 4. A place for shared community inspiration.

**The Spire's community garden, another sign of our commitment to neighbourhood wellbeing, continued to provide vegetables, flowers and a welcoming space for volunteers. Produce was shipped to Loving Spoonful.**







A Community Hub: the gardeners; Lionhearts setting up for The Embassy; Cantabile concert.

## Telling our Stories: Social Media

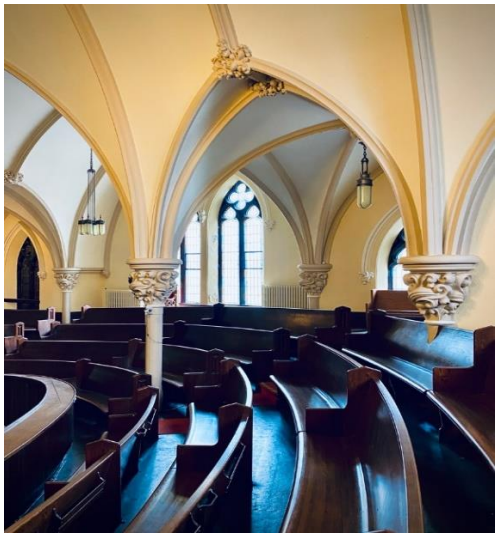
**Dana Ruprecht's postings to social media provided creative images of the building, grounds, showing us the Gothic architecture and secret places at The Spire, and some tenants and users. A series of stunning images and messages of inspiration greeted us daily on Facebook and Instagram. Dana resigned from her position in December, replaced by Trinette Atkinson. Long-time webmaster Bob Cavanagh passed responsibility for The Spire website to Carole Tomalty. We are immensely grateful to Bob for his many years of volunteer time spent developing and enhancing our website. In The Spire's foyer, a constant array of daily messages on the large tv screen informs viewers of coming events, another addition in 2023.**

## Sharing our Stories: The Narthex Story Wall

**The Spire Story Wall project, funded by the City of Kingston and the Kingston Association of Museums, Galleries and Historic Sites, provides opportunities for the public to learn about the congregation's history and current ongoing activities at The Spire. Stunning photos mounted on the Narthex wall depict people and events at The Spire and provide insight into some of the many tenants, users and milestones associated with this heritage building.**

# Managing The Spire: Memorandum of Understanding

**A Memorandum of Understanding, updated in 2023, is designed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the building and operations. It governs the relationship between Friends of The Spire and the Trustees of the congregation of Sydenham Street United. The Trustees of SSU hold the land and buildings in trust for The United Church of Canada. The Business Management Group (BMG) works closely with the Board of Friends to identify capital projects to be overseen by the BMG. Friends raises funds for capital projects and annual building maintenance. BMG members in 2023 are Walt Schmid (chair), Liz Bates, Steve Campbell, Marilyn Huffman, Anita Mercier, Murray Rielly, Jack Soule. Ruth Ranson resigned in 2023 as Administration contact.**








A visually stunning building: balcony; poster from The Spire Narthex Story Wall, contemplative setting.

## Organization

**Friends of The Spire first met formally in October 2013. In the spring of 2016, Friends of The Spire became a CRA-registered Not-For-Profit corporation with a Board of Directors. Board members for 2023: Steve Campbell (Chair), Rob Ivimey (Treasurer), Elspeth Deir (Secretary), Liz Bates, Cynthia Beach, Bruce Hutchinson, Ian Malcolm, Anita Mercier, Jack Soule.**

## Staffing

**Sam MacLeod began his first full year as General Manager of The Spire in January 2023, dealing with a host of challenges including many technical enhancements to the Performance Hall. Lisa Leavitt, Facility Manager, and Les Campbell, Custodian, continued to provide exemplary service to the community, tenants and users. FOS is pleased to be working for the common good of our operations and vision with this excellent team.**

## Financial Health

**Spire operating income from office rentals, concerts as well as grants and donations continued to rise in 2023. Friends of The Spire secured grants in 2023 from the Audrey and Peter Scholes Memorial Fund, the Anna and Edward Churchill foundation, the Community Foundation for Kingston and Area, ITW, the City of Kingston Heritage Fund, Regina Rosen Food First Fund, Smart and Caring Community Fund, Valerie Robertson Women in Theatre Fund, Western Continuity and many individual donors. This enabled us to provide improved amenities for our tenants and users, particularly in the Performance Hall. Our community support remains strong as we work to sustain the building. Our safe and affordable space is in demand and our fundraising work endures as we plan for the large-scale enhancements to the Performance Hall. Bank balance December 31, 2023: $128 913.66; income reached $256 746.00 (donations and grants); expenses $158 235.58.**





A wonderful performance space for the musicians of Orchestra Kingston, Kingston Youth Orchestra

# Looking Ahead

## Community Engagement.

**As has been the case for generations, hundreds of community members rely on The Spire to provide a safe, inclusive, affordable space for many activities. Our Story Wall and Spire Gallery projects exist to increase interest and engagement.**

**Friends Of The Spire and GM MacLeod continue striving to enlarge our community engagement, including reaching agreement with the Seniors Centre of Kingston to offer programs at The Spire. New in 2023: weekly Saturday night cafes in the Upper Hall sponsored by Lionhearts and featuring live local musicians.**

## Capital Projects

**Friends of The Spire and the Business Management Group collaborated on our list of future capital projects to enhance our ability to serve the community. Fundraising for capital projects continues, particularly for the Performance Hall. Board members are working diligently to shape the future of this community hub. Communication with the members of Sydenham Street United are ongoing. The Board commissioned a Heritage Impact Study, completed by Alex Rowse-Thompson, confirming the 1984 and 2015 heritage designation status of the Performance Hall but also confirming that our proposed projects will not noticeably impact the cultural heritage value of the space. As the Heritage Impact Study says: The Spire is an excellent example of the re-imagining and re-purposing of an historic space. The Board has enjoyed seeing the installation of new lighting, sound, soundboard, and streaming equipment, with dedicated attention from Architect Mikaela Hughes, Board members and of course GM Sam MacLeod. The improvements continue.**

Something new: Theatrical performances: Bread and Puppets Theatre; cabaret; Harmonia Greek theatre.







## Donors to The Spire in 2023

Friends of The Spire sincerely thank our generous donors for their many contributions to our capital projects. We are most grateful for their support.

**Community Members**:
Anonymous
Elizabeth Bates
Jan and Tim Bryant
Barb Carr
Robert Cavanagh
Martha Clarke
Harold Cumming
Elspeth Deir
Donna Delyea
Tonia Doerksen
Ross Drummond and Ruth Ranson
Deborah Elliott
Margaret Elliott
Dianne Fielding
Lynn and Russ Freeman
Peter Goheen
Andrea Gunn
Fiona Heath
Peter Huigenbas
Marilyn Huffman
Juliet Huntly and Michael Cooke
Samuel Leung
Ian and Rosalind Malcolm
Elizabeth Macdonald
Rod and Margi McKay
Laurie J. McKnight
Marylil Megginson
Anita Mercier
Barbara Moffatt
Nancy Moffatt
Madeleine Morris and Michael Dakin
Wayne Myles
Barbara Parker
Michael and Catherine Purcell
Beth Rines
Elizabeth Robinson
Victoria and Kirby Ruthven
Walter and Cheryl Schmid
A Britton Smith
Jack and Diane Soule
Nancy Spencer
John and Irene Suk
David and Maja-Lisa Thomson
Rosemary Thoms
Janice White
Ruth Wilson and Ian Casson
Eileen Woloshyn
John Wonswicz

**Corporate, Government, Foundations Funding:**

Anna and Edward C Churchill Foundation
Audrey and Peter Scholes Memorial Fund
Community Foundation for Kingston and Area
Davies Charitable Foundation
Kingston Association of Museums, Galleries and Historic Sites
Regina Rosen Food First Fund
Smart and Caring Community Fund
Valerie Robertson Women in Theatre Fund
Western Continuity



Funding from the Community Foundation of Kingston and Area is celebrated in late autumn.

**Photo credits**: All photos Dana Ruprecht except Lionhearts p 2 Ellie Deir; Story Wall Poster p 3: Narthex Team/Robert Mutch; Orchestra Kingston p 4: John Wonswicz