



CCSAC NEWSLETTER

CENTRETOWN CHURCHES SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

April 2024

Executive:

Chair: Kristine Burr
Vice-Chair: Emmy Verdun
Secretaries: Elizabeth Demaray &
Mary Mussell
Treasurer: Emmy Verdun
Communications & Newsletter
Editors: Mary Mussell &
Lorna Kingston
Facebook Coordinator: Anisha Eipe

Member Churches:

Blessed Sacrament
Canadian Martyrs
Centretown United
Christ Church Cathedral
Church of the Ascension
Dominion-Chalmers United
Eglise unie St-Marc
First Baptist
Fourth Avenue Baptist
Glebe-St. James United
Knox Presbyterian
Quaker Ottawa Meeting
St. Andrew's Presbyterian
St. Barnabas Anglican
St. Giles Presbyterian
St. John the Evangelist Anglican
St. Matthew's Anglican
St. Patrick's Basilica
St. Peter's Lutheran
St. Peter & St. Paul's Anglican
St. Teresa's Roman Catholic
Southminster United
Trinity Anglican

Our Mission:

To unite Christians of all
denominations through joint
participation in social projects and
prayer.

Get in Touch!

We would love to hear from you!
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Ottawa, Ont. K2P 1Z5
613-232-3059

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www.centretownchurches.org

Ottawa Community Land Trust

Steve Pomeroy, a long-time housing policy research consultant, spoke to CCSAC members at the February meeting. He noted that the loss of existing affordable rentals is higher than new affordable housing construction. In Ottawa, we are losing 31 affordable housing units for every one built.

To fill this gap, the Ottawa Community Land Trust (OCLT) is buying existing buildings with affordable rents to remove them from the speculative market and preserve them in perpetuity.

An OCLT goal is establishing a revolving fund to acquire modestly affordable rental housing. Their first purchase was a 6-unit rental property on Kirkwood Avenue with rent levels below the average market rent. They financed this purchase with a conventional mortgage, City of Ottawa grant, philanthropic gift and Housing Forever Bonds (community bonds). They maintain the building and pay the mortgage. At unit turn-over, the rent will rise but remain below market average.

OCLT hopes to raise \$1.6 million to establish a revolving fund. They offer 'Housing Forever Bonds' for people to invest in. These bonds of varying amounts are for a varying duration. Bonds offer 3-1/2% return.

How can you get involved in OCLT? You can become a member. They have membership for individuals and organizations. You can get involved in bond investment. You can volunteer on one of their committees or volunteer to assist with community engagement. More details are available on their website <https://www.oclt.ca>.

Acquisitions by non-profits offer a cost-effective and immediate solution. Perhaps this is something congregations could get behind.

Question: Are buying the bonds in the reach of ordinary people?

A. Yes, as little as \$5,000.

Question: Do you hope to purchase any buildings in the Centretown area?

A. Yes, this area has a lot of 1960's three storey buildings. Ariel Troster is very interested in keeping these buildings from developers. OCLT is hoping to purchase two more buildings in 2024, possibly in this area if they become available.

Question: Do you have a communication strategy?

A. We are working on getting printed material ready and getting our message out to a wider audience.

Question: How are you going to keep these buildings up?

A. Most will need upgrading such as new roof, new windows, etc. This is part of their budget in purchasing the buildings. The goal is to make the buildings as energy efficient as possible.

Finland's Answer to Homelessness

By: Jack Heynen

On January 16, the Alliance to End Homelessness sponsored an impressive event that featured two executives from Finland's non-profit Y-Foundation, the Federal Minister of Housing Sean Fraser, and the Chair of the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Inc. Joselyn Formsma.

Finland's Y Foundation is one of the largest landlords in Finland. It owns 18,000 properties for folk ready to move into a residence of their own.

The insights for me were:

1. Finland has almost eradicated homelessness after twenty years. They are a little different from Canada in that they are a country with a population of around 5 million.
2. All political parties in Finland signed on to help the homeless population, regarding each of them as full-deserving citizens with all rights and privileges.
3. Housing First is the motto (this movement now growing here in Canada) and the aim is to stop homelessness before it starts. Support systems are integrated with the housing.
4. Whatever the costs involved, their system saves costs in the long-run and is considered the wiser investment as the process often reenters folk back into the work force.

St. Bernard de Clairvaux



By: Rev Cas Duclos and Alexander Michaud

The St-Bernard community, a french-speaking church located in the heart of Ottawa, is characterized by its contemporary, progressive and inclusive approach to the Christian faith. Our community is first and foremost a space where anyone, regardless of life experiences or differences, can explore the sacred and become a full part of a community. As an inclusive church, we accept everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, status or belief. Our Anglican service is contemporary, informal and accessible. We also encourage an exploration of faith going beyond the individual to be expressed through a gospel of love, compassion and justice. This makes our church an ideal choice for anyone seeking a progressive faith experience in French.

We enthusiastically invite you to join us every Sunday at noon, either online or on-site at Trinity Church - .1230 Bank Street.