



**EGLINTON ST GEORGE'S UNITED CHURCH
MINUTES OF GOVERNING COUNCIL
DECEMBER 17, 2019**

Present: Marilyn Blair, Caren Cate, Rob Crabtree, Hugh DesBrisay, Rev. Paul Hutchison, Donna MacCandlish, Susan Moore, Alan Morson, Heather Parker, Maggie Wilkinson
Guests: Doug McWhirter (Honourary Chair), Peter Wilkins (Shining Waters lead rep) Alan Walker, Jennifer Thompson, Carolyn Woodland.

Regrets: Charlie Roden, Gord Thompson, John Blevins.

Susan welcomed our guests to our meeting and to new position. Peter informed the Council that Penny Wilkins has agreed to join him as Shining Waters representatives.

Caren lead us in prayer.

Business Items

- 1] **Minutes of November meeting:** A motion to accept the minutes of November 19, 2019 was made by Heather Parker and seconded by Caren Cate. **CARRIED**
- 2] **Finance:** Al Morson described the November finances at month end as on budget. The income is YTD below budget but ahead of last year. The expenses are in a good position.
- 3] **Paul's Update**
Paul complimented Kate Littler on the work she was doing. He touched on the discussion of the Cluster meeting on January 26, 2020. ESG will host this meeting which will primarily consist of 4 workshops. Information is being prepared and sent out to persons who might be interested. Paul introduced the possibility of moving church to St. Matthew's Church for Ruby's baptism. It was referred to the Worship Team.
- 4] **M&P – no report**
- 5] **Trustees (Hugh)** The Trustees reported that the Trustees have decided that the payments made to our pensioners semi-annually, from the supplemental pension fund, will be increased.
- 6] **Outreach (Maggie)** The Outreach Team has decided to provide dinners for the Dismas group in order that the group we support gets the designated money directly.

7] Property (AI)

Al Morson, Gord Thompson and Hugh DesBrisay attended a discussion regarding the development of property where 3 cases studies were presented focusing on starting a new development, working with a major partner like a seniors home, or working with a community focus using the building as a hub. (Refer to Shining Waters report)

Priorities

1. **North Toronto Cluster** (note information above)
2. **Flourish (Alan Walker)** Alan updated Council on the priorities of the Flourish program. Samantha Cavanagh has been working well with the house residents, meeting with them weekly providing spiritual growth, rules of life and individual coaching. One resident has moved on and Aiden, ESG Youth Co-ordinator, has moved in. More research is being done on how to use the church space effectively with the community in order to develop new possibilities for their missional work. \$5000 grant was applied for and \$2500 was received. The program development has been adjusted accordingly. A new marketing approach is being investigated and will be reported on later.
3. **Thrive (Jennifer Thompson, Carolyn Woodland)**
Jennifer reported that the organ restoration proposal is being developed and may be ready in March. Gala preparations are on track. Blyth is interested in increasing their school and using more space. Possible volunteer opportunities for the students are being considered.

Carolyn reviewed the possibilities for the gym, what would be required to make the space accessible and usable by a variety of groups. The three areas to consider are accessibility, esthetics, and cost. It is recommended that a feasibility study be done.

Susan requested that Paul express the Council's thanks and appreciation to the staff for their hard work and dedication to the congregation and our goals.

Paul ended the meeting with prayer after which we enjoyed some Christmas cheer.

Next meeting January 21, 2020

North Toronto Cluster meeting January 26, 2020

Coffee Hour March 15 2020

Chair – Susan Moore

Secretary – Marilyn Blair

Outreach Committee Report: December 17, 2019.

Compassionate Justice:

Speaker Harry Nigh is scheduled for January 19th. Beverley McLachlin, Feb 23. This is the 10th year for the series!! Attendance has been very good for the series to date – about 200+ people per event.

Peace with Justice

The Write for Rights Amnesty letter signing is December 15th – we are highlighting 5 petitions that focus on young people working to secure human rights or who have had their own rights abused.

Thursday Drop in Program

The program continues to run smoothly. We have served an average of about 15 people per week to date, and have provided guests with socks, mitts, hats and scarves when needed. There have been several new guests coming to the program this fall. The program will be closed on Dec 26th and Jan 2nd.

Out of the Cold

Out of the Cold dinners have been scheduled for this year: Nov 9, Dec 21, Jan 11, Feb 8, Mar 28. Volunteer sign up lists have been posted in the narthex. We anticipate serving about 160 people in December and are providing a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Donations of food for the dinner have helped to defray costs.

Good Food Box Program

We gave away 4 boxes of food last month to families in need. Next Good Food Box date is Thursday Dec. 19th.

Fair Trade Fair

The very successful and popular Fair Trade Fair was on November 24th, with new groups participating, including 10,000 Villages. Kate Littler did a great job organizing this event.

We are looking for a supplier who can sell us individual packets of fair trade sugar, as Lantic no longer carries this product. We need a champion to take on attention to our Fair Trade designation. We have received re-certification for this year.

Advent Gifts

We collected donations of goods and money for the following groups as part of our Advent Gifts on Sunday Dec 8th:

Massey Centre

Fred Victor Women's Shelter

TUNM

ESG Thursday Drop In program

We were very pleased with the congregation's response to the Advent Gift campaign – we raised \$4822 in cash donations, plus donations of gift cards (\$445 total I believe) and a nice amount of items from the 'suggested items' list. The organizations we support through this project are very appreciative of our help and were very happy to receive the donations well before Christmas.

In the event that more Advent Gift donations come in before the year-end, we will arrange for a second set of cheques to be issued.

Shining Waters Report

On November 23, Hugh Desbrisay, Gord Thompson and I attended a **Property Consultation** meeting of **Toronto** United Churches, at Fairlawn United Church.

The purpose of the meeting was to network with **other Congregations wrestling with property issues in the North Toronto context**. There were three case studies presented –

a) outlining how to start out down a development path; b) working with a major partner; and c) developing a community hub

I did not feel that these were particularly relevant to our circumstances - but were well presented and very thought provoking.

My observations/conclusions from the meeting are:

1) Most congregations are facing financial challenges coming from declining membership or decaying buildings.

- 2) Buildings which were a wonderful means to further a Christian community have now become a major focus and a liability. Rental income has become the means of surviving for a while.
- 3) Developments are focused on helping the neighbourhoods, while modernizing worship space, solving pressing financial challenges and hoping for a better future - **but not mission driven**.
- 4). Developments take much longer than expected - about 10 years or so, and can be exhausting.
- 5) The developments may be successful, but they don't end up as continuing outreach for the Congregation, but rather are under separate governance.
- 6) Not at all clear that Congregations that work with developers are better placed for the future, or have gained many new Christian congregants - but do have more modern space.
- 7) Sharing resources or multi point charges could be the direction for many, as we have too many churches - could/should lead to worthwhile mergers while energy exists and where missions are compelling and compatible.

Gord Thompson in general support of this added that the session “revealed what I see as a huge gap when congregations face the challenges. The gap is, I believe, that congregations seem to look at their property assets as a vehicle to undertake what are really outreach projects rather than long term improvements to the ministry and spiritual offering of the congregation. These projects offer nothing for the spiritual life of the congregation or the community. When the project is completed, after 10 years and thousands of hours of very hard work by volunteers, the benefits all accrue to the municipality and the congregation stays the same but is 10 years older. The congregation will still go down the tubes and the city will simply carry on running the food bank.

John Suk, minister at Lawrence Park Community Church, attended and then wrote a very thoughtful blog <https://faithisntwhatyouthink.blogspot.com/2019/11/have-been-to-half-dozen-denominational.html>

His comment in short is

Beware: Community Ministry or Focus Won't Save Your Church - in other words, the United Church and ESG are fundamentally not just about providing affordable housing, running food banks or drop in centres in our real estate. If there is no change to our spiritual offering, our approach to and communication with the wider community that surrounds us then we will wither and blow away like dust.”

12/12/19

Respectfully Alan Morson