

**EGLINTON ST GEORGE'S UNITED CHURCH
MINUTES OF GOVERNING COUNCIL (by Zoom)
September 22, 2020**

Present: John Blevins, Marilyn Blair, Caren Cate, Rob Crabtree, Kathleen Hull, Rev. Paul Hutchison, Donna MacCandlish, Susan Moore, Heather Parker, Charlie Roden, Gord Thompson, Maggie Wilkinson,

Guests: Rev. Sarah Chapman, Alan Walker, Lisa Elder, Doug McWhirter, Peter Wilkins.

Regrets: Hugh DesBrisay

Heather Parker opened the meeting with Prayer.

Priorities:

Financial Update – Gord

Gord led the Council through the Year-end Financial report.

It was moved by Charlie Roden and seconded by Gord Thompson that Council approves the 2019/2020 financial statements to be presented to the congregation at the 2020 ACM.

It was moved by Gord Thompson and seconded by Peter Long that Council accepts the recommendation of Finance committee to approve the budget and that it be presented to the congregation at the ACM. **CARRIED**

Two other motions were presented and discussed.

1) Gord moved and Caren Cate seconded that fundraising by members of the congregation for specific staff or contractors is not permitted. ESG does support "directed program donations" as per the example of support of leads for summer music. **CARRIED**

2) Gord moved and Caren Cate seconded that expenses that are not included in the annual budget, previously approved by Council and the Congregation, shall not be incurred by any program of ESG, regardless of any proposed fundraising to cover such expenses. Such expenses and proposed fundraising must first be recommended by Finance Committee and approved by Council. **CARRIED**

ESG Community Engagement – Donna

Donna presented a very comprehensive perspective on opportunities to enhance our communications between staff, volunteers and the congregation: our efforts are good and can we do more to share the good news; how can we also listen and open up a two way exchange. Any suggestions on how to proceed with this initiative were requested.

Nominating Update – Donna

Gord Henderson has been added to the M&P Team for approval at the annual meeting. People for the other positions with expiring terms are still being processed.

Approval of the Logo and Tagline – Alan and Lisa

A motion was made by Donna and seconded by Charlie to approve the new Logo and Tagline that Project Flourish members presented to the Council. **CARRIED**

North Toronto Cluster – Susan

Susan led a discussion on a proposal coming from Lawrence Park Community Church that members or the various church committees meet regularly to discuss information pertaining to the operations those committees are responsible for. Council accepted the idea and will proceed by Zoom to connect with the other churches.

Business

Minutes of previous meetings. – Marilyn

Marilyn moved and Donna seconded a motion to approve the minutes of July 31, 2020.

CARRIED

Marilyn moved and Charlie seconded a motion to approve the minutes of August 31, 2020

CARRIED

Marilyn moved and Heather seconded a motion to approve the minutes of September 8, 2020

CARRIED

Paul and Sarah update

Preparations for live stream are progressing. Colin Walker will be hired to assist with the technical issues.

Janet Hardy will be joining the team for 8 months as part of her educational requirements in the area of pastoral care.

M&P – no report

Trustees – no report

Property – John

Contractors are on site completing the upgrades in lighting and sound. Blyth School has requested and will pay for new filters on the furnaces pertaining to their area.

Sarah ended the meeting with prayer.

Annual Congregational Meeting – October 18, 2020 12:30 – 1:30 by Zoom
Council Meeting October 20, 7:00 pm
Council Meeting November 17, 2020 7 pm

Chair – Susan Moore

Secretary – Marilyn Blair

Committee Reports

Outreach Committee Report: Sept 22 , 2020.

Compassionate Justice:

No new info currently on CJ plans for the coming year.

Peace with Justice

Peace with Justice has not met since February 2020. For the coming year, Amnesty International petitions / letters are being distributed online through the weekly email on a regular basis. The group is deciding whether to meet on Zoom or do something else.

Thursday Drop in Program

A number of our past guests have been in touch about the program ending. We have alerted them to the Little Free Pantry and to the opportunity to sign up for a Good Food Box. Many have taken us up on the food box offer – we have donated a total of 20 boxes to people in need in September, and hope to increase this number next month. Several past guests have indicated their preference for vouchers, as the food boxes are not suitable for their situation, however, we have explained that the voucher program has ended for the foreseeable future.

Out of the Cold

At this time, we are uncertain about the future of the Out of the Cold program in Toronto for next year. We continue to wait for word from the city and from the OOTC board about what will be possible come next November.

Good Food Box Program

The program is running twice monthly out of Maggie's garage instead of ESG for this year. This month we were able to give out 20 boxes of produce to those in need. Some boxes were discounts from Foodshare, some were donated by Good Food Box customers, and some were paid for through ESG Outreach funds. We hope to continue to reach people in need through this program, as well as providing healthy food to customers in the community. We will be looking for help with deliveries as those numbers increase. Kudos to **Kim MacLaurin** for taking care of deliveries since April!

DISMAS

Dismas has been meeting online for the past few months. We have let them know that ESG Outreach is interested in helping out if possible. They are making plans for some kind of dinner together with safe distancing and take out style meals. ESG Outreach will help with providing some meals if possible. We are waiting to hear about the details and protocols being put in place.



Little Free Pantry

As of Sept 10th, the ESG Free Little Pantry is up and running! The **Last Minutes** group has generously offered to monitor and stock the pantry frequently through the first month or two. To date, we know the pantry is being accessed and that sometimes it has been 'cleaned out'. However, this has not happened often and it appears that generally people are making use of the pantry in an appropriate way. We have begun putting information flyers into mailboxes in the area immediately surrounding ESG and will continue to get the word out through various methods.

We invite you to take a look at the fabulous workmanship of **Connie Roden** – she did a great job building an attractive and functional cupboard.

Anti-Racism Discussion Group

The discussion group continues to meet regularly every second Thursday and is enjoying deep and rich conversation. We plan to extend invitations to specific groups we think might be interested in participating in similar discussions and to share our resources to date. Thanks to **Bo Bardos** (one of our alto leads!) for kicking off this initiative!

Fair Trade Fair

Kate Littler is examining different ways in which we might safely hold our annual Fair Trade Fair at ESG. We hope to be able to figure something out that could allow for physical distancing in our space.

Cluster Discussion

There is a meeting on Wed Sept 23rd of interested 'helpers' including churches from the North Toronto Cluster, social workers, and other groups regarding how best to assist the residents of the Roehampton Hotel Shelter (and perhaps other shelters in the city, but primarily this one as it is in our neighbourhood) . We hope to be able to report back on concrete ways we at ESG can provide help in a hands-on way.

ESG PROPERTY COMMITTEE: SEPT 22, 2020

1. Contract signed for the replacement of remaining lights in the church with LED lights. Materials delivered today and work has started.
2. The equipment required to complete phase II of the Building Automation System have been ordered and install will start soon.
3. There was an inquiry from Blyth Academy regarding filtering the air in the west wing in an attempt to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 . We provided information to them and Blyth has been contacted by Power Application Inc and is purchasing and installing special filters on the furnaces which service the area occupied by Blyth. Blyth Academy is paying for these changes.

Worship, Sacraments and Music Committee Notes for Council Meeting of September 22, 2020

Committee Activities

- The committee had an active summer with a committee meeting in late June to discuss the music programme for the 2020-21 worship calendar as well as coverage by committee members of virtual coffee hour throughout the summer.
- Members of the committee were also active in supporting the music budgeting process throughout July and August and in recruiting a special cohort of lay readers to support the Unravalled worship series run through the summer
- WSMC's chair Christine Lawson is actively involved in the planning for reopening the church for live services with congregational attendance this fall.

Meetings

- Last meeting for the 2019-20 Worship Calendar was on June 23, 2020. The meeting schedule for 2020-21 is currently being set.

Communication – Call to Action

In my new role as Member at Large for Church Community Engagement, I am eager to stimulate discussion about steps we can take to enrich engagement with our ESG family – both those who are actively involved and those less so.

I perceive a significant need to step up two-way communication to the greatest extent possible. This is not to say that efforts are not being made to achieve this; just that more needs to be done.

Many Great Things are Happening

As we have grappled with the complexities imposed by COVID 19 over the better part of the year so far, so many great things have been happening at ESG, thanks to the hard work and ingenuity of our Ministry team, many members and volunteers. To highlight:

- Paul, Don, Shawn and Bryan Estabrooks (with the compelling support of Christine Lawson and the Worship and Ministry team behind them) have done a stellar job navigating COVID challenges to bring us inspiring on-line services followed by virtual coffee hours. And we have enriched our worship experiences as we cross-pollinate delivery with others in our North Toronto Cluster and across our United Church Community. On a solemn note, the stream-lined funeral services, offered this summer, have been exceptionally special.
- Christine Lawson and the Worship Committee provided hosts for the Zoom Coffee Hour during the month of August. Don has been making plans for monthly Thursday evening Evensong services (eight in the next year), including "Christmas In A Minor Key" in December, and "Maundy Thursday" in April.
- Kate Littler, Caren Cate and the family ministry team have significantly expanded Sunday morning participation through our now virtual platform and continue to offer rich programming for parents and kids. Numbers have moved from 7 kids on average in attendance to, on many occasions, over 100, and their breadth of activities has expanded.
- Individual lay leaders and teams have creatively introduced innovative ways for us to engage – through, for example, our 'We Are Not Alone' Tuesday messages and 'Weekly Prayer Circle' on Wednesdays that keep us connected and nurture our needs. Thanks to Patti Thompson and Peter Wilkins for their leadership on these.
- Our Community Garden is thriving and lush, attracting all kinds of community interest and the in-kind and monetary support from sponsors like 'Scott's' and 'Faith in the Common Good' - clear testaments to the value of this initiative. Big kudos to Arlene Duncan, Reid Robson, Donna Lang, Aiden and the youth group for the loving care and muscle they have put into this effort.
- Apart from attending to the Community Garden, Aiden and the team participated in, and provided worship services for, the on-line GO Project.

- Don and our Pastoral Care team continue to connect with more than 100 individuals across, and beyond, the congregation through visits, phone calls and cards; have fostered connections and offered support to post-secondary students; continue to offer valued funeral support to both members and non-ESG community members when needed and will be joining the fall Grief Group championed by Deborah Hart in the fall; all of their efforts amplified through the compassion of ESG Angels, New Perspectives, Last Minutes and others.
- A team of 31 Champions and Ambassadors reached out to over 400 folks (both members and volunteers) to ‘check in’ in the early days of the COVID pandemic with an open-ended gesture to find out how folks are doing and offer a friendly ear as needed.
- Maggie, Connie and members of the Outreach team have been deep in thought and actively planning how to continue to provide outreach support in new, creative ways – modifying how programs, like the Good Food Box, are delivered and embarking on new programs such as their ‘Little Free Pantry’ to be launched shortly and ‘Kit Assembly’ program being contemplated.
- Patti Thompson and the Adult Education team have some intriguing programs planned for the year ahead and are deep in discussions about how to bring them to life in new ways that navigate the challenges of COVID restrictions – exciting new initiatives such as the ‘Coping with COVID 19 Anxiety Series’, ‘ESG Skills Exchange’ and ‘Bible for Busy People’.
- Our fabulous ESG Choir has established a small discussion group that is studying racism (particularly black racism) and anti-racism. They have begun sharing resource materials with the congregation through our Thursday ‘This Week at ESG’ emails.
- Our Project Flourish team, through presentations and ‘Percolating Sessions’, has made strides to share research findings and source input from various stakeholders to help shape how we move forward as we collaborate with RAMP, the marketing team that is working vigorously to enhance our brand and set the stage for reaching out to broaden our ESG community.
- Behind the scenes our various committees (Property, Trustees and Finance being examples) are hard at work, moving forward to build effectively for the future – installing a new sound system to improve internal communication on the sanctuary, installing a new assistive hearing system (which will benefit many), undertaking reconstruction of ESG’s front driveway, conducting an engineering assessment of the storage room roof to enable planning for future waterproofing, completing work needed to replace the remaining incandescent lighting with ‘greener’ LED lighting, procuring grants and incentive programs to support projects, innovating to compensate for lost revenue due to COVID, etc.
- Susan and a small, select think-tank of really clever, insightful folks have been thinking through the best and compliant ways to re-open our church so that we can actually connect, safely and smartly, in person once again in the months ahead.
- As part of the work done through our Project Flourish team, and as we prepared for the North Toronto Cluster session we hosted in January, we have developed a pretty comprehensive picture of the many (roughly 60), vibrant ways in which ESG is, or is

planning to, reach out. The array of programs and activities spanning traditional and non-traditional, spiritual and religious parameters, is very impressive. However, we have learned through our internal 'Percolating Sessions' and general feedback that most ESG'ers (even those considered highly active) are not actually aware of the breadth of what's offered and available. Missed opportunity!

Let's Share the Great News and Take the Pulse!

All that to say, there is an enormous amount of great, thoughtful work going on behind the scenes – we need to let people know about it – they **crave communication** and we can only benefit from opening up channels to both inform and, very importantly, (1) hear their feedback and ideas, (2) answer their questions and (3) be open to adapting our plans, based on that two-way exchange, to optimize success.

Throughout the 'Percolating Sessions' our Project Flourish team organized, those invited to contribute were grateful to do so. Their input was valuable, and I know they would like to continue to be involved. As we ask people to contribute in this way, and others, we should update them. If we adopt their suggestions, we should let them know why we have, and thank them; and where we do not adopt their suggestions, we should let them know why not, and thank them. People, when engaged, **become true champions!** Beyond that, this is just the right thing to do!

How Do We Accomplish This?

Over the last several years we have not had a dedicated Communications Chair on our Governing Council. Nor have we had a dedicated staff function/member tasked with communication strategy. As such, communication has become a shared responsibility with various groups operating in absence of the whole picture and an overarching strategy. How do we fix this?

In the short term we have funding in the Project Flourish budget that was earmarked for change plans and communications alongside sharing learning within the UC Community and, of course, marketing (internal/external). I suggest we take advantage of that in the short term to contract resources (RAMP and, as needed resources beyond RAMP) to bolster two-way dialogue with our congregation, update them and seek feedback on the many things going on at, and planned for, ESG. This is always important, but particularly now in this significant period of change as we evolve our strategy and contend with the realities characterizing the world around us.

Members of the Pastoral Care team, sensitive to the need for greater communication, have suggested we utilize the Ambassador team, if they are willing, to make calls out to the broader ESG population three times a year (fall, January and May) to provide updates as to what's happening. This would serve to forge relationships between callers and those called - almost a buddy system; allow for consistent messaging and the opportunity to tailor information appropriately; augment pastoral care programs and increase overall outreach; and build community, calls being warmer and more interactive than emails. And, happily, calls

can be made regardless of lockdowns. This would, of course, require considerable coordination but the basic blueprint is in place.

They have also suggested that we consider producing a brochure featuring our programs (both online and hard copy) that could be updated annually, for internal and broader distribution – great opportunity to leverage our new logo and branding!

Beyond our Pastoral Care team, we can reach out to other groups to source additional ideas – i.e. invite multiple stakeholders to offer up suggestions and make this a shared initiative. Great opportunity to engage and prosper in the process.

In the meantime, I am eager to hear your thoughts as to how we can bolster communication, both in the near term and looking into the future.

Strengthening our communication will champion a culture of engagement; strengthen broad-based understanding of the ways in which folks can participate in, and contribute to, life at ESG; promote lay ministry leadership; develop insights as to people's interests and talents; build community and a sense of belonging and; in essence, celebrate the many ministries of our congregation and its members.

Thanks in advance for considering and weighing in on this opportunity.