

ESG Governing Council Meeting Minutes

Date: December 16th, 2025

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Hybrid (in person and Teams)

Present: Marion Axmith, John Blevins, Gord Brookes, Hugh DesBrisay, Kathleen Hull, Paul Hutchison, Peter Wilkins, Maggie Wilkinson

Guests: Simon Cummings, Gordon Henderson, Colin Chungshik Kang

Regrets: Susan Moore, Caren Cate, Gord Thompson, Bob Blair

1. Opening

- Meeting was called to order by the chair
- Reflection on based on Isaiah 40, inviting members to consider where they sense hope stirring in the community and where they long for peace
- Members shared reflections highlighting:
 - Encouragement from increased attendance at worship, the Christmas concert, and the pageant, particularly among children, youth, and young families.
 - Hope arising from new and returning congregants, intergenerational participation, and inclusive community life.
 - Longing for peace locally and globally, including concern for world conflicts, political instability, and the need for justice, as well as personal peace and wellbeing.
- Prayer led by Paul with a focus on hope, imagination, and love in the Advent season.

2. Paul's Accountability Report

Paul presented reflections arising from a recent conversation with Janet Hardy regarding priorities that could most effectively advance the congregation's strategic direction. The discussion was exploratory and informational, with no decisions required at this stage.

a) Expanding the Care Network

- A recent Community of Care roundtable was highlighted as a successful engagement opportunity.
- Emphasis was placed on broadening and supporting the existing web of care across the congregation.
- The possibility of lay listener training was introduced as a means of equipping volunteers with skills for pastoral listening and support, while reducing isolation among those engaged in care work.
- Council members expressed appreciation for this approach and interest in learning more about potential training resources.

b) Expanding Invitation and Welcome

- Paul outlined a vision for strengthening invitation and welcome strategies, both within and beyond the congregation.
- Discussion included the importance of telling compelling stories, clarifying why events and worship matter, and meeting people where they are.
- The potential use of external communication and marketing tools (including digital advertising and CRM-style systems) was described as a way to increase visibility and follow-up with newcomers.
- Council members noted the importance of adapting any such models to a Canadian and United Church of Canada context.
- Success indicators were discussed, with clarification that engagement would include both worship attendance and participation in programs.

Council members offered initial feedback, asked clarifying questions, and acknowledged that further discernment and planning would be needed, particularly in collaboration with staff upon Sarah's return.

3. Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the Minutes of November 18, 2025 Council Meeting.
(Maggie, Simon) **Carried**

4. Ministry of Personnel (M&P) Resolutions

Two resolutions were presented on behalf of the Ministry of Personnel Committee:

Motion 1:

Resolved that the Governing Council approve the appointment of Caroline Woodland as Chair of the Ministry of Personnel Committee, effective January 1, 2026. (Maggie, Marion) **Carried**

Motion 2:

Resolved that the Governing Council approve a cost-of-living increase of 2.6% for the 2026 calendar year for staff members: Rev. Dr. Paul Hutchison, Rev. Sarah Chapman, Shawn Grenke, Megan Jamieson, and Murray Brooks. (Peter, Gord B) **Carried.**

It was noted that the next M&P meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2026, and that questions remain regarding alignment between M&P responsibilities and the strategic direction implementation. Janet Hardy, Hugh and possibly Simon will be in attendance.

5. Pastoral Care Team Report

Kathleen Hull provided a verbal report, noting:

- Successful collaboration between the Pastoral Care Team and Last Minutes Group to prepare and deliver Christmas gift bags for Super Seniors, followed by a shared meal.
- Launch of “Socks for Souls,” led by Judy Healy, to distribute socks to individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Completion of an updated contact list for ESG seniors, led by Arlene Duncan, and initial planning for updating the ESG photo directory (last completed in 2020).
- Hosting of the “Christmas in a Minor Key” service on December 11, with strong in-person and online participation.
- Ongoing grief support group facilitated by Deborah Hart, supported by ESG.
- Early steps being taken to reconnect with congregants lost to contact since COVID.

Additional remarks highlighted a recent lunch at Christie Gardens with seniors, which was well received and generated interest in resuming regular gatherings, with transportation identified as a key consideration.

6. Other Business

No additional items were brought forward.

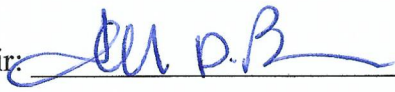
7. Closing Prayer and Adjournment

Maggie offered a closing prayer reflecting on the year past, the coming of Christmas, and the cultivation of hope and gratitude.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

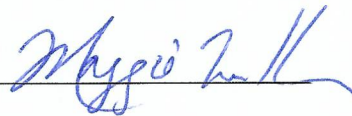
Next Meeting: January 20, 2026 at 7:00 pm in person and Teams. Closing prayer by Marion.

Chair:



Hugh DesBrisay

Note taker:



Maggie Wilkinson