ESG Council

Minutes of April 14, 2026

Chair: Hugh DesBrisay
Co-Chair: Simon Cummings

In attendance: Paul Hutchinson; Marion Axmith; John Blevins; Gord Brookes; Caren Cate; Sarah Chapman; Kevin Maynard; Peter Wilkins; Maggie Wilkinson; Carolyn Woodland

Regrets: Kathleen Hull; Charlie Roden; Gord Thompson

1. Opening

7:00 pm. The Chair called the meeting to order and confirmed quorum. Sound and connectivity were confirmed for online participants.

Kevin Maynard was formally welcomed as Secretary of Governing Council. His background and experience were acknowledged with thanks and appreciation.

---

2. Opening Reflection

Sarah led the spiritual moment. A candle was lit and an Easter reflection was offered, drawing on Kate Bowler's Blessing for Easter Sunday.

Council members were invited to share brief reflections on meaningful moments from Holy Week and Easter.

---

3. Approval of previous minutes

Acceptance moved by Maggie Wilkinson, seconded by Peter Wilkins. Carried unanimously.

---

4. Business Arising / Major Items

4.1 Vibrant Spirituality Center (VSC)

Sarah Chapman presented a VSC proposal via slide presentation, outlining alignment with ESG's strategic direction. The VSC is designed to be a soft entry to ESG or a traditional church, and supplement regulars with structured paths for spiritual growth. VSC is a ministry/program not a physical entity. Key points of the presentation included:

- A pilot model beginning fall 2026
- Five areas of spiritual engagement
- Emphasis on low-barrier entry points for spiritual curiosity
- Break-even operating budget (grant-dependent)
- One-year pilot with review in spring 2027

Council discussion focused on:

- Scope and pacing of the work
- Need for a resource plan to determine who is doing planning/execution/admin and how long each piece is projected to take
- Staffing and volunteer capacity
    - Daevyd and Sarah have been mapping out roles & responsibilities
    - There are significant benefits in using experienced partners who have already designed and presented their programs
- Alignment with existing ministries
- Learnings from the former Wellness Studio
- Communication and community engagement strategy

Motion: That Governing Council approve the general direction of the Vibrant Spirituality Centre proposal and authorize staff to proceed with pilot implementation.

Moved by Peter Wilkins. Seconded by Marion Axmith. Carried unanimously.

4.2 Ministry & Personnel Recommendations

There was general discussion of parental leave plan for Sarah, and support for Paul over this period. Love Alive will be handled by Daevyd, MJ & Jamie. Flourish House by Patti & Janet.

4.2.1 Extension of Program Support Position

M&P recommended extending the Program Support position to cover Sarah's parental leave.

Motion: That Governing Council approve the extension of the Program Support position (Daevyd Pepper) through August 30, 2026, at up to 20 hours per week through June and reduced hours over the summer, as outlined.

Moved by Carolyn Woodland. Seconded by Kevin Maynard. Carried unanimously.

Motion 2: That Governing Council recommend inclusion in the 2026–2027 budget of a Program Support position for Daevyd Pepper at up to 20 hours per week, September–June, at $30.75/hour.

Moved by Carolyn Woodland. Seconded by Maggie Wilkinson. Carried Unanimously.

4.2.2 Extension of Communications Contract

Dipale Raje and MJ are working on next year's calendar of events over the summer. Dipale currently has a 100 hour block of time contracted, rather than a set work week. M&P recommended a temporary increase to Dipali's hours to address social media and communications workload (currently in Paul's budget to end of the fiscal year, June 2026).

Motion: That Governing Council approve a trial extension of Dipali's communications contract by 10 additional hours per week through June 30, 2026, and that continuation be considered during 2026–2027 budget planning.

Moved by Carolyn Woodland. Seconded by Caren Cate. Carried unanimously.

4.2.3 Truth & Reconciliation Day Staff Policy

M&P presented a proposed staff policy for Truth and Reconciliation National Day, aligned with United Church of Canada and Shining Waters Regional Council practices. This included allowing staff to participate in Truth & Reconciliation activities on this day.

Motion: That Governing Council approve the staff policy for Truth and Reconciliation National Day, to apply annually, as presented.

Move by Marion Axmith. Seconded by Carolyn Woodland. Carried Unanimously.

---

5. Updates and Other Business

- Maggie Wilkinson suggested moving council meetings to the 4th Tuesday, starting in September.
- Council agreed condolences should be sent to Donna McCandlish; Maggie Wilkinson volunteered to send on behalf of Council.
- Council members were reminded of upcoming spring and summer programming.

---

6. Closing Prayer

John Blevins offered a closing prayer

---

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Minutes recorded by Secretary Kevin Maynard, with recorded assistance provided by Paul Hutchinson.