

**Leadership Team Meeting
Mount Forest/ Woodland
United Church Pastoral Charge
June 18, 2024**

On June 18, 2024 the leadership team of the Woodland Mount Forest Pastoral Charge met in the gymnasium of the church instead of the Fellowship Hall because of the work being done to paint and brighten up the Fellowship Hall.

Laurie had set up a zoom link but no one joined via the zoom. Those in attendance were: Dan McArthur, Al Leach, Diane Johnson, Bob McFarlane, Lene MacLean, Laurie Aitken, Rick Sinnamon, Norm Eygenraam, Betty Seminowicz, Neil Aitken, and Reverend Lori Campbell.

As a way of introducing ourselves to Lori, everyone took a turn to say who they were and what rolls they had in the church.

Bob McFarlane opened the meeting with a prayer.

Rick Sinnamon moved that we accept the minutes from the May 21st meeting, second by Lene MacLean. Carried.

Business arising from the minutes:

Lene MacLean updated us on the church basement. A positive response from the green in Fellowship Hall. Juliann, Shawn, Lene, and Dan chose the paint chips.

Bulletin boards are down. Tapestries are being moved. The summer pulpit which hasn't been used in decades is being moved. A bookshelf is being organized with children's books to use during coffee time and funerals.

Lighting update next month.

Janice Benson had found a North Wellington grant application through the Community Development Coordinator. Suggested ideas were wheelchair accessible washroom and a chair lift to the third floor. Deadline is July 23. Janice to do the footwork. Moved by Al Leach seconded by Diane Johnson. Carried.

Al Leach then presented the financial report. BMO expenses seem to be increasing. PAR is becoming continually more popular and much easier to deposit. The full financial report can be read at the end of these minutes.

Mission and Service held a beautiful strawberry social and art show. \$840 was raised.

Norm Eygenraam gave the highlights of the May WOW meeting. It was the big meeting so far this year and Norm also gave an informative written report. Norm specifically was saddened by the sudden passing of a regional indigenous leader to WOW, Joyce Johnson. She had been highly respected and conciliatory.

Norm also told of the newly ordained ministers and explained the new ways the candidacy board is working. Questions from our search committee arose as to qualifications and the costs involved if a church hires an off shore candidate. Norm clarified the misunderstandings and noted the executive is trying to "get things back on the rails."

We encourage everyone to read Norm's written report:

Report on Spring W.O.W. meeting in Port Elgin May 24, 24, 26, 2024

Theme: Life Together

This was considered a Tri-regional meeting with Antler River Watershed and Horseshoe Falls so that we could all hear the moderator speak and welcome the new executive minister for the 3 regions. There was also scheduled separate time for individual business.

2pm Friday – our opening worship included covenanting with the new executive minister for the 3 regions, Mark Laird who has replaced Cheryl-Ann. C-A has joined a position in the national church. Mark was previously the minister in Drayton and also the president of W.O.W. He has never taken himself too seriously and this day was no different. He showed up in t-shirt and shorts. He has already had some practice in that he filled in for C-A while she was on sabbatical.

Tanya Cameron of the Office of Vocation and Tim Hackburn of the Indigenous Office of Vocation did a presentation on how ministers are to be paid electronically and the importance of pay stubs. Apparently the majority of M&Ps and treasurers are not aware of the requirements and are not doing paperwork correctly.

The Community of Faith Stewardship support program has reworked a number of the stewardship videos to create more engagement and givings. In light of the congregational meeting which we had prior to extending the call to our new minister, I think it would be beneficial to show these to the congregation. They are more entertaining than you might think. Greg Smith-Young did a presentation on how we can envision growth in the church. This involves renewing, creating and inviting. Unless we are prepared to step out of our comfort zone and do church in new ways we will not be in a position to meet anyone who may be searching. This definitely includes thinking outside the box. The second part of his presentation had to do with recognizing the DLMS who had done some extra work and now are in a position to be fully ordained. Basically their life experience will be credited to them in lieu of the education which they did not get originally.

In the report for Kindred Works, it was noted how many churches are providing space for community services as AA, NA, Food Bank, etc. All of these services are desperately needed by the community and these services could not be provided without the partnership of the local churches.

The afternoon was closed out with staff reports which pertained to all 3 regions. These included, Indigenous Ministries, Right Relations and Justice, Pastoral Relations, Congregational Support. After the dinner break, we heard from the moderator of the United Church, Carmen Lansdowne. She is the first indigenous person to hold this role. She is absolutely delightful woman who does not sugar coat anything. She has this unique ability to kick you in the butt when it is needed and you say “thank you”. It is her custom to start a speech by describing what she looks like and what she’s wearing. This is done for the benefit of the visually impaired but it is done with humour. Despite being raised to overcome racism and prejudices, she does not dwell on it much or take herself too seriously. There were lots of laughs.

She talked about how the church had restructured and no sooner had we settled into figuring all of that out, then the world restructured due to COVID. There has been a lot of hurt and hurtful words. Carmen reminded us about how the United Church is known for its daring justice and bold discipleship even when we are struggling. It is critical that we live FOR each other instead of WITH each other. Our communities of Faith are a gift to the community. Our mission, discipleship and evangelism are the life blood of the church but they are also often triggers to bad things for those outside the church. We have to be prepared to do things differently. We often pray for patience. God does not give people patience. He gives them opportunities to be patient. The same is true for courage.

In her talk, she repeatedly referenced a book written in the 1930s by German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer called “The Cost of Discipleship. This is definitely one that is now on my wish list.

I have a copy of her talks for anyone who is interested.

Saturday 9am – Separate W.O.W. time lead by president Jennifer Irving

After opening worship and a lot of routine business, the first report was by Rebekah Duncan on the work she has been doing to build a W.O.W. directory. This should be ready for release in 3-4 months.

There was a presentation of and discussion on the slate of commissioners going to General Council next year. The committee charged with creating this slate were looking for volunteers but also had a mandate for the diversity that was needed.

There was a motion from Glen Allen United Church to allow non members to be in positions of leadership. The intent with this motion was that it go to General Council for discussion and a decision. Even though I felt there were some red flags with the way things were worded, I spoke in support of the motion for the simple reason that it would continue the dialogue. From a practical perspective, there are many communities of faith that are struggling to fill vacancies in committees. There are many long time supporters who for one reason or another have never become full members. There was not enough time to finish the discussion and to vote so it was carried forward to the evening meeting.

Rebekah Duncan was the only name put forward for President elect. Have worked with her on the Congregational Support Commission. Well spoken, caring individual. A good choice.

When we went back to a joint meeting, the 4 candidates for ordination were introduced. After each candidate was introduced, they had about 5 minutes to share their goals, vision and mission. It was also noted that since there are now 70 candidates looking for work, the candidacy board is no longer accepting applications. This was also something that the moderator addressed rather vigorously.

The moderator spoke again. She asked the question if we were allowing the new church to grow into what it was meant to be or are we stuck in the past and comfortable with what was. She really challenged the church to face its prejudices. There are so many churches without ministers at the same time as there are so many candidates looking for a position. We proclaim that we are anti racist but our actions do not match. She also addressed the struggles of the DLms in getting to a more equal footing. We are often closed minded and do things the way they were.

After her talk, she was presented with a gift and then it was announced that Sue Dulliban who is the executive secretary for the 3 regions will be retiring after the fall meetings. She will be missed.

This was followed by the celebration of ministries. It was a long service since there were 24 DLms who were also being ordained. It was a real joy and celebration for some whom I have had working relations.

After the supper break, we continued with the regions meeting individually. Rebekah Duncan shared her vision of what she would do and prioritize as president of W.O.W.

The communities of faith in our region who have completed the affirming process were recognized. There were 4 pastoral charges ... Grace United of Hanover, Lakeshore in Goderich and two point charge Rockwood and Eramosa.

The committee responsible for creating something for the 100th anniversary celebration of the United Church was presented. One of the ideas they have come up with was to create a map of the region as a puzzle which was cut into 124 pieces. One for each community of faith. Each CoF needs to decorate and return their piece by the end of 2024. I introduced this idea to both of our CoFs when I lead worship on June 9.

The new W.O.W. executive and the slate of commissioners was approved.

Discussion was renewed on the motion from Glen Allen and the motion was defeated. There was follow up discussion on if it should still go to General Council for discussion. There was discussion overnight behind the scenes and in the morning it was decided that the motion would go to the Congregational Support Commission for further discussion and rewording since it was recognized that even though the motion was voted down, there was general support for the idea. The revamped motion will be presented at the fall meetings.

To close out our evening meeting, the moderator joined us for a Q&A. The question that took up most of the time was centered around her view of the conflict in Gaza. The United Church is pushing for an immediate ceasefire and resumption of aid to the Palestinians. The peace plan needs to recognize a two state system. Members of the United Church have been meeting regularly with parliamentarians. Carmen emphasized that 4 handwritten letters to the parliamentarians carry much more weight than a petition with 1000 signatures. It was also emphasized that education is step one of any involvement in the peace process. Unless you learn how the situation got to where it is, you can not be involved in the resolution.

Sunday morning session went from 9am to noon. The first hour was spent as individual regions. Our president elect Rebekah Duncan was confirmed. Those present were informed as to what was happening with Glen Allan's proposal which was approved unanimously. There were a few other small matters of unfinished business.

As the 3 regions came back together, we were given an update on the executive evaluation which has been done. The executive is taking the feedback very seriously and wanted people to know what has been implemented, what is still a work in progress and what things are impossible to change. I really get the feeling that they are really trying but in the realization it is going to be virtually impossible to connect with everyone and make everyone happy.

The Discipleship Commission will be reaching out to each pastoral charge to clarify what they can do to push the Canadian government into action on the Gaza crisis.

The final hour + was in our final worship. Mark Laird delivered the message where he really wrapped things up around the theme which was "Living Together"

As a final personal note, there is so much in this report and then I realize there is so much more that I could have written. It is, and has been a joy to serve as your regional rep. It has been a position which I have experienced a lot of fulfillment and growth from. Thank you for the opportunity.

Norm Eygenraam

Rick Sinnamon moved that we accept the committee reports. Seconded by Betty Seminowicz, carried.

A regional meeting of the LLWL is being scheduled for either October 19 or 26 and chose this church as their central location and we're hoping to have the rental fees waived and use of the kitchen. Lene MacLean informed the meeting of the last two rentals from WOW and their expectations of kitchen catering, cleanup, and payment.

Betty Seminowicz moved that we waive the rental from whichever date they chose. Second by Neil Aitken. Carried.

Rev. Lori told us she is working out all the moving to Fergus and new conditions of the job, but is hoping to be in Mount Forest at the church office from Tuesday to Thursday, and Sunday afternoon in Pastoral Care. She doesn't want to take vacation time until after VBS which will be August 6-9, and before Woodland anniversary August 25.

Rick Sinnamon suggested it could be possible that the mice have returned to the Upper Room. Dan said he will investigate and speak to those in charge.

Betty Seminowicz informed us that the call bell for the elevator wasn't working last Sunday. Once again, Dan said he will investigate.

The usual Fireworks Hymn sing will be as usual on the Sunday of the Fireworks.

Bob McFarlane mentioned that the 40 year old speakers facing the choir are sketchy at best. Derek is so diligent that he continually tries to repair them. It was suggested Bob and Derek try to get a quote for some new equipment for next meeting.

Rick Sinnamon motioned that we adjourn.

Financial Report to Leadership Team Meeting- June 18, 2024

May Financial statements have been received.

- General fund balance to end of May is similar to the end of May is approx. \$89,700.
- Total income (operating & non-operating) is now approx. \$21k above the YTD (year to date) target largely due to \$25k bequest received this year.
- Operating income (receiptable and non-receiptable) is approx. \$21,000 above YTD projection.
- Total Operating Expenses are down approx. \$47,000 over YTD projection based on fact that most committees have little or no expenditures to date and no Minister salary & benefits has been expended though included in YTD projection.
- Excess Income/Expenses is higher than YTD target by approx. \$67,500.
- A year end deficit of \$48,500 was the original approved budget projection, however with current revenue & expenditure picture & the hiring of a new Minister; a revised projection, with possible financial support from Trustees, is estimated at an approximate break-even year-end projection for 2024.
- Preliminary indicators are, that after 5 months, the Church is in a positive financial position.

➤ COMMITTEES EXPENDITURE PICTURE:

- M&P is currently under projection by \$35,000, mainly based on no Ministerial expenses to date and the Admin Assistant position has not yet been filled. This will change with the start of salary & related expenses for a new Minister in June.
- Worship Service- on target.
- Choral – exceeds YTD target by approx. \$250 due to fees and copyright expenses.
- Pastoral Care –minimal expenditures to date.
- CE – minimal expenditures to date.
- M&S – no expenditures to date.
- Benevolent- no expenditures to date.
- M&F – slightly below budgeted target.
- Media – slightly above budgeted target.
- Church Property - below YTD target by approx. \$3,500 mainly due lower hydro & repair costs.
- Church House- below YTD target by approx. \$1,000 due to lower heating & repairs.
- Grounds – currently below YTD target by approx. \$1,100 related to reduced snow removal costs. This could change depending on snowfall in the early winter months in 2024.
- Admin – exceeds YTD target by approx. \$400 due to internet & office supplies costs.
- WOW –slightly exceeds YTD target by approx. \$1,000 as assessment cost has increased.
- Fundraising – exceeds annual budget by approx. \$200

Under non-operating funds, there are currently retained funds in a) the camp account; b) strategic planning c) the Green Team and d) Refugee Sponsorship accounts. A possible discussion on how to use or where to move funds of approx. \$3,600 in the Strategic Planning account, remaining from a few years ago, should take place. Are there any restrictions on this grant?

Respectfully submitted: Al Leach Finance & Stewardship Committee Chair

