

HIGHLAND HILLS UNIFIED BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Brian Austen, Joan Chapple, Rebekah Chevalier, Shawn Chevalier, Neil Darby, Erskine Flook, Janet Heffer, Debbie Sherwin, Pat Thornett, Rev. Max Ward, Barbara Walford-Davis

Regrets: Bruce McClennan, Marybeth Wilson

Rev. Max opened with prayer.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: Debbie Sherwin/ Pat Thornett moved and seconded the approval of the agenda as amended to add Nominations under New Business. **Carried.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of June 7, 2023, Unified Board meeting.

Motion: Rebekah Chevalier/Barbara Walford-Davis moved and seconded acceptance. **Carried.**

Business Conducted Via Email:

Motion: Moved by Bruce McClennan, seconded by Brian Austen that Highland Hills Pastoral Charge invest in a bond offering from Places for People, with an initial investment of \$10,000 and a further \$5,000 in October if cash flow permits.

Correspondence: Rev. Max received a letter of congratulations from the Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, marking the 20th anniversary of his entry into ministry. Barbara Millington sent a letter saying she had reviewed the financial records for the pastoral charge and HHUC for the year 2021 and that bill payments and deposits to the bank were complete, well organized and accurate. ECORC correspondence was received regarding the Discerning Currents Consultation Survey that is gathering data to create a plan for the future of the church and the Regional Council figure out what it should do in the coming years to make that future possible.

PASTORAL CHARGE

Chair: Janet Heffer thanked the Lift Committee, Erskine Flook, Bruce McClennan and Neil Darby, for their work. She thanked Brian Austen for completing the fire plan.

Clergy: Rev. Max Ward had sent a report in advance (attached).

Pastoral Care: No report.

Treasurer and Finance: Erskine Flook had emailed a report on finances in advance (attached). Regarding the General Fund, he noted that the report reflects a \$5,000 bequest received from an estate in the spring. He said that the HHUC bank account can now accept e-transfers. Some \$22,000 in expenses have been paid out for the lift. Erskine did a comparison of the General Fund last year at this time to this year. The general givings are up 3% from last year, even with the lift fundraising. There was a question as to whether there are more givers than last year. Erskine says he will provide this information as well as the average amounts given.

Contributions from Hope United are helping HHUC, and the bank account is now over \$10,000. He noted that in the General Fund we are still spending more than we are taking in.

Motion: Moved and seconded by Erskine/Brian that the HHUC and pastoral charge financial reports be accepted. **Carried.**

Action item: Erskine asked all chairs to review their budget for 2024 and advise him of any changes from 2023.

Ministry and Personnel: Shawn Chevalier had emailed a report in advance (attached). He noted that M&P will be meeting at the end of October with Hope United regarding extending the arrangement for another 6 months. Rev. Max reported that Hope met recently and is wanting to renew the arrangement.

A question was asked regarding what happens with Hope United when Rev. Max is on sabbatical next year. The expectation is that those doing pulpit supply will do both congregations.

Shawn noted that the United Church has traditionally used the Canadian cost of living index to guide staff salary increases. For 2024 it will be 6.3%. However, they are recognizing the difficulty this presents for many congregations, so The United Church of Canada will re-evaluate what tools to use to determine the percentage in future years.

Manse: Brian reported that a meeting was held in August. There were \$708 in expenses. These included the following: The smoke alarms were changed, there was paint for a bedroom, and hedge trimming. The balance in the manse account is \$1,415. It was noted that the deed to the manse is missing. It was suggested that the bank safety deposit box be checked. This has been raised because there is a tree that they do not know which property it is on. **Action item:** Janet will do some checking.

A question was raised as to why there is a separate bank account for the manse. The answer is, in case Rev. Max needs something immediately. It was also noted that another person is needed for the Manse Committee.

Maple Lake Trustees Report and Update: Rev. Max's reports covered this.

Worship/Pulpit Supply/CE: Sunday attendance has been steady. There is a workshop called "Flourishing" on Nov. 10 in Kingston. Janet will circulate the information in case some are able to attend.

Outreach: Pat Thornett had emailed a report in advance (attached).

ACCEPTANCE OF HHPC REPORTS

Motion: Barbara Walford-Davis/ Shawn Chevalier moved and seconded the acceptance of all committee reports. **Carried.**

HIGHLAND HILLS UNITED CHURCH REPORTS

ECORC: Debbie Sherwin had circulated a report in advance (attached). She noted that there is training being offered to M&P committee members.

There was discussion of the remit regarding an autonomous Indigenous organizational

structure. Debbie noted that the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission included ones aimed at churches and their need to educate their constituency regarding the history and role of the churches in colonization. The United Church also has committed to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation. She explained that this is all part of why congregations do things like read a land acknowledgement every Sunday. She noted that the remit is about a new relationship with the Indigenous church.

There was discussion of the remit. Points raised included a dissatisfaction with the lack of information about the systemic barriers the remit is supposed to remove and a lack of clarity in the information about the remit that Board members had reviewed in advance. Other points were that the national church is taking a courageous step by asking congregations to take a leap of faith. And that we are being asked to trust the Indigenous church to determine its structure, and if we ask for more detailed information, this would demonstrate a lack of trust.

After discussion, it was determined that not all members of the Board were ready to vote on the remit and that some require more information. Debbie will be asked to identify links for several online resources that she mentioned that could be sent out to the Board. The remit will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting.

Rev. Max noted that he was asked to be a supervisor for a student minister in Whitby and he declined.

Trustees: Bruce McClennan had sent a report in advance (attached).

Property: Neil Darby had sent a report in advance (attached). He encouraged anyone who is in the church to empty the new dehumidifier.

Stewardship/Fundraising: This will be addressed under Lift Fundraising.

UCW: Pat Thornett had emailed a report in advance (attached). She noted that at the last Diner's Club, they put out a tip jar that raised \$75 for the lift fund.

ACCEPTANCE OF HIGHLAND HILLS UNITED CHURCH REPORTS

Motion: Rebekah Chevalier/ Neil Darby moved and seconded acceptance of the reports.
Carried.

NEW CHARGE BUSINESS

Lift Financing and Fundraising: Janet noted that the Fundraising Committee has organized a lot of things over the last few months.

The Drew Allan fundraising concert was discussed. The timing of the concert is not good, as there are other events within our congregation in December plus other musical events in the community. The Board also needs information about his genre of music. It was agreed to revisit this concert as a fundraising possibility for the spring. Max will pass this on to Dee and Katy.

Mulligan's has offered to host a Christmas buffet for \$10 and the church would be able to add more to the ticket cost to make it a fundraising event. The suggestion was that the tickets be \$30 each, with \$20 that will go toward the lift. **Motion:** Moved and seconded by Barbara

Walford-Davis/Brian Austen that a fundraising dinner be held at Mulligan's on Thursday, Dec. 14, with a ticket cost of \$30. **Carried.**

The cookbook: The production cost per book is \$7-\$8. 200 are being printed. **Motion:** Moved and seconded by Pat Thornett/Barbara Walford-Davis that the sale price of the cookbook will be \$20. **Carried.**

There was discussion as to whether or not we should reduce the expectation of how much of the \$80,000 needed for the lift will be raised from donations and fundraising versus how much will be covered from reserves. Realistically, we think we will raise \$15,000 to \$20,000 from donations and fundraising. Further thought is needed as to how and when to communicate this. In the meantime, it was agreed to reduce the number of fundraising activities in the new year.

It was agreed to postpone the November travelogue fundraising event until some time in the New Year. It was also agreed not to have a carol singalong in December, as that month is already busy. Nov. 17 was suggested as a murder mystery night.

Nominations: In the past the past chair was the driving force, but our past chair has moved away. So we all need to start looking and ideally it would be good to get some of the newer members involved. We also need to identify the key vacancies.

Next meeting: The next meeting was set for Wednesday, Dec. 13, at **9:30 a.m. (Note change of time.)**

Rev. Max closed the meeting with a prayer. Rebekah Chevalier moved adjournment.

Chair, Janet Heffer

Secretary, Rebekah Chevalier