

HIGHLAND HILLS UNIFIED BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, Oct. 19, 1:00 p.m. via Zoom

ATTENDANCE: Rebekah Chevalier, Shawn Chevalier, Andy Cooper, Lois Deacon, Erskine Flook, Bruce McClennan, Pat Thornett, Barbara Walford-Davis, Rev. Max Ward

Regrets: Brian Austen, Joan Chapple, Neil Darby, Janet Heffer, Tom Parish, Marybeth Wilson

Andy Cooper opened with prayer.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: Rebekah Chevalier/ Bruce McClennan moved and seconded the approval of the agenda. **Carried.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of July 13, 2022, Unified Board meeting.

Motion: Rebekah Chevalier/ Erskine Flook moved and seconded acceptance. **Carried.**

CORRESPONDENCE: Andy received a request from Hope United Church in Norland, which is requesting Rev. Max to officiate two Sundays a month, beginning in the New Year. They do not envision any change in pastoral relations at this time. This was discussed under new business.

PASTORAL CHARGE

Clergy: Rev. Max had circulated several reports (attached). He highlighted his gratitude for having the privilege of being able to take a sabbatical.

Pastoral Care: Marybeth Wilson had circulated a report in advance (attached). There is a need for more pastoral care callers. It was suggested an announcement go in the bulletin seeking callers. **Action item:** Rev. Max will work with Dee Wruth on this.

Treasurer and Finance: Erskine Flook had circulated a report in advance (attached). Regarding the Pastoral Charge, there is nothing particularly outstanding. The biggest extras were in office expenses, Internet costs related to a new website, and the purchase of a safe storage box reflected under office equipment. For 11 months HHUC is bearing the full cost of the Charge. There is a shortfall of \$3,500, but there is money in the bank to cover it. Rev. Max noted that he has not submitted six months' worth of his expenses because of his sabbatical. He estimated the amount will be about \$2,000.

Budgets are coming up. We have received notice that there will be a 3.2% cost of living expense for Rev. Max. For Dee the first increase was 1.3% on the one-year anniversary of her hire in September and then effective Jan. 1, she will get the cost of living. The cost of living will also apply to Melissa. These increases amount to \$4,000 for staff salary and benefits. There are also increases in fuel costs. Mileage reimbursements also went up, which affects pulpit supply and Rev. Max. This will add about \$200 for the year.

Regarding the Church, givings are down and there has been no opportunity for fundraising. Insurance and fuel are up. Expenses are up about 5%. As a result of all this, there is a shortfall of \$23,000. However we have not transferred any money from the trustees, which we had budgeted \$10,000 for. Our financial position: we have money in the bank, but the General Fund has a shortfall of \$8,000. We are living off the money from some of the other funds. Erskine suggested funds from the trustees be requested for the end of the year. Bruce McClennan agreed with this approach. There is \$16,000 available in the Canaccord account.

Responding to a question, Erskine said he would be concerned when the bank account drops below \$10,000. It's currently \$25,000. There was discuss about givings being down 5%.

Concern was expressed about the impact due to the lack of fundraising. Rev. Max fed in ideas that he heard about. For example, if the church sells gift cards, chocolate, or cheese and gets a portion of the sales. It was questioned whether we would we get enough back to justify the time commitment this would involve. Fellowship-oriented fundraising seems more in alignment with our values. It was agreed that we should let people know about the financial situation. This could be in the bulletin, in an announcement, and in a letter or email to the congregation. We could put something at the end of the order of service. It was suggested the letter not be totally focused on finances but be in the form of a check-in as well. The letter could include the need for pastoral care callers.

As Maple Lake winds up, the hope was expressed that they would consider the pastoral charge a place where some of their excess funds, if any, could be donated. It was clarified that the region is treating the disbanding in a similar way as amalgamation. The bulk of any residual funds would go to Highland Hills. **Action item:** Rev. Max and Erskine will work on a short congregational letter to be sent out.

Erskine feels that costs related to piano maintenance should come out of the Music Fund. This year it came from the General Fund. It was clarified that if there is a need to purchase music and if there are not enough funds in the Music Fund, this would come from the General Fund. **Action item:** Erskine will speak with Melissa and Joan about the Music Fund and its use. Currently the expectation the choir is working under is that the onus is on the choir to raise funds to purchase music. This is not the expectation now.

Motion: Erskine Flood/ Lois Deacon moved and seconded acceptance of the HHPC and HHUC financial reports. **Carried.**

Ministry and Personnel: Shawn Chevalier had emailed a report in advance (attached).

Manse: Barbara Walford-Davis reported. Brian Austen, Barbara, and Andy had a meeting regarding the possibility of Rev. Max's father moving into the manse. It was noted that any expenses related to physical changes could not be covered by the church. Re: insurance, Rev. Max's parents would have to buy insurance for contents and liability. There were comments of support for Rev. Max and his family if they go forward with this. Rev. Max noted that at this point, neither are interested. But he is grateful to have this information. It was noted that one more person is needed on the Manse Committee. As a side discussion, it was noted that we may want to put a notice in the bulletin about the various committees needing members.

Maple Lake Trustees Report and Update: Rev. Max provided information about this as part of the report he circulated in advance via email. The survey has finally been done and a meeting with the township will need to take place. Some of the building is on the road allowance of both roads.

Worship/Pulpit Supply/CE: Marybeth may not be available to lead worship in November, in which case, Rev. Max will take the service.

Outreach: Pat Thornett had emailed a report in advance (attached). It was decided to hold off until January to do any work on Basic Income. Joan Grant is willing to buy the Christmas gifts for Highland Crest and there will be an appeal for funding to cover the cost. It is good to

see the M&S objective has been met.

ACCEPTANCE OF HHPC REPORTS

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

HIGHLAND HILLS UNITED CHURCH REPORTS

Trustees: Bruce McClennan had emailed a report in advance (attached). The net amount of our insurance went up about \$300. The national United Church is working on a plan to reduce the cost of insurance for churches as of December 1.

Property: Neil Darby had circulated a report in advance (attached).

Motion: Barbara Walford-Davis/ Erskine Flook moved and seconded the purchase of a large dehumidifier for the basement, subsequent to an adequate resolution of the drainage issue.

Carried.

In the discussion, there was a question of whether there is a drain it can connect to. It was suggested there could be a pump connected to the outside or that tubing could be used to connect with an indoor drain. It was agreed that further investigation is required. **Action item:** Andy will call Neil about the drainage concern.

Regarding the lift, a new style of lift has been found because the one initially proposed is not available. It is less expensive than the original. Bruce clarified that contrary to the pictures we had been shown, the lift will now be a full height, like a closet. It was clarified that it is the back west window that would be obstructed. We received approval from the congregation for the smaller size, but the new lift would be much larger. Do we thus need congregational approval for this new lift? It was agreed that we do. **Action item:** Andy will discuss the need for getting this approval with Neil. We need revised pictures to post again for members to review. *Update:* After the meeting Andy spoke to Neil. Neil has had some new discussions with the architect and the newly proposed lift is very similar in size, but a fully enclosed lift as opposed to the open-top style which was originally proposed. The fully enclosed design would be slightly less expensive, but a portion of one of the windows in the back corner of the church would have to be covered over.

Kitchen: The backsplash can't be attached just to the drywall. It needs to be attached to wood. We haven't gone for final approval until the backsplash is done. **Action item:** Andy will include this when he touches base with Neil.

Stewardship/Fundraising: Nothing beyond what was previously discussed.

UCW: Pat Thornett had emailed a report in advance (attached). Pat was commended on the turkey dinner takeout.

ECORC: Nothing to report.

ACCEPTANCE OF HIGHLAND HILLS UNITED CHURCH REPORTS

Motion: Rebekah Chevalier/ Erskine Flook moved and seconded acceptance of the reports. **Carried.**

NEW CHARGE BUSINESS

New Chair of the Outreach Committee: This is currently not needed, as Barbara Walford-Davis has agreed to continue as chair for now.

Pulpit Supply for Hope United: Andy spoke to this. Hope United needs someone to provide a two sermons per month. The Region is beset with issues related to churches. There are a few large, fairly stable churches and a number of small churches that are struggling, some of which have to look at closing their doors. One of the Region's approaches has been to cluster 2-6 of some of these small churches in a geographic area. Another concern is that for new ministers graduating, there are not many full-time positions available. Churches are using retired ministers and lay preachers.

Hope United was part of a cluster that fell apart. One of the churches is closing. Hope's active worship numbers are 15-18. Hope wants to hire a minister for two Sunday services per month. Their services are at 11:15. Any revenue from this would allow us to make up shortfalls. It would be a fee-for-service structure. There would be no changes to Rev. Max's wages, but Hope would pay HHPC for his services. Several questions were raised. What happens when Rev. Max is away? Also, how much extra work will this be for Rev. Max? Will it be a similar worship service to HHUC? Would they pay mileage? Is Rev. Max just doing the sermon and leading the service, or also creating the order of service? Andy clarified that the request he received via a phone call was strictly for pulpit supply. Rev. Max was asked if he had the time in his week to take this on. He responded that he feels he could take it on if it was not an additional sermon and if worship service preparation was like the former situation with Maple Lake United. Will Hope want to increase this relationship down the line? Are we prepared for future requests from them to expand the scope?

There were differing opinions on whether or not we should agree to this. Rev. Max clarified that weddings and funerals are not counted as part of his work week, as he is paid separately for these. He noted that there is a shortage of pulpit supply.

In the end, there was conditional agreement with what has been requested. However, we want more details and there is a need to lay the guidelines down. It was suggested there be a small group given the task of following up, and that the members be Andy, Rev. Max, and Shawn. Andy will not be as available, so Janet as vice-chair was suggested. It was recommended that there be a written request from Hope.

Next meeting: The next meeting was set for Wednesday, Dec. 14th at 1:30, in person with Zoom option. This meeting will include budget discussion.

Erskine thanked Andy for his work and leadership both at Zion and Highland Hills. His work on the amalgamation of Zion and Minden were noted along with his many other contributions. He will be missed when he and Charlene move to Collingwood later this month.

Rev. Max closed the meeting with a prayer. Barbara Walford-Davis moved adjournment.

Chair, Andy Cooper

Secretary, Rebekah Chevalier