

HIGHLAND HILLS UNIFIED BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021, 1:00 p.m. via Zoom online

ATTENDANCE: Joan Chapple, Rebekah Chevalier, Shawn Chevalier, Andy Cooper, Neil Darby, Lois Deacon, Erskine Flook, Larry Giles, Janet Heffer, Bruce McClennan, Debbie Sherwin Tom Parish, Pat Thornett, Barbara Walford-Davis, Rev. Max Ward, Marybeth Wilson

Regrets: Brian Austen

Rev. Max Ward opened with a prayer.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: Barbara Walford-Davis/ Bruce McClennan moved and seconded the approval of the agenda. **Carried.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of October 6, 2021, Unified Board meeting

Motion: Rebekah Chevalier/ Joan Chapple moved and seconded acceptance with the correction of the date of the meeting. **Carried.**

Action Items Arising from the Minutes: Lois Deacon was in touch with AI Anon and AA and both groups were in full support of the church's vaccination policy and happy to follow it. Shawn Chevalier sent out the policy to employees and contractors.

Business Conducted Via Email

Via email, the Board approved the purchase of a device to help the piano at HHUC stay in tune. The cost is \$650, which would come from the building fund. **Motion:** Neil Darby/ Andy Cooper moved and seconded. **Carried.**

PASTORAL CHARGE

Chair: Lois Deacon noted that it had been a year of losses and gains. She thanked Rev. Max for his continued work in these challenging times. She expressed particular thanks to Rev. Max for the support he is giving to Maple Lake United members. She thanked Melissa Stephens for all her support and work. Thanks were expressed to Dee Wruth, the new church administrator, and to Paul Rutledge, whose job as custodian has changed now that the church is open. She thanked all the Board members, as well as Erskine Flook for his efforts as treasurer, and Jude Fisher for her work during the first part of the year. Lois noted that since we opened for worship, we have been getting 10 to 20 people out for in-person worship, many of whom are not Zoom users. Finally, Lois passed on a reminder from Dee that any time you wish to use any part of the building for any purpose, please book it through Dee.

Clergy: Rev. Max had emailed a report in advance (attached). There was a request for a photo directory and he is thinking it may be time to do this now. We can now take people's photo through Zoom. This would be a good project for February to March.

Pastoral Care: Marybeth Wilson spoke of her lunch with Eleanor Hamilton.

Treasurer and Finance: Erskine Flook had emailed financial reports in advance (attached). He noted that when he requested budget figures, the information he sent was only three quarters of the budget, not 100%. The pastoral charge budget for 2022 will be going up a little bit. Regarding assessments, it was clarified that our assessment for this year is \$5,413; 2022 will be \$6,548 and in 2023 it will go up to \$7,683. Last year, 2020, it was about \$4,000.

Ministry and Personnel: Shawn Chevalier had emailed a report in advance (attached). Shawn asked for committee minutes and reports to be sent as Word docs so they can be posted online on a secure site hosted by the national United Church. Rebekah will ensure Dee receives copies of committee reports sent for circulation for Board meetings. At the end of each year, Dee will post Board minutes and their accompanying reports on the secure national UCC website. It was recommended that Dee use a standard, consistent file naming approach for these documents, perhaps following the naming approach used on the national UCC website. Regarding printed copies, hard copies of minutes and accompanying committee reports are stored by year in binders in the office. It was agreed there is no need for additional print copies of committee reports to be stored in the office. A question was asked about registers for marriages, baptisms, and funerals. Hard copies of these are kept in the office. There was discussion of the need to safeguard these by either putting them in a fireproof box or pouch or by scanning them so there is a digital file. Perhaps the really old records should be sent to the national United Church archives. **Action item:** Rev. Max will ask Dee to look at the amount of material in these registers that would need to be scanned and come back to the next Board meeting with a strategy for safeguarding the marriage, baptism, and funeral registers.

Manse: Nothing was reported.

Maple Lake: Larry Giles referred to the congregation meeting held Nov. 21 regarding the future of Maple Lake United. Two new trustees were appointed, Larry and Shirley Johnston. Subsequently, a letter was sent out and is posted on the Highland Hills website. The Rev. Max noted that he talked with *The Minden Times* and *The Highlander* and there is an article in the *Times* today.

Worship/Pulpit Supply/CE: Janet Heffer had emailed a report in advance (attached). On Sunday, Dec. 12 Marybeth Wilson will be providing pulpit supply and that evening there will be an evening of carols and stories. They are looking for Christmas-themed stories, humorous tales, etc. The Christmas Eve service will be by Zoom only, not in person, at 3:00 p.m. There was discussion about holding a service on Sunday, Dec. 26. In the past, attendance has been poor and sometimes we have not had a service. Rev. Max has said he would do a service if desired either in person, Zoom only, or a recorded video message. It was agreed to cancel the service for December 26.

Rev. Max has provided dates for vacation study leave and sabbatical, so there will be an increase in pulpit supply costs for 2022.

Andy Cooper noted the intention is to get the choir back in operation in some modified form in mid-January. Probably practices would be distanced appropriately and choir members would be masked. The choir would record an anthem to play on Sunday.

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

ACCEPTANCE OF HPC REPORTS

Motion: Andy Cooper/ Neil Darby moved and seconded the acceptance of all committee reports. **Carried.**

NEW CHARGE BUSINESS

Annual Meetings and Annual Report: The date for the pastoral charge meeting will be Sunday, February 13, 2022. The date for Maple Lake United Church will be January 30, 2022. Committee reports are to be sent to Dee by **January 7**. The annual report needs to be ready two Sundays before, so it needs to be posted online by Jan. 23 and then also distributed.

Possible Action Should COVID Numbers Continue to Rise: Lois advised the Board to be prepared to suspend in-person worship should numbers get too high. We need to consider case counts in the county and around, particularly Simcoe-Mukoka and Kawartha Lakes. Rev. Max calculates the trajectory of prevalence of COVID for cadets. They set thresholds that determine whether in-person cadets meetings can take place. It was agreed that we make use of Rev. Max's calculations and if cadets cancel in-person gatherings, then we would consider that information carefully in advising our decision when to cancel in-person worship.

HIGHLAND HILLS UNITED CHURCH REPORTS

Trustees: Bruce McClennan had emailed a report in advance (attached). The insurance company wants an appraisal to determine replacement costs of the two buildings. Bruce is trying to get clarification, but we probably need to allow \$4,200 for this assessment. He also learned that we do not have to use HUB and it may be time to get a quote from another insurer.

Property: Neil Darby had emailed a report in advance (attached). We have been billed for exit lights and extinguishers. Smoke alarms still need to be updated. **Motion:** Neil Darby/ Barbara Walford-Davis moved and seconded that we replace fire and smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors at a cost of \$375 + tax. **Carried.**

Kitchen: Tom Parish had emailed a report in advance (attached). The cost is \$1,288 to complete the project based on the estimate for countertops. **Motion:** Tom Parish/ Janet Heffer moved and seconded completing the countertops based on the estimate from Cutting Edge, with funds to come from the building fund. **Carried.**

Stewardship/Fundraising: Tom Parish had emailed a report in advance (attached). He is considering someone coming in and cooking a fundraising dinner (once permissible) or approaching a local restaurant to offer a meal as a fundraiser.

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

ECORC: Debbie Sherwin had emailed a report in advance (attached). Debbie noted that there are changes coming to the retiree benefits plan, but there are no details yet. It is apparent that a lot of small rural churches are struggling. 40 percent of churches in our council area are without ministers. Licensed lay worship leaders now almost outnumber clergy across Canada.

ACCEPTANCE OF HIGHLAND HILLS UNITED CHURCH REPORTS

Motion: Neil Darby/ Bruce McClennan moved and seconded acceptance of the reports. **Carried.**

NEW HHUC BUSINESS

Lift Update: Neil Darby reported that he finally received the paperwork from Duncan Ross, the architect. The proposal is for research, design, and construction documentation. It does not include any costs beyond completing the drawings up to getting approval for a building permit. These upfront costs to get to the construction phase total \$12,000. The lift committee has reviewed this documentation. Bruce McClennan commented that there are various steps. It's important to understand the location for the lift. Those coming in by car come in at lower level through the door and cross the basement to the lift and come up into the sanctuary near where the coat racks now are. This would cause the least disruption and cost. How much approval is needed from the congregation regarding location? If we go to the congregation, we need to choose the lift before we ask the architect to do the drawings. If we choose the lift before purchasing, then there is something to show the congregation. The desired style is like the lift at St George's. It has no top to it; it's open. Garaventa Opal is an

example of the style of lift. People coming from Newcastle Street could use the ramp, and we may need to put an automatic door opener in there.

The other option is putting the lift on the outside, which involves significant structural change, which will increase the cost. Lois Deacon noted that she would be more comfortable getting congregational buy-in for the location, giving the congregation the rationale for the location. Neil noted that going to the congregation with a plan is important for getting the project accepted. A question was asked about the basement stairs from the Newcastle St. side and whether they should be reconstructed. Neil responded that it would be very costly to change the stairwell, so that's why they started looking at other options.

A question was asked as to whether we should ask the architect for some conceptual drawings to take to the congregation before the full documentation. It was suggested we mark out the space required for the lift on the floors. These things could also help the Board. Neil is willing to go to St George's to take photos of their lift and its footprint. These footprints can also be taken off the internet. **Action item:** Neil Darby and the lift committee will come back to Board at its January with something to show, for example, a template and tape on the floor. It was suggested that we check with churches that have closed that recently put in a lift so see if they might be willing to let us have it.

Next meeting: The next meeting was set for Wednesday, Feb. 16 at 1:00 p.m.

Janet Heffer closed the meeting with prayer.

Joan Chapple thanked Lois for all her contributions. Joan moved adjournment.

Chair, Lois Deacon

Secretary, Rebekah Chevalier