

**Council of Guiding Elders – Minutes September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Edith Rankin Memorial United Church**

**In Attendance:** Bill Spencer, Ruth Pettis, Gordon Sinclair, Margaret Merkley, Andrew Robb, Ken Williams, Rev. Michelle Down

**Regrets:** Peter Merkley

**Guests:**

1. **Call to order:** Bill called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

**Mission Statement:** We seek to be a welcoming community, anchored in God’s love, challenged to sail on the winds of the spirit, sharing the Good News of Christ with each other and the world.

**Devotional:** Ruth offered the poem “Begin” by Florence Niven in her recent collection entitled “Step Into This Day” reflecting on living your life to the fullest: doing your best; be willing to forgive and forget but also to embrace yourself. Florence’s work is also the subject of an article in the most recent Kingston Life weekly.

**Commendations, Regrets, Prayer Concerns:** Special note was made of all those who have worked hard to attract rental clients to the church in recent months. It was agreed a note needs to be placed in Tidings to keep the congregation aware of the work being done. It is very important and much appreciated.

The people on the east coast suffering from the major storm were also in our prayers as were the many, here in Ontario who were today standing up to those who were protesting the inclusion of pro-LGBTQ policies and legislation in various school boards and municipalities.

A number of member’s names were offered up in prayer including Al Pickering who played a significant role in the life of Edith Rankin U.C. over many years. Pre-deceased by his wife in 2017, Al passed away on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Our thoughts are with his children and grandchildren..

**Correspondence:** None

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meetings:**

**Motion:**

Moved by Ken Williams, seconded by Ruth Pettis to accept the minutes of the council meeting of June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 by Video conf.

CARRIED

3. **Business Arising:**

4. **New Business:**

1. **Complaint from Renter:**

Essentially, the issue was that a renter had locked the door to the room they were using for security reasons. However, others in the church, who have come and gone freely in the past also had access to the room. It is fortunate that we are able to rent our facility as the income is needed but we will need to develop protocols. A note will be included in Tidings to explain the issue and where to look for information. Property Committee will continue with ongoing monitoring.

2. **5 Year Photo Album:**

Bill raised the idea of developing a photo album of members as had been the tradition in the past. Many members of Council agreed with the advantages of having such an album and wondered about the options of the traditional physical booklet format vs. digital models. A digital/on-line approach would allow for easier updating but presented a number of challenges including privacy concerns. Would a “members only” page be viable? Either way the co-ordination and complexities needed to be investigated. Marg Merkley agreed to look into these issues and report back to Council in October.

3. **Affirmation Update:**

Barb Taft and Kathy Baer are leading this team. A round table group discussion is planned for Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup> after church at which the Mission Statement and Plan of Action can be settled. The United Church of Canada then requires that it be submitted to Affirm Untied for approval. Assuming all goes smoothly, a congregational vote can then be scheduled for early spring 2024. This would be a standalone, single issue meeting. Rev. Michelle will investigate if this vote need be in person or how might virtual participation be incorporated.

4. **Stewardship:**

Bill introduced this item as a very broad issue related not only to financial support but also how to engage with the broader population outside the church. This included the suggestion of regular (monthly?) meetings of smaller groups to discuss what it means to be a member of ERMUC but also the potential of social media to attract a younger audience. Bill will discuss the issues of developing an Edith Ranking Facebook page with the Media and Communication Team. One suggestion was that members of Council could develop very brief (one minute) videos of what it means to them to be a member of ERMUC which could then be posted and see if a younger audience was then drawn in to participate. Articles for Tidings could also be prepared. A new, changeable message sign on the road would also be very helpful.

5. **New Church Sign:**

A previous committee led by Bill Spencer had recommended the establishment of a “small capital projects” option within the budget. The top two priorities were kitchen upgrades and a new roadside sign. However, the congregation still needs to be included

in the decisions and prepared to provide donations. The requests need to be specific and coordinated. One idea was to focus on the sign now because it required little design and could proceed quickly while the kitchen required background needs identification and design which could be carried out over the winter.

Bill agreed to connect with Craig and the past committee and to communicate with the congregation.

### **Reports:**

#### **1. Treasurers Report:**

Peter was unable to attend to provide detail but had previously circulated his report. Council members had reviewed these but did not see any concerns.

#### **2. Minister's Reports:**

Rev. Down noted that the Admin Team needed a special one-item Congregational Meeting on Sunday Nov 19<sup>th</sup>. In order to accommodate this there will be a special one-item Council meeting Wednesday Nov 1<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 am.

She also noted the LGBTQ counter protest rallies taking place today and the need to be a safe place for all. In closing she read from Rev. George Lavery's thoughts on the Foundations of Faith noting love is the most critical ingredient in the congregation of a church or indeed, a whole community.

Marg Merkley also noted there will be a number of special interest Regional Council meetings over the fall including one by the Moderator or the United Church in November. She will try to provide more detail in Tidings nearer the dates.

**Announcements:** none

**Closing Prayer:** Michelle closed with a prayer.

**Adjournment:** the meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.

**Next Meeting:** The next regularly scheduled meeting of council will be – Wednesday October 18<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 am.

Bill Spencer, Chair

Ken Williams, Secretary