

## **Council of Guiding Elders – Minutes October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

### **Edith Rankin Memorial United Church**

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

**Regrets:** none

**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:** Margaret reflected on a paragraph in Ephesians focused on how the decisions we make in life go on to affect many and that we need to keep that in mind as we move forward.

**Commendations, Regrets, Prayer Concerns:** Council noted the horrible challenges currently being faced by the people of the Middle East and noted the need for world leaders to collaborate amongst themselves to find a resolution. Our prayers went out to the people, not only in the immediate area but also neighbouring countries, all of whom are struggling. We need to find ways to live together.

Special note was made of all those who had worked to organize the Affirming Luncheon following last Sunday's service and council was very pleased with the large turnout.

A number of member's names were offered up in prayer.

**Correspondence:** Michelle read from correspondence received from a minister passing through Kingston who has seen the benefits of an electronic changeable message sign at Trinity United Church in Guelph and offered a \$100 contribution towards our fund.

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

**Motion:**

Moved by Ken Williams, seconded by Ruth Pettis to accept the minutes of the council meeting of September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 by Video conf.

Carried

3. **Business Arising:**

4. **New Business:**

1. **New Electronic Message Sign:**

The many advantages of having an electronic changeable sign have been discussed at Council for some time. It was agreed it is now time to act quickly. Updated quotes and permits are needed. The suggestion of redirecting some existing restricted funds within the budget was dismissed. We need approximately \$15K. There needs to be a team put together and given the mandate to get the project done.

**Motion:**

Moved by Peter Merkley, seconded by Andrew Robb:

That a team be recruited and formalized to lead the project to build and have in place an electronic changeable message sign as soon as possible.

Carried

2. **Snow Ploughing Contract:**

Gord Bell (Chair of the Property Committee) was unable to attend but a review of the contract terms and bid price of last year's contract was favourable to one put forward by the same contractor for this year. It was noted the other contractor asked to bid last year no longer was in the business. Andrew and Peter have also reviewed our terms with a few contracts with other organizations. It was agreed we continue with the contractor from last year.

3. **Photo Directory:**

Margaret Merkley had agreed to look into some options. One company (IPC) is apparently the only company still in the business. There would be no cost to the church. The company makes its money by selling photos to the families. The notion of a digital version was discussed but dismissed for security and logistical issues. Target date of mid-April (2024) was suggested as the "snowbirds" would be back by then and give us time to get organized. Arrangements need to be made to include shut-ins and others who can't get out.

Margaret Merkley agreed to organize. Other volunteers will be needed to make follow-up calls etc.

**Motion:**

Moved by Margaret Merkley, seconded by Gordon Sinclair:

That Margaret be authorized to proceed with the creation of a church family photo album (hard copy) targeted for distribution by the fall of 2024.

Carried

4. **2024 Financial Plan Status:**

Peter noted that the Admin Team owns this project and will be bringing recommendations to Council by Oct 30<sup>th</sup>. Council will need a one item special meeting Nov 1<sup>st</sup> to review the recommendations. Two documents will be provided: one – a basic “Word” document outlining the assumptions for the congregation; the other a more detailed “Excel” document with detailed numbers.

**5. Affirming Team:**

The affirming Team met last week to go over the results of the meetings after church on the 15<sup>th</sup>. All the teams reported healthy discussions and support to move forward in a positive way. They will bring a report back to Council.

**6. Kitchen:**

Margaret noted that the team was to have its first meeting today. The planning design and costing of the kitchen renovations is underway and has the full support of Council. Since the fundraising of the installation of a new electronic sign has been encouraging, Council has given approval to this project to proceed. The kitchen renovation is more complex and still remains our priority. The anticipated cost is much greater than the approximate \$15K we have right now, however, given the priority of the electronic changeable sign project the first work on the new kitchen will not be until 2025.

**7. Flourishing Tours:**

The Moderator (the Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne) has invited all to engage in reflection and energizing activities towards dream-oriented actions for our churches and communities. She will bring the conversation about the future of the United Church of Canada to the congregations. She invites us all to connect with one another in hope, with a deep conviction by belief that, despite all the challenges of church life in this day and age, we can move from despair to transformation. A congregational workshop will be held at Crossroads Unted Church, Friday, Nov 10<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 am to 4:00pm.

**8. Men’s Worship Service:**

Gordon noted that plans were underway to have a Men’s worship service Sunday, November 12<sup>th</sup> designed to explore men’s spirituality. The guest speaker will speak with each of the men’s groups prior to this men’s service.

**9. Stewardship Videos:**

Bill and several members of Council remarked on how well the stewardship videos were going. These were a follow-up on earlier discussions about how to enhance and encourage the recognition of individuals and how they had contributed their time and talents.

**Reports:**

**1. Treasurers Report:**

Peter had previously circulated a summary report as well as a detailed summary of expenses and revenues to July 23<sup>rd</sup>. He noted the Admin Team is working on a new format to make it easier to read. The Admin Team is meeting with a view to presenting the 2024 Financial Plan to the congregation Nov 19<sup>th</sup>. We also have a new bookkeeper and will be converting from Quick Books Desktops to Quick Books Online.

Peter noted that the ad-hoc committee, led by the Admin Team and M&P, reviewing the needs for Office Administration, program support, extra duties, etc. within ERMUC needed an extension of time to complete their work.

**Motion:**

Moved by Peter Merkley, seconded by Andrew Robb that the ad-hoc committee reviewing program support needs have their deadline to report extended to **April 2024** October 2023.

Carried

**2. Minister's Reports:**

Rev. Down noted the following items:

1. Congregational Budget Meeting – November 19, 2023  
Christopher Sproule is away and asked me to find a chair for the meeting. He noted that it had been a long time since there was a female who chaired a congregational meeting. As a result, I asked Lorna Thorne who is the past chair of Council, and she agreed. Lorna Thorne - Chair, Rhonda Kerr – Secretary
2. Reminder that there will be a Special Council Meeting November 1, 2023 9am on Zoom. One item meeting to discuss Financial Plan for 2024
3. I have met first on the phone, and then an in person meeting with Lawyer Jane Patterson to discuss a workshop on Estate Planning: Power of Attorney; Last Will and Testament; Estate Administration. Jane is willing to come to ER and offer this workshop free of charge. There would be no requirement that people use her legal services after the workshop, but if they do, then that would be between them and Jane and not involve the church in anyway. Council noted that there may be a lawyer qualified in estate planning issues within the congregation. Michelle will follow up.
4. Affirming Process – Affirming Team offered workshop on Sunday to discuss the Vision Statement and Plan of Action. The workshop was attended by approximately 60 people. The content of the conversation from the congregation is being collated by the team to create the Vision Statement and the Action Plan, both of which are requirements for Affirm United the national affirming body.
5. As initiated at our last months Council meeting, I have been making Stewardship Videos for each week of October from members of ER. They have been well received by participants and recipients. I will continue with the same style of videos for Advent/Christmas.
6. I am away on Con-Ed for one week starting Monday October 23.

7. I am starting Advent one week early this year. November 26 will be Advent 1 and we will kick off the season with the Merry Minstrels having a Christmas Carol Sing along after the Fellowship Breakfast, and before worship 9:30-10:00, and then they will stay and play during worship as well.

8. December 24, 2023 Christmas Eve services will be: 10am Family Service, 7:30 Candle Light and Communion Service

**Announcements:** none

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

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

**Next Meeting:** There will be two council meetings in November: The first, a video conference 9:00 am Nov 1<sup>st</sup> to review the draft 2024 financial plan and the second regularly scheduled meeting of council, Wednesday November 15<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 am. The previously provided video link is good for both meetings.

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Bill Spencer, Chair

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Ken Williams, Secretary