

**MINUTES OF THE OFFICIAL BOARD  
OF SYDENHAM-HERITAGE UNITED CHURCH  
On Wednesday, November 10, 2021**

Present: Sharon Davidson, Norma Janzen, BJ Leighton, Terry Matheson, Larry Pickard, Darrell Picketts, Jacquie Scatcherd, Rev. Paul Shepherd, Ron Stinson, Lorne White

Regrets: Andrew Advincula, Yvonne Wright

Absent: Shelley Grisdale

Darrell called the meeting to order. This was the first 'hybrid' Board Meeting with six members attending in person and three members attending virtually.

**Land Acknowledgement** offered by Sharon

**Devotion** offered by Darrell – reading by Ian Anderson focused on Land Acknowledgements and Remembrance Day, with a reading from Romans 12 as found in the First Nations New Testament.

**Motion to accept the agenda with the following additions: Sanctuary Flowers moved by Ron Stinson and seconded by Lorne White. Carried.**

**Motion to accept the Minutes of October 13, 2021 with the following corrections moved by Lorne White and seconded by Ron Stinson. Carried.**

**Corrections:**

- **Agenda motion renal should read rental**
- **Youth – los should read lost**
- A discussion followed with respect to Spiritual Report and Bell Lane Ministry. Word 'originally' was questioned, should it read 'traditionally' with respect to ministerial leadership and participation in this outreach ministry. Following discussion the wording was left as 'originally'

**Congregational Health** – no items

**Business Arising from the Minutes**

**1. Land Acknowledgement**

Recently the issue of reading land acknowledgements at the beginning of Sunday services has been discussed. These discussions need to be based first on responses to the question: What is a land acknowledgement? There are many answers to this question on a number of reputable internet sites, but personally I think we need to examine and reflect on what does a land acknowledgement mean to each of us.

I welcome the discussion and examination of land acknowledgements that Paul and others have initiated in our congregation as it is also being discussed by Indigenous leaders and communities in recent months. Such an examination can be a healthy means to self-reflection, mindfulness, and understanding.

However, let us be clear: a land acknowledgement is a sign of respect toward the inhabitants of the land prior to colonization and of the dislocations and ruptures that continued colonialism still causes Indigenous people. As a sign of respect, it is a first step to healing and building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Replacing a land acknowledgement with statements or reflections on what the land means to us without inclusion of Indigenous peoples is to contribute to the historical cycles of erasure to which they have

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been subjected. It is one thing to articulate one's spiritual experience of the land and quite another to make invisible Indigenous people on whose land we have that experience.

The reference to the October 21<sup>st</sup> CBC piece on Indigenous perspectives on land acknowledgements was cited as proof that Land Acknowledgements are a problem for Indigenous people and therefore, I believe has been used as a justification for not saying them. I believe this to be a distortion of what was said by these Indigenous community members. Hayden King discusses the superficiality of many land acknowledgements as they often obscure treaties. He also objects to the scripted nature of Land Acknowledgements and challenges us to find ways to "breathe life into our obligations" to Indigenous communities and these treaties. Devon Saulis objects to the performative nature of Land Acknowledgements. She wants non-Indigenous people to back up the words with action and land is at the centre of this action. Tataliya Michelle Nahanee wants to see Land Acknowledgements using the present tense and omitting the word "acknowledge" as she views this as a sign of paternalism. Claudette Commanda speaks to the irony of continued land dispossession as Land Acknowledgements are said, but she wants people to continue to make them as a means of opening paths to decolonizing practices and as she states, "bridging awareness into action". None of these Indigenous people want to see the discontinuation of Land Acknowledgements.

It has been stated that Land Acknowledgements are more "mythological than historical". I disagree. Analogies have been used comparing Indigenous people to immigrants. I disagree. We need to be aware of what these statements are saying and the implications they communicate. We live in a community that as part of our collective history had the longest running residential school in Canada. We live beside the largest reservation in Canada. We need to be mindful of what such statements mean. I would like to quote from Chelsea Vowel, Metis:

"If we think of territorial acknowledgements as sites of potential disruption, they can be transformative acts that to some extent undo Indigenous erasure. I believe this is true as long as the acknowledgements discomfit both those speaking and hearing the words. The fact of Indigenous presence should force non-Indigenous peoples to confront their own place on these lands." (from *Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements*)

Submitted by Sharon Davidson

**Next Steps:**

- Include land acknowledgement in Sunday services
- Host a forum on this issue for the community with Indigenous speakers and community members (I will do this in the new year)
- Have a means to share our reflections on this issue in the church (similar to the way we did this with the meaning of home)

**Motion that as a first step a Land Acknowledgment, acknowledging whose land we occupy, is said at the beginning of each Sunday Service, moved by Sharon Davidson, seconded by Terry Matheson**

Discussion

Vote called

**Motion defeated – 3 in favour 4 opposed.**

**Next steps**

- Education on this issue is required
- Ongoing discussion on this issue is required
- Sharon will seek out Indigenous Speakers for a congregational forum

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**Community Day**

- A successful event, attracted 40 to 50 participants, inclusive of many community members
- Music was well received many thanks to Jim Linington and Sonny Sinclair for their roles in organizing
- Bake sale raised \$200
- Two barrels for Food Bank were filled
- General donations of \$200 – this is being earmarked for hoped for Children’s Musical Program

**Rental Agreement**

- Preliminary draft has been circulated to board
- Committee meeting one more time before finalizing the documents

**Seasons Ministry – no update**

**Minister Report**

- Positive feedback from Remembrance Day Service
- Interfaith Group currently Sydenham-Heritage United Church, St. Mary’s Church and the Mosque – hosting ‘One Heart, One Table’ on January 22, 2022 at 6pm
- Sharing Ministries has initiated shared calendars
- Anti-discrimination Table – looking at ‘Hate has No Home Here’ – flip chart in Calder Hall inviting input
- Paul brought forward concern that there is not wifi in the church building

**Correspondence - none**

**Committee Reports**

***Youth***

- Video report submitted by Andrew
- Focus has been personal and professional development – Zoom Training, Outdoor Activity Training, Advent Programming
- Andrew will be Youth Delegate at General Council in 2022 and is looking to recruit other youth from the congregation to participate

***Stewardship (Fundraising, Social, Outreach)* – no report**

***Communications***

- Facebook analysis demonstrated it is a viable vehicle to use for communication purposes
- Print newsletter for December is in process

***M&P***

- Highlights of Human Resources Workshop
- Post Employment Standards poster
- Need to develop Violence and Harassment in the Workplace policy and procedure
- Need to develop vaccine policy and steps to enforce
- Police checks (vulnerable sector check) at time of hire and every three years for staff and volunteers; Ministers provide annually
- Independent Contractors should not be utilized for Music Directors, they should be employees which will provide benefits and require CPP, EI, Deductions

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- Trevor's contract has just been renewed (October 2021) BJ indicated in consultation with Horseshoe Falls the contract can continue while conversations occur with Trevor moving forward
- **Next step:**
  1. M&P will initiate conversation with Trevor about transition from Independent Contractor to Sydenham-Heritage employee
  2. A cost analysis was requested from treasurer/finance of this shift for the Music Director for Sydenham-Heritage to come to board for consideration

***Property***

- Sample of Calder Hall finish circulated for board to view to be installed January 17, 2022
- Two quotes received for the electric panel in boiler room. The Electricians quote was \$29,500; Gravil Electric quote was \$23,500. Both quotes do not include HST. Gravil Electric has been awarded the contract. A 400 amp service will be installed to permit future use should air conditioning be installed in the building. 200 amps will be utilized for current needs. Details being finalized by Property and Gravil Electric

***Spiritual***

- **Worship and Pastoral Care** reports circulated

***Trustees***

- We are financially stable

***Finance***

- Have finalized the letters with respect to the Financial Review of 2019 and 2020
- Cindy and Norma have indicated they are both willing to continue the Co-treasurer role for 2022

***Treasurers Report***

- Income January to October 2021      \$94,396.50
- Expense January to October 2021    \$112,683.09
- Projected deficit for 2021            \$65,000.00

***Horseshoe Falls***

- Summary of Fall Conference circulated

***Edge*** – no report

***Re-Opening Committee***

- Board utilized this time to consider proof of vaccine - Discussion

**Motion that Sydenham-Heritage United Church effective November 21, 2021 will require proof of vaccination for all persons entering the church building, inclusive of Sunday Services, planned programs, and contractors, moved by Norma Janzen and seconded by Ron Stinson. Carried.**

- Will be announced on Sunday, November 14<sup>th</sup>; notice will be placed on website and in Snippets

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**New Business**

**1. Christmas Breakfast**

- There is interest in bringing this event back this holiday season
- There is a small group who will seek others to be part of planning and implementing this event
- Board is supportive of this initiative
- Unvaccinated will be provided with a take away meal
- Notice in city food calendar

**2. Electronic Sign**

- To be added to Projects list

**3. Flowers in Sanctuary**

- Larry and Ruth Pickard are interested in continuing this task
- Norma asked that a new budget line be added to the Worship Committee budget for Sanctuary Flowers

**Next Meeting:** December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm

**Devotions:** Ron Stinson

**Closing Prayer:** offered by Paul

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Sharon Davidson, Co-Chairperson

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Darrell Picketts, Co-Chairperson

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Jacquie Scatcherd, Secretary