

## **Minutes of the Official Board of Sydenham Heritage United Church**

**Wednesday September 13, 2023**

**Present :** Verna Timpener, Lorne White, Sharon Davidson, Paul Shepherd, BJ Leighton, Yvonne Wright, Norma Janzen, Larry Pickard

**Regrets:** Maureen Hall Gilmore, Terry Matheson, Andrew Advincula

**Guest :** Tara Buchanan - Belonging Brant

Sharon called the meeting to order. She acknowledged this would be a difficult meeting, this is the beginning of an ongoing conversation.

**Land Acknowledgement** – offered by Sharon

**Devotion-** offered by Verna, She shared Matthew 7: 24 – 27

**Christ Candle** – lit by Sharon

### **Belonging Brant – Kind Cooks Program**

Tara Buchanan attending meeting to bring feedback to the initial partnership between the Kind Cooks Program and SHUC. The program has been well received. Most weeks had 8 persons attending. The program has been able to meet the needs of individuals who are isolated, who have benefitted from the health input provided by the staff persons background in Nutrition. The SHUC site has worked well as most participants can reach it by walking. The lack of accessibility in the building has not been an issue to date for participants.

Kind Cooks would like to continue with the partnership. Belonging Brant is aware of the changes at SHUC and have proactively sought another location in the event that SHUC felt they could not continue. The program would like to resume in October and would be suggesting they meet the first and third Thursday of each month. Brantford CLA could continue to carry the Insurance.

The Board committed to responding to Belonging Brant by the end of September so the group can finalize their plans and communicate to their participants.

Agenda – Sharon advised that the order of the agenda has been altered . She asked that the Board listen deeply and respectfully to each other. If the conversation becomes heated we will be asked to take a moment to gather and center ourselves in silence .

**Motion to approve the agenda moved by Lorne White, seconded by Yvonne Wright, carried.**

**Motion to approve the Minutes of June 14, 2023, moved by Verna Timpenr, seconded by BJ Leighton, carried, with the following correction**

- – on pages 2 and 3 the spelling of Darrell Picketts name to be corrected.

### **Discussion & Decision of Ministerial Coverage**

Paul has tendered his resignation effective November 30, 2023. His final date with SHUC will be November 5, 2023

There are three Options for the Board to consider at this time

1. Pulpit Supply – a list is available from the Region  
Or Contact previous Pulpit Supply – if from outside the Region, will require approval of the Region
2. Intentional Interim Minister – list available from Region – six month contract that can be extended two times
3. Share Ministry with another United Church

### **Discussion**

- Upset of congregation requires Intentional Interim Minister
- This is also the recommendation of M & P
- Focus should be Worship, Sacraments, Pastoral Care and Healing of the Congregation
- Paul stated he has to get out of the way to allow the healing of the Congregation to occur
- Question for Region – is the Intentional Interim Minister appointed by Region or selected by the Board?

**Motion that SHUC move to request of the Region that an Intentional Interim Minister effective November 5, 2023 or as soon after that as possible, moved by Yvonne Wright, seconded by Verna Timpener, carried.**

### **Regional Assistance – Healing Circles**

- The Board and M& P requires professional assistance to facilitate discussions about conflicts that exist between people
- The Region have facilitators to lead Healing Circles
- Micol Cottrell is the contact person at the Region, he has indicated he is able to source funding for this purpose

- Do we wait for Interim Minister to be appointed to begin this Healing process or do we go ahead?
- Sharon will bring this question to Micol for his input

### **Congregational Meeting September 24<sup>th</sup>**

- Sharon proposed postponing the Congregational Meeting to a later date to ensure we have correct information and as Paul's resignation has given us other priorities
- BJ expressed the meeting should go ahead given the upset of the Congregation and that the Board should address those concerns
- Originally set at the June Congregational Meeting to follow up presentation by Options Committee after discernment over the summer
- With Paul leaving and upset in the congregation do we go ahead or postpone?
- **Discussion**
- **Action**
- Meeting will go ahead
- Primary focus will be sharing plan about Ministry Coverage –Intentional Interim Minister request
- Clarifying Building Anniversary Service and Paul's final service Nov 5<sup>th</sup>
- Discussion about Options Committee – any other ideas/options identified?
- Feelings about Paul leaving
- Sharon will request a Regional Rep be present

### **Correspondence**

- Certificate of Thanksgiving received from United Church of Canada recognizing SHUC for giving \$14,261.00 to Mission and Service in 2022

### **Ministerial Report**

- 3 weddings and two funerals over the summer
- We need to plan to celebrate our time together
- Oct 1, 2023, shared Service at Fairview United Church – planning is underway
- Erie Development Commission AGM September 19<sup>th</sup>, will include an educational component related to the current Remit being considered
- Paul has received comments from congregants who are concerned Board Members not in attendance at Worship during time of congregational upset  
Response by Chair – hear the concern - timing unfortunate for both Chairs as previous time was scheduled prior to Paul announcing his resignation – Board Members have received feedback and calls from Congregants
- Belonging Brant will need a SHUC contact when Paul leaves
- Paul, Terry, Aileen, Jim and Ann will be meeting to identify Communication /Practical Tasks /areas requiring the identification of a SHUC Contact upon Paul's leaving

## Committee Reports

### **Spiritual**

- Bob MacMillan is continuing to coordinate greeters
- Bob's seat at the Worship Committee is being held until he is ready to rejoin
- Jim Linington has resigned from the AV Committee effective Nov 5, he has made the decision to leave SHUC
- Jim is available to train anyone interested
- Yvonne is in discussions with other members of AV Group to create plan for streaming of Service and posting to You Tube upon Jims leaving
- Nov 5, 2023 is the Anniversary of the Building Service, this date was set prior to Pauls resignation.
- Ian Sandler will be Guest Organist and Rev Jenny Stevens will be Guest Speaker.
- Letter received from Darrell Picketts requesting that the Board determine how to handle the challenge of this celebration alongside Paul's final service
- **Discussion**
- **Action** – Paul will connect with Rev Jenny Stevens and determine how to best coordinate the service
- Paul will provide his final message related to his leaving after Jenny's message
- Luncheon to celebrate SHUC and Paul's ministry will be held after service on November 5<sup>th</sup> in Calder Hall

### Stewardship

- Mystery Dinner has been cancelled , committee does not have enthusiasm or energy to plan and execute a fun evening at this time
- Walk Through Aging seminar set for September 14<sup>th</sup>
- Tia McGrath Concert October 14<sup>th</sup>
- Verna tendered her resignation to the Board as representative of Stewardship/Outreach effective October 31, 2023
- Verna will remain involved with the Sandwich Outreach Project and will step back from other projects

### Finance

- Donations to August \$81,668.40 ,
- General Envelope Giving are up approximately \$12,000.00 over last year

- Report contained a brief report on Benevolent Fund – there was a short fall , however appeal from Pulpit resulted in enhanced contributions – we are sitting at a small surplus at this time

Question – should we be continuing to issue Gift Cards monthly?

- Discussion
- Action – Grocery Gift Cards are part of Benevolent/Outreach mission, outside Operating Budget and will continue
- A condensed Financial Statement will be prepared for September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting

#### Trustees

- Report received
- **Motion that Trustees be prepared to transfer \$20,000.00 to the Operating Budget upon request from Treasurer, moved by Norma Janzen, seconded by Yvonne Wright, carried.**
- CERB loan will be repaid before end of 2023

#### M&P

- At September meeting negotiated Paul’s closing vacation and education entitlement, last date will be November 5, 2023
- Celebration is being planned
- M&P recommends an Intentional Interim Minister
- Rental Agreements will include the Custodian Fee as each is completed
- The Custodian Fee was not included in the completion of the Villages Rental Agreement, resulting in Bob not being paid for services
- **Motion that Bob Woodward be paid \$300.00 for four days of Custodial Services provided for Villages rental, moved by BJ Leighton, seconded by Norma Janzen, carried.**
- There is an additional \$500.00 received from the Villages from which this payment can be made

**Youth** No report

**Communication** Report received

**Property** -Report received

## **Horseshoe Falls Region**

- Fall meeting scheduled for September
- Videos about the Remit are available from the website

## **Brantford United Church Sharing Resources**

- Oct 1<sup>st</sup> service at Fairview United
- SHUC offering gatherer will be Cindy Aniol
- Need to identify one SHUC Greeter
- Communion will be celebrated as it Worldwide Communion Sunday

## **Congregational Health**

- Correspondence shared from congregant expressing concern about two ministers leaving SHUC in her five years with this congregation – wondering if we have a retention problem, what initiatives did Paul try to initiate that weren't brought to the congregation
- Majority of Stewardship/Outreach Committee feeling devastated by Paul's leaving
- Others expressed feeling morale in church is low, people are hurt and sad
- We have been told we are not progressive
- Paul clarified the leadership of the congregation is not progressive – not willing to be inclusive, to change - he does not believe the congregation is not progressive ,
- Response a concern expressed that some chairs of committees are seen as 'difficult'
- Paul states people need to be themselves in the church , should be able to come in and be themselves
- Paul stated that a year ago he realized that perhaps he 'needed to provide space' for an Intentional Interim Minister to come in and address the issues he was seeing in the congregation; He indicated he addressed interpersonal challenges in Board meetings, from the pulpit through messages
- Response that it was unfortunate Paul did not share out loud and clearly – to the Board and/or the Congregation, that these issues were are so concerning that he believed we perhaps needed another leader
- Paul spoke of coming to congregation and racist jokes being told , he has asked they not be continued and have stopped in his presence, he believes they continue out of his hearing
- Paul felt people with new ideas "had door closed on their faces" , we are not great on change

- Much of the congregation is 75+ and perhaps set in our ways, seems we aren't as progressive as we thought
- Upset about one letter of resignation that excluded efforts and commitments of others on same committee.
- Concern expressed that Black History Month has been squashed, focus was on racism not accomplishments of people of colour, challenges /differences in planning were interpreted as being 'difficult'
- Individual feeling excluded from activities, not welcome, feeling people talking about them
- 'doing church' has changed since COVID yet here is judgement about those not in pews
- Sadness that Paul is leaving
- Paul shared over the summer his father attended a service and no one spoke to him
- Wish expressed that he had introduced his father, during summer services four congregations come together and unfamiliar faces are part of summer worship, feel we are good at recognizing new faces on Sundays at SHUC

Sharon brought the discussion to a close just before 10 o'clock. This is the beginning of necessary conversations as SHUC moves forward.

**Next meeting set for Wednesday October 11, 2023**

**Devotions** – Larry Pickard

Paul closed the meeting in prayer.