

Trinity United Church Leadership Team Meeting
Wednesday, June 9, 2021
The meeting was held online via our Zoom meeting platform.

Present: Kim Guy, Pam Lotun, Alan Brown, Donna Matthews, Diane Routledge, Denise Stairs, Julie Baker

Regrets: Cindy Curry, Lesia Case, Gloria Ross, Stephanie Verhoeven

Call to order: Pam Lotun agreed to chair the meeting in Cindy's absence. She called the meeting to order at 7:09 a.m.

Land acknowledgment

We are all treaty people. As we meet, we remember that we gather on Treaty 1 land. This is the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Dene, Dakota, and Oji-Cree nations and is the homeland of the Metis.

Opening Prayer and Reflection – Julie shared a video conversation between two United Church leaders regarding the United Church involvement in residential schools and the road towards reconciliation.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: to approve the minutes from May 12, 2021 as circulated.

Moved by: Donna Seconded by Kim: **Carried.**

Correspondence:

Information package has been received from Karie Eisner-Mooney with RAAM (Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine) Southern Health-Santé Sud.

Discussion and Decisions:

The recent discovery of unknown and unmarked graves containing the remains of 215 children at the Kamloops Residential School reminds us of Trinity's legacy and connections to the Portage Residential School. Is there a desire to take any action in this regard?

After some conversation, it was agreed that we would like to broaden the education of our leadership team and our congregation about our role in the local residential school. Before the next meeting, leadership team members will take time to investigate our history with a goal to perhaps making a public statement or create a page on our website about our work towards reconciliation including our history.

<https://thechildrenremembered.ca/school-histories/portage-la-prairie/>

is a good place to start. We may also wish to engage local indigenous leaders (Angela Roulette or Cornell Pashe) as we start to imagine any action we might take.

It was agreed that we would come back to this conversation at our August meeting when team members have had a chance to review some of the information available.

Motion: that Trinity United Church donate \$215 from the Memorial Fund to the United Church Healing Fund in recognition of the children who died at residential schools and the recent

discovery of unmarked graves at Kamloops Residential School. Moved by: Kim Seconded by: Denise **Carried.**

For further information about the Healing Fund, see the United Church web page:

<https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/being-community/indigenous-ministries/healing-fund>

Summer plans – at the last meeting, Leadership decided that when staff are on vacation in July, we will also close the building. Only users who can use the building independently (have their own keys) will have access to the building. M & P is seeking a list of names of people available for emergency pastoral care while Julie is on vacation. Max Chappellaz will cover grass cutting while Don is on vacation for the first two weeks of July. Kim Guy is willing to be the building contact for emergencies during the first two weeks of July. Diane volunteered to be the building contact for the last two weeks of July. She will need a key, a code, and a list of phone numbers!

Finance Report – Donna took the team through the attached financial statements. She noted that we have received a bequest from Mary Liz Miazga's estate of approximately \$76 000. Thank you Mary Liz – thank God for Mary Liz. It will be placed in the Unspecified Bequest Fund at this time. Our financial position is also in a positive position, thanks to another bridge grant from the provincial government. We are a bit behind in our giving goals.

It was suggested that we should start a wish list of projects that we would like to do in the church that could be prioritized every so often, so that we can make good decisions about what to do with generous gifts. We could also plan to do large projects on an ongoing basis, rather than doing things all at once (like when we did the elevator and the roof in the same summer!) Among the brainstormed items at this meeting: new, accessible bathrooms, (a sanctuary bathroom), the auditorium floor, the auditorium in general, a sanctuary fresh air exchange system, etc. etc.

Motion: to approve financial statements from May 2021 as circulated and presented.

Moved by: Donna Seconded by: Alan. **Carried.**

Trustees Report – Nothing new to report

Ministry Search Team Report – The group has done advertising, and is actively recruiting for the CDM position.

M and P Report – Kim reports that 3 of the committee members attended a training event with the region in May. M & P has had some conversation about documentation. At this time, they agreed that those things brought to leadership will be those things considered worth documenting.

They are seeking pastoral support for emergencies during Julie's vacation.

They have secured Max Chappellaz for grass cutting during Don's vacation.

Prairie to Pine Region – A virtual meeting was held May 28-30. Brenda Brand was our lay representative to that meeting. Her written report is attached.

Calendar – The public health restrictions currently are discouraging all indoor activities, so the church calendar remains quite open at this time.

Team and Interest Group Updates –

- Structure Support team - has set a meeting for September 21. Cassandra Pehura has agreed to join the structure support team. We are all still asked to prayerfully consider options for chair elect!
- Property – Leith Saunders’ 2-month rotation continues throughout May & June. She was called in to repair 2 broken pews (north side, 3rd row and one in centre). Mitchell has painted parking bumpers rainbow colours and plans to add some colour to the ones in the west lot. He is also investigating how difficult it would be to paint the white boards up in the bell tower. He would come back for permission should he come up with an option. Bob Mulvey installed a new wireless doorbell that works intermittently, depending on how it’s pushed. Kim and Diane will need information on who to contact for emergency property matters during July.
- UCW – 618 petunias were sold for the Chance 2 Grown petunia sale; \$565 was raised for Unit C.
- Stewardship – On June 13 at 1:00 p.m. the Stewardship education event is being held via zoom with guest Cornell Pashe from PCRC to further encourage education and reconciliation. It will provide some introductory information to the concept of treaties, and will provide some information on the Circles of Reconciliation program. The plan is to limit the program to about an hour in length. Denise will participate as a reader. Leadership is encouraged to use the “Share” function on Facebook to get the word out.
- TriniTidings – We imagine the next newsletter will go out at the end of August with fall plans.
- Caring Friends – nothing new to report
- Just Because.... Covid – To date, 15 nominations have been received, and boxes have been or are being delivered.
- Sunday School – nothing new to report – who might care about this in August, or the fall?
- Study Groups – Tuesday afternoon study is on hiatus during the circuit breaker lock down
- Choirs and Singing – nothing new to report at this time
- Affirming Ministry - Pam will do the Annual Report for 2020

Membership Status Update: No membership changes were noted this month.

New members

Transfer

Deaths

Members:

Adherents & Other:

Closing Prayer was led by Julie

Adjournment: Pam adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Next Meeting: 7:00 p.m. August 25th

_____ Pam Lotun, Acting Chair

_____ Julie Baker, Acting Secretary

Report on the Prairie to Pine Annual Meeting
May 28-30, 2021

Worship - Friday evening and Saturday began and ended with worship intended to be inter-cultural and to honour diversity. Parts of each worship were spoken or sung in various languages, including Chinese, Korean, Nepali, French (and Cree?). The themes built progressively from the many gifts of the Spirit, to the church as one body with many parts, to God's covenant with the Israelites and ourselves (to write the Law on our hearts), to the Corinthians 13 passage "If I ... but have not love, then I am as". Children and youth were involved in all worship. Some worship services were enhanced by hymns played on the cello by Jonathan Wong - His CD's to raise money for the food bank at St. Mary's Road united in Winnipeg are available at bandcamp.com ("connectivity" and "The Journey").

Election of Commissioners to General Council 2022 - The proposed slate of commissioners and alternates, with good diversity in age and race, was confirmed, with one delegate raising the question of why such a large percentage are women. The Nominating Committee replied that the invitation to nominate self or others had been circulated widely, and the group had also specifically invited many people to apply, with the suggestion that that percentage of women might also be present in the delegates to this Annual Meeting. If the totality of delegates in the country lack balance in some area of diversity, the national church will ask regions to find people with particular backgrounds. A covenanting ceremony was held with our commissioners.

- Keewatin Circle (largely isolated Indigenous communities) is represented here, as well as in the 14 or 15 spots allotted to the National Indigenous Council.

Stewardship & Mission - The presentation by Vicki Nelson emphasized generosity and gratitude as spiritual practices, and encouraged people to connect with the resource "Called to Be the Church: the Journey."

M&S Fundraiser - "The Masked Singer" - Delegates were invited to try to guess the identity of one or more singers on several songs, with each song being stopped in a couple of spots to provide clues. Singers represented themselves with puppets, and were well-known to many delegates. Participants pledged amounts online during each song, and over \$8,000 was raised.

Honouring Ministry Retirees - with intermittent vignettes, each retiree was pictured along with a description of the many gifts and traits they had given to their ministry and intend to give in retirement. A couple of verses from an appropriate hymn ended each presentation.

Memoriam for Ministers and Others who had served the Wider Church - was integrated into opening worship.

Covenanting between the Regional Council and Communities of Faith who had completed the process since February 2021 - was integrated into opening worship on Saturday.

Presentation by Gloria Cook, Community Capacity Development Coordinator- Indigenous Ministries - Gloria spoke about the Medicine Wheel as it applies to all aspects of our lives. We must first focus on the self before we can move forward to the family circle (what we want to model and teach), then the community, and then the world. She named the Medicine Wheel's four quadrants and elaborated as follows:

A. Our Journey as Indigenous Peoples before contact with Europeans – self-sustaining, taking only what we need; self-governing, with youth, women and men participating in governance; nomadic; matriarchal; clearly defined roles from childhood to elder years; lived by the Seven Sacred Teachings common to many First Nations.

B. What happened with European contact and colonization - foreign systems of governance (Indian Act, Residential Schools, Social Welfare and Justice systems, church/religion);

- who we are was “wrong”;
- patriarchal; power of Indian Agents;
- people were confined to the reservation
- needed permission to leave, would lose treaty rights if they left for more than three months; couldn’t enter public places
- conflict between Indigenous and European views on ownership was manifest in differing understandings of Treaty provisions
- Indigenous intent was to share the land and resources fairly as they did in their own communities without private ownership - governments took advantage of this
- The government owns all homes on the reserves, so families cannot use their homes as collateral
- attitude that white society knows what’s best for Indigenous peoples
- The Chiefs and Band Councils became accountable to the government rather than to their own people, and are now trying to figure out self-government
- Effects of Residential Schools - loss of family connections and modelling of how to parent and be family; loss of elders’ teachings; CFS took many of the next generations away from parents.
- lack of access to medical services

C. What is – what we’re faced with as a community and nation

- dependency, fear, anger, shame, addictions, grief and loss
- “What’s the use?” - struggle to define who we are, to build trust and move forward
- mindset of “us” and “them” fostered by the system
- poverty
- education - there are limits on how many are supported to attend post-secondary. Treaties provide education only for K-8 - gangs and drug trade on reserves, including big ones like Hell’s Angels
- younger generation doesn’t understand inter-generational trauma, what colonization means, or that it still exists today
- people who have “made it” tend not to return to reserves
- conflict in communities between Christian faith and traditional spirituality
- youth suicide due to confusion, chaos, violence, abuse and addiction in communities
- mistrust (fear, anger, feeling intimidated by people who are “smarter”)
- very difficult for Indigenous people to work in their own communities

D. Who we are: struggles to opportunities

- need to unlearn, reclaim, rebuild, and proclaim selves as First Nations people
- Seven Sacred Teachings as basic values; use the Medicine Wheel for teaching
- begin with self, family; then build communities of trust, and become equal partners in the world
- Indigenous peoples must do this work themselves - no one can do it for us - empower ourselves, allowing voices to be heard, making choices, and moving beyond the place we are in.
- must come to terms with individual and family life, e.g. with families run like a residential school
- some chiefs/councils are replicating the pattern of the Indian Agents
- many people, especially the younger generations, lack workplace ethics, and don't show up for work when they don't feel like it
- social assistance dollars are entirely inadequate; lack of housing and overcrowding. People won't attend church and listen about Christianity when their basic living needs are not met.
- recognitions of the importance of spirituality in life
- recognition of the importance of the first seven years of life in forming the person and what they carry forward in life - parents need healing
- mandated anger management programs fail with most participants because they don't want to be there.
- though we must do this ourselves, allies are needed and valued.

Admission to the United Church of Canada - Christopher Davis, minister at Deloraine, was admitted and reflected on Jesus' question "Who do you say I am?"

Reports from the Region's Co-Chairs

- Diane Dwarka highlighted her written report, giving thanks to the staff, her Co-Chair and the Executive, and welcoming the incoming Executive. She stated that our journey to be intercultural and anti-racism is coming along.
- Kwang Beom Cho said he is "still trying to find hope in the United Church, and spoke of the need to make new wine and put it in new wineskins (as opposed to new wine in old wineskins). We may be tired, but don't give up on this.

Report of the Executive Secretary

Shannon McCarthy thanked the Co-Chairs, Executive, staff and committees, especially the Nominations Committee. She invited people to bring their gifts forward to this level of church; most former Presbyters haven't made the leap. She also said the Region is letting go its lease for the building on St. Mary's Road, as we don't need that much space. They hope to find a home in one of the Winnipeg churches.

Finance - we had a surplus in 2020 due to activities curtailed by COVID, and are still waiting for about 1/4 of congregations to report their statistics.

- Bridge grant income is not included in assessments.
- 15% cut in M & S grants will not affect Regional staff positions, which are funded under Governance

- If people want to raise M & S money for places/projects in Prairie to Pine Region, they should donate it directly to Prairie to Pine and inquire to the regional Executive about designating the donation. All M & S donations sent to the national church remain in the national fund.

Recognitions of anniversaries in ministry - Anniversaries were recognized in five or ten-year increments, with service of up to 65 years noted.

Delegates and others had the option of joining a virtual games night on Saturday evening, which apparently was a success.

Sunday Worship – celebration of becoming an Affirming Region

- -This process had been completed when we were a Conference, and was re-engaged as a Region.
- The service acknowledged people who are “differently abled” fairly briefly, with a focus on affirming diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The mood and decorations were very festive and rainbow-themed. The reflection was related to Noah’s ark and the rainbow, expressed in four “P’s”, two of which I remember as “Power” and “Presence”
- barb janes spoke about the history of working for recognition, openness and acceptance of LGBT2Q people since the 1980s. (apologies if I have missed any of the descriptive letters) –
- Communion was shared and celebratory voices raised

Submitted by Brenda Brand