

Trinity United Church Leadership Team Meeting  
Trinity United Church

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Present: Cindy Curry, Pam Lotun, Kim Guy, Lesia Case, Donna Matthews, Alan Brown, Denise Stairs, Julie Baker

Regrets: Stephanie Verhoeven, Gloria Ross, Diane Routledge

Call to order: 6:59pm

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 – Julie showed a YouTube video called “I don’t know – maybe?” and offered opening prayer.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: to approve the minutes from June 9, 2021 as circulated.

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

**Correspondence:**

The United Church of Canada, Director of Philanthropy – a letter of thanks for our \$215 donation to the Healing Fund, in memory of the children who died at Kamloops Residential School.

Thank you notes received from Jared Verhoeven, Andrew Stasiuk & Jan Boychuk for their Just Because... Covid boxes

UCW sent a note of thanks and appreciation to the Leadership Team for the many ways we’ve been able to stay connected as a church throughout COVID.

**Discussion and Decisions:**

1. 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. Since then, residential sites across the country have identified thousands more unmarked graves. This is what is currently listed on our church website about Trinity and residential schools: <https://trinityunitedportage.ca/history-of-trinity-united-church/>

In June, Stewardship hosted a reconciliation event with regards to treaties with Cornell Pashe (PCRC). They are considering whether they might pursue something else like it as a step two, but have no particular plans.

Angela Roulette (Women of the Mother Earth Network) is interesting in partnering with Trinity in some way (healing circles, meals, orange shirts).

Orange Shirt Day is September 30.

Julie has also been in conversation with James Kostuchuk, who is providing historical research support to indigenous elders exploring the local residential school grounds. James will convey our interest in this history to the group, and our desire to be supportive if there is a way we can be so. He expects that they may reach out to us directly.

At our last meeting, we talked about hoping to broaden the education of our leadership team and congregation about our role in the local residential school.

**September 30<sup>th</sup>** – Orange Shirt Day: encourage the congregation to participate in any communities that are happening

Donna has agreed to do a display outside the church for Orange Shirt Day.

**Other next steps are tabled for now.**

2. Fall plans – the most recent public health orders remove most health and safety decisions from the government and back to organizations and businesses. This means that there are a great number of decisions to be made about how Trinity will proceed this fall. While vaccine uptake is fairly healthy within the community of Portage, we have no information about how many Trinity attenders are fully vaccinated. We know that Julie is fully vaccinated, as are many Trinity folk. We also know that children under the age of 11 (anyone born since 2010) are not currently eligible for vaccination. We have spent a great deal of time and energy on the affirming journey; it is therefore unlikely that we would ask people to produce a card for entry! We also note that vaccines can be a tool to make a place safe and welcoming for people.

**Decision:** It was agreed that at this time, we would not ask for personal health information for Sunday morning attendance. We could imagine, however, that vaccinations for particular programs or leadership positions might be part of our safety and screening protocol.

Capacity limits, physical distancing – The current public health orders allow for activities in the church up to 50% capacity at this time. This would allow for 250 in the sanctuary. However, allowing that number of persons would not accommodate physical distancing of 6 feet between households. At present, every other pew has been blocked off to maintain 6 feet back to front, and side to side distancing is being managed by eyesight. For the most part, this system could be maintained for the number of people who show up on regular Sunday mornings. However, it doesn't come close to allowing the maximum capacity allowed. (Maximum capacity with households fully distanced depends on size of households – probably up to 150 with some larger household groups) What capacity will we permit for a large funeral, for example? What about a wedding? Would we remove the cords on pews to allow people to have more room to space themselves? Would we allow capacity that does not maintain the full distance? We have already had questions related to capacity numbers for two large funerals, and we have a wedding booked at the end of September.

**Decision:** At this point, max capacity is 150 until we no longer need to physically distance. We will keep every second pew blocked off to help people maintain distance.

Contact tracing – At this time, many places have given up contact tracing (funeral homes are no longer tracking). At Trinity, we are continuing to request that people sign in, and have suggested to funeral homes that we would require it at large funerals.

**Decision:** We will continue to keep a record of those who attend Sunday mornings and Trinity group gatherings, including funerals, for the purposes of contact tracing.

Mask wearing – Current public health orders do not require masking indoors, but recommend it, particularly for those who are not fully vaccinated. At present, for Sundays, we are not requiring, but encouraging mask use. On these very hot Sundays, Julie has invited people to remove their masks while they are seated, if they are not speaking, but to use their masks for speaking or when they are moving about. If people have entered without a mask, they have not been required to take one. With the small summer attendance numbers, people have been quite good about maintaining distance while seated. We expect that indoor mask use may be re-mandated soon.

**Decision:** We will follow public health orders, but if masks are not mandated for churches, at this time, we will ask people to wear masks in the building unless they are seated and distanced from one another. We will make sure that masks are available for anyone who arrives without one.

Live music – At this time, we have only permitted instrumental live music. As you can imagine, there is a desire from some members of our congregation to bring back live music, and singing in particular. Could the choir offer some live music from the choir loft? Can the congregation sing hymns? Singing is a very complicated question, as the science around aerosol movement indicates that the kind of physical distancing for singing indoors would be more like 20 feet than 6 feet. Singing produces an aerosol effect similar to coughing. It is also significantly impacted by air current, fresh air exchange and ventilation. In the Trinity sanctuary, air currents are minimal, as there is no forced air heating. However, there is also minimal ventilation and fresh air exchange. There is one vent in the roof and no windows that open. The only ways for fresh air to enter the space are to open doors to the sanctuary, none of which are on the room level of the sanctuary. (Tupper Street and Bank of Montreal door) This means that while fans could be utilized to increase the fresh air exchange, they would also impact currents which would reduce the effectiveness of physical distancing. Commercial air “purifiers” would do little in a space the size of the sanctuary. It is possible to mask while singing. There is no definitive information on the efficacy of fabric masks to prevent aerosol escape, but it is clear that it helps. When Dr. Roussin was specifically asked about singing in the latest round of health orders, he indicated that there was no prohibition, but that measures should be taking for distancing (he did not indicate what kind of distancing) and masking where distancing was not possible. (He did not seem prepared to speak to it in detail).

Choral Canada shared the following informative webinar at the end of June that Julie attended.

<https://www.choralcanada.org/wecansingsafelywebinar.html?fbclid=IwAR0Q-h0FvFyQtlyIEFAIR1uE9pmVkJfgUh2OgbWmn8zwZaAPvx2c53yTpo>

And offers the following resources on Covid-19 and singing:

<https://www.choralcanada.org/covid-19-resources.html>

We should note also that there would be implications to how we share audio to online services when we return to live music. What timeline and pathway might we imagine for a return to singing live?

**Decision:** At this time, we will continue to refrain from congregational singing. We are not yet ready to bring back choir. We would encourage instrumental options, and could make the use of live soloists work if we had any volunteers.

Sunday School and Children's Programming – Like singing, children's involvement in church is complicated, as children are currently not eligible for vaccination and therefore vulnerable to virus transmission, even from vaccinated adults who may not find themselves affected a great deal. It is hard to know the difference between cart and horse when it comes to creating a safe program, and parents' comfort level in bringing their children to church for said program. Do we need a group of fully vaccinated volunteer leaders? What protocols would be put in place? For elementary school age children, the pandemic has been a long time. Any pre-pandemic patterns will be gone, so a children's program will be starting up from scratch. Where and when and how do we begin?

**Decision:** It is hard to imagine how to move forward with so many unknowns, but we lament the thought of simply doing nothing to involve children. Decisions were tabled at this time, but we will return to the conversation.

Refreshments – Much has been learned about Covid-19 as relates to sharing food. We have learned that it is not the food and drink that is a vulnerability, but the amount of time that people spend in close proximity without masks talking and using their mouths for chewing etc. that makes it a less safe activity with regards to transmission. If we created a plan for communion that allowed people to receive communion where they sat, or take communion with them back to their seats it might be possible to share communion safely. Do we wish to set a date for an in person communion service at this time?

**Decision:** Provided health orders allow, we will plan for a communion service October 3.

At present, we have eliminated church coffee time after church. In recent weeks, ice water has been available at the back of the church for people to take with them to their seats. Do we envision a pathway back for sharing food and drink at the church in a social way?

**Decision:** After much discussion, decisions in this regard were tabled. We will consider this again at our next meeting.

What about funeral receptions? Funeral homes have recently made a return to receptions in an adapted fashion. Does the Leadership Team wish to make any decisions for the church building or recommendations to the UCW about funeral receptions?

**Decision:** At this time we are open to holding funeral receptions, if a safe way can be reasonably determined, and the UCW is comfortable catering. The protocol for receptions needs to be thought through and we will encourage the UCW to do so when they are ready to do so.

It is clear that retaining an online worship experience is valued by people connected to our church. Should we create a Hybrid-Worship Think Tank/Team to help determine what worship might look like going forward? (how do you engage online people and an in person congregation without making one of them feel like the audience? How can we be participatory in a way that includes

both groups, but also allows people to participate at their own comfort levels? How can we be an intergenerational worshipping community?)

**Decision:** Discussion was tabled due to time constraints. We will return to this topic at a future meeting.

#### Finance Report –

The finance team approved an unbudgeted Covid expense from Byte Me Computers to hard-wire our internet connection into the sanctuary. We hope that this increases our online reliability for livestreaming.

Motion: to approve financial statements as circulated and presented, including approval of the unbudgeted expense of \$325.

Moved by: Donna Matthews    Seconded by: Denise    **Carried.**

Trustees Report – Cynthia Jordan’s family personalized one of the balcony stained glass windows, in her memory. When should we dedicate the window?

**Decision:** We suggest that the window dedication take place Thanksgiving 2021, provided Cynthia’s family is available, and health orders permit.

#### Ministry Search Team Report –

- our job advertisements have not resulted in any local (Manitoba) interest so we have done some brainstorming of names from the community/congregation that we feel would have the skills for the job - if the Leadership Team has any ideas of people that would be a good fit, we'd ask that they let us know
- over the next 2-3 weeks members of our team will be reaching out individually to the people we've identified to gauge interest / encourage interest in the position
- depending on responses we still may entertain dividing the role if we have a good candidate who wants to work fewer than 30 hours per week

#### M and P Report –

Pulpit supply has been arranged for September 26, October 17, November 7 and January 2. Volunteers are coming to be in the office while Jacquie is away for the next week and a half.

#### Prairie to Pine Region –

It was noted that Brenda’s report submitted in the spring was thorough and well received.

Calendar – Leadership team reviewed the September calendar plans.

#### Team and Interest Group Updates –

- Structure Support team - has a meeting scheduled for September 21. Anyone have any further thoughts about who might be recruited to be chair elect? How is your “prayerfully considering” going?

- Property – Waind was called in to fix the flusher in the accessibility stall in the women’s washroom, and is finishing up his 2 month rotation at the end of August. Up next will be Matt Morais for September & October. Access was in to figure out why, on our first Sunday back from summer break, Julie found herself stuck in the lift for over an hour. After much time spent on it, they weren’t able to replicate the problem but have agreed to return if we need them again. Lori Carpenter from the nursery school nominated Trinity for the Communities in Bloom initiative, and our gardens were featured in the Portage newspaper, with photos and a write-up. Also, we may have a bat in the sanctuary, that Bob Jones is investigating.
- UCW
- Stewardship – Are planning a fall campaign. They expect to make use of 3 Sunday mornings – not likely consecutively. For their Cornell Pashe – Treaty Education event for Reconciliation they had 40 participant devices logged in – some of which had more than one person at the device. They were exceedingly pleased with that attendance. In addition, of those 40, 14 belonged to people who were not Trinity attenders. So that’s 35% of the audience that was not the congregation which also met the stewardship goal of offering value to the community beyond our congregation.
- TriniTidings – We plan for a newsletter with fall plans to go out on Friday, August 27.
- Caring Friends
- Just Because.... Covid – 19 nominations were received, and boxes were delivered.
- Sunday School
- Study Groups – Tuesday afternoon study is on hiatus during the circuit breaker lock down; it is not clear when or how this group should resume activity
- Choirs and Singing
- Affirming Ministry - Has Pam done the Annual Report for 2020? She will.
- Tech Updates – We have been having issues not receiving some emails, and not having our emails received. Investigation with MTS is underway. In addition, the corded internet connection to the sanctuary has been completed.

Membership Status Update:

*New members*

*Transfer*

*Deaths*

Members:

Gerry Johnston, June 27, 2021 (officiated by John Zondag, First Presbyterian – on behalf of Trinity)

Adherents & Other:

Dallas Denslow July 5, 2021 (officiated July 17 by Norman Collier – on behalf of Trinity)

Judy Archibald, January 24, 2021 (officiated by Wilma Shirriff, July 23 – on behalf of Trinity)

Dennis Roy, January 29, 2021 (officiated by Leith Saunders, July 24 – on behalf of Trinity)

Dick Street, June 28, 2021

Lorry Nicholson, July 26, 2021

Closing Prayer was offered by Julie

Adjournment: 9:15pm

***Next Meeting: September 8, 2021 at 7:00pm***

\_\_\_\_\_ Cindy Curry, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_ Pam Lotun, Secretary