

MINUTES – Woodlawn United Church Council March 16, 2020

CALL TO ORDER: Council Co-Chair Kathy Dean called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

The ‘Special Meeting’ of Council was called to discuss and address the challenges and opportunities facing Woodlawn United as we strive to be the church, to continue to provide both witness and service during the uncertain times created by the world wide pandemic COVID-19. The meeting room was set up with seating that maintained a safe distance and a video and audio link was established for those that were self isolating and/or otherwise unable to attend in person as we attempt to exercise best practice of ‘social distancing’

In Attendance: Kathy Dean, Dennis Dean, Jim Allen, Bev Lynch, Rev. Mary Lynne Whyte, Paul Whyte, Shannon MacLean, Keith Musselman, Bob Watt

Via Video Link: Peter Woods, Brian Moors, Kerri Graham, Rev. Phillip Kennedy

Via Audio Link: Allan Eddy. Helen Dixon

Guest: Shelley Clee

OPENING PRAYER: Co-chair Kathy opened the meeting with prayer.

WELCOME: Kathy welcomed everyone to what may become our reality in and for the near future, meeting via the internet.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:

Worship: there was acceptance that we should follow the government guidelines around public gatherings and that we have to be innovative in finding new ways to worship. Technology provides us with options and Facebook Live was suggested as a way the clergy could still provide leadership in worship. **By consensus it was agreed that Woodlawn United cease public ‘in house’ worship for the Sundays of March 22nd, 29th and April 5th; that the ministers provide a ‘Facebook Live’ message for those Sundays and that the message be recorded and posted on the web site and that we re-examine this decision before or after April 5th.**

Office Closure – Yes or No: There was emotional conversation around whether we should keep the office open or closed; the message, either way, it would send to our congregation and the community we serve. Shelley, our administrator, indicated it was her preference to work from the office rather than from her home. **By consensus it was agreed that the office would remain ‘open’ during the normal business hours for as long as Shelley remains comfortable in doing so.** The ministerial staff should use their own judgement and comfort level in the decision to work from the office or from home. It was recommended Shelley maintain a log, for the foreseeable future, of persons who visit the office, that signage be posted reminding people to be aware of recommended ‘best practices’, that our electronic sign display a message of care and concern, and that a daily scripture/devotion be posted on the web site. (Action - ministers & Shelley). Shelley raised the question of the ‘church’ being opened for the Monday noon hour and Jerry Jackson’s query; if it were possible to do so, in these uncertain times, more frequently. Note - there was no response to either question.

Easter Services: Maundy Thursday service was left in the hands of Shannon and the Ecumenical Good Friday Service was being co-ordinated by Mary Lynne and the other area participating clergy.

Discussion drifted from the special services to the 'how of providing internet service and the time involved in doing so'. The feeling of council was that pastoral care is a priority and that minimum time be spent on developing 'Facebook Live' service. **There was consensus that salaries would be paid to all staff including the organist and choir director during the down time and that Pastoral Care versus time spent on preparing internet service was the priority.**

Special Events/Programming – Shelley reported that all rentals, with two exceptions, have already cancelled and she was waiting for word on the remaining two. All chowders, concerts, Dartmouth Community Concert have been cancelled. It was agreed that the AA and Blood Donor Collection, both considered to be essential services, should not be cancelled. Girl Guides and Scouts have cancelled until mid April. It was recommended that all church sponsored programming be canceled and/or find novel ways to remain connected as long as public worship is not being held. **Consensus was granted to Peter to purchase a licenced copy (\$200.00 annual) of Zoom for the use of Woodlawn United Church and that it be available for any meeting.**

Funerals: Mary Lynne suggested that Woodlawn offer whatever pastoral care necessary and that there be no public service at the time and that a memorial service be promoted for observance at a later date. If a bereaved family insists on a burial versus a cremation and memorial, that the church offer a grave side committal. The ministry staff were given full support of the Council to act according to their comfort level.

Benevolent Fund: Kathy raised the topic of the Benevolent Fund having a zero balance. There was discussion around pastoral care being provided through the Benevolent fund being a priority, who and how the fund was managed. The ministers indicated they were not aware of the status of the fund until it reached zero. Keith indicated he would arrange a reporting to the staff of the balance in the fund on a regular basis. Discussion of a special fund raiser, and a notice to congregation of the need ensued prior to a recommendation to supplement the fund. **By Consensus it was agreed to supplement the Benevolent Fund with a one time transfer of \$2000.00 from existing funds, the amount to be replaced as soon as possible.**

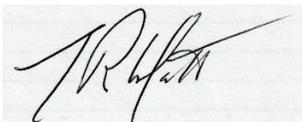
ADJOURNMENT – Chair Kathy adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

CLOSING PRAYER – Rev. Mary Lynne lead the Council in a closing prayer.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING – Wednesday, March 18th, 2020 via video link. Peter to co-ordinate.

Kathy Dean: Co-Chair of Council

Submitted



J Robert Watt - Secretary, WUC Council