

**PRAIRIE SPIRIT UNITED CHURCH
OVERSIGHT COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES**

February 27, 2021 - 9:30 A.M.

Welcome to all; special welcome to our new minister Deborah Vitt

Present: Joycelyn Fournier-Gawryluk, Marilyn McCorrister, Dennis Bitton, Judy Restall,
Linda Uhrich, Heather MacMillan, Donna Little, John McLeod, Val Goodridge,
Reverend DuVal, Reverend Vitt
Guest: Pat Rothney (timed item)
Judy Lawrence (timed item)

1. **Opening Prayer** - Marilyn McCorrister

Marilyn McCorrister opened the meeting with a poem and a prayer with a COVID themed message. It was suggested it be included in the March newsletter for all to appreciate.

2. **Acceptance of Meeting Minutes - January 30, 2021**

MOTION

Moved by Dennis Bitton Seconded by Marilyn McCorrister

That the minutes of January 30, 2021 be accepted as circulated.

CARRIED

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

MOTION

Moved by Linda Uhrich Seconded by Judy Restall

That the agenda be approved as amended.

1. The discussion of Rentals be moved from the Property Report to the COVID-19 Team Report.

CARRIED

4. **Correspondence, Communications and Updates**

No correspondence, communications or updates to report this month.

5. **Report from the Ministerial Team – Rev. Paul DuVal & Rev. Deborah Vitt**

Reverend Paul DuVal:

1. Reverend DuVal and Reverend Vitt have begun to plan out schedules and responsibilities for their team ministry.

2. There are about 30 people who are keeping in contact with folks in the congregation. The lists are improving but will continue to be a focus in the spring. There is a feeling that people are being missed.

3. PSUC has hosted several funerals during the pandemic and there have been several requests for use of the Memorial Garden. Live streaming has been used successfully for some funeral services.

Reverend Deborah Vitt:

1. This has been a busy introductory week. The binder prepared by M&P is very helpful.

2. Reverend Vitt has been planning with Rev. DuVal around their schedule, making sure that one or both

ministers will always be available to the congregation and to lead worship.

3. Rev. Vitt has been meeting with members of the Oversight Team and the congregation in person and via Zoom calls. She joined the Happy Gang Zoom on Wednesday.

4. Rev. Vitt offered a number of areas where her skills could be used beyond Sunday worship:

1. Help to begin the work of becoming an Affirming Church
2. Lift up the Prayer Shawl ministry by having a “Blessing of the Prayer Shawls” during a service.

6. Ad Hoc Committee Reports

6.1. Search Team Report - Val Goodridge and John McLeod

1. The Search Team is very pleased to have Reverend Deborah Vitt join our ministerial team. Her appointment will conclude on June 30, 2021.
2. The Prairie To Pine Region has published the information regarding reappointments that will come into effect on July 1, 2021. The Search Team will review these timelines and make sure there is ministerial staff in place at PSUC.
3. The search for a permanent minister is proceeding. The team has been meeting regularly and looking at minister profiles on Church Hub almost daily. Five letters of interest were sent out to potential candidates after our meeting on February 24, 2021. During our search, we have received some applications but most have been from ministers outside of Canada; predominantly from Africa.

6.2. COVID-19 19 Team Report – Val Goodridge

1. The Public Health Orders currently in effect allow for the church to have in person Worship services in numbers not to exceed 50 people or 10% of room capacity in attendance. Other gatherings are kept to 5 people. Masking and physical distancing remain in effect.
2. Self help/support groups are allowed to meet in numbers not to exceed 15 people or 25% of room capacity.

Cavalier AA is beginning to hold meetings. Inspiration Al-Anon and Hands of Hope are in discussions with their members on when they will start.

3. Jessica Kos-Whicher will be allowed to resume with one on one instruction.

4. All the groups using the building have received the new guidelines for PSUC and will sign a building use waiver for 2021.

Rentals:

1. New written rental agreements have been signed by Agriculture In The Classroom and by Jessica Kos-Whicher. Discounts have been applied to their rents due to COVID-19 restrictions.
2. A new written agreement has been prepared for TPI for their use of our parking lot. It is also discounted as they have not yet returned in force to their office building.
3. Judy Lawrence, our Rentals Administrator, raised a concern around decisions regarding the fee structure when negotiating contracts with renters. She will not be responsible for setting the rental fees. This responsibility would reside in the Property Team with approval from the Oversight Council.

6.3. Nomination Team – Rev. Paul DuVal

Membership: Ken Cade, Margaret Fisher, Flora Mitchell, Rev. Paul DuVal

1. **There are several key positions on the Oversight Council that need to be filled:** Chairperson, Vice Chair and Regional Representative(s).

2. Several Standing Teams need to have more people:

The following Standing Teams currently need members.

- 1. Ministry and Personnel**
- 2. Christian Education**
- 3. Stewardship and Sustainability**

Teams should make every effort to recruit their own members. Team Leaders are chosen by the teams through consensus. Our Constitution states that teams must have a **minimum** of three members and most will need at least 5 to carry out their mandate.

The Nominating Team will be meeting soon and beginning the work of recruiting people for these key positions.

Val Goodridge asked that teams send the names of members, along with their contact information, to her as soon as possible. She will update the contact list for the Standing Teams and the Oversight Council in preparation for the Annual Meeting.

6.4. Policy Development – Val Goodridge

Table to the March meeting

6.5. Thriving Churches Follow up – how can we become a “Mission Church”

John McLeod presented information on the Thriving Churches webinars based on the work of Lorraine MacKenzie Shepherd and Tammy Allan. After visiting churches across Canada described as thriving, they developed a list of practices and traits that thriving churches had.

They are:

Inspirational Worship, Spiritual Formation for adults, Contemplative, Joyful, Communal, Discerning, Innovative, Collegial, Radical Hospitality, Mission Focus, Offering Public Witness

These may not all be found in each church but all thriving churches had some of these practises.

There is a book that can be purchased either as an ebook or a hard copy.

These 3 webinars are available for viewing at:

<https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/recordings>

It was decided to purchase 3 hard copies for use at the church (two for the library and one for the office)

6.5.1. Mid-week coffee time has started including Happy Gang

As a way of connecting during the time we are out of our building, a Zoom Coffee Time has been started. The group was opened up to all members of PSUC and Crestview as well as the folks who attended the Happy Gang meetings before the pandemic. There were 9-12 people at the first meeting which was led by Dennis Bitton. Chris Hashimoto provides leadership to the group in general. For the second meeting which took place last Wednesday, Joycelyn Fournier-Gawryluk sat in to support Chris with any technical difficulties. The group decided to meet every second week. Deborah Vitt joined last Wednesday and Joycelyn reported that the group was very appreciative of the opportunity to meet her and to get together this way. Joycelyn will continue to provide technical support until it is not needed.

6.5.2. **Let's Talk Books** – Val Goodridge

The Oversight Council gave Val Goodridge permission to start a Zoom Group for folks who love to read. They would get together to talk about the books they have been reading and make recommendations for great books to read. Let's Talk Books will be advertised in the Weekly Up Date on Friday, March 5.

7. **Finance Projections and Plans**

7.1. **Budget For 2021**

7.1.1. **Worship Team Presentation regarding worship budget requests and rationale**

Pat Rothney (timed item: 10:30 a.m.)

Pat Rothney went over the Worship budget request and took questions. The cost of technology has been added to the Worship budget. Due to the pandemic, PSUC only has a presence online and that has increased our costs for technology, production staff and musicians. This is true of the four churches that were surveyed.

7.1.2.2021 **Budget Overview**

Marilyn McCorrister went over the draft budget for 2021 and took questions. She expressed how difficult it has been to create a budget during the pandemic. Although this budget is showing a shortfall, the Finance Team supports it.

MOTION

Moved by Marilyn McCorrister Seconded by John McLeod

That the Draft Budget for 2021 be received.

CARRIED

Joycelyn Fournier-Gawryluk thanked Marilyn McCorrister and the Finance Team for all their hard work and recognized that putting this budget together has been a stressful process.

8. **Oversight Council Standing Team and Other Bodies Reports** (1-2 highlights)

8.1 **Congregational Life** - Heather MacMillan

1. Following COVID-19 guidelines, the Congregational Life Team is planning to make meat pies and fruit crisps later in March.
2. The Cookie Train will continue on the second Monday of each month. Cookies can be brought to the church parking lot between 11:30am and 12 noon for delivery to Oak Table, West Broadway and St Matthews Maryland Community Ministries.

8.2 **Finance** - Marilyn McCorrister

8.2.1 **Monthly Report**

1. The Income Tax receipts, T4s and T4As have gone out.
2. \$125,000 from the savings account was moved to GICs on February 1. We will be doing a yearlong cash flow document and may decide to move additional funds to GICs.
3. The Finance Team has been working on the Finance Policy and Procedures on and off for over a year. It will soon be ready to bring to the Oversight Council for approval.
4. The Finance Team passed a motion to continue having an audit in 2021 rather than a review engagement. This needs to be passed at the Oversight Council.

MOTION

Moved by Marilyn McCorrister Seconded by Val Goodridge
That Prairie Spirit United Church have an audit carried out in 2021.

CARRIED

8.2.2 Financial statement

Marilyn McCorrister went through the Financial Statement ending January 31, 2021 and took questions.

MOTION

Moved by Marilyn McCorrister Seconded by Heather MacMillan
That the Financial Statement ending January 31, 2021 be accepted.

CARRIED

8.3 Ministry and Personnel

8.3.1 Yearly staff reviews

The staff reviews have begun. M&P team members are meeting with all staff to discuss and celebrate their performance as well as set goals for the coming months.

8.3.2 Custodian position

Now that there is increased use of the church, it is necessary that we hire a custodian. The M&P Team will meet on Wednesday and will begin the hiring process.

8.3.3 Ministerial appointments

M&P is happy to welcome Reverend Deborah Vitt to the ministerial team. Pat Rothney has guided her onboarding.

8.4 Pastoral Care

1. The main focus has been to find ways to stay in contact with the congregation and shut ins during the pandemic. We need a system that assures us that no one is “falling through the cracks”. People are officially and unofficially talking to congregants but there is not an official master list of who is talking to whom. There is a need to create that list and to develop procedures for tracking address changes when people move. Often mail goes to a family member when a person moves into a Personal Care Home. Judy Sawyer sends cards regularly to our shut ins and on different occasions so having up to date addresses is very important for that work to be done efficiently.

2. Prayer Shawls have been delivered to Heather Friesen and Eileen Keck.

8.5 Property

1. Duncalfe Mechanical has been hired to service the new HVAC twice this year at a cost of \$1500.00.
2. Polished Cleaning Services have been hired to clean the building while we are without a custodian. Property is not satisfied with the quality of the work being done and the costs involved. They recommend that M&P begin the process to hire a custodian.
3. Property is moving ahead with several projects that were identified as needing to be done in 2021:

- Memory
1. Repairing the paved portion of the sidewalk on the west side of the building. A Stone Campaign has been started to help offset the cost of this project.
 2. Replacement of the flooring in the office area, hallway and Sunrise Room. We will be able to receive a discount on the cost of the flooring product through the Mohawk Industries representative.
 4. Dennis Bitton is meeting with Poulin's to discuss the mouse issue in the church. Heather MacMillan will contact him regarding the extreme problem in the kitchen and the possible need for professional cleaning.
 5. At the Oversight Council meeting there was a discussion about the church phone system and whether it needed to be replaced. Since the meeting, our Office Administrator, Sherri Van Aert, has received tech support from Telexperts and feels that the phone system is good for many years to come. She reports that the church phone system is quite sophisticated and is only 4 years old.
 6. Property had asked for guidance from the Oversight Council regarding having a third phone line installed in the office dedicated to sending and receiving faxes. The church fax line was only used when dealing with ADP. Recently ADP has moved to an online system removing the need to send them faxes. Scan and email are the industry standards these days. Our Office Administrator does not think the expense of an extra line is worth it for fax capabilities in the office.

8.5.1 Grants (including Tech Soup) and 5-year Capital Review

Property recently purchased from TechSoup Canada, at a considerable discount, GrantStation, software that assists charitable organizations in searching and applying for grant money. This program should prove invaluable to the person or persons who step up to assist PSUC in finding grants.

8.6 Social Justice and Outreach

1. The Social Justice Team is using the Weekly Update and the PS Newsletter to bring social justice issues to the congregation. Several opportunities to join webinars have been presented over the last few weeks.
2. The Grandfather Teachings, posted in the last Newsletter, were well received and these will continue to be featured.

8.7 Trustees

8.7.1 Insurance

Churches have been warned that insurance premiums could increase by as much as 30% in 2021. Trustees have put \$14,000.00 into the draft budget for 2021 but expect that figure to be a little high. Insurance coverage cost PSUC \$8,950.00 in 2020.

8.8 United Church Women - Donna Little

No report

8.9 Worship and Faith Development - Judy Restall

1. The Worship Team is working to raise visibility using the Weekly Update and the Newsletter to feature our banners and the Judy Morning Star quilts displayed in the Narthex.

2. "Ask Worship" has been introduced in the Weekly Up Date.
3. Eight people attended the Lenten Study last week.
4. Planning has been done for Lent and Easter.
5. Heather MacMillan, Judy Restall and Sharon McIntyre met to discuss the Funeral policy. They recommended a number of changes to the policy.

MOTION

Moved by Judy Restall Seconded by Heather MacMillan

That the following changes be made to the policy:

1. The sound fee currently set at \$50.00 be raised to \$63.00
2. A change in terms: Projectionist changed to Live Streaming - Quote provided on request .

TABLED

A discussion ensued. It was decided that a meeting, including a larger group of people, will take place to discuss the Funeral policy and a report will be brought back to the OC at a future meeting.

8.10 Other teams not yet operating:

- 8.10.1 Stewardship and Sustainability
- 8.10.2 Christian Education
- 8.10.3 Communications – ad hoc committee needed

MOTION

Moved by Linda Uhrich Seconded by Dennis Bitton

That the Team Reports be approved.

CARRIED

9. Report on Membership Lists (software to support), historic roll and ways of building a supportive faith community

The Team that met to review and update these lists will meet again to finalize the lists once our Office Administrator finishes compiling all the information from the last meeting.

10. Prairie to Pine Regional News – Covenant Agreement

Our Covenant Certificate has been received and will be framed and posted in the church.

11. Business Arising from Reports – coordination of our work (policy development)

11.1 Planning for our Annual Meeting (reports to be to office by March 12th)

1. The Annual Meeting will be held on April 18th
2. Team Reports on activities completed in 2020 are to be sent digitally to the Office Administrator by **March 12** at the latest.
3. The Annual Meeting will be advertised several weeks in advance at the Sunday service and through the Weekly Update and possibly the Newsletter.
4. Two plans are in development.

- Plan 1 - Zoom/phone in and Plan 2 - in person if it is allowed by the date
5. People who wish to attend must register in advance. If the meeting is held via Zoom, only registered attendees will get the Zoom link.
 6. The Annual Report and motions will be sent out digitally and by mail. There will be copies available at the church.
 5. The meeting agenda will be kept brief.

12. Closing prayer

Reverend Paul DuVal closed our meeting with a blessing.

13. Adjournment

As the business of this meeting was concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30PM.

Next Meeting Dates:

Saturday, March 27, 2021 at 9:30

Oversight Council Secretary

Oversight Council Chairperson

Val Goodridge

Joycelyn Fournier-Gawryluk

Notes:

From the Prairie to Pine website:

2021 Regional Council Meeting New

The 2021 Prairie to Pine Regional Council Meeting will be on **May 28-30, 2021**. It will be an electronic meeting held in blocks of time spread out over three days. Stay tuned for more information.

New Manual (2021) Now Available New

The 2021 edition of the Manual of the United Church of Canada is now available online. It comes into effect March 01, 2021. The changes from the previous 2019 edition can be spotted with the year “2021” in the margin.

As with the 2019 edition, there will be no printed version available for purchase. People are encouraged to use the version on-line or print it themselves if they prefer a hard copy.

World Day of Prayer New First Friday in March (March 5)

To attend a Manitoba wide service please register at Eventbrite. Its free but you must register to get a ticket. Go to www.eventbrite.ca to register. When you register you will get the Zoom link. It is set up for Friday, March 5 at 1:00 pm. Please click [here](#) for more information.