

**Prairie Spirit United Church  
Oversight Council Meeting  
Minutes  
Tuesday, August 31 2021**

**Welcome**

**Present:** Chris Urban, Joycelyn Fournier-Gawryluk, Marilyn McCorrister, Pat Rothney, Dennis Bitton, Marsha Jones, Linda Uhrich, John McLeod, Heather MacMillan, Donna Little, Val Goodridge, Susan McIlveen.

**Regrets:**

1. **Opening Prayer** - Val Goodridge
2. **Acceptance of Oversight Council Meeting Minutes - June 23, 2021**

**MOTION**

Moved by Chris Urban    Seconded by Heather MacMillan  
That the minutes of June 23, 2021 be accepted as circulated.

**CARRIED**

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

**MOTION**

Moved by Linda Uhrich    Seconded by Dennis Bitton  
That the agenda be approved as amended. An item, "September 10, 2021 Portage Avenue Food Bank Conflict with the Election Canada Rental" was added as 6.7 on the agenda.

**CARRIED**

4. **Correspondence, Communications and Updates**

**4.1. Letter from Deb McAlpine**

The letter, addressed to the Oversight Council, was read aloud.

**Action:** On behalf of the Oversight Council, Val Goodridge will contact Deb McAlpine to seek greater understanding of points raised in the letter.

**4.2. Letter from Bill Percy -Tax Bill enclosed**

For the last two years, the tax bill has been sent to the office of Bill Percy at Thompson Dorfman Sweatman as they were our lawyer for the title transfer from Sturgeon Creek to Prairie Spirit United Church. Our Treasurer has received the tax bill.

**Action:** The Trustees will contact the city to correct the mailing address. The letter was given to John McLeod.

**4.3. Purdue Pharmacy Bankruptcy Claim**

No one on the Council has any knowledge of a claim made against Purdue Pharmacy.

**Action:** Letter will be shredded and no further action will be taken.

#### **4.4. Letter from FLCCC Alliance - Call To Action**

PSUC is asked to join our voice in a call for the use of ivermectin, a large animal dewormer, as a treatment for COVID in humans. The Oversight Council strongly declined this request.

**Action:** Letter will be shredded and no further action will be taken.

### **5. Report From the Minister- Susan McIlveen**

**5.1** Susan reports that she is familiarizing herself with the members of PSUC through phone calls and office pastoral visits. As well she is becoming familiar with the worship, funeral and baptism practises followed at PSUC. She has developed a worship plan for September 12 - Reign of Christ Sunday.

**5.2** Susan asked the Council about the status and timeline for filling the full-time second minister position.

A discussion ensued. The Oversight Council had differing perspectives about how the position as it was described in 2019 matched the current situation at PSUC. All members were supportive of the concept of the second position but saw a need to revisit the position description in light of changed circumstances and our Office Administrator having taken on some of the pieces in the position description.

**Action:** A working group will be created to carry out this task.

**5.3** The Transition Team created a mission statement for PSUC that was approved at a Community of Faith meeting on October 27, 2019. However, at that time there was no Vision Statement created or specific goals developed. The Oversight Council is in agreement that these two things need happen if PSUC is to live into its Mission Statement. A process to do this will be developed. This item will come to the September 28 OC meeting.

### **6. New Business**

#### **6.1 Reopening To In-person Worship**

COVID-19 Survey results:

Val Goodridge reviewed the answers and a copy of the results was given to each member of the Oversight Council as information. There were some commonalities among the responses but also many differences of opinion.

The OC discussed the responses and also a possible plan and timeline for opening our sanctuary to in-person worship. Of greatest concern is the decision to allow unvaccinated people to attend in-person services.

Susan McIlveen gave 5 possible options to address the concern:

1. Allow only vaccinated people to attend in-person. Masks and physical distancing would still be required.
2. Allow everyone to attend with strict rules re: masks, distancing, hand sanitation, no choral singing or choral prayers.
3. Allow everyone to attend and segregate the people who are not vaccinated.
4. Have two services each Sunday based on vaccination status.
5. Do not return to in-person worship until everyone is able to attend.

The Council is facing the difficult task of balancing the safety of the congregation with the need to provide a loving welcome to those folks who are unable or are hesitant to be vaccinated. Services will remain on-line beginning on September 12; no decision on an opening date was made. The OC will review the COVID-19 situation again at the September 28 meeting.

## **6.2 Organ Sound Chamber - John McLeod**

### **MOTION**

Moved by John McLeod Seconded by Donna Little

That John McLeod be authorized to attempt to restore the organ sound chamber to a facsimile of its original condition. All items stored in the chamber would be removed and the speakers repositioned. A padlock would be installed on the door with one key that would be stored securely in the office with only the office administrator and the minister having access to it. Access to the organ chamber would be limited to a) a qualified organ technician or b) a member of the congregation who has obtained specific permission from the Oversight Council Executive for a specific entry and purpose.

After discussion, John withdrew the motion.

### **Actions:**

1. All current staff will be sent an email outlining the purpose of the organ sound chamber and why the sound boxes may not be moved. It will also explain that nothing may be stored in that space.
2. M&P will follow up with all lay staff to be sure these rules are understood and accepted.
3. The Worship Team will follow up with the Tech Team.
4. A new sign, such as "NO ADMITTANCE", will be put on the door.
5. The Organ Sound Chamber will be kept locked at all times. The key will be removed from the key box and located elsewhere in the office. Office Administer Sherri Van Aert, Susan McIlveen and Dennis Bitton of Property will be apprised of the location.

## **6.3 United Fresh Start**

The Oversight Council thought that this could be a timely programme for PSUC as we begin our new pastoral relationship with Susan McIlveen. There are several churches in the province that are also beginning new relationships and may be interested in joining with PSUC.

**Action:** Val Goodridge and Susan McIlveen will meet to discuss the program and begin to formulate an implementation plan.

#### **6.4 Communications Team**

Tabled to a future meeting

#### **6.5 Governance Document Review**

Tabled to a future meeting

#### **6.6. St. James Assiniboine Food Security Network Update - Linda Uhrich**

##### **6.6.1 Food Share**

People with excess produce from home gardens are requested to drop it off at the Manitoba Housing complex on Country Club Road. The produce will be distributed to folks in the area who are food insecure.

##### **6.6.2 Food Deserts in St James**

A list has been created of all grocery stores, food pantries and agencies in the St James area that provide food assistance. This will be updated regularly. Linda will give our Office Administrator the list for reference if she should receive visitors or calls to the church looking for assistance.

#### **6.7. September 10, 2021 Portage Avenue Food Bank Conflict with the Election Canada Rental**

Advanced Polls will be held at PSUC on Friday, September 10 between 7 AM and 8 PM. This is also a Food Bank Day. A conflict will occur for about 30 minutes in the morning when the food delivery truck arrives at the front door. The volunteers would need to share the elevator for 2 to 3 trips to the kitchen with perishable foods. Chris Urban described a plan that would minimize the disruption to people coming to vote during that short time period.

**Action:** Val Goodridge will contact the Charleswood office of Elections Canada and invite Sherri Amstel to visit PSUC to view the site and discuss the plan to ease the conflict with the food delivery in the morning.

### **7. Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

Nil

### **8. Standing Teams and Other Bodies' Reports (1-2 highlights only from your report)**

#### **8.1 Congregational Life - Heather MacMillan**

8.1.1. Congregational Life Team is not in favour of an outdoor lunch in early September.

They would prefer to have an Anniversary Tea on the first Sunday in Oct to celebrate the 3rd anniversary of Prairie Spirit United Church. A packaged treat, tea bag

and poem would be available to people to take home from church to be enjoyed at “half past three” with you and me.

8.1.2 Meat pies just about done. As this is a good source of revenue, it was decided to make more while we can, and also turkey soup. Plans are for mid Sept. and fill the freezers. Any fruit, rhubarb, sliced apples, blueberries etc. may be frozen and put in the freezer for fruit crisps.

## **8.2 Finance - Marilyn McCorrister**

### **8.2.1 Report**

We have had four people die and come off PAR in the last three months. Another member who was not on PAR has also died and his wife is moving to a Lutheran church. The combined loss of income is \$10,824 per year. Not all of this will be reflected in 2021 as we are over half way through the year.

Less than half of the envelopes that were purchased and delivered to congregants last year are being used. We will probably be ordering something different for 2022. The envelopes are very expensive and we can probably order something that is more environmentally friendly and at a lower cost.

A Stewardship Team is essential as revenue is down considerably

### **8.2.2 Financial Statement to July 31, 2021**

Marilyn presented the Financial Statement to July 31, 2021.

### **MOTION**

Moved by Marilyn McCorrister Seconded by Donna Little  
That the Financial Statement to July 31, 2021 be received.

**CARRIED**

## **8.3 Ministry and Personnel - Marsha Jones**

8.3.1 The Team Building Workshop held recently with the M&P Team and the church staff was very successful. Marsha extended thanks to Pat Rothney for facilitating the workshop.

8.3.2 Sherri Van Aert will take over the rentals effective September 1. Sherri has added 2.5 hours (30 minutes per day) to her work week to fulfill this responsibility. She will be asked to track the hours required to handle the rentals over the next few months. M&P will review the time allocation at the end of this period.

### **MOTION**

Moved by John McLeod Seconded by Linda Uhrich

That M&P be authorized to pay the Office Administrator at her salaried rate for additional hours needed for rentals administration during the period of September and October. Further that in lieu of salary she be allowed to bank the hours if she prefers.

## **CARRIED**

8.3.3 Susan McIlveen has requested to attend a continuing education opportunity during the week of October 12-18, 2021. M&P has approved this study leave. Worship will arrange for coverage for Sunday, October 17, 2021.

## **MOTION**

Moved by Marsha Jones      Seconded by Pat Rothney

That Susan McIlveen be granted a continuing education week, October 12 - 18, 2021.

**CARRIED**

## **8.4 Pastoral Care**

Sadly we have heard of the deaths of three members of Prairie Spirit United Church; Gerry Varnes, John Thiessen and Lorene Kitching.

## **8.5 Property - Dennis Bitton**

### **8.5.1 Report**

There have been several large expenses over the summer, many having to do with a 'surprise' Winnipeg Fire Department Fire Prevention Branch inspection of our premises.

The inspection took place on May 28 with a list of violations received by Property shortly thereafter. These violations were followed up on and the mandated repairs were completed prior to the follow up visit from the inspector.

The sidewalk to the main doors on Thompson Drive has been repaired and most of the Memory Stones have been incorporated. This took place in early August at a total cost of \$9,380.00 (labour) + \$2,120.00 (engraving) + \$111.60 (8" x 8" pavers) + \$561.00 (soil, grass seed + labour) + taxes.

Seven of the Memory Stones were not laid in the sidewalk as it was noted by the workers that some of the stones included religious wording relating to the Lord and they were very hesitant to lay those stones where people would walk on them. After consulting with Susan, it was decided not to lay those stones in the sidewalk and after notifying the donors of those stones, it was decided to place the stones in some fashion near the sidewalk, possibly in or near the Pat Glover Garden.

### **8.5.2 Rentals**

Judy Lawrence, our Rentals Administrator, has been busy with groups (self-help)

returning to PSUC, possible new renters, parking lot rentals and the hand-over of her duties to Sherri Van Aert as of early September. Sherri will liaise with Judy and Property after the handover. JKW Studio, AITC-M and now Renate Rossol are all permanent renters in our building. Elections Canada will be using PSUC as a polling station for both the advanced polls (Sept. 10-13) and on election day (Sept. 20).

#### **8.6 Social Justice and Outreach - Linda Uhrich**

A notice will be placed in the Weekly Update on Friday, September 3 outlining ways the team will support people in the congregation in accessing a COVID vaccination if they have been unable to do so up to now.

A notice will be placed in the Weekly Update on Friday, September 3 outlining the process of voting by mail if they are not able to vote in person. The Social Justice Team has offered to assist anyone who needs help in accessing a mail in ballot kit. Susan McIlveen has offered to help as well. A letter containing the information will be sent to those people who do not receive the church emails.

#### **8.7 Trustees - John McLeod**

Trustees are beginning the process of deciding how much insurance coverage we need and can afford on our building and contents for the coming year. They will also be receiving quotes from a variety of companies before making a decision on an insurance carrier.

A request was made by the chair that the Trustees look into how much liability we would have in our policy for volunteers working with people in the congregation.

#### **8.8 United Church Women (UCW) - Donna Little**

The UCW will hold their first meeting on September 8th in the narthex at the church.

#### **8.9 Worship and Faith Development - Pat Rothney**

**8.9.1 Communion** Susan McIlveen reported that in order to have a recognized communion in the United Church we must be gathered in some way. Therefore, going forward there will be no communion offered in a recorded service but can be offered during a live stream service.

Next communion will be November 21, 2021 – Reign of Christ Sunday.

**8.9.2 Goals For Year One** Susan McIlveen undertook a detailed review of our Transition Team's reported results from our questionnaire on Worship and found that Traditional worship is important to most people. The Team felt that it's key to be authentic to who we are versus innovative at this time

The Worship Team and Susan felt the following was an appropriate Goal for the next year:

GOAL: Have worship recognizable, comfortable with old Lord's Prayer text with one traditional hymn at each service and organ played regularly

BUILD: confidence & trust back to what we know while enjoying being together in the same place

RECOLTIVATE: Active VS Passive participants

## **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

## **9. Business Arising**

### **9.1 Inventory of the Congregational Life storage rooms**

As she is responsible for coordinating the decorating in the sanctuary, Pat Rothney requested to be included when Heather MacMillan and Judy Restall reorganize and inventory the two storage rooms. Heather agreed to inform Pat of the date once decided.

### **9.2 Custodian Remuneration for Special Event Rentals**

Dennis Bitton asked if there was any mention of remuneration for Manny, our custodian in the contract with Elections Canada. Val Goodridge indicated that there is not. Our existing policy allows for a payment of \$75.00 to the custodian for special rentals to reflect the extra work in setting up tables, cleaning and sanitation of the main space, bathrooms etc. that is required for this type of event.

### **MOTION**

Moved by Dennis Bitton Seconded by Pat Rothney

That in accordance with existing policy, PSUC will pay the custodian \$75.00 per day during the five days of the Elections Canada rental contract, for a total amount of \$375.00.

**CARRIED**

## **10. Closing Prayer**

Susan McIlveen closed our meeting with a prayer.

## **11. Adjournment**

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

**12. Next Meeting Dates:**

**Tuesday, September 28 at 9:30 AM**

October 26

November 30