

August 22, 2019

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Communities of Faith Commission
Thursday, August 22, 2019**

The Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met by video conference on Thursday, August 22, 2019. The meeting began at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present

Christine Smaller (Chairperson) Ross Leckie, Emma Pipes, Cindy Randall, Calin Lau, Gloria Tozek, Sandra Nottegar, Harry Ramsaran, Jody Maltby (Staff Lead),

Regrets

Kevin Logie, Amy Lee, Carolyn Harding

Welcome, check in and prayer

The chairperson welcomed the members of the commission and opened with prayer.

Agenda

The commission agreed by consensus that there is one agenda item: the request from West Hill United Church, Scarborough to sell their property.

West Hill United Church, Scarborough

The chairperson offered a framework for the conversation. We have a congregation with an urgent request to sell their building. Sometimes we have time-sensitive requests without having policy yet to follow. The expected outcome of this meeting is to have a plan for how to move forward that is faithful to our responsibility to the region and also to the congregation that needs our support. She also reminded the commission that one of our core tasks is to encourage innovative and creative ministry not necessarily tied to building. At the same time, we have a real commitment to maintain buildings that we discern are strategically important. Resources embedded in buildings are critical to our future as a region and as a church and we have a fiduciary responsibility to manage this.

After a full discussion, the following steps were identified:

- Authority: The **chairperson** will make contact with the President: David Leyton-Brown to determine if the commission has the authority to make this decision or if it rests with the Executive.
- Policy development: **Harry Ramsaran and Gloria Tozek** will work on a formula for distribution of proceeds for consideration by the commission at the

next meeting. This will form the basis for a policy when a congregation that is not closing or amalgamating wishes to sell property. Considerations include whether the proceeds be invested with interest available to the congregation, or should a congregation be able to access a portion of the capital as well? Should a percentage of the proceeds come to the region for use by the wider church? Should there be a threshold for this so that if the proceeds from the sale are below the threshold, the congregation might be able to keep all of the proceeds.

The **chairperson** will work on a flow chart that shows the various factors to be considered including strategic location, threshold proceeds, etc.

- Determining if this is a strategic location for the region: **The Staff Lead** will follow up on the report from Toronto United Church Council. She will also gather information from the minutes of the former Toronto Southeast Presbytery. She will follow up on the mapping project.
- Listening to the congregation: **The Staff Lead and Emma Pipes** will attend the September 10th congregational meeting of West Hill United. The commission is particularly interested in hearing updated numbers and plans for relocation. Is the congregation as a whole supportive of this plan? Is there a level of sophistication around real estate in Toronto?
- Immediate communication: **The chairperson and the Staff Lead** will speak with the minister and council chair from West Hill and advise them that we want to work with them and that we are interested in hearing their ideas of innovation. This is a priority for the commission and we are taking a number of steps in order to be able to make a decision at our next meeting.
- **The chairperson and Ross Leckie** will form a working group to look at real estate best practices. Suggestions were inviting someone from East End Ministry, Toronto and Lansing United, Toronto. The working group might propose a real estate policy or guidelines.

Ross Leckie closed in prayer. The meeting adjourned at 11.22 a.m.