

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Community of Faith Commission
Wednesday, February 21st, 2024**

The Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on Wednesday February 21st, 2024 via Zoom. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Present: Chris Bennett, Trevor Brisbin, Carolyn Harding, Amy Lee, Tom MacNeil, Eric Nyarko, Harry Ramsaran, Patti Rodgers

Staff: Kathleen Jones, Diane Matheson, Jody Maltby

Regrets: Sandra Nottegar, Eun-Joo Park, Gloria Tozek, Kim Uyede-Kai

Welcome

There was a time of check in. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Harry Ramsaran, gave an acknowledgement of the land and acknowledged our commitment to being a safer place for all people to gather and participate in our Region. She then led the commission in a time of worship.

Agenda

MOTION by Tom MacNeil / Harry Ramsaran **SW-CFC-2024-02-21-01**
that the Agenda of the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council dated February 21, 2024 be accepted as circulated with the additions included a discussion about Westmount United listing their property for sale and an update on the regional meeting

MOTION

CARRIED

Minutes

MOTION by Carolyn Harding / Trevor Brisbin **SW-CFC-2024-02-21-02**
that the Minutes of the meetings of the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council dated January 17, 2024 be approved as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

The Commission made the following decisions by email vote;

.... that the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council increase the amount that St. Paul's United Church, Scarborough may use from restricted funds from \$54,108.92 to \$56,048.92 to cover the unexpected cost of additional LED lighting

...that the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council approve the renewal of the loan from TUCC to Metropolitan United Church, Toronto in the amount of up to \$3,031,991 for a term of two years beginning March 1, 2024 with an interest rate of 4% or the Bank of Nova Scotia three-year rate (maximum 6%), whichever is the higher on the date of the renewal.

The Regional Staff Lead (*Jody Maltby*) made the following decision;

February 20, 2024; approval of request from Ebenezer United Church to receive a loan from TUCC for \$75,000 for renovations

Listening Plan Lay Led Congregations *Diane Matheson*

Diane then discussed their proposal to engage with lay-led congregations to understand their needs and share resources. They plan to start this outreach after Easter, with the intention of fostering relationships and learning from the experiences of these congregations.

Purpose behind this proposal: In October 2023, the Pastoral Relations Commission and the Communities of Faith Commission recognized that lay led congregations may become more prevalent in Shining Waters Regional Council. The Commissions jointly asked for a listening process with the current lay led congregations and their pastoral charge supervisors to find out how best to support lay led congregations into the future.

Goal: To create a process for listening that builds trusting relationship between the regional council and lay led congregations in order to assess the needs of those communities of faith. Pastoral Charge Supervisor can help provide support for the connection with lay led congregations. The listening process can be informed by an Appreciative Inquiry approach which focuses the listening for those things that are working well, and seek to learn from and enhance them. It will be important for lay led congregations to know that the intention is to listening and learn from those communities of faith.

Community of Faith Updates

Forest Grove & Jubilee – *amalgamation agreement*

An amalgamation agreement has been received from Forest Grove and Jubilee. This relationship is about growth, connections within the community and possibilities. March 31st, 2024 date of amalgamation. This agreement was submitted previously in January for feedback and the commission was supportive of this direction.

The commission supports this amalgamation going forward as scheduled but has also identified a number of learnings to inform our decision-making process for future requests. It would be helpful to have more data about the congregations' income and assets to understand the potential for ongoing viability of a newly amalgamated congregation. The commission voiced concerns about decisions that have been made in several instances related to allocation of funds from the sale of property, in particular the use of proceeds from the sale of a church building to pay a minister's compensation. While congregations can access interest from a manse fund to pay a minister's compensation, they can't access capital in that fund for this purpose. This discrepancy in how we allow access to capital from the sale of property may create inequity, particularly between larger urban churches and smaller rural ones.

The commission also discussed the importance of regular check-ins and the possibility of reallocating funds if things don't go as planned.

The commission asked that this be an item on the agenda of the next meeting to allow for a fuller exploration of these issues. These are systemic concerns that should be separated from the particular experience of considering the request from Forest Grove and Jubilee.

Eric Nyarko joined the meeting

The meeting took an all-purpose break.

MOTION by Patti Rodgers / Tom MacNeil **SW-CFC-2024-02-21-03**
that the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council approve the amalgamation agreement between Forest Grove United Church and Jubilee United Church with March 31st, 2024 being the date of amalgamation with the understanding that \$6,197,319 is restricted to be used over ten years as outlined in the agreement. The congregation will provide an update every three years demonstrating that the congregation continues to be active and viable or an alternate plan for the use of those funds. Should the congregation cease to function, remaining restricted funds will revert to Shining Waters Regional Council to support other communities of faith.

MOTION

CARRIED

Amy Lee left the meeting

Palgrave United Church, Caledon

Palgrave United Church in Caledon, which is in the process of transitioning to a lay-led congregation.

Westmount United Church, Orillia

On January 28th, 2024 a motion was passed resoundingly at the AGM for Westmount Congregation, to proceed with finalizing a Shared Ecumenical Agreement with Church on the Hill, and directing the Westmount Trustees to proceed with selling Westmount United Church property

MOTION by Trevor Brisbin / Carolyn Harding **SW-CFC-2024-02-21-04**
That the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council approves the request of Westmount United Church, Orillia to list the property at 23 Westmount Drive South for sale with Bruce Shipley, Broker (Coldwell Banker the Real estate Centre Brokerage) as the agent to manage the selling of the building and property at \$4.175 million

MOTION

CARRIED

Conversation re: Budget Jody Maltby

Chris and Jody agreed to discuss the strategic directions for the budget in an upcoming meeting and to consider ideas and comments on how to proceed. Chris suggested creating

a proposal for the budget and deciding when it becomes active. Jody clarified that the Regional Council approves the total amount, but the Commission internally creates the budget and decides how to allocate the funds.

Update on Regional Meeting

Jody provided an update on the planning process, including a change in the timing of the Celebration of Ministry (CoM) Service to avoid a conflict with another significant event. The meeting is set to start at 9 AM on Friday June 7th and would continue through Saturday June 8th until 3 PM, followed by the CoM Service at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday.

Good News Stories

Members shared good news stories from various communities of faith.

Next Meeting Wednesday March 20th, 2024 9:30 a.m.

Closing Chris Bennett offered a closing blessing, and the meeting closed at 12:00p.m.