

SW2024-02: Viability of Ministries in the GTA Proposal

Whereas we are unaware of a comprehensive plan for ministry in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and there appears to be meagre support for ministries which are under threat of being under-resourced, we propose that the Region develop a policy for addressing preservation and/or development of property assets and strategic viable ministry, particularly for marginalized communities, in the GTA for adoption and implementation by the 2025 Regional Annual Meeting.

We further propose that the Region form an ad hoc committee or empower the Executive to address compelling needs brought by Communities of Faith in the meantime.

A Strategy for Ensuring the Viability of Ministries in the Greater Toronto Area

Origin: Fairlawn Avenue United Church

1. What is the issue? (describe in broad terms)

Communities of faith in the Greater Toronto Area face different challenges in being missional. Some have internal resources to address these challenges, some, by virtue of the economic disparity of their worshipping communities, do not. For example, a community of faith with meagre resources may be offering ministry to their local community that is beyond their capacity. The Region could be intentional in allocating resources and helping them address that ministry.

We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to be intentional in our ministry planning for Communities of Faith in the Greater Toronto Area.

2. Why is this issue important?

Simply put, Jesus made it clear that we are to care for the least of these, our brethren. The least of these may be described as the marginalised in our neighbourhoods who rely on our communities of faith to care for them.

There is no tool/guideline for determining how to assist a community of faith that is resource rich (i.e., a building) and cash poor carry out their ministry to their neighbours.

A policy is required to direct resources to these communities of faith while they navigate transition.

This policy is required to ensure that we have communities of faith supported across the GTA to offer ministry, instead of simply seeing resources from sales of properties saved for a rainy day.

The policy should ensure that there are communities of faith in recognized neighbourhoods of the GTA—i.e. no area of the GTA should be abandoned as a result of church building closings.

3. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

Many of our communities of faith have the opportunity to provide a ministry of compassion to marginalized persons, including indigenous persons, people of gender identities subject to prejudice, people from other cultures making a new start, discrimination because of their economic circumstances and/or race. We offer this ministry with an awareness of the intersectionality of the above-named communities.

4. How might the Regional Council respond to the issue?

The development of a strategy articulated as a policy for communities of faith in the GTA would ensure

- 1. Ongoing neighbourhood presence across that part of the region and**
- 2. Allocation of funds to enable some of those communities, on an as-needed basis, to care for the marginalized persons in their neighbourhoods.**

Motion

Be it resolved that the proposal, as circulated with the notice of our Governing Council meeting April 9/2024 , for Fairlawn Avenue United Church be approved.

Moved by Vicki Stuart

Seconded by Amanda Hancox

Carried unanimously