

SW2024-03: Support of Broadview Magazine Proposal

Origin: Official Board, Grace United Church, Barrie Ontario

1. What is the issue?

Broadview Magazine, an important voice for faith and justice in the United Church, has suffered substantial cuts to both its funding and advertising revenue.

In 2013, the national church grant to Broadview was \$132,000. In 2020, the grant had dropped to \$102,000. In addition, United Church advertising in the magazine that year was \$83,000.

For 2024, the national church grant is only \$40,880 and there are no contracts for advertising. The dramatic decrease in financial support has not only put Broadview's existence in jeopardy, but also no longer covers the cost of the 20% United Church content in the magazine.

Background:

Since its inception in 1925, United Church members have been informed about what is happening in our church by publications which merged to become the United Church Observer in 1939. During its 78-year history, the Observer became an award-winning magazine committed to stories of spirituality, justice and ethical living as it pertained to our church. In 2019, the publication was retitled *Broadview*, a name that connects with contemporary audiences and echoes the open-mindedness and inclusivity that defines today's United Church. The magazine and its digital platforms positioned *Broadview* as the voice of Canadian progressive Christians and those who share our core values.

The magazine has given not only local updates and pertinent information about what is happening across the United Church, but also provided insight and analysis of various theological, ethical and political positions the United Church has established to a wider audience.

It has brought us together as a national church and given us a sense of the wider church to which we belong. As we have de-structured the United Church, eliminated presbyteries, moved to more reliance on Zoom meetings and downsized attendance at General Council meetings, many United Church members have expressed a concern about being left behind and left out. Yet, they are still able to stay informed through Broadview articles and information.

Broadview magazine has continued to provide coverage of United Church life, even while moving ahead with exploring other topics and educational matters of a spiritual nature. As we move into the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada, we need to affirm not diminish those vehicles whereby United Church people can nurture and be nurtured through information, education, fellowship and sharing.

2. Why is this issue important?

We live at a time when false news and false narratives consume much of the public information output. As well, diminished funding for all sources of media and public information means that often there is no in-depth coverage of important issues. Many people express a yearning for deeper understanding and a means to engage with the contentious and complex issues of our day.

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

Broadview Magazine seeks to keep its subscription rate at a level which allows access by those who have limited budgets while still selling its magazine. Broadview Magazine, through its appeal to a wide audience continues to be an important voice for inclusion and diversity.

4. How might Shining Waters Regional Council respond to this issue?

The Regional Council might:

Call on General Council to;

- Affirm the value and importance of Broadview Magazine as a publication that contributes greatly to enhanced education and dialogue about important spiritual and justice issues of our day;
- Affirm Broadview Magazine as a means by which United Church people as well as others learn about the United Church and issues that require in depth ethical consideration;
- Use the 100th year of the formation of the United Church of Canada to help lead a subscription campaign and encourage United Church members and communities of faith to subscribe to this important publication;
- Restore funding to at least a level that supports United Church content (approximately \$80,000, not including postage), and also renew advertising content.

Respectfully Submitted

Paul Burke

Chair, Official Board,

Grace United Church, Barrie