

North Burlington Churches united Meeting

Jan. 9, 2017

“One church body in Christ which ministers to the needs identified by the North Burlington community”

Present: Dale Martin, Janice Martin, Barb McKeown, Dale McKeown, Keith Rutherford, Mike Lawton, Stephen Huntly, Sue Stephen, Daryl Webber, Paul Bartu, Allison Playfair, Heather McGavin, Gary Goodale, Nancy Knill, Janet Saunders, Carol Boyle

Regrets: Marilyn Martin, Jill Strapp

Welcome

Steve opened the meeting by leading us in a hymn

Daryl welcomed everyone and in his remarks referenced the scripture about the journey of the magi and how they had to return home through a different route. He told us that Nelson had voted to “cease worship”. They will find a new way home now – similar to the magi. There was a great deal of discussion about the implications of losing their church home and sharing of thoughts about this. They are considering this a new beginning instead of an ending and will have a service in April honouring the past and reviewing their history with former ministers. The group also talked about ideas for maintaining an identity of the church history while moving on (e.g. having a plaque in a new worship space, naming of a room in another location). Daryl closed the discussion by leading us in prayer.

Nancy Knill thanked Tansley for their openness and welcoming Carol sing and Women’s Group dinner. She acknowledged that these events lifted her up.

Minutes

Allison Playfair moved and seconded by Keith Rutherford that the minutes of the Dec meeting be accepted as circulated. There was no discussion. CARRIED

Dale Martin reported that Jill Strapp was delayed in Costa Rica and that he would update her about the outcome of the meeting.

Common Prayer

This continues to meet our needs and is being read or published in the bulletin at all sites. It is also on the website.

Update on Joint Outreach

- Janice reported that there is no update on the First Nations projects. They need confirmation about that.
- Tansley is holding a shredding event for confidential paper. Half of the proceeds to the First Nations projects so they would like all churches to advertise
- The joint committee is also looking at education and awareness for our churches on the reconciliation process
- Janice is looking into a First Nations authors’ event

Feb 12th Joint Service

It will be held at St. Stephen at 10:30 am. The ministers agreed to work on the scriptures and hymns. There was some discussion about having Valentine cookies.

Updates from Congregations

St. Stephen

- They are proceeding with the development of potentially 28 townhouses with property severed off for church use.
- The use of the church space has not been clarified. There will be discussions with the congregation about that as well as discussion with other congregations at the NBCu retreat.
- EDGE has been providing support for this process

Tansley

- They presented Lowville's visioning and will be discussing this in Feb.
- Trustees are making a concerted effort to communicate their financial situation. They have learned that it was useful for different people to give different messages each week for 5 weeks (one pushed the use of PAR, one praised everyone for their time and talents, one pointed out how important this was for the future of Tansley). They also sent emails with messages. It has been their most successful campaign in year.
- Steve reported that he is happy to see the fruits of their labour with outreach. Some single moms are now starting to attend.

Nelson

- They were deliberate with their wording about their recent congregational decision. If they cease to worship they can maintain their identity and control of their assets. If they close, assets go to the United Church of Canada.
- Their trust has guidelines and by restricting how much and how the funds can be used, they hope to maintain it for many years to come. Currently it is being managed by RBC Wealth Management. They still welcome bequests that can go into the trust.
- One point that they used in their presentation was that to eliminate the deficit of \$25,000/year, they would need 25 people walking in the door prepared to contribute \$1,000 each year.

Lowville

- They are trying to focus on their proposal for church re-design that ties in with the food security network and a farmer's market. They have submitted a request for \$50,000 for the kitchen renos.
- They have a meeting on Feb 4th with Edge to try to sort through some of their issues. They also have a heritage building and are a part of the Niagara Escarpment
- They are faced with staffing resource issues with the closing of Nelson. They may need to use more lay ministry support or get support from the other churches.
- They will be meeting with the Art Gallery who is interested in increased programming and they will be meeting with the City of Burlington youth division about the No Socks for Ivan program.
- Keith emphasized that they want NBCu as part of their outreach activities

Feb 25th Visioning Day

- Dale only got 2 responses from the question that we were all to answer about what we want from the day
- Dale pointed out that since we made the decision to have this day, decisions have been made about several of the churches that look like we are just doing our own thing. How do we present what has evolved in such a way that shows that NBCu is trying to be united?
- St Stephen was forwarded some stats from Halton Presbytery for all churches from 2004 to 2016. It shows that we are all in similar situations and our trajectories are the same.
→ Heather will forward these charts to the committee.
- We are all running out of time, talent, and resources. This is an opportunity to come together.
- Suggestions for the day:
 - start with worship
 - have name tags with no church affiliation noted so that all come together equally
 - have the day be framed as a part of worship and mark each transition by scripture or a prayer to bridge the activity
 - discuss what is common – start with joyful experiences (joint outreach, worship) and then talk about common challenges
 - talk about possibilities
 - consider testimonies – Nancy (same as above, joint worship, outreach, North BurLINKton dinners
 - present financial info and then look at NBCu
 - our vision
 - common prayer
 - this is what we can make happen together – cannot do it alone
 - still at different places but NBCu is a way to carry on and do good things
 - Where do we want to be in 5 years? What does this vision look like? What do we do to bring this vision to life?
 - Each church will have to give something up. There are stories from the bible about having to do this. There are many paths but they all require leaving something behind. Consider symbolic doorways based on bible stories. This may be done on Feb 12th and expanded on at the Feb 25th visioning day.
 - Present the concept of giving something up to move forward. Each congregation could present what decisions have recently been made at their church.
- What would success be at the end of the day? It would be a clearer understanding of whether the congregations will buy into NBCu. Do we want to become 1 church? Do we want to continue to have a United Church presence in North Burlington?

Synopsis:

- Open with some sort of worship with a theme of giving up something for the greater good
- Moving through the day, continue the thread of worship (include testimonies)
- Sharing of good experiences with NBCu
- Sharing a short summary of our finances
- Update from each of the churches
- Can use small group discussions
 - Somehow get people to say that they want to move forward
 - What do I cherish about my church?

- What do I want from a new church?
- Include traditional and contemporary music. Have each church offer a favourite hymn but sing only 1 verse
- We will need some type of anonymous vote at the end of the day.
- Dale will create an invitation that each church should post along with a sign-up sheet
- Each church bring their sign-up sheet to the Feb 12th service to catch those that have not already signed up

Closing

Dale extended his thanks to everyone for their patience and input.

Barb McKeown moved that the meeting be adjourned

Next meeting Feb 6th 7 pm at St. Stephen United Church

(A special thanks needs to go to Shirley Williams from Lowville who set up the refreshments, stayed at the church until our very late closing, and then cleaned up!)