

North Burlington United Churches Meeting

Sept 12, 2016

Present: Steve Huntly, Daryl Weber, Allison Playfair, Paul Bartu, Mike Lawton, Dale McKeown, Barb McKeown, Bev Greer, Keith Rutherford, Heather McGavin, Sue Stephen, Gary Goodale, Dale Martin

Devotion

Daryl opening the meeting with a reminder that this is the season of Creation. He invited us to walk through the season of creation. We sang the hymn "Walk with Me" and this was followed by people sharing stories of walks that we have been on that have either been spiritual or given us a new appreciation of nature. A couple of stories focused on the significance of treading on walkways that people have been walking on for centuries and we were also reminded never to take the ability to get out and walk in nature for granted.

Review of Edge proposal

Option B was definitely the preferred choice – Developing a 'new model of church' for the congregations in the North Burlington Council. Parallel to moving forward with Edge are the following:

- Nelson will be going to their congregation on Oct 2nd to discuss their future. It is expected that they may close by June 2017.
- St. Stephen will soon be making a decision about the land development but a decision about the church building itself has not been made
- Lowville received a grant from Edge for an Identity Mission Needs Analysis which should be complete by March.

The group felt that the Edge proposal was not exactly what we are looking for.

- The proposal assumes that we are starting from square 1 when in fact we are much further along than that
- The ministers do not feel that they need 10 coaching sessions but agreed that a couple of sessions would be good
- Rather than have the ministers coach the congregations through this process we would like Edge to do this
- The proposal is for a 10 month process and we would like to move it along faster than that. The 3 churches mentioned above will still be going through their own processes but hopefully the direction of NBUC will help inform their decisions
- We all agreed that our vision is 1 church with 1 administrative structure and joint ministry but that what we end up with exactly and what that looks like will depend on the process.

Next Steps

1. Each church will go to their Councils / Boards for approval to move forward with this process.
2. Invite all Councils / Boards to a joint meeting to discuss moving forward with this. A tentative date has been set for Wed Oct 12th. We will ask Edge if they can facilitate so the date may change if they are willing but unable to accommodate that date. It will be held at Tansley (and if there is a conflict with a possible change in choir practice time we will move to St. Stephen).
3. Paul, Dale and Dale will draft a "communique" which each Council will make available to our congregations about this process. It will be announced in church on Oct 2nd and then posted on our websites and / or sent out via emails to the congregations.

4. Heather will draft a memo to send to Edge in response to their proposal with some counter suggestions. It will be circulated to those present at the meeting and they have 3 days to respond with feedback.
5. It was suggested that we strike and official Joint Board to help work through this transition. It may very well be the current NBUC Council but there may be others who are interested. This can be discussed at the combined joint Council meeting.
6. Our next joint service ran into some snags date wise. It was decided that we could do the joint service on the first Sun in Advent (Nov 27th) pending approval from the various Worship committees.
7. The St. Stephen Design & Development committee had decided that there should be input from the other North Burlington Churches when they are ready to make decisions about the new building. Members of the NBUC group expressed a willingness to participate.

We need to remember to be very sensitive to the needs and concerns of the congregations. We often don't listen to understand. We listen to reply. We must learn to **Listen to Understand**.

Remember also when talking with others about our future. It is not about losing. It is about gaining and joining and building on our strengths.

Daryl closed the meeting with a prayer "Autumn Psalm of Contentment"

Next Meeting: Joint NBUC churches Council meeting – Oct 12th at Tansley (subject to change)