

## **North Burlington Churches united**

**February 26, 2017**

### **Vision Day**

The North Burlington Churches united council was established in \*\*. Membership is made up of representatives from four local united churches: Lowville, Nelson, St. Stephen and Tansley. The council has approximately 30 members and meets on the first Monday of each month.

A Vision Day was held at St. John's Anglican Church on Saturday, February 26, 2017. Members from all four churches attended, as well as three members from East Plains United Church. The purpose of the Vision Day was:

- To share information about the work that the council is doing
- To discuss ways that the four churches can collaborate together
- To provide information to all participants about the financial situation of the North Burlington Churches
- To discuss the dreams, strengths, challenges, and opportunities of the four churches
- To have participants express their dreams for a United Church presence in North Burlington
- To determine the next steps in the process for all four churches
- To determine if there is a mandate for the North Burlington Churches united work to continue

### **Overview**

- Good energy at the start of the day
- Icebreaker was fun
- Band was fabulous
- Information sharing about the various churches was helpful
- Testimonials were a lovely idea and quite positive
- People who had not been to council meetings seemed to find it very useful for learning what is going on
- Participants enjoyed being involved and thinking about their dreams
- Each church developed action items to continue their work with the NBCu
- Session ended with a mandate to continue the work of North Burlington Churches united

## **GROUP SESSIONS:**

Participants were asked to discuss:

### **1. What dreams do you have for a United Church presence in this area?**

#### **Dreams:**

The dreams fall into the following areas:

Community Hub – establishing one centre to serve all of the churches

Financial stability and many volunteers

Inclusivity

Strong Youth Programs

Flexibility in services and hours

Strong Musical Component

Ministerial Team that works to its strengths

Christian Development – shifting from organized religion to spirituality, listening to God's presence

Communication – using all forms of media to communicate

Outreach – continuing to serve people who are in need in our community

The comments for each dream are provided below:

#### **Community Hub – One building**

Develop a strong vital community hub

The church/community centre for community uses

Include a national First Nations Support Centre – A facility for indigenous people to use

Build a multi-use building including a place to worship

All four churches amalgamate to build a large visible church on a large property

Facilities that would meet needs for a variety of activities (gym, stage, meeting rooms, etc.)

Worship in alternate community spaces

Community integration

One brand new church in a different spot than any of the others

New building that has a worship space but also supports the community – space for events, groups, outreach, help the growing number of individuals with dementia, seniors, mental health, youth

Centre for Education /Retreat – A place people can be together; multiple centres, satellites

Less “silo” effect – one umbrella, joint activities

Developing into community hubs

One church building – service(s) on Sunday with local satellite home churches during week

## North Burlington Churches united Vision Day Summary

### Spiritual

A new building/location to serve North Burlington, to accommodate additional staff, programs

A consolidation of four existing churches

Mixed mode worship – time and type, more younger families and ethnicity

Empower community – not parent it

Community centres – local presence, NUCunited bus/van, grow a garden

Build an identity - Area serviced by North Burlington Churches does not fall into ANY of the very distinct subsections of Burlington

### **Financial Stability and Many Volunteers**

Fill the seats and spaces each day/week

A large, active, motivated congregation

More volunteers to “share the load”

Have financial stability

### **Inclusivity**

More inclusive

Expand inclusiveness – encompassing all ages, gender, orientation, religious beliefs, passions, financial capabilities, time availability

### **Good strong youth program**

Partner with local schools

Increased youth activities/involvement

Increase all children’s groups – preschool to youth

Messy Church

Youth group – foster and combine resources, relationships; energy in numbers

Have to look after our young people, different areas – share high school activities, targeting specific age groups and interests

Bring more “young” folks into the church. “Make church cool again”

Increased youth involvement – programming

Vibrant congregations with younger families with associated programming

### **Flexibility in services/hours**

Add worship availability outside of Sunday mornings

### **Strong musical component**

### **Ministerial Team**

The Leadership of the church – encourage lay leadership

## North Burlington Churches united Vision Day Summary

A ministerial team that focuses on their particular strengths

Personnel – within church – assist shut ins to attend church, as a “listener”

### **Christian Development:**

Strong Christian Development

Spiritual growth and nourishment

Celebrate the joy, fun and experience of church – cool church. A sense of belonging.

Ignite passion for service e.g. Website, communication

Embrace change

Traditions

Commitment

Appeals to all ages

Shift from organized religion to spirituality

Come together to celebrate our values with other faiths and secular friends – e.g. vigil with Lowville/Nelson community

There needs to be a presence

A variety of services – style, music

Currency Flows – spirituality, gift in kind, helping

### **Communication**

More accessible information (websites, social media) for activities within the churches

Increased use of technology/social media

### **Outreach**

To be self-sustaining financially with enough excess to be able to provide Outreach programs to encourage all members to use their gifts/talents to support work of the church (day to day and outreach)

Local food program partner with community providers: Food for Life; Daily Bread offer community service hours (volunteer)

A strong collaborative outreach

Fellowship fostering outreach (assess community needs)

Focus on community needs – single mothers, poverty, mental health, substance abuse, child abuse, elder abuse, youth programs – pre-school, elementary school and high school

Use the Nelson legacy to help others

Collective body to support community with different initiatives, e.g. Food, Native Canadians

Support role in helping people with major life problems ex mental health, dementia, homeless, in need of food, grief, illness (pastoral care)

That we can continue all the outreach that churches have offered for the community – unique to each church

## North Burlington Churches united Vision Day Summary

Outreach in lower income areas – neighbourhood support and programming

Lower income families: “support” – physical and mental wellness

Listening Ears for people who come inside – example Rhonda’s connection – expand training and resources

Meeting needs of larger community

Increased outreach to youth

Outreach – personal – within church, community; monetary – specific crisis, worldwide

### **2. What gifts/assets does your individual congregation have to contribute to such a collaboration?**

#### **Gifts:**

The congregations have many gifts. Some of the broad categories identified include:

Relationships and Partnerships, Programming, Music, Pastoral Care, Welcoming and Skilled Volunteers, Outreach, Ministerial Leadership, Locations and Settings and Financial Support.

#### **Relationships and Partnerships**

Relationship with Police Force

Partnership with Food for Life

Ontario Early Years

Conservation Connection

Carpenter Hospice

Partnership development – multi use, to help community, reaching more people

#### **Programming:**

Special events attracting community at large

Youth Programs

BBQ

Ability to offer more than one type of service – less organized, more spontaneous, different music, style; ability to support more than one type, relevant to different age groups

#### **Music**

Vibrant music program

Strong music leadership

Vibrant musical/choir programs and leadership

Talented music director

Committed choir

Music programs for youth

great music director

## North Burlington Churches united Vision Day Summary

small mighty choir - invite other talented musicians – Pipe and Drum, partnerships  
Seniors' Choir

### **Pastoral Care**

Lovely pastoral care

### **Welcoming atmosphere and skilled volunteers**

Open minded; open-armed

Broad minded congregants able to accept both traditional and progressive ideas

Energy, commitment

Strong core of volunteers; work ethic

Experienced lay leaders

Passion for fellowship

Skills – building, business minds, baking, planning, lay leadership

Willingness to change? Try something new

Strong lay leadership

People (committed, talented)

Strong sense of fellowship

Willingness to be flexible

People – hard working volunteers, people of hope, love and faith

Leadership

Ideas – creativity, festivals (thinking outside the box)

UCW

Strength of lay members – life experiences, profession

People skilled to write grant applications so support programming

Enthusiasm

Skill sets – web development, social media, Facebook, twitter, stronger presence

Youth leaders

Volunteers, hard workers

Age, experience, skills

Positive energy

Sincere welcome, openness

Loyalty of congregations

Members looking to future

Open to new ideas

Strong male presence

Willingness to refocus

Awesome communications team

UCW – bring-in shut-ins

## North Burlington Churches united Vision Day Summary

Wisdom

Multiple talents

Forward thinking – planning for future

Open to new ideas

### **Outreach**

Outreach programming in all churches

Tansley Care Network

Develop listening, pastoral care – expand into community and support Rhonda as liaison

Care and Connection with Community – shut ins, Funds and outreach; mission and service

Food for life – buy to subsidize

Established programs to offer – e.g. Single moms, hospice, Kids in Kitchen

Combined support for local community issues Dinner Night Out, City Connections

Faithful core of community outreach events, Christmas, social afternoons

Monthly dinner

Syrian Refugees

Money for ongoing support

Donations for mission and service

Ex. Farmers' Market – model – use elsewhere – source of Food for Food banks

### **Ministerial Leadership**

Prayer presence

Strong leadership

Youth programs

### **Locations/Settings:**

Space – different spaces for different uses

Settings (nature, visibility, parking)

Close to nature

Location: walk-ins asking for help, visual to others – programs, counselling

Known by the community

Flexibility of worship space

Special needs accessibility

Central location

Can share facility with more people/different congregations

Location is central –pivotal

Historical presence

Rural location

Water stop

### **Financial support**

Some future financial opportunities

Fundraising, grants

Financial stability

Fundraising initiatives - Lowville Centre

Cash

## **3. ACTION PLANS FOR CHURCHES**

**What are the next steps for your church to undertake to continue to develop a collaboration with the North Burlington united churches?**

- All churches will continue to inform their congregations about the activities of the North Burlington Council united and about the Vision Day
- All church committees will consider how being part of a collaboration with the North Burlington Council united affects them and how they might partner with similar committees
- Participants endorsed the idea of continuing discussions with the North Burlington Churches united council.

**St. Stephen:** (in order of importance)

Decide what we want to do about future development regarding a building

Decide if we want one Church / new building

Decide on staying independent or amalgamating with other congregations

Stay connected to NBCu while we decide

Decide to change location

Decide if we want a meeting place for St Stephen on our property with a sanctuary and kitchen

Explore available vacant building to lease or buy

Explore new church development – cash? Head office

Explore means to increase members

**Lowville:**

Continue to foster a relationship and ensure that it does not end at Highway 5

Explore the possibility of having a shared ministry

Continue discussions with NBCu because we want to be at the table with you

Make sure our congregation understands what the NBCu council is all about (5)

**Tansley:**

Continue to seek out collaborations

Volunteer at other churches' events

Keep communicating about NBCu



## North Burlington Churches united Vision Day Summary

Have each committee look at how NBCu collaborations could affect them  
Request that other churches let us know their plans

### **Nelson:**

Inform everyone about changes until June 30

Inform everyone about what is happening after June 30

The next meeting of the North Burlington Churches united council is on Monday, March 6 at 7pm.