

# **PORTLAND UNITED CHURCH Council Meeting via Zoom**

December 9, 2020

Call to Order: Hansen Downer, Chair, called meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Attendees: Norma Cummings, Duncan Pickard, Will French, Blaine Tackaberry, Liz Church, Jan Haskin, Bruce Haskin, Hansen Downer, Chair, Patti Evans, Secretary, Rev Lynne Gardiner

Guest: none

Regrets: Connie Cochran, Larry Cochran, Joan Kelly

Opening Prayer: Rev Gardiner offered the opening prayer

Approval of Agenda: Moved: approved with changes by Blaine Tackaberry. Second: Will French Carried

**Portland Church Services and Covid-19:** Duncan Pickard prepared an analysis of numbers of the rise in covid-19 cases in our area. After discussion amongst the council:

Moved by Duncan Pickard: Portland United Church will hold in-person services as long as the active case count in Leeds Grenville West remains 16 or below as indicated on Thursday or Friday. In the event in-person services are cancelled, a virtual service will be recommended until the active case count on Thursday or Friday drops below 16. It is understood that government decisions would supersede this motion. Second: Liz Church Carried

## **Business Arising from last meeting:**

- Operations manual – postponed to next meeting. A small committee will present an updated manual at that time.
- Benevolent fund policy – postponed to next meeting.

## **Committee Reports**

Finance – Duncan presented the financial statement for year to date. All reports are included with minutes file. The general fund budget was submitted, documents are filed with the minutes.

Motion: Duncan Pickard moved to approve the budget as presented, with minor change as discussed, for insertion in the annual report. Second: Norma Cummings Carried

Guidelines – timelines for annual report submissions: January 10, 2021.

Sharing and Caring – Liz Church has taken over sharing and caring and pastoral care. Liz shared ideas she has been working on to set up the pastoral care team for our church. This team will have a pastoral care side and a sharing and caring side – a strong team of individuals prepared to respond to any emergency. Rev Gardiner shared the Bethel Church pastoral care solution. They have a system of elders (7). Each elder is responsible to contact between 17-18 people. With the onset of covid-19 and the associated restrictions, the decision was made to end in-person services. The pastoral care then became their number one priority. The Elders set up a phone tree – each elder has a list of congregants. The elder is responsible to call individuals on their list and talk to or visit throughout the year. Elders run errands, grocery shop, or just talk to their people who are lonely during this covid-19 crisis.

Rev Lynne does the emergency pastoral care as well as nursing home and hospital visits.

Cemetery – Blaine Tackaberry – nothing to report

Envelope Steward – Norma Cummings – nothing to report

Fundraising – Hansen Downer – no changes – all events are cancelled due to Covid-19

Memorials – Will French – nothing to report.

Regional – Liz Church – nothing to report. Liz will investigate and begin work on this in the new year.

Property:

(Inside church) - Larry Cochran – not in attendance

(Outside church) – Bruce Haskin presented a report on projects outside the church. Most expensive project will be done over two years. Culvert problem has been addressed with the Town and repaired and improved.

UCW – Connie Cochran – not in attendance

Worship – no update

M&P – Jan Haskin – no report for M&P

Music – Joan Kelly – not in attendance

Trustees – Will French – no report

Motion to Accept Committee Reports: Moved: Duncan Pickard Second: Will French Carried

### New Business

1. Church services Advent 3, 4, Christmas Eve and 2021
  - a) Close the church for worship on Sundays
  - b) Continue with video services on Sundays
  - c) Continue with in-person services on Sundays
  - d) Continue with a mix of 2 and 3; perhaps in-person services one or two weeks per month.
  - e) Work with a minister to set up video services that could be pre-recorded on a Saturday and be ready for Sunday video services. (This is the approach taken by Rev Lynne Gardiner, incumbent at Bethel.)  
**Council has chosen to operate under option d) unless the situation with Covid-19 develops as noted on page one.**
2. Profile committee update – training will be set up for the committee sometime in January 2021
3. Elgin survey – should we send it to the PUC congregation? The council has agreed not to issue this survey to our congregation at this time.
4. Process for snowstorms? Hansen will contact Katy Gibson to verify the procedure previously set up for this issue.
5. Rev Lynne Gardiner – suggestions for reviewing alternative worship solutions. Our region has a specific source for alternative solutions. Her name is Jane Dawson. We should have a made-in-Portland solution. She recommends the book *The Indispensable Guide to Smaller Churches*, by David Ray. The worship needs for this community need to be assessed. In our region there are currently 20 vacancies for ministers. Rev Gardiner pointed out we are in a unique situation in that we can choose whatever we want to do. Also, she stressed that gathering for worship and gathering for the social aspect are two different needs that should not be confused. Because of Covid-19, there should not be socializing. This is difficult for people who have been together for a long time and the instinct to hug and talk is difficult to control.

Closing Prayer – Rev Lynne Gardiner

Next regular meeting January 27, 2021 7:00 pm via zoom

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm