

Mt. Seymour United Church Council Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2023 6:30 pm

Held at the home of Nancy Talbot and Brenda Fawkes.

Attendance: Kirsten Harkins, Steve Wellenbrink, Ward Branch, Mary Sparks, Lorna Leckie, Younes Skhissi, Nancy Talbot, Carla Wilks, Kelly Nobles

Regrets: Kathryn Ferriss, Heathir Naesgaard, Jen Towers

1) **Opening** –Territory acknowledgement.
Nancy – Opening/ Check in

2) **Approve Minutes** – October 11, 2023
Minutes approved with amendments

3) **Committee Reports**
- Finance: see attached
- Property: see attached

4) **Updates**
- Ministers' update (Nancy and Carla) see attached

5) **New Business**

a) Strategic planning group update: The group continues to meet, remaining mindful of the church's budget and vision, and is planning ahead for a presentation to the congregation at the Annual Meeting. Priorities that arose from the Council retreat are the Cafe and Garden projects. Ministry staff's job descriptions need to match how staff actually spend their time. This will be discussed further in January. The church's Deficit spending over the last few years was in line with the plan for managing the Ker bequest - but cuts need to be made unless the congregation is prepared to take more from the bequest. More analysis of the numbers is needed - but attendance and energy are looking great!

b) Garden proposal: Hollander landscapers have provided a quote for the Front entrance area - prayer wall and oculus. The budget is \$14.2k including 2 stone benches, 3 basalt pillars and a dry stone wall. (The company employs a Scottish-trained stone mason.) \$25k was approved in 2022 and \$13.5k has been spent so far. The Memorial fund has \$47k. The team proposes spending \$5k from the Memorial Fund and \$9.2k from the church's operating budget to upgrade the entrance. No vote is required for the operating funds because there is \$20k in this year's budget and only \$5k spent. Next priority will be the thrift shop drop off area including a new shed and pathway

MOTION: Steve Wellenbrink moved, /Ward Branch seconded that Council approve \$5k towards the Garden Project budget from the memorial fund CARRIED

c) Thrift shop: business dealt with in camera

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6) Action Items

- Steve Wellenbrink to fill pothole,
- All to share/recruit star gift stories,
- Ward Branch to ask to review cleaning contract
- Steve to call St David's about cleaning contract
- Carla to request posters and post on social media
- Nancy to let Meg Caron know about the Garden budget approved
- Kerstin to learn to use debit machine

7) Closing – Nancy

8) **Next Meeting:** January 10, (February 13, March 13,
April 10, May 8, June 12)

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Reports:

Financial: In terms of money on hand, our account balances are as follows:

1. Chequing: \$111,482.51
2. Savings: \$232.29
3. COVID Loan: -\$60,000.00 (If we don't repay \$40,000 of this by December 31, 2023, the loan will be converted to a 3-year 5% term loan. We probably want to repay it given that the 5% we would be paying may not be much better than what we could earn in the stock market.
4. Term Deposits: These are now all gone as we cashed them out to manage our planned deficit
5. Investments: They are at \$995,272.34, a nice \$50,000 jump from last month as the stock market had a nice bounce in November. With luck, we will be back over \$1 million by year's end!

3rd Quarter results were submitted to council. Key points:

1. Income up, but not (yet?) to levels high enough to nuke our deficits
2. Snow removal and Janitorial are killing us on the expense side
3. Wages are up and I'm not sure why. I'm still investigating that unless someone else knows.
4. Overall picture still ok because we haven't spent as much on our Special projects as projected.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT DECEMBER 13, 2023

SNOW REMOVAL

The contract with RAY CONTRACTING was signed on November 9, 2023.

SOUND SYSTEM

Is ongoing:

- 1) various components of the Sound System have yet to arrive, then their set up will be scheduled. This is likely to occur after the Christmas season events' schedule.

PRAYER WALL

Is ongoing. The stone mason will be scheduled shortly, again to fit in with church events.

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FALL CLEAN-UP

Thanks to all the volunteers on November 18, 2023 the church is looking and smelling wonderful.

THRIFT STORE'S ENTRANCE DOOR

Repair is awaiting parts.

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Lead Minister's Update for December 13 2023 Council Meeting Rev. Nancy
General Update

Following our fruitful Council Retreat, I had a week of holidays and then spent much of the last month planning and leading worship services for Advent and Christmas and offering pastoral care.

Worship and Christian Development:

- Led worship on 5 Sundays
- Note that Sunday morning worship attendance has been up this fall
- Led November Pilgrims Path
- 1 baptism and 2 professions of faith on November 19 th .
- Organized stories for Children's ministry leaders each week – and some crafts!
- Led one session of the Advent Book Study group
- Organized music coverage for Julian for all the "holes" including the late service on Christmas Eve. Hoping Julian will be back on January 7 (to be confirmed)
- Met with Marcus to plan Gospel Choir Sunday
- Met with WCD team to firm up Christmas Eve services and plan into the New Year
- Kirsten is leading her last Yoga session for the year this week and Carla led the last meditation group of the year last week.

Pastoral Care/Congregational Life

- Pastoral phone calls and texts, a couple office visits, several hospital/hospice visits
- Met with Caring Connections team (organized poinsettia deliveries for Advent Season)
- Sent out invitations for Blue Christmas service
- Turkey Lunch support and attendance

Administration etc.

- Led Staff Meetings
- Supervision sessions with Jenn and Carla (Jenn has been working on updating website)
- Met with the Council sub-committee to debrief after the Retreat
- Café Budget review with Cheryl and Jenn
- Q3 budget review with Ward and Cheryl

Café:

- Café is busier the last month and sales are up especially on Saturdays.
- With loss of barista and sporadic volunteer absences Jenn is needing to fill in a bit more when things get busy

- Café has catered two memorial services, a party and lunch for one of our rental groups this month (as well as council retreat) Pre-orders and Sales of quiches and baking doing well.

- Issue of both financial and personnel sustainability is ongoing. Nayanna, Jenn and team to meet early in the new year to discuss.

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Sacred Garden:

- Committee met once. Members have met with landscaper to discuss moving forward with the project. Will have a full report at the meeting about starting the Oculus and prayer wall portions of the project. Display in Narthex highlighting the project has been set up.

Wider Church:

- Attended farewell gathering for Carmen Landsdowne (First United) who will be joining the faculty of Emmanuel College following her moderatorship.
- Attended two meetings of the Theme and Worship team for the Pacific Mountain Region Annual General Meeting (in June)
- Hosted my colleague Will Sparks (Highlands United) in the café and gave him a tour of our Thrift Shop operation
- Asked to help plan a day long retreat for North Shore churches with Lynn Valley United and rep from Highlands United – scheduled for February – at Lynn Valley United – part of a desire for more cooperation among north shore united churches.

Upcoming dates:

- Wednesday December 20 th – Blue Christmas Service at 7pm
- Thursday December 21 st – Christmas Carols in the Café 2pm
- Sunday December 24 th – 4pm and 7:30 pm services Note: No Sunday morning Service.

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November/December 2023, Update to Council – Rev Carla

I preached/presided on Remembrance Sunday (in uniform) and preached one Sunday in December so far, and participated (prayers/children's story) in the remaining Sundays. I have met with a family about a funeral (which is happening by the time our meeting happens) and met with another family for pre-funeral planning. I have met with the mental health team once, and we are going to try the mental health series again in the new year in a different way – café style conversations. I have received one more application, and continue to monitor the other applicants, making sure that their invoices are paid. We have approved 7 applicants, with a few more inquiries. We have paid for therapy sessions for 4 people, with 21 sessions paid, and a total of \$3100 spent. I have reached out to the other United Churches on the North Shore to tell them about our project, in case they have people to refer to us. I let our MPs office know as well. I was contacted by Trinity United in PoCo, as they have a mental health fund (for the past 30 years). They were inspired by our project and it caused them to reboot theirs. They asked me to refer people to them if people from outside of the North Shore apply to us. I met with MP Terry Beech with Nabil and Ilham, about the situation in Gaza with their family. After our meeting, Terry's office staff person said "I noted that that was one of the most incredible meetings I have ever been a part of. Terry felt the same way. It was so humanizing, in a time where it is so easy to forget that humanity, and the actual people on the ground." I invited Nabil and Ilham and family to our turkey lunch, and they came with one of their sons. I arranged for them to light the candle of peace and for us to have a second hour with them after church that Sunday. I was part of a meeting with Parc – Cedar Springs to plan a holiday thrift fair and fashion show with them. It went very well last week (with a "bonus" shop day – open Tuesday December 5).

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I have met for supervision sessions with Alexis every other week, but we have regular check-ins

and also with John and Rebecca.

Met with the Thrift Shop leadership team once.

I hosted book study this week on the Advent book, the Angels of Christmas.

Attended one caring connections meeting and sent out Blue Christmas invitations, purchased

the poinsettias for the team to deliver and I delivered two poinsettias on behalf of the congregation/caring connections team.

I had a few pastoral visits in my office – and many pastoral phone calls this month.

Arranged for the Giving Tree to be set up and helped with church decorating.

Participated in the fall clean up.

Attended an Israel/Palestine conversation at Jubilee United in Burnaby with speakers, Nabil,

Ilham and Jeffrey Smith.

Met with a prospective “Outreach team” member to brainstorm what a reboot of the Mission and

Outreach team might look like.

Submitted my official written request to M&P (already requested at my review in the spring) for

my sabbatical in 2024 (September to November).

I participated in a WCD meeting

Participated in Staff meetings and supervision meetings with Nancy – reading the book “Dare to

Lead” by Brene Brown together and discussing it.

For my wider church work I had two meetings with the Pacific Mountain Region (PMR) Lay

leadership support committee. I attended the PMR Christmas Open House at their office in

Burnaby.

Coordinated Thrift Shop gifts for Blueridge Cares hamper program.

Checked in with volunteers on each shift and at tea time, and have been present in café and

thrift shop when they are open on Thursdays and Fridays.

Working ahead on Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve plans.