

Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday November 17, 2021 at 1900h
Via Videoconference

Present: Al Hubbard (video conference host), Andy Choles, Carol Wilson, Clarke Grice, Dana Bryant-Giguere, David Wheeler, Elisabeth Evans, Heather McGillis, John Fargey, Kay Cranston, Louise Sinclair, Marg Shaver, Mary Dowding-Paré (representing Search), Pat Skinner, Richard Cranston, Rick Donaldson, Shawn Bausch, Steve Shaver, Susan Gittings, Teresa Madeira

Regrets: Christine Whiting, Joanne Quennell

Ministry Staff: Rev. Dr. Morar Murray-Hayes, Victoria Keane

Reports attached this month: Communications, Community Outreach, Emergency Preparedness, Ministry & Personnel, Property, Real Estate Oversight, Recruitment, Search, Spiritual Development, Stewardship, Trustees, Welcoming & Fellowship, Worship, Financial Statements & Treasurer's Report, Senior Minister
Other documents attached: Privacy Policy Update, Policy on Expenditure Control

Call to Order

Richard Cranston called the Council Meeting of **November 17, 2021** to order.

A quorum (22) of Council members were present.

Opening Devotional Rev. Morar

Opening Remarks Richard Cranston

Richard reviewed video conference courtesies and procedures, including voting by verbal response for opposition or abstention. The circulated agenda was corrected as follows:

- date of meeting – *November 17, 2021*
- item 9a – *2021 Financial Update - October*

Review & Approval of October 20, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes

No errors or omissions were noted.

- MOTION to Council by Mary Dowding-Paré that the council minutes of October 20, 2021 be approved. SECONDED by Steve Shaver. Motion CARRIED.

Stewardship Campaign Update Louise Sinclair

Louise provided a progress update on campaign outcomes:

- Pledges + PAR commitments so far represent about 70% of the total achieved by January of 2021; the team is hopeful about achieving the approximately \$105K needed to match last year's result.
- Follow up has begun with about 75 households that either pledged last year or are on PAR; there will be further follow up by 'negative election' letter to those on PAR who haven't responded by early December. Eblast was sent out this past week to those on email list who have not pledged to date; phone calls will begin next week. Thank you communications will go out soon.
- Weekly eblasts will begin to include acknowledgement of in memoriam donations to raise awareness
- Time and talent was not covered in this campaign but will be addressed in March, in the lead up to the recruitment drive for May 2022. This will likely involve a Google form.
- Team will also follow up over the next 2 months with those who requested more information about how to make memorial bequests in their will or donations via publicly traded shares. If there is enough interest, they may bring in a UCC representative to give a presentation on either of these topics in the new year.

Annual Report and Winter Semi-annual Congregational Meeting

- Semi-annual congregational meeting date will be February 6, 2022
- Format (in person vs Zoom) to be determined in early January on the advice of EPC, pending their review of post-holiday season Covid outcomes
- Annual report will be distributed in advance for approval at the congregational meeting. Deadline for submissions will be in early January. Carol Wilson will follow up to confirm actual date and instructions.
- We will eventually return to the normal cycle of presenting the annual report at the Spring semi-annual congregational meeting.

Reports from Ministerial Team

Rev. Dr. Morar Murray-Hayes – Senior Minister

Rev. Morar highlighted the following items from her report:

- Reasons for waiting until a new minister is in place to develop baptism, marriage and funeral policies
- Based on her experience with the Accessibility Policy and brochure at Maplegrove (which was based on U of T's School of Theology policy), Morar has created a draft for Christ First and will send it to the Trustees for review.
- Bit of Learning: importance of holding onto and celebrating the strengths of our amalgamation as essential characteristics for moving into the future; e.g. leadership demonstrated throughout pandemic
- We need to increase visibility of leaders in our recorded and live services so that congregants can see our faces, e.g. Louise's messages during the Stewardship campaign. Suggestion was made to have participation in worship by Council members occur on the Sunday following the inclusion of their bio in a weekly update.

Victoria Keane – Youth Music Program Leader

- In January, Victoria will begin a course towards her certificate that is centred on accessible and inclusive ministry
- Curiosity Cohort seminar by Edge - she has enrolled for weekly sessions will likely begin in May. Richard attended the 1 day session and will share his learnings with her.

Committee Reports

Discussions Arising from Committee Reports

No issues or discussions arose from the committee reports submitted by Community Outreach or Ministry & Personnel. Welcoming & Fellowship matters were addressed under Emergency Preparedness Committee discussion below.

Communications – Al Hubbard

- Social media initiative is starting to progress gradually; this is the main focus of ‘marketing’ at this time, with coordination by Sheryl Darlington and input from the full team.
- At Louise Sinclair’s suggestion, fridge magnets were ordered and received for distribution to Christ First supporters.

Emergency Preparedness – Heather McGillis, Kay Cranston

- Team hopes to move to proof of vaccine check or negative Covid test in place of pre-registration for worship, beginning November 28.
- Adam Choles, Health & Safety Director, may be approached to see if he would provide assistance to congregants who have difficulty downloading their QR code or certificate.
- MOTION to Council by Heather McGillis, that Christ First introduce the showing of a QR code or Vaccine certificate, if eligible, and if not a negative test performed less than 72 hours before, on arrival starting November 28, in lieu of pre-registration. That an offer to help any member who needs assistance to download it will be made. Screening and contact lists will still continue as part of the process. SECONDED by Kay Cranston.
 - Proof of vaccination requirement applies to 12+ year olds at this time, and will not likely be introduced for 5-11 year olds until the new year.
 - We do not have the QR code reader app; check in volunteers will simply look at the QR code to confirm the name listed is correct. Confirmation is recorded only once per member.
 - Suggestions: offer the congregation ideas on where to get their paper certificates laminated; allow congregants to provide proof in advance to the office on a drop in basis or electronically.
 - Proof of vaccination is also a pre-requisite for renters
 - There will need to be a process for screening visitors at worship throughout the Advent season, as well as the Christmas walk through to which the neighbourhood will be invited.
 - Motion CARRIED.

- Elisabeth Evans mentioned Welcoming & Fellowship's plan to serve hot chocolate outdoors after the service on December 5. This is in alignment with guidelines developed by EPC for serving of simple refreshments. There will also be a photo area set up where members may take their family Christmas photo after the service. Morar suggested using a company that serves beverages from a van or food truck, as an option to consider for future events.

Ministry & Personnel – Heather McGillis, Sue Gittings

- Committee hopes to have a draft version of the onboarding package ready for the next Council meeting

Property – David Wheeler

- Biggest challenge is getting contractors in to provide quotes for various projects
- Thank you to all who came out to help with property clean up at the Port Credit campus on November 6. It was a great fellowship opportunity for the 15 members from both founding churches who joined the effort.
- Working with Janis on the budget
- A millwright has been contracted to complete minor repairs around the two campuses. All repairs arising from the inspection of Clarkson Campus have been addressed. Dave will follow up with the roofing contractor to have the leak over the elevator rectified under warranty.
- Rod Bolton has provided a list of regular maintenance items for Property to monitor

Real Estate Oversight – Steve Shaver

- Team has placed an emphasis on communications with all levels of the church. Approval of any recommendations by REOC will need to come from Council, followed by Trustees and then the Congregation. The first presentation to the Trustees on November 16 was received with enthusiasm. There was general agreement at that meeting that while the Amalgamation Agreement served the purpose of protecting both properties in the aftermath of amalgamation, and is still in full force, many of the conditions contained therein may no longer serve the best interests of our congregation as it is today. The focus will be on doing what is best and fair for Christ First.
- Rick Donaldson reported that the discussion between Steve Shaver (REOC) and Trustees yesterday was very positive
- Steve expressed appreciation for the expertise and efforts of REOC members – Barb Abrams, Carol Wilson, David Gittings, Jeff Sinclair and Rev Morar. Steve is optimistic about how the upcoming meetings detailed in his report will help inform the team's go forward strategy.

Recruitment – John Fargey

- Richard Cranston acknowledged Christine Whiting for her efforts in handling payroll. Christine has recently resigned from her role as Assistant Treasure.

Search – Mary Dowding-Paré

- The purpose of the recent update to the congregation was to advise that we will not have a new minister until 2022, given that ministers must provide 3 months' notice when leaving a congregation.
- Affordable housing is a challenge to attracting a minister. It is unlikely we will call a minister from the GTA and therefore the on-site apartment might provide temporary housing may be needed for a few months, or be useful as overnight accommodations for a minister who would have a long commute. The apartment is currently occupied until April 2022 and would need modifications to make it suitable once vacated. Discussions are underway between Search, Outreach and Property to see if this option is viable. Property is giving consideration to potential related costs for the 2022 budget. Trustees have also offered to have discussions with the Search Committee to help find a resolution. Morar sees the apartment as a potential asset in negotiations, but suggested weighing the costs of making improvements against alternative forms of assistance, e.g. down payment or interest free loan.

Spiritual Development – Teresa Madeira

- Teresa believes the significant increase in the number of children and new families attending 9:02 is a result of Victoria's innovative programming
- Victoria highlighted Saturday programs for kids throughout Advent. Family members and neighbours are invited to join the events.

Worship – Andy Choles

- Andy highlighted the main technical challenge, which is the mixing of recorded materials with the livestream
- Heather McGillis complimented the team on the November 14 service at Port Credit campus

Future Planning Group – Shawn Bausch

- Shawn will distribute a database of grant applications which will be available through the office in the near future. Consultants will be available to assist with applications.
- Grants are offered by various organizations, not limited to UCC, and some may pertain to the hiring of personnel. Sue Gittings pointed out that there needs to be coordination of such applications with Ministry & Personnel. Dana suggested there be a policy in place to provide parameters around the application process, including the requirement of approval from Council before proceeding. Shawn will discuss this idea further with Dana.

Financial Reports – Dana Bryant-Giguere, Clarke Grice

2021 Financial Update – October

- Dana reviewed the financial statements setting out the position of Christ First as of October 31, 2021.
- She commended Property for their recent efforts towards catching up on repairs, which have contributed significantly to expenditures

- Taking over the payroll duties as been time-consuming. In the process, Dana has discovered there was never a back-up individual with login access. Clarke will fill that role alongside Dana.
- Dana is working on automated payroll functions.
- MOTION to Council by Dana Bryant-Giguere that the financial statements of Christ First as of October 31, 2021 which have been reviewed and approved by Clarke Grice, Chair of the Finance Committee be accepted: SECONDED by Shawn Bausch. Motion CARRIED.

Finance Committee Report

- The revised Policy on Expenditure Control, reflecting amendments approved in principle at the October Council meeting, was distributed for information purposes. There were no objections to the changes reflected in the updated document.
- Deadline for budget submissions was November 15; any outstanding budget sheets should be sent to Clarke as soon as possible.

New Business

Privacy Policy and Consent Form Review

- Rick Donaldson referred to the circulated memorandum and described the many forms of personal information currently collected and used by Christ First, for which written consent has never been obtained. As such, Christ First is not in compliance with the Privacy Policy approved by Council in June, 2020. The consent form that accompanies the Policy must be updated accordingly and there needs to be a process to obtain consent from congregants.
- Rick introduced a motion proposing an update of the Christ First Personal Information Release Form that would align it with the specific use examples mentioned in the Privacy Policy. A discussion surrounding content of the documents and various implementation issues resulted in withdrawal of the motion. The following additional matters will be considered by a small working group led by Rick:
 - a process for obtaining consent could be managed most easily by listing all forms of personal information requested on the consent form. Those items currently on file but not consented to by the respondent would then be removed from their membership file. This could be accomplished via Google form.
 - The purposes for using personal information as described in the Policy should be reviewed and possibly expanded to encompass additional areas such as pastoral care, recruitment, contract tracing, emergency contacts, etc.
 - There is a need to clarify issues around security of and access to personal information; Janis Cowie will be asked to join the working group
- Council members were invited to contact Carol Wilson if interested in joining the group

Christ First Policy Review

- Richard Cranston invited ideas on how to approach a review and update of our policies:
 - Morar recommended a 'grassroots' approach initiated at the committee level rather than searching through pre-amalgamation records to find outdated policies.
 - Each committee can consider which policies might be needed for their area of work. For example, Property will review their Rental Policy in early 2022.

- Those mandated by UCC are listed by topic online, and Regional Council may provide additional guidance
- Suggestion offered to hire someone on contract to assist with a policy review
- Clarke will review the list of old policies to see which ones might apply to current committees, for their consideration.

Other Items

- John Fargey announced his plan to step down from his role as chair of Recruitment effective immediately, as well as his participation on the Stewardship Committee at the conclusion of the current campaign. His announcement was received with regret by Council.
- Next Council meeting will be held December 15 to approve the draft budget. There is the possibility of combining this with a social gathering. Meeting will be held via Zoom unless it is determined by EPC that Council may meet safely in person.

Closing Prayer Rev. Morar

In her closing prayer, Morar gave thanks for all that John Fargey has done over the years for the national Church, Presbytery/Regional Council, Christ Church and Christ First.

Adjournment Al Hubbard

Next Council Meeting December 15, 2021



Council Chair – Richard Cranston

December 15, 2021

Date



Council Secretary – Carol Wilson