

The Central Communicator- May 2022

Central United Church
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<https://centralunitedchurchwindsor.com/>

Services Sunday at 11:15



NOTICE

A congregational meeting has been called for Wednesday, May 25th at 7:00 p.m. by the Council in accord with Section B.5.4.2 b) of The Manual, the by-laws of The United Church of Canada, to consider;

the resignation of the members of the Board of Trustees.

Central United Church's insurer has indicated the policy will not be renewed after its expiry on May 31st because required repairs are not completed. The discontinuation of our insurance must be disclosed to other firms and it is unlikely Central will be able to secure another policy.

This places members of the Board of Trustees at personal risk and they, therefore, are advising the congregation of their intention to resign. It would be irresponsible to ask others to serve if this situation is not resolved which will mean that the congregation is not in a satisfactory state and the regional council must intervene.

The Council and Trustees were hopeful that indications these projects were planned might have prevented this but the insurer considers this insufficient action from the time the projects were identified in January. The Board of Trustees and Council are using the time from now to May 25th to pursue options.

The notice required for a meeting at which Trustees resign must be read in worship for two Sundays in advance and will be read on May 15th and 22nd

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY MAY 25, 2022 7 PM

To consider the Resignation of the Trustees,

Summary from the Council Meeting on May 12, 2022

Finances - Expenses continue to exceed Income

2022 Income and Expenses to Date compared to the 6 Month Budget		
Calendar Year 2022		
Central United Church	Jan-April	6 Mo Budget
Income all Sources	21,842	35,485
Expenses all Sources	25,117	39,322
Gain/Loss	(3,275)	\$ (3,837)
Beginning/Ending Balances		
Beginning- Jan 1, 2022	6,721	
Ending - April 30, 2022	3,447	
<i>adjustments if any</i>		
Income less expenses for February was subsequently changed from \$2,920 to \$1,705 by kicking some expenses into the next month time period making the traditional way this balance has been calculated difficult to determine. Custodian work wasn't paid in April since a timesheet wasn't submitted within the month, but May could be about double. Custodial work is \$250. per month. There was no in-person worship in January 2022		

The balance in the bank after paying usual expenses is increasing somewhat. The treasurer was able to alter the contract on the heating and air handling equipment servicing contract with the provider, Honeywell. It is now \$550 and paid semi-annually rather than all at once.

Contact has been made with an electrician who will provide a full inspection of the building's electrical system and upon completion of any work, provide the appropriate certificate. The certificate itself is \$ 1,250 or so.

The funds available to the church are received unevenly throughout the month with rent received on the first of the month and PAR received on the 20th. Considerable time is spent juggling things to keep the church in the black. A meeting is set up for April 13 to set up a small overdraft protection plan.

Worship

Rev. George Bozanich, Minister of Emmanuel United will be in the pulpit on May 22, **Debz Ferber** is scheduled for May 29th and Charmain is scheduled for all of June. A reminder that Charmain's Farewell Lunch is planned for after church on June 5. **Loretta Hackney** has tickets.

Technology Hub

The minister at Harrow United has written to the Council to introduce and determine any interest in joining in forming a hub. There is a cost to it of \$195 per week. In the process, Council discovered we have been underpaying our Pulpit Supply persons. Should be \$224 plus mileage. Dan is to contact Harrow United Church and indicate we might be

interested and start it in July. More information on the project outline can be found at <http://www.ruralconnectucc.ca/>. More next month.

Property

The electrician inspected the basement on May 12th and found knob and tube wiring that will have to be replaced and other issues including dampness in electrical boxes. The labour cost of \$85. plus materials are extra. The electrician has not seen the attic yet. The main floor seemed to be ok. The insurance company has been asking for this since January.

There is excess dampness in the basement

Will be inspecting the composition of the loose insulation in the attic.

Three shingles in the southeast roof have become dislodged. All are next to each other. Need to be repaired.

We finally found out the expiry date of our current policy. It is May 31, 2022

The insurance company has been asking for evidence of completion. The trustees have none.

The 5 mandatory repair jobs recommended by the church's insurance company were not completed by the original deadline of February 28th and none of them have been since. The insurance company will not review without evidence of completion. The trustees cannot complete all that is asked for before May 31. An extension of insurance coverage is said to be impossible. Accordingly, the Trustees as they are personally responsible for insurance in the building if the policy lapses, have indicated that they will resign on May 30, 2022.

A notice of this to fulfill the church's bylaws is posted on page 1 of this newsletter.

Drain

As I understand it the main drain from Cencourse runs under the sidewalk on the south of the church. It is broken. A roof drain from the church runs into it as well. Rainwater is backing up and is causing damage to the building. All of this has been known for over a year or two. As I understand things, Mr. Calhoun is to seek a new estimate to fix the drain. Who will pay for what is undetermined. No action since the last report.

Former DMI Musical Instruments

The gift of certain musical instruments used by the now-defunct Downtown Music Initiative to the music program at schools "To have and to use said musical instruments for the purpose of musical education of children, who could otherwise unafford musical lessons, as this was the original intent of the Downtown Music Initiative ". AND if the instruments are no longer used by the teacher named below, for that purpose, they will re-purpose them with the same intent.

It was determined that the schools could not comply with what we asked. In the trustee's hands. No discussion.

Loans and Grants

Leadership is looking to obtain one or the other for repurposing the building or fixing it. Because of our current situation, it looks like a long shot. If we tried this 5 years ago when we had more workers and more in the bank, the odds would have been better. No discussion

Next Council Meeting - May 24, 2022, at 7 pm

Congregational Meeting - May 25 at 7 PM

The following nicely summarizes the presentation to the congregation by Kevin Rogers at New Song Church on May 6, 2022,

A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING – LIFE CYCLE OF A CHURCH

There is a right time for everything:

A time to be born;

A time to die;

A time to plant;

A time to harvest...

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, TLB

The opening line of this well-known passage from Ecclesiastes reveals a writer who pays close attention to life. We've boiled down these familiar words to what most of us probably say on our way back from a great vacation: "Nothing lasts forever."

As great and awesome as your church is or was, it too will grow old and diminish in its effectiveness. And yes, it will eventually die. Think about it. How many of the churches that Paul planted still exist? If churches started by the greatest missionary who ever lived eventually died, then you can be sure your church will die, too. Every church will go through natural cycles of growth, decline, and death. I tell every church I work with that it too will die someday, the question is not whether your church will die, the question is: Did it make disciples who multiplied while it lived?

A Predictable Pattern

The general rule of thumb we see is a slow decline between thirty and forty years. A great deal of research has been done to understand the natural life cycle that churches often undergo.

The concept of an organizational life cycle first originated in the corporate world with the theory that organizations tend to mirror human life cycles. Later, Robert Dale, Martin Saarinen, George Bullard and others adapted the concept to relate to the local church¹.

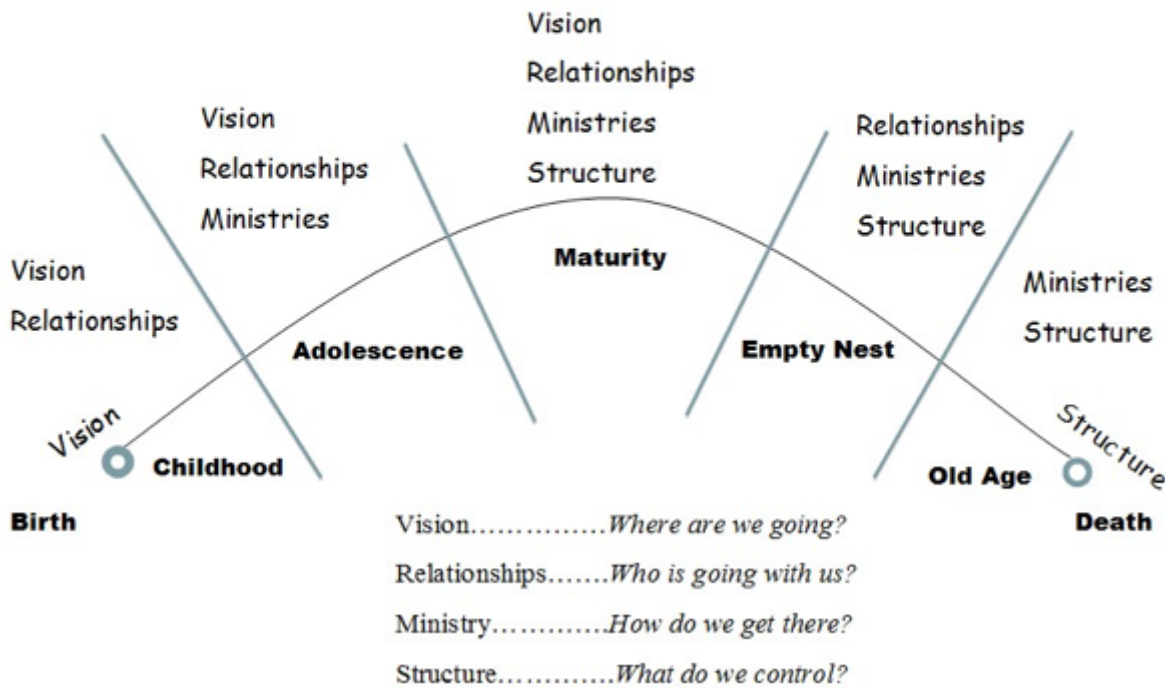
Church plants can't reverse the tide alone. Our older, established churches desperately need to find new life and a restoration of their mission.

Bullard uses ten stages to describe the life cycle of a church, including birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, maturity, empty nest, retirement, old age, and death². He estimates that 80 percent of congregations in North America are on the aging side of the life cycle or are living in the last five stages³. The following diagram illustrates an adapted version of the life cycle bell curve.

Four Elements

In each stage of life, churches tend to lean heavily on one of four elements:

Life Cycle of a Church



At the start of the church, there is nothing more than a vision by a church planter and his or her team.

That vision begins to attract others until the church becomes a vibrant place of great relationships both inside and outside the church. The vision has attracted like-minded people who genuinely enjoy being together, and they have redemptive relationships with those far from Christ.

As the church matures, new ministries that multiply are put into place to build disciples and to reach the local community. These ministries are simply organized ways of creating and keeping healthy relationships.

And then finally, the growth becomes too much to manage so structures are put in place to manage the church. Boards, committees, and systems are formalized. This structure ensures that ministries function consistent with the vision and healthy relationships. These structures ensure ministries are healthy and multiplication can continue.

This all happens on the front side of the curve. Ideally, a new life cycle is intentionally launched before a church gets too far down the backside of the life cycle curve.

The Backside of Life Cycles

On the backside of the curve is where we find our declining and plateaued churches. On the backside, a church begins to lose the four elements it once had:

Vision is the first to go as the church continues to do what it has always done. As chapters 11 and 15 in Acts illustrate, Jerusalem didn't embrace subsequent visions. New vision seems to require morphing and if it doesn't change, frustration will follow.

As the frustration grows, the past ways of doing things work less, and then the relationships begin to suffer. By pulling in, the people in the church often don't build redemptive relationships with people distant from Christ. This "pulling in" exacerbates the decline, and people begin to leave as the tension grows. At this point, often a new vision is quickly squashed as the church continues to "hold on to what we know." We've heard many

stories from churches nearing the end. The basic narrative is almost always the same: "The world around us is changing and going to hell, and we have no way to reach it."

As the church continues to contract, it's left with fewer people and multiple ministries that they try desperately to maintain. Eventually, the ministries can no longer continue. Dan Turner, <https://dying2restart.org>, is correct in saying that people can smell death, and visitors quickly pick up that a church is in contraction.

Typically, when the death of a congregation is near, there is little ministry; few healthy relationships with people distant from Christ or within the body; and ultimately, no vision. But there's still a lot of structure. I've worked with churches that had less than thirty people, but their constitution called for thirty-five positions to be filled on their board and committees. They tried to fulfill all of these ministries with only thirty people! Once, it took me two meetings and about six hours of work to get a church of twelve people to eliminate their weekly board meetings! The only thing they could cling to anymore was structure.

My comments May 6th

From the Life Cycle of a Church chart above, observe the words "Vision" and Relationships. Where they appears, where it wanes or disappears. Also observe "childhood", new birth, new vision and purposes. Central has had many childhood life experiences like the founding of what became the Downtown Mission and later what became Cencourse. They were like having children again and grandkids again. They are energizing. Is Central ready for great, great-grandkids? Is repurposing or redevelopment possible?

Perhaps with God. Perhaps God has other plans. We seek His leading

Please pray for the leadership as they discern God's leading, and for guidance for yourself to make wise decisions about the future and collectively the future of the congregation. May we all be granted-
Wisdom Understanding and Knowledge, Gladness and Joy

Update on May 17, 2022

The trustees cannot meet the requirements of their present insurer.

Insurance from UCC through Hub International is being applied for.

The Trustees are busily preparing applications for Liability Insurance.

A document to absolve or waive the Trustee's duty to provide adequate general insurance is being drawn up to be approved by the Council and the Congregation. The congregation will hold the risk.

Capital Loans are being applied to complete the needed repairs. Loans are more responsible than large cheques should we need to sell.

Stay Tuned In-Person Congregational Meeting May 25, also Zoom

Loving and leading God, give us patience to listen to your voice, give us courage to follow your footsteps, give us faith to trust that you are guiding us on a pathway that leads to the new thing you are doing. We pray in the name of Jesus, amen. Isaiah 43:18-19