**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**St. Paul’s United Church**

**MINUTES OF MEETING - 5 March 2017**

Meeting commenced at 10:30 A.M. with a “hymn sing”.

Rev. Herb Klaehn welcomed all, saying that “*we want to hear from you about the future of the church”*.

**Announcements:**

* Fundraiser in support of refugee family coming to Walkerton in 2017, to be held March 25th at the church *“Hot Lunch/Cool Tunes”*. Funds raised will be matched by Scotia McLeod.
* Rev. Klaehn announced that the fundraising event held at the Walkerton Curling Club over the weekend netted an amount of $1,066.21 for emergency funds in Bruce County.
* Vacation Bible School to take place during March Break. Donation of supplies requested.

Rev. Herb Klaehn described the process for the meeting, involving all in attendance. The idea is to create an atmosphere where everyone feels safe to express an opinion in whatever way they wish.

Behavioural Covenant and the New Creed recited by all.

**Remembrance:**

* While lighting the Christ candle, we remembered May Petteplace

**Opening Prayer**

**Offertory**

**Presentation** – Gary Munro, Chair of Finance Committee

* Regarding the state of St. Paul’s finances – good news is that the building, land, chattels are all paid for. St. Paul’s is debt-free.
* We are on the verge of a new financial reality – we are in an era of continuing deficits.
* Innovation by the Finance Committee has helped to stabilize, however, the era of deficit is continuing.
* While not an “imminent concern”, what is the long term prognosis for St. Paul’s?
* Finance Committee believes in the need for a “Plan B”, contingency plan, for St. Paul’s.
* Gary listed the financial facts – projection of continuing deficits, in spite of fundraising
* Deficit approaching $20,000.00 this year, would have been close to $35,000.00 without efforts of fundraising initiatives.
* Continual deficit would leave a potential life span of ten (10) years, provided there are no increased costs and givings are maintained at current levels.
* If there are changes to costs and/or givings, potential lifespan would be reduced.
* Only 40 families contribute 70% of all givings at St. Pauls, however, there are 350 potential contributors.
* Fundraising Concepts Committee have new ideas for fundraising, however, these will fall short of the need
* 30 to 50 new families would be required to cover the deficit, which is not imminent.
* Cutting expenses would, potentially, change the culture of the church.
* Today’s meeting will assist in determining the wishes of the congregation

Questions:

1. Out of the 300+ families who do not attend regularly, how many still attend sporadically? Bar graph in the Annual Report shows number of contributing households.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Group Discussions**

Rev. Herb facilitated small group discussions regarding the Finance Committee Report.

**Human Continuums**

Rev. Herb facilitated testing out possibilities for the future of St. Paul’s by drawing an imaginary line, and inviting those in attendance to share their response to the questions posed by where they placed themselves in relation to the line – one side being positive agreement – the other being negative disagreement – and the degree of opinion being shown by how close they position themselves to the centre line.

Questions Posed:

1. I love Winter and hope it stays six more months

– OR – I can’t wait for Summer

Result: More were positive towards Summer.

2. I don’t care for Soup Sunday

- OR – I absolutely love Soup Sunday.

Result: More were positive towards Soup Sunday

3. I think we should change Worship completely

- OR – I think we should not change a thing

**Result**: showed the majority (35) standing closer to centre,

with fairly equal numbers on both negative (12)

and positive (13) sides of the centre.

**Comments**:

* Just don’t like change.
* Should change because it’s not relevant to today’s society
* If we don’t change, even if change is difficult, it’s still important to explore new ways, because we’ll never grow if we don’t.
* From the middle – our message/core values are central, but it’s how we deliver those messages
* Seems as if we’re not bringing people in the doors in sufficient numbers to grow as a church – how’s that workin’ for you, not changing?
* The activity the group is currently engaged in, as opposed to sitting still, is really important to do, and will attract more people. Engagement.

**Option A:** - members separated into discussion groups.

Living out our mission statement, that we continue to move towards being an Affirming Church (a welcoming church) to all people – expand our outreach – touch the community more, and invite the community more – and reach out to past attendees and invite them back. Partner and network.

We should work towards making whatever changes necessary to revive St. Paul’s – OR – we should prepare for the closing of this church in 5 to 10 years.

I strongly agree with moving in this direction

- OR - I strongly disagree with moving in this direction

**Result**: showed approximately 28 in agreement, 26 at the mid point and 6 disagreeing

**Option B:** - members separated into discussion groups

Stewardship – should St. Paul’s explore the option of joining in partnership with another church.

I strongly agree with moving in this direction

- OR - I strongly disagree with moving in this direction

**Result**: showed approximately 12 in agreement, approximately 31 in the mid range, and approximately 15 disagreeing with the proposition.

**Note: Time did not permit all potential questions to be discussed**

**Option F:** - members separated into discussion groups.

Should St. Paul’s prepare for a “Good Death”

**Result**: - showed 2 in agreement, 13 in the mid range and 45 disagreeing with this direction.

**Notes:**

* Question posed and discussion took place regarding installation of a digital sign to let the community know of events at St. Paul’s
* Yes and No responses were divided 24 to 22, with 14 in the centre
* Comments made that, perhaps, a sign would be helpful, but the cost of a digital sign was somewhat prohibitive in our current circumstances
* Question also posed regarding how quickly a sign should be installed – with an even split of 24/24 saying yes/no, and 12 in the centre.
* Comments made that a non-digital sign may be a better investment

**Comments from the Chair of Council:**

* Betty-Anne Elliott, thanked all profusely for their sharing.
* Reminded us of the necessity to make decisions based not on personal preference, but what’s best for “us”
* Live out our spirituality – be the member we need to be.

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting – 6 March 2016**

**Moved by** Bev McNeil

**Seconded by** Peggy Munro

That the Minutes of the AGM of 6 March 2016 be approved as circulated.

**Carried**

**Report of the Finance Reviewers** – Peter Thor

* Peter Thor, in conjunction with Tammy Gailing, have reviewed the financial records of St. Paul’s United Church, following the guidelines of the United Church of Canada, and found no issues to report.

**Moved by** John Inglis

**Seconded by** Janet Field

That the Finance Reviewer’s Report be accepted as presented.

**Carried**

**Moved by** Myrna Inglis

**Seconded by** Deb Sutherland

That Peter Thor and Tammy Gailing be appointed to audit, review and present a report regarding the Financial records of St. Paul’s United Church for 2017.

**Carried**

**Budget** – presented by Gary Munro

* Report was included in package provided
* Gary explained the proposed budget for 2017

**Moved by:** Charlie Clarke

**Seconded by:** Peter Thor

That the Budget for 2017, as proposed by the Finance Committee, be accepted as presented.

* Peter Thor invited all members currently using PAR to increase their givings by whatever amount you can, if you can.
* Gary Munro extended thanks to Laurel Douma for her excellent assistance

**Carried**

**In Memoriam** – Rev. Herb read the names of those lost to us in 2016

Closing hymn, *“Deep in our Hearts”*

**Motion to adjourn** – 12:05 P.M. – Marv Reid

Respectfully submitted:

Anita McNeil

Council Secretary