

Zoom Council Meeting
First United Church
Tuesday August 18, 2020

Present

Burt Amiro, Chair, Rev. Valerie Kingsbury, Grant Langford, Chris Bowman, Charlotte MacQuarrie, Tillie Armstrong, Tracy Boutilier, Rev. Roger Moore, Pat Roberts, Janet White, Karen Byers, Diane Wasson, Martha MacLaughlin, Elaine Campbell, Grant Campbell, Lila MacLean, John McElhiney, Krista McNutt, Malcolm Macpherson, Lynn Macpherson, Ken Cameron, Heather MacLeod, Carolyn Dalrymple and Alan MacLean.

Regrets

Cathy Olsen, Susan Dixon Dyke and Rob Dickson

Worship

Valerie led the Council in a moment of prayer.

Minutes of June 23, 2020 Council Meeting

On a motion by Malcolm Macpherson seconded by Karen Byers the minutes were approved as circulated.

New Business

Reopening of the Church: The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss whether or not the church should be reopened for Sunday services. An extensive policy had been sent out to Council members by Rev. Valerie indicating the requirements outlined by the Health Department. These included the need for self-distancing, cleaning and sanitizing the sanctuary after the service, the limit in the number of people who could attend church and the need for registering to come to church due to tracking requirements should an outbreak of covid 19 occur. There were other items including a limitation of 70 people in attendance but these were the main points.

Considerable discussion ensued and Rev. Valerie noted that due to recent updates from the Health Department and the bubble of families sitting together this number could be increased to 106. This would mean that one service would likely accommodate everyone wanting to come to church on a Sunday morning.

A secondary concern was the cleaning of the sanctuary which has not been done for several months. It was generally agreed that this should not be done by members of the congregation. It should go to an outside contractor or a newly hired caretaker.

On a motion by Malcolm Macpherson, seconded by John McElhiney it was recommended that we reopen the church for Sunday services starting September 20, 2020. The motion carried.

A further discussion followed regarding cleanup of the facilities after usage. It was recommended that we investigate the hiring of a company to carry out this work. John McElhiney and Burt Amiro agreed to meet with Rev. Valerie on Thursday at 10 am to act on this issue.

The need for a launching plan was raised but no action was taken at this time. It was also noted that individuals using the church and hall facilities would be required to clean up and sanitize after their activities concluded. Chris Bowman noted that the bell choir does this now.

Lynn Macpherson made a motion to accept the policy document provided by Rev. Valerie regarding the opening of the church. John McElhiney was the seconder. Motion carried.

Alan Syliboy Room Rental: Rev. Valerie raised the question of Alan Syliboy's rental of a room in the basement. He has not been there on a regular basis but has faithfully continued to pay his rent. She requested that we consider offering him a month of free rent. A motion by Alan MacLean, seconded by Pat Roberts recommended offering Alan Syliboy a month's free rent. Motion carried.

Staff Appreciation: Karen Byers raised the issue of the extraordinary work of the staff during the recent difficult times. She felt that it is important to show the congregation just what the staff did to keep the church active during the past five to six months. They were essentially left to carry on by themselves and ended up doing so in a creative and inspired manner. She felt that one way to do this was to get a report from each of the staff members on their activities over the past several months and headline those reports in the next church newspaper to be published in the fall. Pat Roberts moved, seconded by Malcolm Macpherson that we request these reports from staff and publish them as suggested by Karen Byers. Carried.

Minister Leave of Absence: In a letter to Council Rev. Valerie requested a four month leave of absence next year starting in May 2021 and extending to the end of August. She felt she needed time to recuperate from what has been a very difficult two years with numerous funerals, especially of those she felt close attachments to as well as the chaotic times of dealing with the closing of the church etc. While there was some discussion on this matter it really centered on what to call the leave. There was general agreement that it be granted. It was moved by Pat Roberts, seconded by Heather MacLeod that this leave be granted. Carried.

Next Meeting

To be determined.

Adjournment

On a motion by Heather MacLeod the meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Benediction

The benediction was given by Rev. Valerie