

Meridian Pastoral Charge Official Board Meeting

14 April 2020

Minutes

This was a teleconference/online meeting. This format is due to the social distancing measures put in place by the province during the covid-19 pandemic.

Present: Malcolm Kirkpatrick, Colleen Norton, Georges Cormier, Nancy Langlois, Margaret Porter, Michele Ammeter, Cliff Harrison, Jane Mannes, Julie Ringash, Rev. James deBeer, Diane Trudeau, Ron Mannes, Judy Mannes, Jamie Scharf

Meeting was called to order at 7:04pm

Malcom started with some talk of expectations of how to make this teleconference most effective.

Rev James provided the opening prayer

MOTION Michele/Diane - Adopt agenda as amended. carried

The draft minutes of the November 12, 2019 were reviewed

Correction: Location was Starbuck Lutheran Church.

MOTION Cliff H/ Michele - Adopt minutes as amended carried

Reports

The Minister, Worship, Ministry and Personnel, Regional Council, Avonlea United, Sanford United, Starbuck United, and Inter-church reports were presented.

Discussion regarding M&P proposal to eliminate pulpit supply by having laypeople read James' reflection in other points

Info: Pulpit supply list is now online at Region website

Jane asks M&P to encourage James to take some time off this summer.

MOTION: Michele / Ron - Adopt reports as published carried

Treasurers

In general, tracking pretty close to budget, pension is a little higher than planned.

Malcolm provided thanks to Cliff for his 5 years of service as treasurer!

MOTION: Cliff / Georges - accept the financial statement as presented carried

No Correspondence was brought to the meeting

Old Business

Motion Ron / Diane - Because the Chairperson Malcolm Kirkpatrick is the sponsor of two of the "Old Business" topics - specifically "Constitution Update" and "Fishing Tips - Flyers"- he is recused as MPC Chairperson and Diane Trudeau is appointed Acting MPC Chairperson during the discussion of the two topics only and possible motions rendered by the two topics. carried

Constitution Update

Malcolm explained the process he, Diane, Stuart, Jane, Margaret, Ron, and Jamie went through to get to the draft we are looking at during this meeting.

Malcolm was proposing to approve this constitution today.

Michele proposed having the committee appointed in previous meetings take this document and complete the work under Regional Council oversight.

Malcolm requests to leave this committee due to his chairperson position on the board. Call for volunteers and ask for the committee to have a working copy by next meeting in September.

ACTION Ron name an Avonlea representative to this committee by next week.

Jane suggested the document should specify 2 representatives from each congregation on the committees and include some summary of the expected workload associated with the positions.

A suggestion for the committee circulate the next draft taking into account all the current concerns to the entire board in June/July

Ron wanted to clarify the chairperson should ensure the nomination process is happening (not that it's their responsibility to do it)

ACTION: Anyone with concerns should forward them in writing to Michele

MOTION: Malcom/Colleen - the committee provides a final draft for the September meeting for Board approval and final vote in November after Regional feedback. carried

Fishing Tips – Flyers, Social Media

All agreed that it's a great idea to do some promotion. However, Starbuck has requested to be excluded from this promotion at least until they have had a chance to discuss it with their board.

MOTION: Malcom/Ron - the pastoral spend up to \$500 to distribute up to 1500 flyers in the Domain, LaSalle, Brunkild, Oak Bluff, Sanford and Starbuck. The inclusion of Starbuck in the distribution and promotion is tentative. carried

Hub

MOTION: Diane/Julie remove Hub discussions from our next meeting agenda carried

Contract vs Pulpit Supply

General consensus is that we can move away from paid pulpit supply. There are other ideas for how to cover the 3rd point each Sunday.

MOTION: Michele/Nancy - the pastoral charge not pay for any pulpit supply from now until December 31, 2020 with a report from those affected by Oct. 15. carried

MOTION: Cliff/Diane the Contract vs. Pulpit supply discussion item be removed from future agendas carried

New Business

Whole People of God Sunday school curriculum

MOTION: Julie/Jane The pastoral charge pay \$187.43 for the Whole People of God Sunday School curriculum carried

Offerings – Canada Helps/E-Trans/Envelopes

Georges recommends each Church register with Canada Helps if they feel it's appropriate.

Covid 19 trickle down budget effect/government initiatives

Currently none of the initiatives apply to us but one from ADP/National church might get us some financial help

Covid 19 In-Church Services Suspension/On-line Church Services

At this time no indication of when and how return to in person worship will resume. We have the authority to decide based on Public Health recommendations. Our best guess is we return in summer/fall and we'll communicate with our congregations via email/phone/website announcements.

Prairie to Pine/Manse Money

Manse money restrictions have been lifted by Region.

Signing Authority

We have 2 signing authorities Georges and Karen Elliot but only 1 signature is required on cheques.

MOTION: Cliff/Diane Signing authority be given to Georges or Karen carried

MPC Finances - Church Insurance/Bulletin (Tom Manson)

When we go back in person worship, Tom Manson's services for formatting bulletins may be helpful but perhaps not required? We'll leave that discussion with M&P when we have a better idea when in-person will resume. However, most support the idea of keeping Tom's service. Until in-person resumes, it is desired that he provide a normal bulletin to distribute like before in addition to the one James is currently posting to the website for online services.

HPX bill

Everything is sorted out.

Tech Soup

Interesting idea but we need to think about it more -- perhaps a decision in September. Rev. James and Jamie to provide additional information prior to the next meeting.

MOTION: Georges/Jane - The pastoral charge reimburse Jamie Scharf upto \$200 to cover expenses for Zoom/telephone fees covering the period ending in June 2020. carried

Meeting Dates for MPC

8 September 2020 – Starbuck – 7 PM

10 November 2020 – Avonlea – 7 PM

9 February 2021 – Sanford – 7 PM

MOTION: Diane - that the meeting be adjourned carried

Meeting concluded at 10:45pm

DRAFT

Minister's Report

Happy Easter everyone! I know none of us have ever experienced an Easter celebration like this one. It has been very painful to be unable to physically gather in our church buildings for worship. In times of crisis and uncertainty, being able to gather with friends and neighbors provides the love and community we need to 'keep calm and carry on'. Having to find new and 'virtual' ways to do this has been both challenging and rewarding. I am so grateful for the technology we have access to in order to gather in one way or another, acknowledging that there are many in our congregation who do not have this access. So a big thank you to all who are reaching out, especially to the most isolated.

I also thank you for your patience and kindness to me during the worst of my herniated disk health problems. I was grateful to be able to worship with you for a few weeks at least before social distancing guidelines were applied. I am better though still struggling. I was scheduled for an MRI in June but at this

point I don't think that will happen or perhaps not at all. I can sit for short periods now and standing is generally fine.

It was a difficult and painful decision to make to suspend in-person worship starting March 22. I'm so grateful for the support and understanding each congregation board had in making these decisions. I'm also very grateful to Jamie Scharf for setting up zoom meetings for online fellowship and other meetings, trying to make them as accessible as possible.

I looked at multiple platforms and methodologies for generating some sort of virtual/online worship services. Facebook live and zoom seemed like viable options but I thought the flexibility of people being

able to watch something on their own schedules was ideal and would be the most accessible so I chose YouTube video recordings. I also thought about going to the churches to film them but thought I would do them from home as a show of solidarity with keeping with the isolation requirements of Public Health. As we move forward during this pandemic and physical isolation protocols, I'm definitely open to suggestions and alternative platforms.

I don't think any of us know when the physical distancing restrictions will be relaxed but perhaps we could discuss what we will do when the guidelines change (for example, if they increase the limit of people to 50 do we return to in-person worship or wait until it's 100?).

Also I don't have any travel plans this summer so, if allowed by public health, congregations decide to gather for worship in July/August I am here. The Prairie to Pine Regional meeting scheduled for May in Steinbach has been postponed, date TBA.

I think we're doing a great job of keeping in-touch and staying united so thank you to everyone for being

flexible and open to new ways of doing Church. Regardless of where or how we gather, we are the church and continue the mission of Jesus to bring about peace, reconciliation, and healing in our world. Jesus is risen, he is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Rev. James

Worship Committee Report

There hasn't been a Worship Committee meeting since August 2019 and our next meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2020 at Starbuck.

Colleen Norton

Ministry and Personnel Report

At the Annual meeting there was a discussion on pulpit supply. Each congregation was to have discussion about whether it would be possible to reduce the need for pulpit supply even further. Suggestions included Rev James doing 3 services each Sunday or just eliminating the pulpit supply and having congregation leadership.

With Rev James unable to attend service for a couple weeks, we all had a taste of how latter could work. Starbuck had a board discussion and felt that it would be very possible to deliver Rev James message, as we did while he was off. If all points did this it would eliminate the need for pulpit supply almost entirely.

Given the current COVID-19 crisis there may be additional ideas that can be explored.

I have not yet contacted the Region about contracts, and don't plan to until Meridian Boards makes a decision on whether next year will we will require pulpit supply regularly or not.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Michèle Ammeter

Regional Council - Prairie to Pine Report

There is very little to report.

The Prairie to Pine Regional meeting in May has been postponed.

The Moderator of the United Church of Canada, Right Reverend Richard Bott, invites those who are interested to "chat" with him every day except Tuesdays via Zoom. He also is encouraging people to delay having funeral services if possible. <https://www.united-church.ca/blogs/round-table>

The Prairie to Pine Bursary Funds from UCW for \$800 is available.

The Prairie to Pine newsletter provides Covid 19 updates. Also in the newsletter is that 1 Just City has had more than normal requests for food so they are asking for help. They make food hampers as well as provide meals.

I did attend a Special Regional online gathering with Shannon McCarthy and the only thing of note to us was that Canadahelps.org charges 3 % generally but less for churches.

There has been no mention of the covenants.

Submitted by
Diane Trudeau
Prairie to Pine Rep.

Avonlea Church Report

At Avonlea we haven't had any services in our church since March 7 th . The Covid 19 has created many challenges for everyone. Parents at home 24/7 with their children, many people into full isolation, and others whom have had to continue work under demanding protocols, and all these situations have created a degree of paranoia and uncertainty. Not only is our economic and viral health at stake, but many people will be very challenged with their mental health going forward. These are very different times for our generation, and hence a requirement for community and religious support. Unfortunately community activity centers and coffee shops are all closed. So this forces us into social media for human

contact. I'm not sure what we would do without it. A big hand of applause for James with his ability to tackle these challenges. The Sunday service broadcasts on-line have been excellent. Thanks, James. One last comment ends with a question, does anyone remember a Good Friday and Easter where our churches were closed? Stay safe!! Ron M.

Sanford United Church Report

These are indeed unprecedented times:



Church Sign Side 1 Church Sign Side 2

Our last in person worship was March 15, 2020 and since then we've been making the best of it trying new ways of connecting within our congregation and community

Prior to that, our busy little church was going about its regular business. Our Advent and Christmas season was as successful as usual and a Children's Art program run by Barb Batulla also completed it's fall session.

The board met on Dec. 4, 2019 to approve the proposal to replace our front door. Work is expected to happen when the weather permits. And our annual meeting was January 19, 2020, well attended and some good discussions.

Just prior to the pandemic, our normal worship was interrupted with not only our minister's injury but also our pianist's broken wrist. Trust our little church to come through that as we made last minute changes to accommodate this. We are thankful for God's healing power and happy to report both James and Kelly are much better. And thanks to the worship committee for their help.

The pandemic is starting to put a strain on our finances which were not rosy even prior to that. At this time we are using up reserve funds pretty quickly and hope that we can take some action to increase our income so that we can continue to do God's work in Sanford. We trust that we will continue.

And a big thanks to Rev. James for all his work to keep our services going in this time of physical distancing. We have been getting nothing but glowing feedback on these online services!

Respectfully submitted,
Jamie Scharf

Starbuck United Church Report

This is, without exception, the most challenging time in which to maintain our church life. We are without our own services during Holy Week and for Easter. We are grateful to Rev. James for filling the void as much as possible with on line and printed services. His wisdom is much valued and a constant to hang on to. It is vital at this time that we maintain our community spirit but very difficult when contact is forbidden. We miss the choir, the handbells and the fellowship as well as coming together in worship.

That being said we must take satisfaction in knowing that we are doing our part in keeping others safe. We must look forward to the time when it is safe once again to come together as a church. This is an opportunity to reflect on all that we have and have taken for granted and to appreciate anew the value of friends, family and community. We must also remember that there are many others both sick and well who have things so much worse than us and pray for all of them.

Once again, our thanks to James for being there for all of us!

Margaret Porter

Meridian Inter-Church Council Report

The Advent service was held at St Paul's Lutheran Church in Brunkild on December 1 at 7 pm with a full church approx. 180-200 people. The service began with opening prayer followed by Scripture readings and commentaries on Hope, Joy, Love, Peace, church choirs, and congregational singing. The monies collected this year, \$1000.25, was donated to Koats for Kids. Last year \$1023 was sent to Koats for Kids, and in 2018 \$870.25 was sent to InterCity Youth Alive. The event concluded with fellowship and a sharing of donated goodies from each congregation.

The World Day of Prayer Service during Lent was held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Starbuck March 8, 2020 at 7m with 25 in attendance. The leadership of 3 clergy members and the fellowship was a wonderful display of Christian unity and the mission of this council.

A committee was formed to discuss the 2020 Baccalaureate Awards. The application form was revised and discussion followed how to support the award given that the former baccalaureate church service supplied the award funds. A motion was passed at the March 10 meeting that the MIC church allocation of \$50 would be raised to \$100. The award recipients will be mentioned at the Sanford graduation ceremonies and it was decided that the individual churches would hand out the awards during Sunday service.

United Church yearly \$100 allocation payable to MIC is shared: Avonlea 2020; Starbuck 2021; Sanford 2022.

BBQ and Ball tournament and fellowship set for June 14, 2020.

Advent Service is set for Nov 29 with La Salle Fellowship to host.

Judy Manness

Treasurer's report.

As the new treasurer for MPC and unsure as to what needs to be reported, I will wing it and try to offend everyone so that this will be my last report. LOL

During this covid-19 period, we have had to adapt to new ways of doing things and makes us reflect on how things were done in the past, how they are currently done and forces us to think about how things might be done in the future.

As treasurer, I am questioning certain things and in the end it all leads to \$.

1)What if we continue to do the Sunday bulletin and post it on all 4 websites (Meridian, Avonlea, Starbuck, and Sanford)? The bulletin should also be emailed to everyone that each church has an email address for, including those who moved away, quit coming to church, or even those who come on Christmas Eve. I can only see many pros of doing this, and I will leave it up to each board member to think about this. This could lead to an increase in regular givings, special projects, and/or other initiatives (\$).

2)Church insurance? If any of the churches are facing a financial shortfall and the insurance bill is due, please talk to the insurance agent/company to possibly have monthly payments made if possible versus one annual payment. DO NOT LET THE INSURANCE LAPSE. (\$)

3)Signing authority for the MPC bank account. I have left the signing authority to one signature on cheques only. Both Karen Elliot and myself can sign cheques. In discussion with Karen, I will probably be signing 99.99 percent of the cheques. She will only sign a cheque with my approval. This was done for simplicity/efficiency purposes and also Karen is a compromised individual concerning covid-19. So no contact. (\$)

4)This is what I had sent to the three church treasures a while back concerning CanadaHelps. "I received a short tutorial from a Lucas Froese of Canadahelps who is stationed in Toronto.

I believe this is an individual church vs a Meridian initiative.

Following is what I have learned:

- 1CanadaHelps is a registered charity that provides donors with another avenue for on-line giving.
- 2The tools are free.
- 3Churches register on-line with CanadaHelps.
- 4There is no cost to the charitable organizations to register.
- 5If there is a \$100.00 donation, 3.5% is kept for a transaction fee.
- 6The charitable donation receipt is made for the whole amount i.e..
\$100.00 and will be issued immediately to the donor via email.
- 1Each church would have to go to the website and complete an on-line form in the "claim an account" tab.
- 2Even if the church does not create an account, a donor can still currently go to the website and make a donation, and a cheque will be sent to the church's address that CandaHelps has, in about 6 weeks. The church will not know who made the donation as they do not have to issue a charitable donation receipt.
- 3Once a church registers, then that church will be able to find out when and who donated. - Once a church is signed up and there are donations made, then the 96.5% amount of the donation will be deposited into the the church's bank account on the next Thursday.
- 4Once you are signed up, you can view all sorts of reports on the CanadaHelps website such as who donated, amounts, messages, etc.
- 5An individual can sign up for "one only" donation or for monthly donations. If the donor chooses monthly donations, they will receive one charitable donation receipt for all donations during the year.
- 6Donations may only be made by credit card or PayPal, NOT FROM BANK ACCOUNTS.
 - Once signed up a church can put a link on the church's website that would take donors directly to their churches giving page at CanadaHelps.
- 1Every time someone donates, a message will be sent to the email address specified when the registration was done. ie. treasurer or the churches email address or whatever.
- 2Whoever signs up with CanadaHelps to set up an account will have access and accesses can also be given to other specified individuals. Then an email will go to those individuals to set up their passwords.
- 3I am not sure about the three churches and if this would be useful, but I can see this website used in a obit/memorial situation for donations made to the churches in the deceased name or if a major fundraiser is undertaken. "

As MPC is not a charitable organization, we cannot apply to be part of CanadaHelps, however each individual church can apply. I believe that it would be beneficial for each church to register as we can have the link inserted on each of the individual churches websites. Having said this, we can make mention of this for regular givings or other fundraisers, like when we collect, for example, Feed my Lambs at Christmas time, in the weekly bulletin that would reach

A LOT of people electronically as per 1) above. The bonus is that donors can use their credit card and the donation is made immediately versus the donor saying "I will write a cheque next week" and forget. (\$)

1) We pay Tom Manson \$30.00 a week for secretarial duties to produce the weekly bulletin. Currently we are not producing a bulletin, so should we continue to pay Tom? However, if we decide to keep producing a bulletin to be sent electronically, then we can keep Tom employed. (\$)

1) "I have been asked to look into Techsoup by Jamie.

TechSoup Canada is a program of the Centre for Social Innovation, a nonprofit coworking space, community and launchpad for people who are changing the world. Qualified charities, nonprofits and libraries can order donated and discounted software, such as Microsoft Office and Bitdefender Antivirus, for a very low administrative fee."

Having read the above, I did not do any further research as MPC does not meet the eligibility criteria to register. (\$)

1) Covid-19 government assistance. Condensed version and my interpretation below. The government assistance requirements are changing every day. So far there would be 2 programs that MPC might qualify for. I do not believe the individual Meridian Churches would qualify for any assistance on their own, as the payroll account is under MPC and not the individual churches, and everything seems to be related to payroll. The individual churches contribute to the overall salary paid, but do not have an employer number, nor pay salaries, or make deductions at source. The first subsidy would be to qualified employers whose income was reduced by at least 30% due to Covid-19. There are two ways to calculate this, one is to compare the March 2020 income to either March 2019 or the Jan/Feb 2020 incomes. New rules, for March the income only needs to be reduced by 15%. I contacted the individual church treasurers for the donations for the applicable months. The decrease of all donations (3 churches) for March 2020 as compared to March 2019 is 12%. The increase, **YES** increase from February 2020 to March 2020 givings is 1.2%. So far it does not look like we would qualify for this one. I will keep monitoring for April and May. The second subsidy that MPC might qualify for is in the form of reduced income tax remittances on employees' behalf, at the employer's choice, manually calculated. The maximum reduction is 10% per cent of payroll, to a maximum subsidy of \$1,375 per employee. From my understanding ADP (payroll company) will be applying for this incentive. I do not have all of the information, but there is a taxable benefit somewhere in all of this, and I would not want to put James in a financial bind at tax time next year. I will keep monitoring and gather information as it comes available. As I have not been changed as yet as the ADP authorized contact, I cannot get any info from them. The changes are in progress. (\$)

8) Bank balance March 31, 2020 - \$24,992.91

Term note - \$95,000 - matures March 2021 (\$)

Georges Cormier

Meridian Charge - March 31, 2020

Bank Balance - \$24,992.91
 Manse investment - \$95,000 2020 M & S pledge - \$6000
 Minister-\$60,559 salary Travel -\$0.42/km
 Worship leader -\$216/day

<u>Expenses -</u>	<u>2020 budget</u>	<u>1st quarter</u>	<u>Worship Leader -</u>	<u>\$7344 - 34 Sundays</u>	<u>\$1512</u>
Travel -	\$1200	\$249.90	Region Allocation	\$4184	\$2092 Regional
mtgs -	\$800	\$ Telephone -		\$	
Office/Worship-	\$1000 (include phone)	\$263.25	Miscellaneous	\$500	\$ Secretary -
\$1320 - 44 Sundays	\$330	Treasurer (book)-	\$600	\$	Credit Union - \$50
\$ Salary/pens/benefits -	\$77,088	\$19,400	Travel	\$3500	\$390.60
Total	\$97,586	\$24,237.75	Allocations - Avonlea - \$2450; Sanford - \$2450; Starbuck - \$1700		

Sanford phone - discontinued
 M & S = \$6000 - Avonlea \$3000, Sanford \$1000, Starbuck \$2000
 Cliff Harrison/Georges Cormier