

Meridian Pastoral Charge

Official Board Meeting – 2020-Sept-08

Present: Rev. James DeBeer, Jamie Scharf, Malcom Kirkpatrick, Diane Trudeau, Georges Cormier, Michele Ammeter, Julie Ringash, Jane Manness, Margaret Porter, Nancy Langlois

Regrets: Ron Manness

Called to order 7:32

Opening prayer from Rev. James

MOTION George/Margaret: Masks may be removed since we are physically distanced. carried

MOTION Diane/Jane Adopt agenda as distributed carried

Minutes of April 14th 2020 minutes

Correction – Location of the previous meeting is Trinity Luthern not Starbuck Luthern.

MOTION Michele/Jamie the minutes be adopted as amended carried

Reports

Minister

Since our last meeting in April, we continued online worship services during the suspension of in-person worship through to the end of July. I wanted to have something available online and so decided to create simplified videos in July but needed a break in August. We held a few in-person services in all three congregations once we moved to phase 3 in June. We also held outdoor fellowship times for all three congregations as well as a Sunday School wind-up for Avonlea.

Moving forward now as we resume in-person worship in September, subject to the approval of the Boards as well as consultation with the worship committee, I'm anticipating using these general guidelines moving forward:

- **Communication:** I tried to keep in touch with the congregations regularly to provide updates and reminders about worship but have been remiss in this in August so plan to resume more frequent emails/communication.
- **Flexibility:** as this is a constantly changing reality, I'm trying to adapt and be flexible when it comes to planning and worshipping
- **Simplicity:** I've kept things very simple for the outdoor services in June and at Avonlea in August due to the restriction on singing as well as limiting time spent in the worship space

This has been a very stressful time as I know it has been for everyone and I'm so grateful for everyone's feedback and support. As we move forward I look forward to continue to get feedback, especially in regards to how people feel safe and have a prayerful worship experiences.

Just a side-note, I've been asked to act as the Pastoral Charge Supervisor for Altona United for the next year as their minister is on leave. I don't believe it will effect any of my commitments to Meridian which naturally always my priority. Rev. James is hoping to record and post one of the Sunday services each week

Rev. James

Worship

Meridian Annual Worship Committee meeting was held in Sanford September 1, 2020. Members present were: Rev James, Marianne Litster, Jane Manness, Julie Ringash, Barb Kirk, Margaret Porter, and Michèle Ammeter.

2020/2021 dates:

- 1) Scripture readings for the church year are from Year A right now , Year B begins at Advent. A link to the Lectionary is available on the MPC website.
- 2) Communion dates are: October 4 (WWC), November 29 (Advent 1), January 3 or 10 th(Epiphany), February 21 or 28 (1st Lent with Liturgy of Ashes), April 4 (Easter), May 23 or May 30 (Pentecost).
- 3) Each congregation will schedule their own Recovenanting services, White Gift Sunday, Hanging of the Greens Memory Tree as the timing suits best.
- 4) Inter-church Advent Service event is scheduled for November 29, LaSalle Fellowship at 7:00PM.
- 5) MPC Blue Christmas Service will be on Monday December 21 in Sanford
- 6) Christmas Eve Services are: Starbuck at 5:00 pm (with Rev. James), Avonlea at 7:00pm (with rev James), and Sanford at 7:30 pm.
- 7) Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - January 18-25.
- 8) Holy Week services are: Maundy Thursday Trinity Lutheran (April 1st); Good Friday Avonlea (April 2, 10am); Easter Sunday (April 4) services are Sanford at 9:30am (with Rev James), Starbuck at 11:30 (with Rev James) and Avonlea at 11:00am
- 9) Union Point service and Interfaith service will be June 27.

Other Information

- 🕒 Rev James will pick Advent and Lent readings.
- 🕒 Suggestion was made to M & P to ensure equity between Christmas eve and Easter Sunday services in scheduling.
- 🕒 The Worship Committee would like to recommend that MPC Board budget for 1 pulpit

supply for each congregation annually if needed (for a total of 3). This may not be required each, but could be used for Christmas Eve, Easter Sunday or any other required service as the local board feels is needed.

⌚ The Worship Committee would like to recommend to the MPC board that MPC Board request anyone attending services wear a mask, even if it is not a provincial or UCC requirement. As was noted by one member of the committee, if children can do it in school 5 days a week, we can manage for a service once a week.

Order of Service Changes

This year there are significant changes to the Order of Service, and things may continue to change regularly as we adjust due to the Pandemic requirements, as we work to try to keep all members safe, and figure out what works and what does not. As much as we may struggle with these changes, we do want to be able to include as many folks as safely possible. The changes at this point reflect the need to minimize the movement of air (and therefore droplets) within the sanctuary. They include:

⌚ Rev James will record the service weekly and post it after the service for folks who feel they are unable to attend service.

⌚ We will not be handing out bulletins (at this point) because there will be no responses and no singing in the service so are unnecessary, but a bulletin will be posted online and can be printed that way for anyone that wishes.

⌚ There will be no singing hymns. Some forms of music are alright, some are not. Anything that spreads air droplets is not alright including singing and instruments which require air. As such we will be only having 2 hymns (1 verse & chorus) in each service (again with no singing). Piano will be OK.

⌚ Communion will take place but using purchased, prepackaged, individual communion servings that Rev James has sourced. These will be distributed prior to the service, again to minimize movement of people and folks will stay in their seats.

⌚ Passing of the peace will not happen

⌚ There will be readers for the first reading, but they can't use the microphone and need to ensure return to seats conforms to requirements, or they can adjust where they sit for the service.

⌚ Attendance, photos, or sign in sheets will need to be taken for contact tracing purposes. While Greeters can't shake hands and hand bulletins to folks they can potentially take attendance and point out the offertory plate & communion juice/wafer pkg and remind folks of the entry & exits as needed, although this will be up to each congregation.

Recommend that masks be mandatory

Proposing including 1 pulpit supply Sunday per year for each church in the budget

Bulletins will not be printed

Do we need to keep our secretary on payroll?

How do we communicate announcements? – each congregation will distribute those the best they can

Communion packets will be purchased for safe communion

Attendance will need to be taken for contact tracing

Michele confirmed she is chairperson of this committee

M&P

The Ministry and Personal committee last met on November 5, 2019.

Thanks to Michelle for serving as chairperson 2018-2020, and staying on until May 31st. Effective June 1st I have taken over as chairperson.

The Meridian board decided that we would try using lay leaders only, in order to reduce the dependency on and expense of pulpit supply. A draft Meridian Worship Leadership schedule with no pulpit supply, only lay leaders was created and circulated to individual church board chairs, and is attached here. The Meridian worship committee will be using this schedule at their meeting on September 1st. Jane suggested more frequent meetings via Zoom.

I have spoken with Rev. James and he had no issues at that time.

A date for the next M & P meeting will be set when a meeting is required.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Ringash

Prairie to Pine

The Prairie to Pine Regional meeting is planned for a virtual meeting in September.

The Prairie to Pine newsletter provides update and information important to C.O. F for protocols and timelines for reopening:

Diane Strickland, a Trauma Counsellor, critical incident responder and United Church Minister who shared a series of four videos with the church called the PandemicPracticum, has made **two new videos to assist Ministry Personnel and lay leaders as they make decisions about re-opening and begin re-engaging**. They are accessible through:

<http://www.knox-united.com/making-faithful-decisions-on-re-entry---part-1.html>

Financial Support for Congregations:

Erik Mathiesen, the Chief Financial Officer of the United Church of Canada and Clyde Harris presented the latest instalment in the United-in-Learning webinars with

<https://united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/recordings/350-congregational-finances-august-12>

We finally have received feed back from P2P regarding the covenants. Additions will be made and covenants will be returned. These covenants will be passed at the P2P meeting in September. Diane confirmed she is attending the region meeting

Submitted by

Diane Trudeau Prairie to Pine Rep.

Avonlea

Since the closure in March, activity at Avonlea has been relatively quiet as far as Sunday in person fellowship gatherings are concerned. James organized an outdoor church community fellowship one evening in June. We had about 30 people attend, most of whom had been in isolation for several weeks. It was an opportunity to talk and vent and very much appreciated. Proper Covid 19 protocols were observed. The Union Point outdoor service was held June 28th. We resumed in church services August the 9th. We were able to social distance properly without having to use masks. Hand sanitizer was available at the door, an offering plate was set up at the back of the church, socializing was done outdoors, no singing by the congregants, and some congregants chose to wear a mask. There was no need to wipe surfaces given that the virus can't survive on a surface very long and would definitely be dead by the next Sunday. The challenges going forward will be children going back to school, and the possibility that they may come in contact with the virus and transmit it to adults at home or church. Our board at Avonlea held a meeting Wednesday the 2nd of September. We decided to cancel Sunday school for the month of September and to have a designated family day October the 4th. This will give us time to see how the transmission of disease is being handled in the schools and how that may affect our church congregants. We feel we can meet covid 19 protocols. We will be providing masks and hand sanitizer at the foyer of the church. Pictures will be taken of the congregation to keep track of those attending and we plan on installing plexiglas up at the pulpit.

Finally, on behalf of the Avonlea congregation I want to commend James for going to the extra effort providing a connection of fellowship by electronic measures. The services were well received and professionally done. Delayed opening of SS to Oct. 4 – intergenerational service then. Thanks again James.

Ron Manness

Sanford

The life and work of Sanford United Church has looked quite different in these unprecedented times of the Covid-19 pandemic. We feel truly blessed to have the skills of Rev. James as our minister. The work he has put into the online worship at Meridian Pastoral Charge is very much appreciated! And so, it may look different but our work continues to be the same.

Our congregation enjoyed one in person outdoor fellowship at the church in the spring and a physically distant gathering at the Dyck's home prior to our traditional summer break from worship services in July and August. In other words, the activity has been rather quiet for several months now. However, the Board did hold a meeting on July 23rd to discuss plans for return to in person worship.

We decided to go ahead with in person worship starting September 13, 2020. We also decided on the measures we were going to take to ensure this is as safe as possible. Those being:

- No congregational singing
- No printed bulletins (use computer projector instead)
- Block off enough pews to maintain spacing
- No offering plate passed during service
- Greeters remind people of precautions on entry (and take attendance)
- No sharing of microphones
- Bring your own refreshments and only outdoor fellowship (as weather permits)
- Disinfectant provided
- Any decisions regarding communion are postponed since so much could change before our first one in October

The other decision made was to support our local piano teacher by allowing her to use the church for lessons since she is not able to go into the school to offer this.

We pray our response in these times of pandemic is good and that we can soon gather safely without these extraordinary efforts. At the same time, we thank God for keeping so many of us safe.

Starbuck

There has been a lot of consultation with the Lutheran Church to keep tabs on the covid protocols. As with every other organization it is a moving target and we will adapt accordingly.

This will be a fall unlike any other and we shall be feeling our way and finding how to balance the needs of the congregation with the precautions to keep everybody safe. We shall be having our first lay services which we are also finding our way with.

We do, however, look forward to being together and sharing whatever struggles and successes we may encounter. We also look forward to time when we may return to something more predictable. Lutheran church has resumed in person services following the same protocols we've discussed

UC is hoping to have at least one outdoor service soon

Margaret Porter Chair

Meridian Inter-Church Council

Committee met during COVID-19 in May, June, and July to discuss the impact on preachers and lay people and how each church was operating/surviving during this pandemic. It was a much needed emotional/spiritual boost for everyone. Many churches were having zoom and/or outdoor services.

Only one application was received for the 2020 Baccalaureate Service Awards. Tamara Sturch from St Hyacinthe Catholic Church was awarded \$500.

MIC collects dues yearly from each church. United Church \$100 allocation payable to MIC was paid by Avonlea in 2020. Starbuck 2021. Sanford 2022.

BBQ and Ball tournament and fellowship set for June 14, 2020 was cancelled with hopes for 2021 event.

Advent Service is set for Nov 29 with La Salle Fellowship to host. Committee meets Sept 8.

Judy Manness Aug 31, 2020

MOTION Georges/Michele accept reports as presented. Carried

Treasurer

Currently ahead of budget due to reduced costs due to pandemic

ACTION – Sanford make up for forgetting to increase allocation for 2020. Short \$150 per month (paying \$2300 instead of \$2450)

MOTION: Michele/Diane accept the financial report. Carried

Old business

Governance document

Michele highlighted items

Official Board does not require trustees on it

Region suggesting whether we want 15 positions on the Board

Margaret suggested removing member at large position (a congregation can send proxy to maintain congregational balance – governance document makes balance in other positions)

Malcolm wondered about if MICC needs a vote

Regional representative could be considered the same – the representative provides information to the Board but doesn't need to vote

Going to proceed as follows:

for board makeup, use the "shall normally" clause to give us flexibility change the makeup in the future

remove nominating committee

change Quorum on page 5 from 1/3 to 1/2

MOTION – Margaret/Georges : accept governance document with the discussed amendments (subject to regional feedback) carried

Flyer

Agreed to postpone

Techsoup

Jamie has got Google For-Nonprofits setup using our domain name (meridian-pastoral-charge.ca)

anyone interested in trying let Jamie (helpdesk@meridian-pastoral-charge.ca) know and he will set you up with an email account

We'll decide in November

Finances

Georges is recommending we eliminate the bookkeeper position

MOTION: Michele/Margaret - Change signing authority by removing Karen Elliot and adding Diane Trudeau as board member. Carried

CanadaHelps

Needs clarification as to whether any congregations have registered

New Business

Covid-19 protocol implementation

Need some communication to make sure everyone is informed

Minister Message on MPC website

Jane was hoping to have a personal message on the website from the minister

Covenant

Sanford and Avonlea need to name trustees before end of September
B.7.7.1 be specific with number of meetings

Avonlea Nov. 10th 7pm

Sanford Feb. 9th 7pm

MOTION Michele adjourn carried