Meridian Pastoral Charge Official Board Meeting – Minutes DRAFT

Sept 12. 2023

Call to Order - 7:04p

Present: Jane Manness, Nancy Langlois, Cathy Beavis, Diane Trudeau, Stuart Manness, Rev. James, Michele Ammeter, Margaret Porter, Barb Kirk

Opening - prayer of rhythm from Rev. James

Minutes from April 11th meeting

MOTION: Michele/Nancy accept minutes as presented. carried

Committee Reports:

Minister

- Written report presented

Worship

- Written report presented

Ministry and Personnel

- No report
- Discussion about pulpit supply for Christmas and Easter

Meridian Interchurch

- Written report presented
- Today's meeting
    - Nov 3rd - Band Concert – The Colour - youth band - family event
        - MPC may be asked to sell tickets
        - If ticket sales don't cover costs Interchurch will be looking to membership for donations
    - Efforts towards our churches getting to know each other better
        - Poster by Father Gabiele with each church picture
        - Easter Pilgrimage - all chuches open at a set time for a tour
    - Advent service is Dec.3 Starbuck Luthern

Prairie to Pine

- Written report presented
- Rural Connect
    - Pamphlets
- Executive stats from Rev. James
    - 20 Pastoral Charges working on minister changes
    - 35 without minister

MOTION: Diane/Michele: accept reports as presented carried

Treasurers Report

- Written report reviewed
- No expenses will be submitted for last P2P meeting

MOTION: Margaret/Michele: accept financial report. carried

Church Reports:

Avonlea

- Written report

Sanford

- Written report presented
- Foundation work completed here too

Starbuck

- Written report presented

Old Business

- none

Correspondence

- Voting card is the forum included in the report folder

New Business:

Remit discussion - autonomous indigenous organizations
https://generalcouncil44.ca/council/remit-1-establishing-autonomous-national-indigenous-organization
At the bottom of the above link

Downloads

GC44 Remit 1 Study Guide March 2023	Size: 209.3 KB
GC44 Remit 1 Response Form for Pastoral Charges	Size: 80.54 KB
GC44 Remit 1 Response Form for Regional Councils	Size: 77.46 KB
Calls to the Church	Size: 244.62 KB
United Church Statement on UNDRIP	Size: 195.92 KB
Affirming Other Spiritual Paths	Size: 385.99 KB

Other links:
https://prairietopinerc.ca/more-information-remit-on-autonomous-indigenous-organization/
https://generalcouncil44.ca/news/responding-questions-about-remit-1-establishing-autonomous-indigenous-organization
www.gc44.ca

All are encouraged to review before next meeting including getting individual churches opinion - vote will done at November meeting. Review the manual

Something to think about for next summer

- pastoral charge service someplace else than Avonlea
- Maybe Interchurch

Next meeting Nov. 14 on Zoom

Adjorn Stuart 8:30

WRITTEN REPORTS

Minister's Report Meridian Pastoral Charge
September 2023

This summer, the Lectionary has been following the journey of the People of Israel: from their beginnings in Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebecca, Jacob & Leah and Rachel, Jacob's 12 sons including Joseph, the people being slaves in Egypt and now coming into t he story of Passover and entering the Promised Land.

We probably know many of the stories very well individually; the 3 mysterious messengers who visit Abraham and Sarah, the lengths Tamar had to go to get justice from her Father-in-Law Judah, Joseph and his beautiful coat and being sold into slavery by his brothers. Seeing them from a larger perspective—the historical arc of the ancestors of Jesus—helps us to see our own journeys from a larger perspective; the journey of the Christian Church, the United Church of Canada, Meridian Pastoral Charge, Sanford, Starbuck and Avonlea United Churches, the journeys of our communities, our families and ourselves a s individuals.

Putting all these journeys into dialogue with the journey of the Israelites hopefully helps us interpret life through our faith. Just as the Israelites faced trials and tribulations, triumphs and stability, we too have faced times when everything was hunky-dory and other times when it seemed like everything had fallen apart; times when God's power and love were on full display and times of doubt; times when there was certainty about the path forward and times when there didn't even seem like there was a path forward.

This wider perspective of our faith helps us put ourselves and our churches in the context of Salvation History: the history of a world created and loved by its Creator who is always working to bring about life in abundance.

Throughout the last few years, there have been times when, as a pastoral charge or faith community, we wondered: 'is this the end?' There have been other times when we've been filled with joy and gratitude knowing: 'we made it through this.' There has been so much change in our world the last few years, it's sometimes hard to fathom. Sometimes we have the energy to meet change head on with creativity and determination; other times we want to say in bed with the covers over our head and say 'I simply can't deal with this today.' We see the very same things being experienced by the Israelites on their journey.

As a people of faith, we believe God was with the Israelites every step of their journey: creating new paths out of bad decisions, giving food for the journey and even showing 'tough love' when the path needed a course correction. Even in the face of annihilation at the time of Exile, a remnant remained out of which Israel would emerge charged with a new mission: to be the light to the nations and the means through which God would reveal God's Self to the world. This mission was fulfilled in Jesus and continues through those Baptized into his life.

Although God may not appear to us with a pillar of fire, or manna in the wilderness, or parting the sea, we have been empowered to be light for one another, to nourish one another, to make the path forward safe for everyone—all through the love and Grace of Jesus, sharing in the Spirit.

Let's be real: the number of people attending services right now is small, Sunday School attendance is low, many churches in Canada are closing, many cannot find Ministers, many don't know what the future holds or what path to take. But I believe with faith and courage, we can continue our journey as Meridian Pastoral Charge. Our members are dedicated and faithful, we long to create communities of support and inclusion, and we have creativity and openness to try new ways of being church.

Thank you for the role you have invited me to play in your journey. I am humbled and blessed to be your companion—one with whom we break bread and share our selves on the way.

Perhaps its best to think of our journey, as churches and individuals, as a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage isn't so much about how much progress you make in a day, how closer you are to your destination or even what the destination is. A pilgrimage is about the process of becoming:
becoming the people God created us to be, becoming a communion of peoples, becoming a human family.

Rev. James

Meridian Worship Report September 12,2023

The Meridian Worship Committee held their annual meeting at Sanford United Church on August 29,2023.

Attending: Reverend James DeBeer, Michelle Ammeter, Margaret Porter, Jane Manness, Janice Harrison, Julie Ringash, Barb Kirk

- Opening Prayer by Rev. James.
- Additions to agenda- Remembrance Day needs to be discussed.
- Comments about previous year- James commented that it was very nice to have a full year of in person services. As well Online services appear to have a favourable response. The views vary from over 20 views some Sundays to no views one Sunday this past June.
- Chairperson schedule and representation at Meridian Board Meetings
  Sanford 2023 (Barb Kirk)- to continue until August 2024
  Avonlea 2024/2025 - to start August 2024
  Starbuck 2026/2027

- Meridian Worship Leadership Schedule
  Sanford- Rev. James every Sunday at 9:30 am
  Starbuck- Rev. James every other Sunday at 11:30 am. Lay leader alternate Sundays and joint service with the Lutheran congregation the second Sunday of the month.
  Avonlea- Rev. James every other Sunday at 11:00 am. Live streaming alternate Sundays.

- Communion dates:
- World Wide Communion/Thanksgiving - October 1 (Avonlea October 8)
- Advent 1 -December 3/23 (Avonlea December 10)
- Epiphany- January 7/24 (Avonlea January 14)
- Lent 1- February 18/24 (Avonlea February 25)

- Easter- March 31`/24 (Avonlea may have pulpit supply on Easter- to be determined)
- Pentecost- May 19/24 (Avonlea May 26)

- Special Service /Worship
- Lectionary year- Year A to Year B
- Scripture readings- a member of the congregation will continue to be asked to do the first reading each Sunday.
- Recovenanting service-will be on September 24 in Sanford and Avonlea. Rev. James will provide a new Recovenanting service to be more general.
- Remembrance Day Service- Rev. James has been asked to be part of the service with the Domain Legion this Remembrance Day. Sanford Legion will need to lead their own service. Sanford United Church will need to advise the Sanford Legion.
- Hanging of the Greens- each congregation will schedule their own date.
- Advent readings- Rev. James will provide the reading.
- White Gift service- Avonlea and Sanford will determine their own dates. Starbuck contributes to the hamper with the Lutheran Church.
- Memory tree- Avonlea and Sanford will have this as part of the service on December 10.
- Blue Christmas service- Rev. James and Pastor Deb from Starbuck Lutheran Church will have this as a joint online service on December 21.
- Christmas Eve services on Sunday December 24- Starbuck 5:00 pm , Avonlea 7:00pm, Sanford-may have Pulpit supply on Christmas Eve. To be determined. It is unlikely there will be any Sunday morning services on Christmas Eve.
- Lent readings- Rev. James will provide the readings.
- Liturgy of Ashes- will be determined closer to Easter.
- Holy Week services- Maundy Thursday-March 28 – Rev. James will look at a new Children's curriculum for ideas. To be determined at a later date ; Good Friday-March 29 – Avonlea 10 AM; Easter Sunday March 31. Holy Week is over the school spring break this year.
- Interfaith Service- There is no date yet but it is usually the first Sunday of Advent- December 3.
- Union Point- date to be determined as June 30th is part of the July long weekend. The Union Point Service may be on June 23/24.
- Order of Service- discussion around the current order of service. The service can follow any direction/ order that Rev. James would prefer. The Lord's Prayer may be changed to be prior to the children going down for Sunday School.
- Recorded services- All services will continue to be online. Rev. James has purchased a webcam which has improved recording the online services.

- Children's Ministry- Julie has advised that the Whole People of God curriculm for children's ministry is no longer available. Rev. James has suggested that we trial a Scottish children's curriculum – Spill the Beans. It is seasonally based, but does not necessarily follow the lectionary. Rev. James will send a link to the worship committee. Decision was made to trial this curriculum for three months and then make a decision whether or not to continue.
- Additional Business- none
- Next meeting- August 27/24 7:30pm at Sanford United Church. Avonlea to chair.

Prairie to Pine Report for Meridian Pastoral Charge Meeting
September 12, 2023

Prairie to Pine Regional Meeting June 1- 4th
It was a very hot weekend so many people preferred to attend on-line. Reports were passed, M&S Fundraiser by Leslie Harrison raised $7760.00. Our Moderator, Carmen Lansdowne is from Vancouver, BC and her message was about being prepared for the future – being adaptive, creative and to have a strategy for working together.

I attended 4 workshops:

Rural Connect- Community of Faiths (COF) can share weekly services with Atlantic United Church in Transcona via a technology/Hub/internet system.

Rural Ministries Town Hall - participants discussed how they dealt with problems of distance and lack of resources to make ends meet. I was paired with Kenora and Elmo United Church in Ontario. They were fascinated with Starbuck United Church over coming the lost of church and pianist as they have music issues. Also they were very interested in our Inter-church group and how faith can be shared.

Sewing Ribbon Skirts- Angela Roulette spoke about the spiritual, social and educational connections made when several grassroots groups, including Trinity United Church in Portage La Prairie joined to donate material and sew 500 ribbon skirts for her Give Away for Indigenous ceremony participants.

Messy Church- a monthly no charge (offering plate only) program at Transcona Memorial Church. Rev. Carol Fletcher discussed how the 1 1/2 hour family gathering included theme based stories (sharing the gospel), as well as related games and crafts. It was followed by a delicious dinner and clean-up. It doesn't bring in money but increases faith.

Two Proposals were submitted to the Regional Council:
Proposal 1- Listen and discussion time for a Proposal asking the Regional Council action to be taken in addressing Climate Change supported by large bank investments in fossil fuels.

The Proposal submitted was that Prairie to Pine Regional Council review investment policies, investments, and the practices of its financial institutions using the United Church of Canada's "Responsible Investing Guiding Principles" with a particular focus on Climate Change. This proposal was passed.

Proposal 2 Regional Councils are still "creating new pathways of thinking on and creating what Christ's church can look like and then function moving forward together". Since the re-structuring of the church in 2019 and then being closed for 3 years because of Covid" it progress is slow.
A proposal was submitted at the recently concluded Regional Council Meeting that the Prairie to Pine Regional Council consider a ***three-year meeting rotation be reconsidered*** *in order that an alternate functioning model be explored and considered by the regional council body.* The Regional Council is looking for feedback on this topic.

Decision Session time for the Remit and Proposal
Remit #1 was voted upon by Prairie to Pine Regional Reps. and it was passed.
Sunday Service
The Celebrations of Ministry Service was followed by a reception provided by Meadowood United Church.

Submitted by
Diane Trudeau
Prairie to Pine Representative

Interchurch committee report
September 12, 2023

We have had 2 committee meetings since April11. The MICC Grade 13 scholarship was given out to all 4 that applied but we are going to discuss if we will continue to distribute the money in the future because it takes up a lot of our total budget. Each recipient got $250. A successful baseball tournament and bbq was held on Thursday, June 15 in Brunkild. There was a good turnout for this event. Food was delicious and fun was had by all.
This year the church that is hosting the monthly meeting is responsible for picking a psalm and lead us in a discussion on it. We are finished watching the video series.
Our committee wants to continue to make the Meridian Interchurch activities more visible in all churches so Father Gabriel asked that we all send a picture of our church and he will make a poster to send out to churches.

Submitted by Cathy Beavis
Meridian Interchurch Committee Member for Avonlea Church

Starbuck Report for Meridian Pastoral Charge
September 12, 2023

We have yet to have a service this fall as last Sunday was a joint one with the Lutherans.
Our Church site has been sold. The buyer has kindly agreed to try to find a place to display the heritage sign.
On 29th July a graveside service was carried out by Rev Peter Mitchell for Colin Walley. The joint choir sang an anthem which was requested by Colin and the family was very appreciative.

Margaret.

Avonlea United Church Report
September 2023

We held worship services through-out June, ending on the 25th at Union Point on Hwy #75.
July was a holiday month for both Rev James and our congregation. We resumed 9:30 AM worship on August 13th until September 10th when we change to 11:00AM for 2023/24.
During the summer, Parker Excavation helped us carry out an extensive Foundation and Drainage project around the church.
Our numbers are small but the spirit willing and we're looking forward to the coming year.
Our first Avonlea Board mtg is slated for September 19th.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Manness (Chairperson)

Sanford United Church Report to Merdian Pastoral Charge Official Board
Sept. 12, 2023

We're happy to return to regular worship after our traditional summer break. September 10th was the first worship service in our building since early June. Our building is also booked to host numerous programs organized by Macdonald Headlingley Recreation District through the Fall and Winter and regular piano lessons by the local teacher.

The major activity in our congregation since the last meeting was our Raise the Roof fundraising event where we raised $4800 for our new roof. This was a major community event where we packed the church basement with community members happy to support the church and have a chance to win some great prizes by winning at Bingo. It truly was a success! Thanks to Marc Nolette for making this happen. We then followed up with another Bingo themed event that was a fun-raiser for kids where we added a childrens entertainer between games. Another successful event.

We were also planning a general meeting of the congregation (and maybe the community) before summer break. The purpose is to begin the process of shaping how Sanford United Church can continue to do its work in this community. Unfortunately, that didn't happen but hopefully we'll do that soon.

Respectfully submitted,
Jamie Scharf