

North Burlington Churches united

“One church body in Christ which ministers to the needs identified by
the North Burlington community”

Agenda

May 7, 2018 St. Stephen United Church

Present: Dale Martin (chair), Heather McGavin (recorder), Janice Martin, Sue
Stephen, Janet Saunders, Dale McKeown, Barb McKeown,
Nancy Knill, Allison Playfair, Gary Goodale, Paul Bartu, Susan
Ward-England, Daryl Webber

Regrets: Marilyn Martin, Marilyn Stairs

Dale welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Allison led the devotion with a story about perseverance and how perceived
weakness became a great strength

Dale led the group in the NBCu prayer

Minutes of April 9. 2018 – moved by Gary Goodale and seconded by Dale
McKeown that the minutes be accepted as circulated. APPROVED

Dale thanked Heather for filling in as chair and Sue for doing minutes during his
absence

Key events since April NBCu meeting

Lowville

- AGM last Sun
- JNAC was approved for half time minister. The decision was based solely
on finances – not spirit or ministry
- June 3 is membership Sun – about 10 people will be joining (some from
Nelson)
- At last Council meeting they discussed their future involvement with

NBCu. They indicated that they do not want to make any decisions about that at this point. It could depend on the new minister but Ruth will continue to stay involved.

- Shay Marvelle spoke for 5 weeks. She gave monologues about being an immigrant and discussed such issues as racism. She told the story of finding her voice along with her spirituality in the midst of illness when she was a child. Her talks were a great gift to the community. Daryl challenged us to think about how to engage others to share their story. She is preparing a one-person play.
- North Burlington church book group watched a video about the dynamic of reconciliation called Reserve 107. It is available on the internet.
- Visioning ideas such as a local market and retreat centre are on hold right now
- Running a STEM camp (science, technology, engineering and math)

Allison stated that she will miss Daryl's contribution to the NBCu meetings. Daryl shared some of his feelings of sadness and disappointment and thoughts about possibilities for the future.

St. Stephen

- June 3rd is the vote date regarding the future of the church
- Listening circle was held with about 25 participants. Many shared their feelings and concerns and it opened up some opportunity to move forward.
- Meetings are being held after church for the month of May. People are encouraged to ask questions and share ideas. The questions and answers are being typed up along with comments and will be shared each week with the congregation. People are getting ready for the vote and anxious for the decision to be made.
- Community groups know that they have until June/19 and they will be looking for other accommodations – this is a huge concern for the

relocation committee. St. Stephen holds the charter for the scouts group and they cannot afford many accommodations. AA also cannot accept any financial assistance. There is a huge concern about what will happen with them. Once the church realizes some funds they will be able to help out but transition time is of concern. The whole St Stephen community is committed to helping out as much as possible

- Contract with the developer has been signed. Environmental Impact Study is happening right now. Councillor John Taylor was asking about the status after the article in the Post came out.
- Outreach Sun was May 29th. Three speakers spoke re their Haiti project through Empower Global regarding building schools. It is a viable idea for outreach and the Women's group committed to donating some proceeds from the Mother's Da tea to them.
- Mother's Day tea Sat. May 12. It will be the last one.
- June 9th spaghetti dinner fundraiser for the Bridge program. \$15 for adults. The Bridge program is about helping people transition from prison into community. They also work with families – counselling training, help with finding homes. It has been solely in Hamilton but there is a new program in Halton now. They just received a grant to hire 2 new workers (one a SW and for program development). For both men and women but serves mainly men

Tansley

- The 'Over 50' dinners are going well. It has created a new community of people. Tansley provides ambassadors. Happens every Thurs nights but not May 31. Will run until second last week in June. Must pre-register
- Recycling event was successful. Gathered 12+ tons. To date they have kept 117 tons out of the landfill over 7 years and have raised close to \$30,000. Susan and Bob have it really well organized. Everyone gets a personal thank you and a flyer about upcoming events. A couple of the boys who helped out have started to mentor the children of the single

moms and are going to help with the book sale and help with the document shredding. Susan has grade 9s emailing and asking what they can do to help the church. They have provided an opportunity to do something meaningful.

- Michael has a children's choir going – some from the single moms group. There are between 3 and 10 children who show up. They are doing well and have performed for one service. They will perform again for Mother's Day.
- Book sale is May 12. It requires a lot of help. Left over books go to a variety of places – Salvation Army, Value Village. Some go to the single mom's group, some to the North BurlINkton dinners. The jail is another worthy recipient.
- Physical changes
 - They are going to try to fix the parking lot (could not get grant money for this).
 - HVAC unit was repaired.
- There will be a musical theatre camp through Art House for 2 weeks for kids who would not otherwise be able to afford it. There are qualifying factors. Lion King performance will be held July 20th
- Mother's Day brunch for single moms group is coming up. The craft for the children is painting bird houses
- Last year they made a donation to Fort Albany's fresh food market but are looking at other options. Fort Albany is better off than some such as Attawapiskat or Kashechewan. Looking to find out about their needs a finding a way to contribute. Shredding event proceeds will go there
- Maplegrove UC has a First Nations scholarship. The person running the project is willing to talk about their programs. From an NBCu outreach perspective, this outreach to the north have been a focus.
- On Sun a week ago, Steve Bottaro spoke about the movie Indian Horse. It is in Ancaster until June 10th but it is showing in Hamilton through the AGH in June – sometime on June 22 or 23. Times are unknown as yet.

Heather will forward them when the next AGH newsletters comes out. Janice has been participating in the Indian Horse Challenge. She has forwarded an email that has a link to the challenge and to the NFB videos. It will be forwarded with the minutes.

- Children of the Broken Treaty is a book that focuses on a young teen from Attawapiskat who had to leave her home community for schooling. She went to New Liskeard and was killed in a motor vehicle accident. She had been petitioning for a new school in Attawapiskat.
- Tansley had a separate kids communion last Sun. It was a bit of a Seder format- kids asked questions and answers provided.

Daryl charged Tansley to think about how they engage the children in the junior choir. He suggested encouraging some people to be intentional hosts and get to know the children. Relationships are built on being curious about people.

Nancy told the group about another idea from her son's Baptist church. All children have a prayer partner who is an adult who has taken an interest in them. They keep in touch with the children and connect regularly. Oaks and Acorns is one name for this type of program.

St. Stephen / Tansley exploratory conversations/April 28th session

- There was an acknowledgement of the larger exploratory conversation - no minutes to date.
- There were 48 people evenly distributed between churches - 22 from Tansley and 26 St.Stephen.
- Marg did a great job.
- Talked about commonalities and dreams as well as concerns / fears.
- A very positive day.
- Sue's take away was extremely positive.
 - It was an opportunity to both to meet new people and reconnect

with others.

- Everyone participated. There were no observers.
- Big take away was the laughter both in small groups but communal shared laughter.
- Her experience with Nelson – did not reduce any of her commitments but energy was renewed.
- Feedback from Gary
 - got the feeling there is a big group ready for changes and then some who are really struggling.
 - Picked up a few ideas through that. If there was a chapel at Tansley (traditional) that would have all of the things that some people need it would serve both. Some think that Tansley has needed a chapel for a long time.
- Someone made a hurtful comment that he or she did not want to worship in a gym. If a person is feeling that angry how can they be consoled?
- There is a deep and intense grief around this. St. Stephen is hoping to give sacred space for this. There may be comments made where offense is given and taken. There needs to be a forum for this to be heard to work through it.
- One comment in small group from someone from St. Stephen – Tansley sanctuary does not feel like sacred space.
 - Janet indicated that they need to be cognizant of that and see what they can do to make the space more sacred. We would need to have a conversation down the road. The sanctuary was designed to look out and reach out whereas a sanctuary has a more reach out to God/pious focus.
- “The spirit is a migrant and the spirit is migrating in the UC”. The question is will be follow? Getting stuck in our anger keeps us from faithfulness. Need to not get stuck but give space for it to work through it. It is like any form of grief.
- Nancy acknowledged feeling grief about losing that space. There is no

time table for healing. They cannot be ignored. If people can be heard and accepted for their strong feelings it will make a huge difference. The St. Stephen sanctuary has provided a place a safety for some.

How do you help an open space become more safe and sacred? These questions need to be looked at if and when the churches come together. Dale suggests that if a partnership agreed to, that these conversations occur over the next year - do something parallel and something joint – healing/grieving process. There will be grieving on both sides. Also have a joint grieving process to help with the transition.

Some people at Tansley are looking at the \$ from St. Stephen. Dale Martin met with Dale McKeown initially and Nelson was wrestling with what to do with their money. They considered just writing cheques and making major donations – would come with no money but energy. This is a viable option for St. Stephen to consider. There may be things that they want to use as a legacy and they could spend it ahead of time. It could be a challenge for St. Stephen to go with \$. Tansley has been broke since it opened. From day one they have struggled with paying bills. They still do. Nelson money is not there to pay the bills. It is there to do good works. The good thing about having money is that we don't have to have those conversations. We can focus on outreach and meeting the needs of the community. That would be the one real benefit of all of this.

- Daryl – churches think of ministers as a liability because of the expense not as a resource. Allison agreed that this is the culture in many churches.
- Gary - would rather have the people than the money
- Paul – the shared resource of people is the greatest benefit and opportunity.
- Daryl - when Nelson was closing Shirley Bottaro's perspective was that "We gave birth to Tansley. We have gotten old and are just moving in with the kids." The energy that they did not have at Nelson, they now see at Tansley. There is so much more energy.

- Money can be an anchor. Nelson had money but no people.
- Other concern regarding having money is that the combined church would consider themselves good to go – that is a danger. There is huge potential but danger that becomes a crutch. Congregations would need to work out how to use the combined resources.

And all will be well

At Tansley's May Board meeting there will be a motion that they schedule a congregational meeting in June so that if St. Stephen votes to join, Tansley can respond as soon as possible and together we start the process. Steve is not back until June 19th. They do not have to have their minister but clergy needs to be there at a congregational meeting. Sue agreed to arrange that.

Question to clergy – there are a number of people at Tansley who consider themselves members and who contribute but have never formally joined the church. They may not have proof. Can they become members through profession of faith without going through a class?

- There was considerable discussion about that, but it would appear that they could do that through a service called "Celebrate God's presence".
- Allison will send information to Sue.
- According to Info from UC – you dust off your documentation or there are membership classes that you must attend.
- Profession of faith is another option.
- Does it have to be done in front of the congregation? Need to see if it has to be at a Sun service – a gathering of congregation might suffice.

Vote for intention of amalgamation and then work towards it.

June 10th combined Service

- Marilyn Stairs and Allison to meet on Thurs
- Wade in the Water – anthem (gospel tune)

- Looking for suggestions for other gospel hymns
- Lowville will not be participating. Not many Sundays left with Daryl and they are having their pet Sun that day.

Future of NBCu

- Wait until after June 3rd

Further discussion about the future if there is an amalgamation

Question raised about what will happen to the ministers. Options – stay on and do team ministry, can ask for an end to pastoral relationship (90 days from congregational vote and approval from Presbytery), new minister appointed or do a JNAC before actually coming together. Pastoral relationship does not automatically end but it can if the congregation chooses that. Intentional minister – Appointed but done collaboratively with congregation. Usually for 2 years. Works with congregation to determine what ministry needs will be. Then do a JNAC based on transition team’s recommendations. Come Dec - may no longer have Presbytery and Conference. Will be a regional body and not sure how it will be different. Calls will be done differently.

What both congregations need to hear is coming together and becoming a new thing is a 2-3 yr process. St. Stephen needs to focus on ending and then we can come together and determine the future.

Nancy has talked with several clergy. It takes 2 -3 years and it is not simple. There is a lot of adjustment required. Dale noted that in business it is acknowledged that it can take 7 years.

Barb McKeown offered to be at the disposal of others who would like to talk to Nelson folks. It is a journey and we do not rush into it. Commit to the purpose and goal and work it out as you go. You make it up as you go along.

Kim Udici has offered to come back (she did the listening circle at St. Stephen). We could use her again as we move forward and have them periodically as a way of creating a safe space where everyone can speak and be heard. Most in the circle that was held at St. Stephen heard things they had not heard before. It gave some people in the congregation who had not had a voice a chance to be heard.

Motion for Adjournment – Paul Bartu at 9:20

Closing Blessing - Dale thanked everyone and thanked God for the conversation and guidance and hope for the coming weeks.

Next NBCu meeting June 4, 2018, at Tansley (Dale and Janice send regrets).