

Trinity United Church 2023 Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes

Meeting of Sunday, March 24, 2024, held at Trinity United Church

Attendance: *Diane Best, Vicki Bellan, Giceline Beaudet, Delores Best, Diane Best, John Boone, Beverley Bridgman, Jennifer Bridgman, John Bridgman, John Brosseau, Julia Budd, Sheri Cameron, Sheila Cannon, Shirley Cartmill, Judy Ciciola, Stacey Ciciola, Carol Cunningham, Norman Doré, Eric Garceau, Sarah Garceau, David Garland, Garry Garland, Sabz Heffernan, Veronica Heffernan, Patrice Laporte, Erika Leung, Dolton Lucas, Philip Massarelli, Kobina Odoom, Gail Pallante, Claudette Petrauskas, Heather Purcell, Warren Purcell, Michelle Richard, Fred Rowe, Ivylin Scott, Natalya Scott-Sandy, Rev. Read Sherman, Elsa Spencer-Beaumont, Gary Tompkins, Ashley Verhaeghe, Rev. Stéphane Vermette, Rosemary Warren, Kim Wildenmann-Doré*

- Welcome & Call to Order

Gary Tompkins called the meeting to order. Rev. Read Sherman opened with a prayer and the land acknowledgment.

Gary went over the procedures regarding voting with a secret ballot when it comes to the elections. For the people who are online on Zoom they would send their vote to Gary Tompkins privately in the chat and those who were present physically would be counted by Rev. Read as they were the scrutineers for the meeting.

Gary reviewed the holy manners to have during the meeting.

- Quorum *had been met for the meeting.*

- Memorial names *were read by Christine Tatarewicz. Candles were lit by Rev. Read Sherman to honour and remember Maria Turanski, **Vera Studnicki, John Lewchuk, Irma Brathwaite, Gladys Snelgrove,** Gerald Bradshaw, **Mary Yankowski,** Robert David Haines. (Bolded names were Trinity members.) He offered a prayer for each one, those we knew well and will miss, and those we didn't know but whose families turned to Trinity for help with their memorial services and/or burials. Those who were cherished members and friends of Trinity will never be forgotten!*

- Allowing adherents to vote

MOTION Shirley Cartmill, seconded by Sheri Cameron, to allow adherents to vote. Motion carried.

- Use of secret ballots for election voting

MOTION Shirley Cartmill, seconded by Christine Tatarewicz, to allow secret ballots for election voting. Motion carried.

- Approval of the Agenda

MOTION Veronica Heffernan, seconded by David Garland, to accept the agenda as submitted. Motion carried.

- Adoption of minutes from the congregational meetings in 2023:

MOTION Kim Wildenmann-Doré , seconded by Diane Best, to accept the minutes of March 12, 2023, March 19, 2023 & March 26, 2023 as submitted. Motion carried.

- Adoption of the Annual Report for 2023. *Thanks to Sheri Cameron for all the great work producing this year's report!*

MOTION Kim Wildenmann-Doré, seconded by Patrice Laporte, to adopt the Annual Report as submitted. Motion carried.

Question period regarding the annual report. Rev. Read thanked everyone – all the leaders and volunteers who gave of their time and skill and caring in the different Ministry Teams and other work in the church. He mentioned as a highlight the successful Vacation Bible School held for three weeks during Summer 2023 – bigger, more inclusive, and deeper engagement in and with the community than ever – well done to Sheri and the whole team!

- Report on Église Sainte-Claire by Rev. Stéphane Vermette.

Stéphane extended on behalf of his congregation, their appreciation regarding the partnership between Trinity United Church and Église Unie Sainte-Claire. Stéphane also announced the changes that are upcoming due to the end of the three-year funding cycle supporting this new emerging ministry. He will be reducing his time from ½ time to ¼ time, relying more on volunteers to make up the gap. But everyone is still hopeful and committed! He thanked Philip Massarelli and Judy Ciciola in particular for their help with the financial matters.

As a follow up, Philip Massarelli shared words of encouragement to Stéphane and its community.

- 2023 Financial report and 2024 budget presented by Philip Massarelli, the Director of Finance.

Philip explained the different "bodies" that make up his financial report – Trinity United Church, Église Sainte-Claire, Mission & Service, Benevolent Fund and more, which can get complicated – one body but many separate accounts! However, he focused on our activities at Trinity. Such as the sources of income (around \$71,228 from the congregation's giving – all sources; and \$28,555 from rentals), where the funds are going towards (salaries, building costs, etc.), and the resulting operational deficit (\$78,500 in 2023) and sources needed to fund this deficit (\$78,500 from our reserves), which was our current situation.

Furthermore, explanations were provided regarding the origins and use of the fund reserve from the sale of St-George's United Church. The St-George's Fund currently had a book value of \$443,658 (more than \$100,000 had already been drawn down). Trinity's own Reserve Fund which had been used to cover our operating deficits now had an accounting deficit (-\$71,546). Therefore, Philip was proposing for bookkeeping purposes to transfer funds to top up our Reserve Fund from the St-George's Fund as follows:

MOTION Philip Massarelli, seconded by Ashley Verhaeghe, that the congregation approves the transfer of funds from our St. George's Fund to our Reserve Fund in the amount of 150,000\$ to relieve the current negative balance of our Reserve Fund and to add additional monies so that our Reserve Fund has enough cash to transfer to our Operational Fund for the proposed deficit of 2024.

MOTION Rosemary Warren, seconded by Judy Ciciola, to table the financial proposal until after the presentation of the budget. Motion Carried.

There are more details regarding the investments, the multiple funds that we have and the other sources of income, so for questions, please see Philip. Philip thanked incoming Treasurer Judy Ciciola, who has been learning lots as she ramps up, and his Financial Team including Warren Purcell, Eric Garceau, John Bridgman on Offering, Shirley on Envelopes. He's been working hard with Beverley Bridgman as well. In response to a question, Philip summarized the other various reserve funds held by Trinity.

Philip urged everyone to get the word out about Trinity. We've been here for 100 years yet we're largely unknown to the local community. We could be promoting Église Sainte-Claire as a francophone expression of our church. With a \$70,000 deficit we need to be brave to invite others to join us.

- Budget 2024

Philip offered a detailed walk-through of the proposed budget for 2024. It included expected revenues of \$95,580 and total expenses of \$178,161, with a projected deficit of -\$82,551.

Capital expense budget is a separate category which is calculated on top of the operational deficit. Some years the expenses were higher when a lot of work needed to be done. In 2023, little was spent on the building. Investment and interest revenue projected for 2024 was \$27,000, minus related expenses (including \$10,000 for potential building repair/maintenance) of \$19,300, for a net revenue of \$7,700. Philip said that ideally, this net revenue gain would be reinvested to grow the Reserve Fund for extraordinary expenses or to top up the operational fund; unfortunately, we are using any yearly gain and more to cover our annual operating deficits.

MOTION Philip Massarelli, seconded by Kim Wildenmann-Doré, to approve the budget for 2024 as presented. Motioned carried.

Gary thanked Philip for all his work and brought back up the prior tabled motion to be considered. Philip hoped it was now clearer, from the deficit we were running, why this motion was needed.

MOTION Philip Massarelli, seconded by Ashley Verhaeghe, that the congregation approves the transfer of funds from our St. George's Fund to our Reserve Fund in the amount of 150,000\$ to relieve the current negative balance of our Reserve Fund and to add additional monies so that our Reserve Fund has enough cash to transfer to our Operational Fund for the proposed deficit of 2024. Motion carried.

- Request for support from Erika Leung *for her on going research on developing a guideline for the United Church of Canada on how to welcome neurodivergent people in our churches.*

Erika explained how she and her daughters had recently received diagnoses that they were on the autism spectrum, which had opened her eyes to some of the struggles she has faced in her life. She realized how helpful it could be to others like her (and the girls!) if the church community had more awareness of the needs of neurodivergent people (including autism, ADHD and other diverse conditions), in order to help them feel comfortable and included. Erika planned to do research to develop a guideline for churches. She asked for Trinity's support, including, for instance, letters of support when she writes grant applications.

MOTION Sabz Heffernan, seconded by Veronica Heffernan, to support Erika Leung in her project.

Discussion: Rev. Read mentioned that Erika had presented her project to the Nakonha:ka Regional Council Executive recently, and had received their full support!

Motion carried.

Erika expressed her heartfelt thanks and love for Trinity, to which Gary returned the same.

- Trustees: resignation and election

Due to the need to determine the make-up of the new Council prior to knowing who and which positions would become Trustees, the following motion was made.

MOTION Philip Massarelli, seconded by Rosemary Warren, to table the Trustee resignation and elections until after the other elections are done. Motion carried.

- Elections

With thanks to everyone who were nominated or who nominated themselves, the following people were elected:

Chair of Congregation: Sabz Heffernan
Secretary of Congregation: Natalya Scott-Sandy

Council:

- Chair: Shirley Cartmill*
- Communications/Secretary: Rosemary Warren*
- Finance: Beverley Bridgman*
- Ministry & Personnel: Heather Purcell*
- Spiritual affairs: Veronica Heffernan*
- Treasurer: Judy Ciciola*
- Member at Larger: Stacey Ciciola*

Ministry Team Leaders:

- Building & Grounds: Fred Rowe*
- Christian Development: Sheri Cameron*
- Congregational Life: Diane Best*
- Fund Development: Ashley Verhaeghe*
- Media: Natalya Scott-Sandy*
- Membership & Pastoral Care: Christine Tatarewicz*
- Mission & Outreach: Judy Ciciola*
- Worship: Heather Purcell*
- Nominations committee: Diane Best (Plus Chair of Council and Chair of Congregation)*
- Regional Council Representatives: Elsa Beaumont, Jenn Carroll (Alternate: Michelle Richard)*
- Regional Council First-Third (YAYA): Diane Best*

- Trustees

Rev. Read reported that the Trustees had last met in early March and had not been very active since, something he hoped to change in 2024.

Philip reported that at that March meeting one life-time appointed trustee had asked to resign - Elsa Beaumont - and another life-time trustee, Dave Ingham, had asked to resign his life-time appointment in favour of, if the congregation was willing, being re-elected to the new, standard, 5-year appointee renewable term for (non-Council) elected trustees. (As per Trinity Handbook, Council has three one-year appointed terms that include the Chair – now Shirley Cartmill – and the Director of Finance – now Beverley Bridgman – and one other member of Council (still to be determined by Council). In the United Church, trustee resignations require approval to be accepted by a vote of a congregation.

MOTION Philip Massarelli, seconded by Kim Wildenmann-Doré, to accept the resignation from the Trustees of Elsa Beaumont.

Discussion: The question was asked why a congregational vote was required for a trustee to resign. Philip said one reason was because it allowed the resigning trustee to speak to the congregation, if they wished, about the reasons for their resignation. Trustees are mandated to support the direction of the Council. If a trustee felt strongly enough that a decision or direction of Council was inappropriate, there was little recourse to oppose it except for resigning.

Motion carried.

Philip thanked Elsa for her service on behalf of the congregation.

MOTION Philip Massarelli, seconded by Stacey Ciciola, to accept the resignation from the Trustees of David Ingham.

Discussion: Philip reported that Dave's interest in resigning his lifetime appointment was about encouraging more flexibility in the future given the move, over time, to five-year Trustee terms.

Motion carried.

MOTION Philip Massarelli, seconded by Kim Wildenmann-Doré, to appoint Dave Ingham to a five-year appointee renewable term as a trustee. Motion carried.

MOTION Philip Massarelli, seconded by Rosemary Warren, to elect Kim Wildenmann-Doré to a five-year appointee renewable term as a trustee. Motion carried.

Philip reminded the congregation that the remaining lifetime appointed trustees were himself, Ashley Verhaeghe, Norman Doré and Heather Purcell.

- Thanks & courtesies, prayer

Rev. Read asked all those who had been part of the Congregational leadership, Council, Ministry Team Leaders, Regional Reps to please rise to be recognized for their service. A round of applause was given for all the time, effort, passion given by all our leaders. For any leaders leaving their positions, he hoped they would remain active and help the new leaders as they start their work. He offered a prayer of thanksgiving for all who had served.

Rev. Read then asked leaders, newly elected or re-elected, to rise and be recognized. He prayed for God to sustain and encourage them in the work that lay ahead.

- Adjournment

Gary thanked everyone in person and on Zoom for being present – well above the required quorum, which was much appreciated.

MOTION Judy Ciciola, seconded by Rosemary Warren, to destroy all election ballots. Motion carried.

MOTION Sheri Cameron, seconded by Veronica Heffernan, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Natalya Scott-Sandy,
Secretary of the Congregation*