

Human Resources Commission
Horseshoe Falls Regional Council
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
Connecting, Supporting, Transforming

Place: Zoom mtg 1:00 p.m.

Roster: Pat Tooley (L, Chair), Callie Archer (L), Doug Caldwell (L), Sue Cowan (DLM), Barbara Duffin (L), Joanne Hedge (OM), Morar Murray-Hayes (OM), Allison Playfair (OM), Lennox Scarlett (OM), Susan Stephen (L), Robin Wilkie (OM)

Staff Support: Pretima Kukadia-Kinting, Admin Assistant PKukadia@united-church.ca
Rev. Diane Blanchard, Minister, Pastoral Relations DBlanchard@united-church.ca

Present: Pat Tooley, Callie Archer, Sue Cowan, Joanne Hedge, Allison Playfair, Sue Stephen, Robin Wilkie, Pretima Kukadia-Kinting, Diane Blanchard

Regrets: Doug Caldwell, Morar Murray-Hayes

Absent:

Welcome and Constitute Meeting: The meeting was constituted and opened by Pat Tooley.

Acknowledging the Land: Territorial lands are acknowledged on behalf of the Human Resource Committee by Name

Opening Worship: Allison Playfair led worship with a prayer.

Opening Motions:

Corresponding Members:

MOTION by Allison Playfair / Callie Archer that Mel Matthias, Helen Prior and Marilyn Parsons be named as corresponding members.

MOTION

AGREED

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION by Joanne Hedge / Callie Archer that the agenda be accepted as circulated.

MOTION

AGREED

Approval of Previous Minutes:

MOTION by Sue Cowan / Susan Stephen that the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council approve the minutes of October 28, 2020 as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

Business Arising

1. Re letter written to Vineland United Church: sent. The employment relationship with Brenda Ottawa was agreed upon and finalized. Brenda was compensated to September 30, 2020 so the pastoral relationship is ended as of that date.
2. Jerseyville United Church was informed that it cannot extend the position beyond March 1, 2021 as the status of student minister has changed.
3. Exit interviews were conducted with Michelle Hogman and Christina Paradela.
4. Update from Mountainview United Church transition team: have received applications and will be interviewing next week.
5. Commission members thanked the entire team for the work they put into the regional council meeting.

New Business

1. Conversation with Helen Prior, IIM at Grace, Burlington and Transition Team regional council representatives, Mel Matthias and Marilyn Parson re report 'November 2020 Review of Grace United Church Transition HJP'. Some recommendations were made by Helen Prior in her report and this will be forwarded to the Congregational Support ministers of the tri-regional councils. Clarity as congregations move into an amalgamation is helpful, including the possibility of a memorandum of agreement.

Report 'Grace UC Transition Team Approach November 2020' Have not been able to celebrate new name yet, proceeding well along the timeline, with COVID-19 being a big damper in consideration, the extension is warranted. Is there a restlessness in the congregation due to having a IIM? Not really, working on forming a new congregation.

MOTION by Callie Archer / Sue Cowan that the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council accede to the request of the congregation of Grace, Burlington for an extension of the appointment of Helen Prior as IIM and look forward to receiving the record of appointment when it is completed.

MOTION

CARRIED

Sue Stephen abstained from the vote.

2. Consent docket:

Request for Change of Pastoral Relations:

That the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council approve the request of Dale Skinner, OM, for a change of pastoral relations effective January 27, 2020 to seek a new call or appointment.

Approval of Open Positions:

That the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, having reviewed the position description for a full-time position for a community outreach minister at Barton Stone-Mount Hope, Hamilton, approve the position for posting on Churchhub, pending approval for use of funds by the Covenant Commission.

That the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, having reviewed the position description for a .5 supply position at Lynden United Church, approve the position for posting on Churchhub.

That the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, having reviewed the position description for a part-time 30 hrs/wk supply position at Delta United Church, Hamilton, approve the position for posting on Churchhub.

That the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, having reviewed the position description for a permanent fulltime position at Delta, Hamilton, approve the position for posting on Churchhub.

That the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, having reviewed the position description for a .5 supply position for pastoral care at St. Paul's, Dundas, approve the position for posting on Churchhub.

That the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, having reviewed the position description for a part-time, 10 hours/week supply position for children and families at St Paul's, Dundas, approve the position for posting on Churchhub.

Appointment of Liaisons:

St Paul's, Milton –

Delta –

St George – Mike Wyatt has agreed to replace Jennifer Canning

Request for Categorization of Position

That the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, having reviewed the fulltime position for a community outreach minister at Barton Stone-Mt Hope categorize it as a CDM position.

MOTION by Callie Archer / Allison Playfair that the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council approve the consent docket as amended.

MOTION

CARRIED

3. The Human Resource Commission has received a position description for a half-time minister at Vineland United Church.

MOTION by Robin Wilkie / Callie Archer that the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council invite members of Vineland United Church to attend a meeting with the Human Resources Commission to consider the benefits of an Intentional Interim Minister.

MOTION

CARRIED

MOTION by Robin Wilkie / Callie Archer that the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council table the .5 position description at Vineland United Church until they have met with the Human Resources Commission.

MOTION

CARRIED

4. Requests for extensions of supply appointments from St George United, St Andrew's United, Hamilton and Barton Stone-Mount Hope, Hamilton. Following discussion about each community of faith's circumstances, the following motions were made:

MOTION by Callie Archer / Joanne Hedge that the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council agree to the request for a 6-month extension for St. George United Church.

MOTION

CARRIED

MOTION by Robin Wilkie / Susan Stephen that the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council agree to the request for a 6-month extension for St. Andrew's United Church, Hamilton.

MOTION

CARRIED

MOTION by Robin Wilkie / Allison Playfair that the Human Resources Commission of Horseshoe Falls Regional Council agree to the request for a 6-month extension for Barton Stone-Mount Hope, Hamilton.

MOTION

CARRIED

5. Arranging an Exit interview for Dale Skinner, if desired. Callie Archer and Sue Stephen will extend the offer.
6. Report on Brantford and Brant County conversation about ministry sharing held November 22: this would be beneficial for some of these smaller communities of faith. There may be follow-up.

Next Meeting: December 17, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. by Zoom

Worship by: Allison Playfair

Closing prayer was offered by Allison Playfair.

Agreed to adjourn at 02:40 p.m.

APPENDIX I - November 2020 Review of Grace United Church Transition_HJP
November 15 Review of Grace United Church Transition

Background: The Interim Appointment between New Church (formerly Nelson, St Stephen and Tansley) and Rev Helen Prior began August 1, 2019.

The Transition Team: is made up of a good cross section of the congregation, representing diverse interests, length of engagement, and life stages, as well as people belonging to the three former legacy churches: Sue Stephen (T), Chair; Stacy Goodale (T) Secretary; Robert Chatterton (T) [presently on short-term leave]; Chisanga Chekwe (SS); Linda Draddy (SS); Sharyn Georgas (SS); Barb McKeown (N); and Region Reps: Mel Matthias, Rev Charlie Hogg (September 2019 – June 2020), and Marilyn Parsons (September 2020 – present)

Goals:

Overarching: Bring three former communities into one new Community of Faith

1. Develop a shared vision and mission, including a new name
2. Build an inclusive and diverse church that reflects our community at large
3. Engage the church in reviewing structures, programs and relationships
4. Develop stewardship awareness
5. Prepare the congregation to call and welcome the new minister
(please see Transition Team Timeline for progress on goals to date)

Outcomes Thus Far

Grace United Church, like every faith community, is a work in progress. People had vacated the former Nelson and St Stephen buildings, had been worshipping with Tansley before this appointment started (under the name “New Church”) and most people seemed ready to move forward. As the majority of people came from these communities, some members chose to move to different church families. As is relatively normal, Tansley also lost some members with the change of ministry personnel. A few members expressed sadness about the losses, but also recognized that the decision of friends to join with other churches better met their needs. A few folks took some time to adjust to the changes but have gradually been helped to process their grief and losses. With time, there has been increased participation by a wider diversity of people. The new church also attracted new people from outside the legacy congregations as the energy rose and momentum gained. People came at first out of curiosity and then stayed enjoying the positive energy. The energy and enthusiasm have continued despite COVID. In some instances, the pandemic has served to help break down legacy community silos as everyone has pitched in, reached out and started caring for each other with innovative networking patterns. The greatest milestone achievement thus far was coming to agreement on the name Grace, just before going into lockdown in March, and then completing the 146 tasks associated with the change required to meet CRA and United Church of Canada requirements.

Progress

The Transition Team for Grace United Church in Burlington is by far the most diligent and gifted

team I have had the fortune of working with throughout seven interim ministries. Their commitment, thoughtfulness, depth of faith, dedication to transparency and accountability have been commendable. The Team has met almost monthly since its inception and has provided excellent leadership to the work of the congregation. The team have worked well together and continue to gel. Their openness and honesty with each other suggest to me that a solid foundation is being built which will carry the congregation well into the future.

Challenges

When I arrived at New Church, the Board (and presumably other congregants) believed that the amalgamation was further along than was reality. While the three congregations had joined together to work out details through a “Founding Board”, there was never an articulated Memorandum of Agreement. The absence of this foundational agreement caused considerable misunderstanding and confusion within the congregation that took a number of months to unpack and rectify. Everyone had access to the information, but as often happens in congregations, people in the pews needed to hear messages from leadership a number of times, in a variety of mediums, in order to be heard.

The primary confusion that I observed was related to the type of amalgamation that New Church was seeking. There are three forms of amalgamation: absorption, co-existence or the formation of a wholly new creation. Nelson had successfully and seamlessly been absorbed by Tansley when they amalgamated in July 2018. When St Stephen came in a year later, a large proportion of Tansley and Nelson folks were anticipating that St Stephen would similarly be absorbed by Tansley. However, in the minds of St Stephen folks, they had clearly agreed to an amalgamation that would form a new creation or new church. As a result of this misunderstanding, many perceived St Stephen folks were making unfair demands (e.g., different than the concessions previously offered to Nelson). This difference in expectations was accompanied by negative perceptions and feelings, disappointment, distrust and low-level conflict throughout the system.

A normal challenge in amalgamations occurs where one church maintains their building. Because they haven't had to physically uproot, it is often more challenging for the “home” church to shift in sharing ownership of the building, leadership, altering programs, staff and general identity. This was further compounded by the legacy Tansley congregation being slightly younger, with more people, a little more energy and a tendency to be more procedural in operations.

Reasons for Requesting an Extension

1. Getting past the misunderstandings and expectations regarding the type of amalgamation being sought took four months to unpack and resolve.
2. Moving through regular interim tasks during the pandemic has been challenging. The months of March, April and May were basically lost to the interim process, as the focus was moved to transitioning the congregation to digital worship and meetings, assuring connection to all members and adherents and generally learning how to be church in a

strange new world. Normally the interim process is heavily dependent on community conversations. While we have evolved to digital workshops and the use of questionnaires, this innovation took time, and it generally takes longer to ensure the entire congregation is included in the required discernment.

3. For most amalgamations to succeed takes longer than two years. There are a number of failed amalgamations throughout the church, often due to rushing the process. Many church scholars are now believing that the pandemic is serving as an accelerant to the already present decline and reformation in process across the universal church. This congregation will have a stronger foundation moving into the future if they are granted the time and the tools to discern their identity, foster stronger relationships internally, and start living into being the church God is calling them to be.

Recommendation to Wider Church

In the future, my recommendation to the Region and wider church would be that amalgamations be initiated with a Memorandum of Agreement which clearly states:

- What is happening with ministry staff
- What is happening with buildings
- How endowment funds will be utilized
- What type of amalgamation is being agreed to (absorption, cc-existence or new creation)
- How a future identity, polity, mission, vision and name will be discerned

Respectfully submitted,

