

Westworth United Church
Special Meeting of Council
March 15, 2020

1. Call to Order: Pat Stephenson called the meeting to order at 12:35.
2. Opening Prayer: Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd led us in an opening prayer.

Present: Pat Stephenson, Bruce Tefft, Keith Love, Paul Chard, Barb Magarrell, Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd, Ron Bailey (via Facetime), Eunice Pratt (via phone),

Guests: Petra Thanisch, Dorcas Windsor, Debbie McLeod, Bettina Nyman, George Nyman, Worship Ministry Team representatives

TOPIC: Response to Covid-19

Given the need to act proactively and in line with the United Church of Canada guidelines, discussions were wide-ranging. In an attempt to decide the best course of faithful action for the congregation in this unprecedented time, decisions were taken regarding the closing of the church building, how to provide spiritual and pastoral support to congregants, how to continue our wider community ministry, as well as how to keep our staff working, safe, and supported. Actions agreed upon were decided by consensus.

The Church Building will be closed to the public as of Thursday, March 19 at noon. This accommodates the Outreach Ministry Team's ability to collect food for the West Broadway lunch and allow congregants to collect any personal items they may have left at the church. Small group gatherings will be discontinued as of Monday, March 16. These include the Lenten Study groups, Spirituality groups, UCW, Faith Café and Prayer Shawl group. Leaders of these groups are encouraged to stay in touch with members through email or by phone – perhaps phone trees could be used. The possibility of using ZOOM, a conference platform, to allow small groups to meet virtually will be explored this coming week.

Church services in our building will be suspended starting Sunday, March 22. We hope to be able to provide an Easter Sunday, April 12 service. A decision will be made Monday before that service.

Worship Committee representatives left the meeting at 1:15, with thanks for their input.

Further consideration of the ZOOM option continued, taking into consideration information that was provided by Peter Sim of the Communications team, regarding

some other options. Westworth would pay the fee for access to ZOOM and the ability to load a recording. Loraine would need assistance to use the platform. We will videotape sermons, prayers and music that is in the public domain so that we can offer an online worship experience. The resulting recordings could be shared on the Westworth website, Facebook, and for viewing through an online link. This would allow those at home, with computers, to experience worship together. **Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd** and **Pat Stephenson** will investigate this.

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Loraine will notify Lenten Study facilitators that they will not be meeting in person this week, and that these small group meetings have been suspended.

Bruce Tefft will contact Marion McKay to ask for direction for the congregation regarding where people may drop off food for delivery to West Broadway.

Pat Stephenson to contact Sheldon regarding the Opera's plans for rehearsals this coming week. If they continue to rehearse this week, they will be asked to use only the gym, kitchen, and lower classroom and to enter and exit only through the west door.

A congregational email will let everyone know:

- That services in the building will be suspended for the time being with the hope of keeping people safe and being able to come together for Easter, April 12. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services in the building will be cancelled. We will still try to offer these on-line and let people know that the Moderator will also be offering on-line worship.
- Small groups are suspended unless they are able to meet virtually through Zoom. Leaders and facilitators will be encouraged to check-in with members on-line or by phone.
- Pastoral care will continue to be available by contacting Loraine via phone or email.
- Spring Break Vacation Bible School will not be held.
- The Rummage Sale has been postponed until the fall. A date is not yet set.
- Staff will be in the building to help if needed during regular hours.
- Congregation members are encouraged to reach out to those they know may need a friendly call or assistance.

- Important information will be shared through regular congregational emails to include requests for prayer, illnesses, changes to schedules, and other information, as appropriate.
- That if they are able, they might let Loraine know if they are able to pick up groceries or other needs for those who may be ill or unable to leave their residence, and/or may wish to be part of a virtual prayer circle to offer prayers for those who may request this support, under Loraine's guidance.

An email to the Leadership Team from Pat Stephenson will let them know:

- That services in the building will be suspended for the time being with the hope of keeping people safe and being able to come together for Easter, April 12. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services in the building will be cancelled. We will still try to offer these on-line and let people know that the Moderator will also be offering on-line worship.

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- Small groups are suspended, unless they are able to meet virtually through ZOOM. Lenten study group facilitators are encouraged to stay in touch with groups members to support them through the next few weeks.
- Spring Break Vacation Bible School will not be held.
- Pastoral care will continue to be available by contacting Loraine by phone or email.
- One-on-One visits will continue as able. Virtual house groups/phone circles will be implemented as quickly as possible to reach out to congregation members. Group leaders will be asked to reach out through phone, email or whatever is appropriate. The hope is that relationships will be maintained, and pastoral care needs can be identified and responded to in a timely manner. A script will be developed to help those who may feel more comfortable with a little support.
- Funerals will be held if required but with family only present. There will be no receptions in the church building.
- Staff will be available to help, if needed, during regular hours.
- Team Leaders are asked to consider any temporary changes they may need to make to their Ministry Team mandates, in light of Westworth's Mission Statement and Values, to better meet the current concerns of the congregation.

Nancy Doern-White notified Council that UCW is cancelling its gatherings, delaying the Rummage Sale to the fall and will consider rescheduling the June, 2020 Thankoffering service.

Currently we have the resources to continue to pay staff, but there will need to be some changes to the responsibilities of some people. **Paul** Chard will be talking with staff about those arrangements and any adjustments to be made to their responsibilities and hours. He will also talk with our building maintenance team about on-going responsibilities, as well as the need to have the building thoroughly cleaned prior to us re-opening. There will be a conversation about this at this coming week's staff meeting. There will be no changes to the Night Lock-up position.

This week, notices will be posted on our exterior doors asking visitors to consider if they need to come into the building to conduct business or if it could be done over the phone. The church phone number will be provided. **Paul** and **Loraine** will be responsible for this.

Keyholders will be requested to not enter the building unless they contact Heather first – she could tell them if there is mail or not, for example, and to not enter the building outside of regular business hours.

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MOTION TO ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Moved by: Keith Love

Seconded by:

Pat Stephenson, Chair of the Board

Barb Magarrell, Secretary

