



The United Church of Canada

Mount Forest – Woodland Pastoral Charge

Congregational Meeting

September 28th 2025

In attendance: 62 people were in attendance, including members of the Leadership Team, and Rev Lori

Opening – appointment of Chair and Secretary for the meeting;

MOTION: That Bob McFARLANE be appointed as Chair for this meeting.

Moved: Mary ALLEN

Seconded: Neil AITKEN

CARRIED

MOTION: That Rick SINNAMON be appointed as Secretary for this meeting.

Moved: Jack WATKIN

Seconded: John DALE

CARRIED

The meeting began at 12:35pm. The Leadership Team had circulated a number of points that had been considered by the Leadership Team in a Report to the Congregation. Those points are included below with points raised by the Congregation added in BOLD italics;

- ✓ The Church House was apparently constructed in 1864. The structure does not have a historic or heritage designation
- ✓ Water seepage and mould have been an ongoing issue. The issue came to a head this past spring when the basement was inundated with water
- ✓ Mould of course followed shortly after. Air quality within the Church House was of a great concern
- ✓ The basement was “cleaned” of refuse and all of the framed walls were removed
- ✓ A quote was sought to rid the basement of mould and to waterproof it as much as is possible. That quote was from a company called GROUNDWORKS and amounted to approximately \$60,000. ***Dan MACARTHUR (Chair of Property) stated that ONE quote was presented to the Leadership Team as this was a reputable company, that deals with not just mould, but keeping water out of the basement.***
- ✓ Other items requiring attention in the Church House includes wiring (old “knob & tube” is still in use), windows and window frames need to be replaced. No quotes have been provided for this work. ***Dan MACARTHUR spoke to this issue, stating that the present condition of the Church House wiring, would not pass an inspection of the building.***
- ✓ The Minister and Office Administrator are being moved to the Church due to health and safety concerns. The office areas in the Church are not “accessible”. Alternatives will be considered for meeting with members of the public. The Church House is not “accessible” either. ***Dan MACARTHUR (Chair of Ministry & Personnel) spoke to this issue. Both the Minister and the Admin Assistant chose their offices in the Church. There was a question form the floor asking if the downstairs Library had been considered. It had been considered, but with numerous functions occurring a different times in the Fellowship Hall, it was not a final choice of either an office or a meeting place. An “intercom” and possible “cameras” are going to have to be considered, as well, some sort of a “drop box”.***

- ✓ ***Dan MACARTHUR has flooring quotes for both offices, and hopes to have the move completed by the 1st of November. Dan further advised that Wightman Telecom will be redesigning /upgrading/decommissioning different aspects of the telecom needs in moving the offices to the Church***
- ✓ ***There was a question from the floor asking was Raw Carrot considered in the moving of the offices out of the Church House. Yes, Raw Carrot has been advised of the move. They too will have to be housed. Those discussions are continuing***
- ✓ Financially, the Leadership Team has concerns as to not just these CAPITAL costs, but as well, the day to day ongoing costs of utilities, etc. As of August 31st, the Church House Budget is 105% spent, with 4 months left in the fiscal year. ***AI LEACH (Chair of Finance) advised that since 2021, the Church House budget has been around \$6000 annually. This year, the Church House is considerably overspent for utilities and repairs. Two dehumidifiers are running 24/7.***
- ✓ The Leadership team has discussed repairing the Church House and either renting it, or selling it. The mould issue would still need to be addressed prior to any rental agreement or the sale of the property.
- ✓ We, the Congregation, are the “Trustees” of the property. Therefore, we can make decisions related to the property and would require the ultimate permission of Western Ontario Waterways. ***Rev Lori further advised that any proceeds of any possible sale of the Church House would flow to the United Church of Canada. It would be held in “trust” for the Congregation, and any requests for funding in the Pastoral Charge would be resourced to our Board of Trustees.***
- ✓ To rent the property, the mould issue, AND other renovations would have to occur. Could that investment be returned ?? What type of individuals would we be seeking ?? Who’s responsibility would it be to look after the rental property ?? Tenants would be in the middle of a “Church”

- ✓ To sell the property, the mould issue would have to be addressed. The property, which includes the Church, could be severed at a cost of \$4000 - \$5000. It is currently zoned multi-use, and would have to be rezoned. The severed Church House would then have to be zoned “residential”. Again, if the property were to be sold, the property and possible owners are still in the middle of a “Church”
- ✓ At our August 19th Leadership Team meeting, The Leadership Team voted to demolish the Church House. The Leadership Team called for the Congregational Meeting today to discuss the Church House and related options
- ✓ ***There is an individual in the Congregation who is willing to demolish the Church House***
- ✓ ***There were a number of future worthwhile options put forward as to future uses of the vacant space. That’s for a different meeting***

Two letters were presented at the Congregational Meeting. One was from Barb WAITE, which basically echoed the Leadership Team Report, and the Congregational questions raised. The other letter was from Bill NELSON. Bill put forward FOUR options; REMEDIATE, DEMOLISH, SEVER & SELL (severance was thought to be in the area of \$15,000 to \$20,000, with the Church House valued at \$550,000), or MOVE THE HOUSE (move it further to the west on the current property. Cost would be in the area of \$175,000).

The Chair, seeing that there were no further questions from the floor, asked the Secretary to read the following motion put together by the Leadership Team;

MOTION: The Mount Forest and Woodland Pastoral Charge, directs the Board of Trustees to demolish the Church House.

Moved: Jack WATKIN

Seconded: Klaus SEIBERT

Prior to the actual vote Rev Lori was asked to provide a prayer. Rev Lori was able to put together a prayer that captured the historic nature of this moment, and was able to put everyone into a calm, reflective and thoughtful mood.

VOTE CARRIED unanimously

Motion; to adjourn Moved: Bob McCLURE at 1:17pm