

## **Mount Forest and Woodland Leadership Team Agenda**

**June 16th 2026**

**@ 7:00pm**

**In Attendance:** George Harris, Bill Kreps, Dan McArthur, Al Leach, Norm Eygenraam, Rev. Lori Campbell, Mary Allan, Laurie Aitken, Janice Benson

**Regrets:**

**Opening prayer/devotional:** Rev. Lori

**Round Table Check-in:** All is good with everyone.

Norm talked about his WOW report. Discussion about making our churches welcoming. Norm expressed disappointment that no one has reached out to him after the last meeting. Laurie reaffirmed the congregations' support for Norm as LLWL.

Norm would like to do some promotion for his July 5 service. He is to send it to Juliann and Janice for Messenger and Facebook.

**Motion for the adoption of the Minutes:**

**Moved by:** Mary Allan

**Seconded by:** Bill Kreps

**Carried**

**Business Arising from the Minutes:**

- Janice addressed the sound system proposed update. The group will look at available grants, obtaining another quote, and seeing if we can take advantage of the "Buying United" program. The trustees and Restoration Committee are on board to assist with financing.
- Lene was not available to update us on the kitchen renovation. We will discuss at next meeting

### **Reports From Committees**

**Financial Report** Al Leach

Financial Report to Leadership Team Meeting- June 16, 2026

YTD = year to date budget projection and May represents 42.0% of YTD

% spent = % of total annual budget

➤ Draft financial statements for May 2026, have been received.

- General Operating Fund balance to end of May is approx. \$13,550. Monthly receiptable income is approx. \$4,500 ahead of YTD target.

- Operating income (receiptable and non-receiptable) is ahead of YTD by approx. \$13,000.
  - Total Operating Expenses are \$12,000 below target to end of month.
  - Excess Expenses/Income is at approx. (\$21,280) vs YTD projection of (\$46,625) or 20%.
- COMMITTEE EXPENDITURE PICTURE at end of May 2026 - or as of 5/12 of the year.
- M&P is approx. \$13,000 below YTD projection (35.4% spent)
  - Worship Service- below target (26.0% spent)
  - Choral – on target (42.0% spent)
  - Pastoral Care –no expenditures to date (0.0% spent)
  - CE – below target (12.0% spent)
  - M&S –minimal expenditures (3.0% spent)
  - Benevolent- no expenditures to date (0.0% spent)
  - M&F- below target (16.0% spent)
  - Media –ahead of YTD by \$150 (64.0% spent)
  - Church Property – below target by \$2,000 (36.0% spent)
  - Church House- expenses ahead of YTD by approx. \$635 (65.0 % spent)
  - Grounds –on target (42.0% spent)
  - Admin – on target (40.0% spent)
  - WOW ahead of YTD by \$1,000 (47.0% spent)
  - Fundraising – no expenditures shown to date. (0.0% spent)

Comments: our thanks to Norm (MFUC WOW rep) for continuing to move the concern of our regional assessment forward.

Respectfully submitted:

Al Leach, Finance & Stewardship Committee Chair

**Mission and Outreach**

## **Minister's Report**

- Patty will send updated governance information to Rev. Lori.
- Rev. Lori has invited clergy from the area in September to bring their living faith story, and to talk about where their congregations are at and how do they see the future.
- Scouts have asked us to be partners with them. Waiting for approval from Scouts Canada. Will be held here in the gym in the fall. Al suggests that Scouts contact the Lions Club to ask for funding assistance. Bruce Chapman has agreed to be the church liaison with the Scouting group.
- Book: Holy Currencies. Forest Hill Church in Kitchener runs their church this way. Others use the church space and pay what they can, and in time they can contribute more or ask for assistance in other areas such as building repair. Food for thought for our congregation.

## **W.O.W. Norm Eygenraam.**

Report on W.O.W. Spring meetings in Port Elgin      May 22-24, 2026

### **Theme: Stop and Listen**

I managed to connect with Brent Caslick, WOW treasurer before the meeting started, to continue the discussion about the size of the MFUC assessment and figure out if there had been an error. Rev. Lori was nearby so I invited her to be part of the discussion as well. Brent expressed surprise at the size of our payment. He is making himself available to come down to review numbers in person. There is some urgency now to this since Brent's term as treasurer is finished but he is willing to see this through. He knows the whole transition process that happened from Presbytery to Region. I think this is an important connection to tap into. One bit of speculation on his part (he won't know until he sees the numbers) is that there was a phase in time for communities of faith who were being hit hard early on. Depending on how MFUC began the process, it may have been easier at first but it would catch up and hurt more later.

I am attaching a picture of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary puzzle that was assembled.

MFUC's piece is 8<sup>th</sup> row down, third from the left. The whole puzzle is an amazing work of art. There would be a possibility of having it here for a bit. Arrangements would need to be made with past president Jennifer Irving.

Friday 1:30pm - Jennifer Irving has done an extra year of being president since Rebekah Duncan has been ill and could not do the duties. After the opening welcomes, motions, BRAVE statement, and introductions, we had opening worship which was based on I Samuel 3: 1-10. In this piece God calls Samuel. This was the strangest worship time that I have ever experienced. With the theme being "Stop and Listen" we were literally asked to stop and listen to God talking to us. I am not sure exactly how long this quiet time was, but I think it may have approached 5 minutes. The way people were fidgeting around me, I could tell I was not the only one feeling uncomfortable. I could not help but wonder what the point of it was. Slowly, however, I started to realize what a gift and a blessing this quiet time was for me. My

week had been so crazy and chaotic that I was not in the mindset to get any benefit from the weekend. With this forced quiet time, listening, I was able to shift to a totally different mindset where I was now ready.

We were introduced to the 3 candidates for ministry. Two were transferring from other churches and the third (Sonja van de Hoef) was a graduate from the Atlantic School of Theology. I had quite a conversation with Sonja afterward. She is also of Dutch background and born and raised Christian Reformed like me. There was only one new LLWL

Betty Pries was the keynote speaker. She is a relationship expert that has helped many communities of faith navigate challenging times like amalgamation. Her topic was "Nurturing Communities of Belonging". Betty's reference point for the talk was an image of Rembrandt's painting of the Prodigal Son. It was pointed out that in Jesus' parable, for the father, shame was secondary to love. She opened with a thought-provoking question: "When do you feel lonely?" She observed that coming home to ourselves is the first step out of loneliness. She also shared that our identities need to be communal as much as they need to be individual. Betty's closing question was, "Can the community of faith be a community of belonging?" My sense is that it should, but MFUC has a way to go.

After the dinner break, we had quite a selection of workshops to choose from. The question I asked myself was, "Do I pick one for myself or do I pick one as the regional rep. I picked one for myself, but it could easily be one to share with everyone. Laurie Stephenson is the new minister for Pastoral Support and she led a 90-minute workshop on "Simple Practices for Spiritual Connection". She shared about the 3 overlapping parts that make up each person ... the mind, the body and the spirit. Many of the breathing techniques which she shared are practices which I already use to calm the mind and become more present. Being aware of our mind wandering into the future or the past will determine what practices we enact to counter it. Laurie did a very basic introduction to Tai Chi to show the spiritual potential of being present and connected to our bodies. There were a lot of off-balance people in the room. Affirmations and gratitude were a key part of the spirit part of the presentation. They support spiritual wellbeing by interrupting negative thought loops, redirect attention and regulate emotion.

When I talked with Laurie on Saturday about the quiet times in her presentation, and how that overlapped with the morning worship. She stated how she had made an adjustment to her presentation. She had observed that people were so uncomfortable in the quiet that some of them started scrolling their phones. She acknowledged that she may not get people to sit quiet as was necessary, but it would be better to introduce the idea rather than turn them off and lose all potential. I shared with her how I had been unexpectedly blessed by that quiet time.

After the workshop I walked down to the beach and enjoyed a sunset.

Saturday 9 AM - Opening worship focused on Acts 2: 1-14, the Pentecost story. The thought question was around hearing/listening to people who are different. Worship lead into the main

order of business for the morning which dealt with the apology of the United Church to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The presentation was led by Therese Samuels and John Egger who share the duties for right relations. An opening question as a conversation starter was, "How do you apologize as a church to someone who has been wounded so deeply by that church?" There was a list of the times that the church has apologized. At our tables we discussed the question, "What constitutes a good apology?" A follow up question was, "Can there be an apology without a lament?" a good apology must lead to action, it must be living, it must include listening.

After a break, the church apology was read again and then discussion turned to the response from our communities of faith. Is there an understanding and awareness? What might the first steps of action. The painting of our church steps has been a very well received action. A group member asked what has been done to build on that bold move. The sad response was, "nothing" I found that time in the discussion very troubling.

At lunch, I asked Therese if she felt that the United Church really (at their core) understand the pain they were apologizing for? After a few moments of thoughtful reflection, she had a sad look when she said, "No" She did acknowledge that in spite of this reality, the apology was an important first step.

Betty Pries spoke again about nurturing communities of belonging as a continuation of what was presented yesterday. This part of her talk felt much more practical by focusing on real life scenarios. She identified the importance of being seen that went well beyond just words. At their root, do our words foster inclusion? Betty stressed the importance of leadership teaching membership how words matter. Loneliness needs to be something we are willing to talk about.

She stressed the importance of identifying our biases as the first step toward changing things. Teaching is an important step since it is natural for people to forget things. By giving people some stock questions, it becomes easier to initiate contact with people they do not normally have conversation with. Being comfortable with small groups allows easier and more thorough interaction with those who typically are at the sidelines. When these initiatives are lay driven, they tend to have a different feel than things that are ministry driven.

Saturday afternoon was celebration of ministries where 3 new ordinates were confirmed. Alydia Smith delivered the message titled "Listening, Longing, Linger". She is a member of the Toronto Region.

Saturday 6:30 pm - The evening program started out with a message from Christine Grose from Elmira. Christine is the president elect for W.O.W. I read her bio in the workbook, but I was not expecting the speech she gave. To say that she has an interesting sense of humour would be an understatement. Her talk generated a lot of laughs and it should be an interesting time with her leadership. She has been active in her own church but also in the wider church. Next was some time with the youth. They decided to lead us in a game of "What would you choose?" We had to discuss the choice at our table and then vote. It was more about

engagement than winning. I am grateful that all the questions were not as challenging as the first one ... if you had to give up hearing or sight, which would you pick? Most questions were more fun like ... if your elevator broke would you rather be stuck with Mark Laird or Jennifer Irving. Sweet or salty, coffee or tea, Spiderman or Superman? It was fun.

Brian George was to give a talk on the state of the Indigenous church but could not come due to illness, Therese Samuels filled in and gave a recap on how things progressed through the remit stage to where they are now with setting up a parallel church within the United Church. They continue to discern their path within the church.

Sunday 9 am - With this being Pentecost Sunday and worship being led by Gord Dunbar, we knew we would be in for something different. Each table had a large, traced image of a body (about 5' tall). The Pentecost story was read from different "Bibles" and then he asked a question and we had to put our thought on the designated part of the body. This also led to a good and meaningful table group interaction. Some people drew little pictures and others wrote words.

There was the formality of "electing" our new president elect, Christine Grose

Our first presentation was an update on "Toward 2035" which is an initiative of the United Church to statistically be prepared for 2035. The intent is to take a declining church and determine what is needed to be a thriving church. There has been an extensive survey put out that had over 3000 respondents. 91% of people support the initiative. The ones that don't are primarily the ones that see death of the United Church as a foregone conclusion. WOW region had the highest level of respondents but also had the highest level of being proactive on already doing things. The clearest point that has come out so far is that we need to be very sure about our "why". Why are we doing this? Why do we matter? Why is this important?

The research team is not yet really at the point of recommendations, but they are making some suggestions. A significant one is to not be afraid to experiment. We need to be curious about our neighbourhoods .... Invite, invite, invite. What would you do.... If? It was pointed out that there is grant money available toward higher level of ministry.

The session closed out with covenanting with newly elected and appointed positions. Retirees and jubilants were acknowledged. Some significant retirees were Cheryl-Ann, Kathy Douglas, Heather Lefler, Tanya Cameron and Dave Jagger.

This meeting led to many very meaningful discussions and interaction but also some troubling emotions. I am grateful to have gone and to represent our community of faith at the region.

Norm Eygenraam

**Trustees** will meet soon and discuss helping with the sound system expense

**Membership & Fellowship** – Peggy Madden would like to transfer her membership. Lori will follow up.

### **Property**

- What do we want to do with the fridge and stove in church house? Offer it to the congregation? Have MacDonald's take it away?
- Stuff still to come out of the garage. What kind of building do we want to put up in its place? Laurie will check it out with the person who builds sheds for the Optimist Club.
- Dan has a few projects to do around the church.

### **Use of Building**

### **Ministry and Personnel**

- Juliann will take some time off from July 6 to 15. Will monitor phone and email and come in as needed. She has booked a week of holidays in August.
- Contact Juliann or Dan if needed in July

### **UCW**

- Rev. Lori will encourage programming in the fall

### **Pastoral Care**

- Gord Dunbar will be our clergy coverage in July
- Looking at a more formal structure in the fall:
  - Rev. Lori – grief and hospital
  - Shut in visitation

### **Woodland**

- All is well.

### **Mission and Outreach**

- Patty is hoping to be starting back to some work in the fall.
- Rev. Lori helped put together drug testing kits with CMHA. Some discussion about other ways we could be involved.
- The van is offering information around naloxone kits. We could help pack up kits and other kits.

### **Christian Ed**

- Getting fired up for VBS. James Croker is helping. August 4 to 7

### **Media**

- **Advertising the summer schedule in the BizBull.**

### **Worship**

**Motion: by George, seconded by AI to receive the reports as received and reported upon.**

**Carried**

**New Business:**

**Motion that we authorize church treasurer to obtain credit card for church usage from Band of Montreal.**

**Moved: Al Leach**

**Seconded by Laurie Aitken**

**Carried**

**Upcoming Dates of Import:**

**August 30 Woodland Anniversary**

**October 18 MFUC Anniversary**

**Next Meeting:**

**Tuesday August 18/26**

**Closing Prayer:**

**Motion to Adjourn:**

**Janice Benson**