

St. Andrew's Council Meeting
Held by *Zoom*, North Bay, ON
Thursday July 30th, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

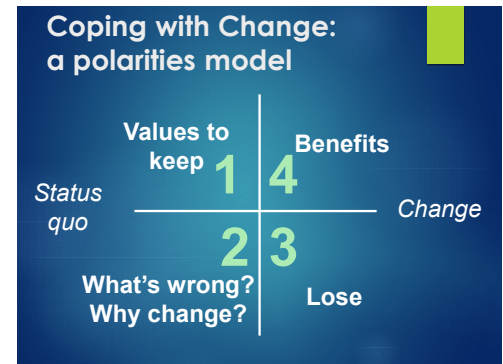
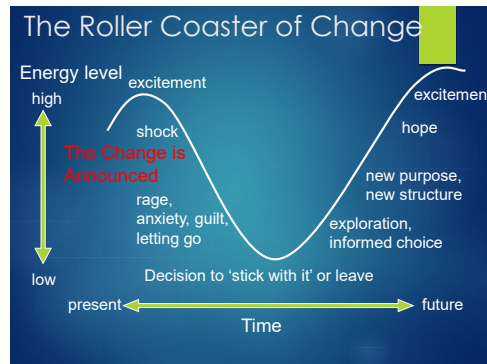
Welcome and Opening (6:35 p.m.)	Rob Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Susan Whitehead, Administrator from the Canadian Shield Regional Council (CSRC), for her technical help. Susan and Melody offered tips on using <i>Zoom</i> . Pat Kirton-Bailey, Chair of St. Andre's Council called the meeting to order.
Attendance	There were 49 members and adherents from St. Andrew's attending this Congregational <i>Zoom</i> meeting.
Guests	Rev. Rob Smith, Rev. Melody Duncanson-Hales, with technical support from Susan Whitehead.
Agenda	The agenda was circulated electronically through our website ahead of this meeting.
Touchstones/ Holy Manners	<p>Rob Smith read our Council Touchstones aloud:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Give and receive welcome2. Be present as fully as possible3. No fixing, saving, advising or correcting4. Observe deep confidentiality5. Trust and learn from silence6. When the going gets tough, turn to wonder <p>Rob then spoke about the principal of <i>Holy Manners</i>. We were reminded to keep God at the center of our interactions, to separate people from problems and to honour the group decisions we make. We are encouraged to welcome the conflict of ideas. Listening without interruption is important so we can really hear the story and recognize the gift of the holy spirit.</p>
Traditional Territory/ Affirming Statement	<p>Tracy Davis offered an acknowledgement that we meet on Traditional Territory.</p> <p>She then read the St. Andrew's Affirming statement from May 5th, 2013:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We, the congregation of St. Andrew's United Church, declare publicly our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and nurturing community where all people are welcome not only to enter these doors, but also to take part in every aspect of our church life including membership, leadership, celebrating life's passages and marriage.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We delight in God's goodness as expressed through variations in age, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, family configuration, differing abilities, ethnic background or economic circumstance - even as such rich diversity may challenge us. We pray for God's spirit to guide us as we work for reconciliation and justice for all persons.</p>
Worship	Tracy Davis offered a brief worship based on her grandmothers words: "This too shall pass". We need to trust that offering our burdens to God is the way forward as we balance contemplation and action. During this time of great change remember that fluctuation is normal. Faith, hope and love are important ideas to hold on to.

New Business

- Meeting Purpose Melody Duncanson-Hales spoke about the purpose of this meeting:
- This meeting is an opportunity to clarify any issues that arose from our last congregational meeting on June 30th.
 - We will be invited to think about the mission of our congregation.
 - People will be given a chance for sharing and discussion during virtual small groups later in the meeting. Feedback from these discussions can be given to the whole group through the *Zoom* chat feature.

- Feedback and Questions Melody Duncanson-Hales reviewed the questions that arose from the last meeting along with some answers provided by Church Council. Those in attendance were offered the chance to ask further questions or provide comments:
- Rob Smith stated that the United Church has created a corporation to assist churches who are trying to sell their buildings. He communicated with them about our situation and their cursory estimate is that our property is worth \$250,000 with or without repairs.
 - The idea of developing an affordable housing project or a mental health partnership was discussed briefly. These options could require high level involvement from the congregation for lengthy period of time.
 - Several members have reached out to community contacts for possible funding ideas and cost estimates. It was suggested that we talk with Invest North Bay and quotes are being sought from several companies. There will be some follow-up.
 - A common idea is that is not worth repairing a car if the repair costs more than 30% of its value. Should we continue to put money into the building?
 - Can we gift the building to the city? This would involve following CRA rules about charities giving to non-charities and may not be possible or practical.
 - We must consider that there are other repairs on the horizon – including the buttresses, the gym floor and the boiler. As with any older building there will always be ongoing maintenance issues.
 - The topic of amalgamation was discussed. There have been low level talks with the other North Bay churches that were interrupted by the pandemic. The intent is to lay the groundwork for future cooperation. If an amalgamation occurred, we would not retain our Affirming status, but could go through the Affirming process with our new partner.
 - It would be nice to get to a place where we are not trying to play catch-up. We are at a tipping point at this time. Renting a space will provide us with a short term solution until we can chart a more permanent path, using our reserve funding to start the process of making St. Andrew's a viable community.
 - A question was asked about the search for a part-time Congregational Designated Minister (CDM). Council has been discussing this and the feeling is that Tracy Davis is not able to provide the leadership we need on her own, especially under the challenging conditions we are now dealing with. The Search Committee is meeting to prepare a job description and will make a recommendation.
 - Several people expressed the view that St. Andrew's has meant a lot to them personally and to the wider community.
 - Documentation related to the belfry issue can be found on our website.
<https://standrews-northbay.ca/belfry-tower/>

Next Steps Melody Duncanson-Hales spoke about the *Roller Coaster of Change*:



- St. Andrew's is not going to be the same a year from now.
- We will have to work through the change.
- We need to remember who we are and what we want to keep.

Rob Smith offered some things to think about as we move forward:

- Take a step back and look at our mission/purpose. Why do we exist?
- What is God calling us to do given the resources that we have? Unfortunately, we don't have unlimited resources to be all things to all people.
- We are entering a new chapter that is complicated by the pandemic.
- The place where God calls us is the place where deep gladness and deep hunger meet.
- The mission of the church is to love the world. How does the building help or hinder this?
- Rob suggested reading Susan Beaumont's book *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*.

Small Group Appendix I

Discussion

The people at the meeting were placed randomly into virtual groups of four and given 15 minutes to discuss how they are feeling by considering the following questions:

- What about St. Andrew's is most important to you?
- What are you willing to leave behind to ensure that those values remain?
- Why should St. Andrew's change?
- If money were no object, what would be your 'best case scenario'?

People were invited to use the Zoom chat to record their comments and questions or pass them on in written form to Council Secretary Karen Gooch after the meeting. A list of questions and comments from the discussions can be found in Appendix I.

Other Business

None

Next Meeting

Tuesday September 22nd, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. has been proposed as the next congregational meeting date. It is likely we make a decision about what direction we will take in order to allow time for Regional Council approval and to meet the January deadline that has been set by the City of North Bay. Please watch for further details. A *Survey Monkey* will be prepared and circulated before this meeting to help gauge how people are feeling and to help formulate a motion concerning the belfry.

Adjournment Tracy Davis offered a closing blessing. Rob Smith moved that the meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Congregational Meeting	Tuesday September 22 nd , 2020 at 6:30 p.m.	TBA
Next Executive Meeting	Tuesday, August 11 th , 2020 at 4:45 p.m. Sunday, September 13 th , 2020 at 12:00 p.m.	Pat Kirton-Bailey’s House St. Andrew’s
Next Council Meeting	Tuesday, August 18 th , 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, September 15 th , 2020 at 6:30 p.m.	Zoom Zoom

Chairperson, Pat Kirton-Bailey

Secretary, Karen Gooch

Appendix I

These are the questions and comments that came from the small group discussions:

From the Zoom chat:

- St. Andrew's is the 'gateway to the downtown'.
- St. Andrew's is a neighbour, important to the city of North Bay.
- St. Andrew's is the 'building of a community', a soul of the downtown. Always a dichotomy between heart and head - but this is between our heads and our souls.
- It has a particular identity in inclusivity, social justice, offers a special way of ministering to the downtown. It's a place that combines social justice and a progressive theology
- A place where we can live out our understanding of how God is calling us to live together
- That does not necessarily mean the building. Love the shape of the sanctuary, the architecture, but it isn't necessary. But the ministry to the downtown community is important - so where St. Andrew's 'lives' is vitally important to its identity
- St. Andrew's offers connection - spiritual, social, creativity.
- St. Andrew's is a second family
- St. Andrew's can rise to meet challenges as they occur, in 130+ years, we're still here, we still have hope
- The heart of the church is the people. We need to nurture the people, fix the people, heal the people, share conversation with the people and not the building. The people are St. Andrews.
- Care for the earth, Respect for Creation is an important ministry that is valued
- St. Andrews has a history of identifying critical community, social issues and to take and materialize them into life in the community of faith and the city of North Bay. Affirming status is just one of these. We are deep into community outreach in so many ways. Our mission means to be available to those in need regardless of their faith level and persons are supported to move towards deeper understanding of the sacred. St. Andrew's helps me see everyone at different levels of values and abilities to contribute. People are allowed at their own depth and level of faith and humanity. We have to realize the wonder in each UC in North Bay. We have to be careful not to become elitist
- Who are our neighbors and in what way are they stakeholders, to the viability of the building, to the viability of the congregation and its mission? Choirs, the university (by association), social service organizations, food bank, people who benefit from Linger Lunch, etc. In what ways are they involved in the discussion, in generating solutions, in committing and contributing?
- What is the broader role of the church and building and as cultural anchor in providing stability at the north end of downtown, given the ongoing decline of the downtown core in terms of use, engagement, and perceived safety? So what happens to the downtown if St. Andrew's isn't physically present there? Is the city therefore a direct stakeholder, and if so, how should it be engaged in this process?
- The building is not really directly comparable to a car, when discussions of repair and continuation are concerned, because it is a people and a historical and cultural entity as well as a building. However, that said, and following on what Stuart Bell said: Looking backward to the present to establish a pattern of growth and/or decline in membership, participation, financial circumstances, etc., will the congregation have the capacity to deal with the known coming problems (roof, gym, buttresses) in, say, 5 years, particularly if the bulk of its reserves have been committed to the belfry repair? E.g. If there were identified a decline in capacity of 50% from 2010 to 2020 (just to pick a number), then we can project in an informed way that it is likely that that capacity will decline another 25% by 2025.

From Group #8:

Individual responses to the following questions: Who are we? How have we loved our neighbours? What do our neighbours need?

- People would miss the beauty of the building but they would also miss what we do as a congregation such as providing a food bank, listening and offering support especially to our downtown neighbours and marginalized individuals;
- Being an Affirming, inclusive community for all -- LGBTQ2S, Blue Umbrella, etc.
- Providing a fortress of solitude, of peace, a safe place for all who need and want a place of sanctuary;
- A place that gathers others beyond the congregation, that brings the city together for events like Turkey Fest, concerts, Town Hall meetings; the entire city benefits from St Andrew's presence in the downtown and in the community.

Individual responses to the question: What is next for St Andrew's, and what are we willing to do to help get there?

- Sell the building and focus on mission;
- Fundraise and repair the belfry by approaching businesses and individuals that would make large donations towards the cost, such as the film industry, start a GO FUND ME page, etc.
- Try to obtain the best possible quote for repairing the belfry, then fundraise such as is mentioned above to pay for it, as long as there is a firm commitment on the part of the congregation that then the work begins to establish a medium-range plan which might include one or more of the following options: a) redevelop the building or a portion, thereof; b) sell the building and set up shop elsewhere; c) amalgamate with another congregation; d) something else that might emerge in the visioning/planning process. Right now, there's too much pressure to decide the future too quickly. Repairing the belfry buys some time, as long as the congregation is committed to future planning not waiting for the next building crisis.