



Transition Team Communication # 10 August 2022 (Shared in September 2022)

The summer has flown by. We wanted to begin this communication with a reminder about the role of an Intentional Interim Ministry and a Transition Team.

Churches can request an Intentional Interim time to help rebuild/revision/refocus after a challenging time. When Rev. Katherine resigned, the board (now council) in consultation with the region, requested to work with an Intentional Interim Minister and go through the process of evaluating our structures and processes.

The goals for St. Andrew's during our Intentional Interim Ministry Time are:

- Examine Church governance
- Research and provide social justice and inter-cultural training and conversation opportunities
- Look for ways to improve communication, transparency and trust
- Investigate process for managing disagreement
- Use St. Andrew's vision to guide the goals of all church groups
- Identify which church and community groups (neighbours) we are not currently serving. Serve and/or partner with them.
- Reach out to the congregation

Thank you to everyone who contributed their ideas about St. Andrew's United in our June congregational event or after by dropping off at the church or online on the "padlet" tool. (For more information on this, see our [July communication](#))

Here is a summary of the ideas shared by the congregation:

Prayers requested

- for members who feel isolated and for SAUC to be able to re-connect with them.

Memories or Gratitude shared for the gifts of past ministers

Church Building

- Multiple congregations sharing the space was heartwarming
- Welcoming feeling ; shows strengths and ability to grow
- Church was involved in building the seniors building and Larry Tod Place

Groups / Events

- Larry ran the Monday morning group which has continued – grateful for his gifts

- Activities for families and youth.
 - Faith and Forks
 - the pot-luck dinner evening at the upper hall - very special
 - Children's Choir, Pageants
 - Youth Group
- Love the various community groups, like Chapter 21, that are part of the church building

Involvement of congregation

- Speakers from congregation
- Bible reading church

History

- each minister had their own strengths
 - Fred Styles his music
 - Leslie was wonderful
 - Don Parr- our family still talks about him
 - Wonderful leaders in youth groups etc.
 - Qualities appreciated about Rev. Katherine:
 - her energy, spontaneity, outgoing nature
 - her age; she had new ideas & attracted younger families
 - she was an active participant in church life
 - she was tech savvy
 - she had a very good knowledge of the Bible; her sermons were thoughtful, touching & interesting
 - she was dialogical and always ready to comfort troubled people.
 - very spiritual, approachable and has an affinity with people. cares for the congregation; always says: "Come to me" when people need to talk
 - she was genuine and would rather blame herself than other people
 - Rev. Katherine was always able to turn negative into positive.
 - People paid high respect to Rev. Katherine.
 - she "brought too much to the church and the families."
 - innovative. She brought in many new things to the church, e.g. the coffee bar
 - comforted and prayed with family during illness
 - spent much effort in developing ministry for the young people
 - took a while for them to adjust to Rev. Katherine's style of ministry when she first came
 - has set a high standard; "how would a new minister compare with her?"
- Equity seeking church that talks about issues happening in world.

"Next Steps" for SAUC to be ready to welcome a new permanent minister

- Forgive ourselves, accept that a new ministry relationship is needed and that this is part of our journey.
- Be as honest as we can. Highlight our strengths.
- Goal to have the church be a pillar of the community; serve the community.
- Communication is important

- we need more transparency before we try new things
- Has the congregation/board made the needed changes?
- Explain more clearly changes to council / board and rationale
- there needs to be communication from the minister, the council & the congregation
- the congregation needs to know how to communicate & to whom; they should feel freedom to communicate both good things & things that are of concern
- we have to be willing to give & take; need to try to understand opposite positions
- need next steps for both the minister & the congregation

Comments about New Minister

- the new minister should follow existing routines at first & explain when making changes – transparency
- needs to focus on all generations
- should be up on current affairs
- should have relevance to today
- would like a new minister with some life & church experience
- new minister should be middle aged

Please note that the search committee will need to follow labour laws and cannot judge candidates based on age (ageism).

Concerns of Congregation and Criticisms of board/council/process

- The transition of worship was not appropriately handled.
- The board had not explained this to the congregation
- The church needs better coordination.
- Leaders need better communication skills.
- The congregation is concerned as to when the new minister will come.

Thank you again for sharing your prayers, ideas, memories and suggestions. This information supports the Transition Team and the Search Committee as we continue our work.

The Governance group shared information in July about the proposed changes to governance. We are repeating that update here as we know the summer is very busy and communications can be missed. Also All [Transition Team updates](#) can all be found on the church website if you would ever like to review.

July 2022 – Governance Update

From Rev. Wayne Beamer (originally shared in July 2022) via email.

Your Transition Team has had a subgroup working with the governance of this congregation since early March. Along with myself, **Rev. Wayne**, there are **Beth Langhorst** and **Louise Marshall**. **Rev. Shannon** and **Michelle Irwin** are also regular contributors. We have examined the current structure both in its recent day-to-day workings and in its historical decisions and patterns of behaviour. We were particularly interested in understanding where and why difficulties and/or conflicts arose.

We have interviewed well over a dozen congregants who were active in the leadership of St. Andrew's and been in active consultation with some of them as we have developed the preliminary proposal presented to Council on the 22nd of June.

We are proposing a Governance model that has a **Council/Leadership Team** that is about half of the current size. It will be more nimble and have decision-making more widely disbursed. This is the place of origin of all policy.

Some of the more important changes are in the **Principles and Responsibilities** of the Leadership Team/Council. The Leadership Team will be released from involvement in much of the day-to-day functioning of the congregation and will take on responsibility for most aspects of adapting to the future including planning. They will become the **Keepers of the Vision, Mission, and Spiritual Flame**. This includes Stewardship in its broadest sense.

The church work happens in the **four sectors**:

- **Faith Formation**
- **Community**
- **Congregational Life**, and
- **Infrastructure**.

Each of these sectors has a Representative on the Leadership Team/Council. Within each of these sectors are **Mission Teams** that are groupings similar or in some cases identical to St Andrew's current committees. This layer is the one where most of the familiar day-to-day activity of the congregation goes on and will be very familiar territory.

The names of these units of organization are not yet final. We are calling units by names that make sense at this point, but some may change. You can look forward to a fuller explanation of our thinking along these lines in the near future.

We expect to fill out more detail in the team descriptions this summer and be prepared to present to the Congregation a **proposal in September** that will serve as the Constitution in Beta form. In other words, we will have a form of Governance ready to be put into practice early in the fall for a **test of three months**. It is our hope to be operating under a new set of guidelines in 2023.

Yours faithfully,

Wayne

Reverend Wayne Beamer
Consultant to St. Andrew's United Church, Markham Ontario