



## Session Chronicles

Volume 2 February 2019

St. John's Session met on February 21, 2019 and the following

matters were addressed:

- Gordon Wilson, long-time facilitator of the English Language Learning (ELL) outreach at the church, has regretfully had to step away from this responsibility. Gordon has devoted a lot of time and organizational skill to seeing this program thrive and grow over its lifetime. Many thanks for a job well done!
- Session agreed to again in 2019 provide financial support from the Legacy Trust Fund for children wanting to attend Camp Douglas, and to provide \$1,000 from the Trust Fund to assist the church Vacation Bible School.
- Session has received the report of The Commission to St. John's, consisting of Rev. Brad Childs, Rev. Cal Macleod and Bev Feick, whose purpose is to examine our ministry. The Minister has received a separate report from the Commission.
- The Commission agreed that there are a number of issues facing St. John's at the moment, the most challenging of which is the church's declining financial situation, and the resultant resort to the Legacy Trust Fund as a means of meeting operational expenses. The Commission has urged Session to examine other options, and to seek advice and guidance relating to our finances from the Presbytery Property and Finance Committee. However, should congregational givings continue to decline to the point where salaries cannot be paid, then a full review of ministry at the church may be required.
- The Commission has also tasked the Minister and Session with the following objectives over the next 8-12 months:
  - the Minister & Session will gather in a special meeting focused solely on fellowship & trust building;
  - over the next year, the Minister & Session will read & discuss at each Session meeting one chapter of Kennon Callahan's book *The Twelve Keys to an Effective Church* as part of its devotions;
  - the Minister & Session will arrange a time & date for a

- congregational viewing and discussion of the video *When God Left the Building*, which focuses on how a congregation can introduce new ministries by looking outside its immediate environment;
- the Minister & Session need to focus on Elder Training & Leadership, enlisting outside teaching resources from Presbytery or St. Andrew's Hall to accomplish this;
  - the Minister & Session will hold a retreat to begin the process of establishing a vision for St. John's, to focus on 3 new ways to reach out into the community and 3 ways to improve St. John's financial situation [details of a Session retreat that occurred on February 23rd are noted below];
  - the Minister and Session members will commit to each invite 3 people to church or Bible study once a year;
  - the Minister & Session will host a special "fellowship only" event for the congregation; and,
  - within the next 8 months, the Minister & Session will present, first to the Commission and then to the congregation, a finalized St. John's Vision (ie. the congregation we wish to be) and Mission statement (a detailed plan of how we will reach our Vision).
- The Commission stressed that, in the interests of transparency & good communication, the congregation must be kept informed regarding discussions and major decisions taken during this process.
  - Anyone wishing a copy of the Commission report can contact me (contact information below).
  - The day-long Session retreat referred to above was held on Saturday, February 23, 2019 at the A Rocha centre at 16th Ave. and 192nd Street. A reading from Zechariah 4: 1-14, dealing with the Jews after their return from exile and their need to rebuild the temple, provided the backdrop for the day's theme - the need to rebuild our St. John's church community. Discussions throughout the day focused on our current challenges as well as our successes, and also our vision for the future and how to achieve that vision.
  - If you wish an electronic copy of the *Session Chronicles* please let me know.
  - Keith Leishman  
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