

Abbey Church First Annual Meeting

November 24, 2024

Notes taken by Marilyn Gough

1. Matt Humphrey opened the meeting with prayer and gratitude.
2. Review: Membership. All were reminded that regular attendance at worship makes us members; a minimum of twice yearly. The purpose of the meeting is to be for discussion and discernment; for challenges, celebrations and opportunities or disappointments. We paused for Meagan Crosby to pray for this community formed by God; for God to be present and to lead our discussion.
3. Our Story: A brief history of the Emmaus Community (neo-monastic/intentional ecumenical Christian Community) and of the evolving Abbey Church. Rob Shearer summarized the Shared Ministry Agreement which sets forth our connection to the Anglican Church of Canada and to the United Church of Canada and our constitution.

Rob and Matt explained the purpose of the proposed Abbey Council: our desire to have a more transparent and democratic and participatory structure and to continue to follow the Shared Ministry Agreement. We desire to have shared decision-making and planning with a consensus-based council including one appointed member of the Emmaus community. Meetings to held quarterly.

Following some discussion there was a call for consensus.

Passed. Ernest Morrow was invited to pray for the

community. For deepening roots to promote growth and good and new fruit and for the Spirit's guidance going forward.

4. Leadership: The proposed council members were introduced. Phil Mills is the appointed member from Emmaus to sit on the council. Several members of the former Vision Team let their names stand to continue on the Abbey Council, including Nick and Joy Hunter and Jen Strohschein. Each were asked to speak about how God was calling them to this community.

Phil spoke of the simple call to love God and love neighbour, and how we could see Christ in the other by responding to this call in our context. Nick and Joy spoke of the lively energy, reverence, creativity and authenticity that he and Joy experience at Abbey Church and of his respect for our willingness to be challenged by the Holy Spirit and the hopefulness that this brings. Jen shared her desire to move more deeply into the heart of the community and of her sense of being able to be real and vulnerable here without wearing a mask of identity. She loves our concern for the environment and connection to the North Park Community.

Two additional people have let their names stand for the Abbey Council: Jake Highfield and Josh Ruberg. Jake spoke of their many years of youth ministry (since they were 15!) and of their appreciation of the life found in our community and excitement to represent youth on council. Josh is drawn to the creative, artistic aspects of our worship and faith where he feels the organic, deep and

powerful movement of the Spirit. It seems to Josh that the many members of clergy who attend and support Abbey Church is significant. Further nominations were sought; there being none forthcoming, we called for consensus on this slate of members of Abbey Council.

Passed. Marilyn Gough prayed for the elected council. The clergy of Abbey church were then introduced. Matt Humphrey is our only paid (half-time Priest). Our other Anglican, non-stipendiary priests are Ernest Morrow, Meagan Crosby, Lynn Mills (St Mary Metchosin) and Reba Gartrell Yeo, a transitional Deacon at the UVic Multifaith Center. Michele Slater and Rob Shearer are United Church Volunteer Associate Ministers. Leading our Youth and children's ministry are Jake Highfield, Tressa Brotsky and Maya Church, intern. Joy Hunter offered an encouraging prayer for this team.

5. Sharing Gifts (Budget): Lynn presented a one-page budget summary and explained that in addition to our regular giving and grant support from our denominations, two large one-time gifts have put us significantly into the black for 2024! While our expenses are lean, our projected monthly giving is also underperforming, and thus we are projecting a budget deficit of \$20,000 for the 2025 fiscal year. We trust in God's provision and creative fundraising inspiration to make up the difference next year and encourage members to give what they can. The proposed budget was affirmed by consensus. Margot Spence, our former Cellarer (ie. treasurer) led us in prayer.

6. Responding in Mission: How are we led to share the Good News of Christ? How do we embody and live into the Gospel? This is what Emmaus calls our Presence in the neighbourhood. We are called to movements for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice. Our support for the Quom Qwem street ministry, for the North Park Neighbourhood Association (weekly food hampers, lending hub, and monthly concerts) support for the Palestine Aid dinner, turning up for the Pride Parade or climate action demonstrations are some of these examples. We are always looking for ways to engage the neighbourhood to work toward community thriving. This is a role for the council so ideas such as creative “making” workshops, or other fun fundraising ideas for instance could be brought to council members. Michele Slater ended with a prayer for the Holy Spirit to lead us in responding to God’s love.