



## COVID-19 WORKING GROUP MEETING

6: 30PM, 20 OCTOBER 2020

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

*God is calling us to be an evolving community of faith inspired to embrace our future as we:*

- *Deepen our commitment to each other*
- *Nurture our spiritual vitality and growth*
- *Live a life of loving influence in the world.*

Chair: Kathy Shortt

Present: Joe Gaspar, Heather Power, Karen Schertzberg, Barb Leask Wynne, Jennifer Allan, Carolyn Machan (for Worship & Music Comm), Bert Blackburn (for Property Comm), and Richard Jackson (secretary). Franleen Wagner (for Christian Education Comm) sends her regrets

1. Opening Prayer was offered by Heather Power followed by Check-In
2. Devotion by Kathy Shortt: Today I attended the Parkminster Conversations on White Privilege led by Fred Monteith. Having come away from the workshop with a desire to increase understanding and learning on systemic racism both for myself and others, I decided to share this **Anti-Racism Prayer** by our moderator the Right Rev. Richard Bott, which is reproduced in Appendix 1.
3. Approval of Agenda  
**Motion** to approve the agenda was moved by Jennifer Allan and seconded by Carolyn Machan.  
**Carried.**
4. **Minutes** of the 18 August Working Group meeting was moved by Carolyn Machan and seconded by Bert Blackburn. **Carried.**
5. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
  - Reopening for Church Services after November 22 - Kathy Shortt
    - Background Information.
    - I have included my email in the Council Bytes and in my newsletter article asking for input of ideas with regard to moving forward. I have received several positive comments about the way we have handled COVID-19 to date. I have not had any emails asking for a return to in-person worship services. Membership and Pastoral Care are not hearing about a lot of people itching to get back to in-person worship services. They did hear from a couple of families with



children who would love to be back in church, but these families might not have been aware that there would be no CE programs even if we were holding in-person worship services.

- I contacted Bruce Mutton to see about the status of our grant for the broadcasting equipment for the sanctuary. He contacted the EAF Grant Committee for a status update and they said that our application was being reviewed and that we would hear between now and the end of December. It would be unlikely that even if we get the grant, that we could have the broadcasting equipment up and running by November 22. If we were to return to in-person worship services after November 22 we would most likely be looking at a live-stream service without any of the interactive features of Zoom (chat feature and slides)
- According to the CBC, Ontario reported 821 new cases of COVID-19 today, the second-most on a single day since the second wave began in mid-August. Hospitalizations, as well as the number of patients in intensive care and using ventilators all went up. With the cold and flu season upon us and the continuing high number of COVID-19 cases, the Ontario government emergency measures will be in place until Nov. 21 in order to protect the health and safety of Ontarians.
- On the plus side, according to the Record today, the number of COVID-19 cases in Waterloo Region dropped on Monday to eight and new cases seem to have stabilised after rising quickly in September. There are 10 active outbreaks mostly in long-term care and retirement homes.
- We do have a sound COVID-19 Safety Plan and Protocols in place if we decide to return to in-person worship.
- As we have discussed before, we need to consider firstly what we will gain by re-opening for in-person worship services, secondly what are the risks of re-opening to in-person worship services given the safety protocols we have put in place and finally do the gains outweigh the risks and the efforts involved implementing our safety protocols to ensure reduced risk.



- The discussion that followed stressed how apprehensive the Working Group was about potentially exposing congregants to the pandemic by re-assembling in person. Concerns about the childrens' time together were raised, however Heather Power indicated that efforts were being undertaken to address this concern. Joe Gaspar stated that those members without internet access would be contacted with a letter and newsletter from Joe and Heather.
- **Motion:** Given the inherently social nature of in-person worship services, the prolonged exposure to participants attending events, the demographics of our communities of faith as a higher risk, and the safety protocols required to ensure reduced risk, Jennifer Allan moved that we recommend to Council that Parkminster Church remain closed for in-person worship services and that we continue with on-line Zoom services and incorporate (photographic) elements of the sanctuary into the service and that the COVID Working Group will review this decision in early January. Seconded by Barb Leask Wynne. **Carried.**
- Renter Update - Kathy Shortt
  - With regard to the safety plans we have put in effect for our renters, there is only one group that we have had any trouble with. I went to meet with this group personally because they were not wearing masks in the church. Since our conversation, they have been cooperative. Right now we have:
    - Stagecoach meeting on Saturdays 8:00 - 3:30
    - Karate is meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:30 - 9:00
    - Sustainable Market Fridays 3:00-6:30
    - The Waterloo Region Downs Society cooking class has decided not to meet even though we developed a safety plan together. They will contact us if they wish to resume meeting.
    - Guides and Scouts continue to meet outside.
    - Everything seems to be running smoothly.





- Bert Blackburn is receiving requests to use the gym for various activities, e.g., pitching practice for three persons, fitness training for a girls' softball team. Bert requested feedback from the Working Group as to whether new rentals would be entertained. Kathy Shortt asked if we are providing a community service, which we might promote. Barb Leask Wynne was concerned about the numbers involved.
  - **Action:** Bert Blackburn will contact the various groups and enquire about their safety plans, templates of which may be obtained from Melanie Chisholm, and the numbers of persons involved.
- Office Safety Protocols -
  - Karen Schertzberg described the cleaning log identifying the items touched, etc. Writing instruments, calculators, etc are to be brought by the visitors to the office, who might wish to use them.
  - Melanie Chisholm will maintain a clean desk protocol when the office opens (Allen Switzer will clean the floor, etc) and would prefer the church office remain closed until January. Office hours for visitors will be carefully prescribed based on Allen Switzer's working hours. Probably Melanie can meet visitors at the Church door rather than have them enter the Church to visit her office.
  - **Motion:** Karen Schertzberg moved that the Covid 19 Working Group recommends that the Church Office shall remain closed and the decision to reopen be revisited in early January. Barb Leask Wynne seconded. **Carried.**
- Church Groups and Activities Update - Kathy Shortt
  - The Bell Choir meets on Wednesday evenings, the Band meets on Saturday mornings, Neil meets with various soloists when required. The Parkminster Youth Group will be having an Outdoor Meeting on October 24 1:00 - 3:00
  - All groups have COVID Safety Plans approved by Council and everything seems to be running smoothly.



## 6. NEW BUSINESS

### ■ Request to attend Bell Choir Rehearsals - Kathy Shortt

- I have had a request that two of our members miss being in the Sanctuary and they would like to attend some Bell Choir rehearsals in order to fulfill that need. This request made me think that perhaps we were not meeting the needs of some of our members. I miss the Sanctuary, but for me it is not a need, it is a wish, although for some of our members being in the Sanctuary could be a need for their mental health. Joe Gaspar, Heather Power and I have discussed this request and we decided that if we did go ahead, we would have to open it up to others as well. We could say that it would be limited to those individuals who are feeling isolated or do not have access to our online worship services. That could be as high as 21 people. We thought they might have to come with a caregiver/driver. In order to attend, they would have a safety plan approved by Council and they would have to have limited numbers (4-6 perhaps). I would volunteer to work the details out with the Bell Choir and to personally be there for the time period to monitor the front door so Neil would not be disturbed. My question to you is: Do you think this is something we could do safely? Is this a recommendation you would feel comfortable suggesting to Council?
- Barb suggested that a sign-up sheet would have to be created but otherwise is in favour. Bert Blackburn reminded us that it is only a practice and the Bell Choir should be consulted, which Neil felt desirable. Bert Blackburn worried about comings-and-goings during the practice, however Kathy indicated that she would monitor the front door.
- **Motion:** Pending approval by the Bell Choir and Kathy Shortt's monitoring of the front door, Carolyn Machan moves that members who are feeling isolated or cannot attend online worship services be allowed to attend some Bell Choir rehearsals following the recommendations of a newly-created COVID-19 Safety Plan as approved by Council. Bert Blackburn seconded. **Carried.**



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- **Action:** Kathy will prepare the new safety plan for such congregants who wish to attend Bell Choir rehearsals.
- Joe Gaspar closed the meeting with a prayer.

NEXT MEETING: T.B.A.

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**KATHY SHORTT (CHAIR)**

**RICHARD JACKSON (SECRETARY)**

**APPENDIX 1: Anti-Racism Prayer by our moderator the Right Rev. Richard Bott**



## APPENDIX 1: Anti-Racism Prayer by our moderator the Right Rev. Richard Bott

Holy One,  
In your image  
You have created humankind,  
in great diversity.  
We give thanks for the  
differences—

Holy One,  
In your image  
You have created humankind,  
in great diversity.  
We give thanks for the  
differences—  
of cultures and ethnicities,  
of histories and life-stories,  
of skin colour and language and  
hearts that love the world.

We watch in horror as Power  
desecrates Black and Brown bodies;  
walks on their sacredness,  
kills and subjugates,  
in thousands of ways,  
hidden and overt.  
We must not stop at watching—  
held back from right action by our horror  
or seeming powerlessness.

Grant us hearts that listen and learn;  
egos that are willing to accept  
when our own racism is called out.

Grant us courage,  
to disassemble the systems,  
the stories, the mythos,  
that privilege whiteness over all others.

Give us your Holy Spirit's wind



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to call out racism in all its forms—  
inside our hearts,  
inside the church,  
and in your world,  
give us the strength,  
the wisdom and the will  
to root out White Fragility,  
and White Supremacy,  
so that they would never again do harm,  
never again take away,  
never again kill.

Help us to be anti-racist,  
in all that we say,  
in all that we do,  
in all that we are.  
It is time. It is well past time.

God of all creation,  
bless us all with what we need,  
to march on.  
To live this work of anti-racism.  
Today.  
Every day.  
Always.  
In Jesus' name.  
May it be.