

2023 Community of Faith Report

At the September 2021 Board meeting of United Churches of Langley, a motion was passed to “initiate a Community of Faith Profile and Financial Assessment for our future sustainability”. Kellie Warnock began this work by meeting with different groups of congregants to gain their input on the Identity of our church. Kellie spent a great deal of time gathering information and organizing it according to the questions asked in the Identity workshops.

In March 2023, Kellie asked that a new committee continue this work. The Community of Faith (CoF) Committee was formed. The Board appointed Bill Pike, Deanna Feuer, Sandi Takasaki, Judy Chang, and Carol Sawyer. Bill Pike and Deanna Feuer both served diligently but had other demands on their time and so Timothy Jones and Trudy McMurdo joined the committee.

Since March 2023, the CoF committee met almost weekly to work through the different components of a Community of Faith Profile. (They met 17 times over a period of 6 months). Working with Rev. Victoria Andrews from PMR the committee reviewed all the data and then used this to complete the Identity Profile. This was shared at the May 2023 Board meeting and then published in the weekly church E-news for three weeks. The committee then moved on to the Living Faith Story. Over the next few months, they gathered information from different sources in the congregation and worked to answer the questions posed for a Living Faith Story. A draft version of this was shared with the Board at the June 2023 Board meeting.

UCoL’s Community of Faith report is different from many churches, as we are not looking to fill a staff vacancy, rather we are looking at what we can financially support going forward. Over the last few months, the CoF Committee wrestled with possible ways to move forward. They didn’t always agree on how this could be done or what it might look like.

The CoF Committee presented three options to the Board on September 27, 2023. The Board Executive Committee met on October 1 to discuss how to proceed with the information and feedback received and felt blending the three options into two options for the Congregation was the best way to proceed.

Option 1 – Staffing remains the same

No changes to the existing staffing levels

Since Amalgamation we have been using funds from the Bequest Fund, the Willoughby Fund, and the Social Justice Fund (since 2019) to balance our budget. The Bequest Fund can be used to offset the church's annual operating and capital costs. The use of this fund is controlled by the Board. On average we have used \$100,000.00 each year. The fund started at \$750,000.00 and presently sits at about \$445,000.00. If we continue to draw funds from the Bequest Fund, we likely will have about 3-4 years before this fund would run out. The interest from the Willoughby Fund has also been used for some specific projects. The Social Justice Fund pays a percentage towards the Adult Faith minister's salary and for administration and property costs.

For several years, the Finance Chairs have been warning the congregation that we need to come up with a plan that considers our financial situation. If we choose to take a wait and see approach, we will likely have to repeat the Community of Faith process in two to three years' time as the data collected between 2020 and 2022 would be outdated.

I. Financial Sustainability

A. Current Financial Situation

The church has been utilizing the Bequest Fund, Willoughby Fund, and Social Justice Fund to maintain its financial stability. These funds have been invaluable in balancing the budget and supporting the church's operations and ministries. This is not financially sustainable.

B. Financial Strategy to Sustain Current Situation

The Board will work with M&P to investigate whether we should review **current Ministers' job descriptions** and **reallocate ministerial responsibilities** to align with congregants' values and create a more effective structure of responsibilities based on skills and capacities. By focusing on the aspects that congregants value most, such as Worship, Music, Belonging, Social Justice, and Children, we ensure

that our church remains relevant to the community and members alike. By refocusing the staff responsibilities and structure, we allow for a more effective delivery of ministry and administration. The current budget for two ministerial staff salaries and benefits is approximately \$180,000.

Review all current expenses to seek opportunities for cost reduction and find more efficient ways of managing resources for financial sustainability. Reducing unnecessary expenses is a fundamental part of maintaining financial health, freeing up funds for more crucial church activities and investments.

Launch a stewardship campaign to increase contributions. Encouraging members to contribute more to the church can help offset financial challenges. A stewardship campaign reinforces a sense of community and shared responsibility among the congregation. Increased contributions not only help the church's finances but also foster a greater sense of involvement among the members.

Evaluate other revenue streams to optimize rentals, programs for fees, ceremonies and other revenue generating activities.

II. Congregational Growth & Understanding Our Identity

Emphasize the importance of worship, learning and studies, music, social justice, belonging, and youth and young adults programming in church communications, sermons, and outreach efforts. By highlighting what the church does best and what congregants value most, we create a clear and appealing identity for the church, making it more attractive to current and potential members.

Continue to work with Social Justice & Outreach Facilitator to connect with prospective members that includes practices to Invite, Welcome, Engage and Support. This could involve hosting open houses, participating in local events, and extending invitations to community groups. Community development enhances the church's visibility and accessibility, making it more likely for potential members to visit and engage with the congregation.

Cultivate a sense of belonging and inclusivity by ensuring newcomers feel welcome and valued by providing resources to our welcoming teams and

greeters. Continue to practice Affirming church values by ensuring we offer a healthy church culture that welcomes all of good faith into our church community. Feeling a sense of belonging and community encourages individuals to become active, contributing members of the church.

By implementing these strategies, the church could move toward achieving sustainability, expand our pastoral reach and foster congregational growth, ensuring the church's long-term viability and attractiveness to both current or future members.

Option 2 – Staff Changes

Reduce ministerial staff to one full-time minister and one 50% Children and Family Coordinator

As we worked through this process, we were guided by Rev. Victoria Andrews. She advised us that for a congregation of our size, one full time minister is not unusual. By reducing our ministerial staff from two full time positions to one full time position and one 50% Children and Family Coordinator, we believe that we can be much more financially responsible and at the same time work towards growing our congregation. We are very fortunate to have a full time Social Justice and Outreach Program Facilitator.

This proposal takes into consideration the key findings of the Identity work and Living Faith Story. In the Identity work that we reviewed the key areas that congregants valued were Worship (including prayer, teaching, and learning), Music, Social Justice, and Outreach, Belonging, and Children. We have tried to include all of these values in Option #2. We also know that to remain sustainable we will need to grow our congregation. Therefore, we have included a percentage of the Ministers' time to include "Growth".

Financial Sustainability

A. Current Financial Situation

The church has been utilizing the Bequest Fund, Willoughby Fund, and Social Justice Fund to maintain its financial stability. These funds have been invaluable in

balancing the budget and supporting the church's operations and ministries. This is not financially sustainable.

B. Financial Strategy for Financial Sustainability

By consolidating ministerial staff into one full-time position, we can reduce expenses while maintaining the essential functions of pastoral care, worship services, and community leadership. This move allows us to be financially responsible while still meeting the spiritual needs of the congregation. UCoL may need to restructure some ministerial offerings when transitioning to one minister and a 50% children & family coordinator. This change will result in savings of approximately \$45,000 per year.

The Board will work with M&P and minister to **reallocate ministerial responsibilities** to ensure that they align with congregants' values. By focusing on the aspects that congregants value most, such as Worship, Music, Belonging, Social Justice, and Children, we ensure that our church remains relevant to the community and members alike. This approach not only reduces costs but also ensures that we continue to provide the services that matter most to our congregation, making the church an attractive place for both current members and potential new congregants.

This option also proposes that we **Launch a stewardship campaign** to increase contributions. Encouraging members to contribute more to the church can help offset financial challenges. A stewardship campaign reinforces a sense of community and shared responsibility among the congregation. Increased contributions not only help the church's finances but also foster a greater sense of involvement among the members.

II. Congregational Growth & Understanding Our Identity

Even by reducing to one full-time minister and a half-time children and family coordinator, it is important to we include the same ways to increase our pastoral reach, grow our congregation, and understand our identity.

Emphasize the importance of worship, learning and studies, music, social justice, belonging, and youth and young adults programming in church communications, sermons, and outreach efforts. By highlighting what the church does best and what congregants value most, we create a clear and appealing identity for the church, making it more attractive to current and potential members.

Continue to work with Social Justice & Outreach Facilitator to connect with prospective members that includes practices to Invite, Welcome, Engage and Support. This could involve hosting open houses, participating in local events, and extending invitations to community groups. Community development enhances the church's visibility and accessibility, making it more likely for potential members to visit and engage with the congregation.

Cultivate a sense of belonging and inclusivity by ensuring newcomers feel welcome and valued by providing resources and support to our welcoming teams and greeters. Continue to practice Affirming church values by ensuring we offer a healthy church culture that welcomes all of good faith into our church community. Feeling a sense of belonging and community encourages individuals to become active, contributing members of the church.

By implementing these strategies, the church could move toward achieving sustainability, expand our pastoral reach and foster congregational growth, ensuring the church's long-term viability to both current or future members.

One Full Time Minister (Ordained)

25% - Weekly Worship Services (Worship and Belonging)
Including alternative and special services

20% - Pastoral Care (Belonging)
Including visitations and funerals

20% - Spiritual and Leadership Development (Worship and Belonging)
for all ages

10% - Administration Time

Including attending monthly Board meetings and consultation with the Office Administrator

5% - Social Justice Supervision (Social Justice and Outreach)

20% - Growth Expectation

Including Community Development, family gatherings, growing weekly attendance in Sunday Worship and Stewardship

One 50% Children and Family Co-ordinator (20 hours weekly)

This position would require someone who could work independently to plan and carry out programs for young children and youth. They would need to have some experience/training in planning and implementing programs through a United Church of Canada lens. They would also need to be available to work on Sunday mornings as well as one or two other days for mid-week programming. This position would need to be supported by a new Christian Education Committee or M&P.

Duties to include:

- Working along side of the children & youth leaders to organize, plan and implement Sunday morning programs for children aged 3 to 12.
- Organizing, planning, and implementing a non-Sunday youth program for 13 to 18 year-olds. Some additional support may be required from volunteers from the congregation.
- Supporting other programs such as Camp Spirit or Messy Church.

Other staffing include:

Music Program - No changes to the current staffing for the music program.

Social Justice & Outreach Facilitator - There would be no change in this position.

Church Administration Positions - No changes in these positions, including Office Administrator (full time – 40 hours) and Finance Administrator (half time - 20 hours)

Children & Youth Leaders – Retain up to 100 hours per month allocated children & youth leaders who work under Children and Family Coordinator. Number of Children & Youth Leader positions to remain at two (2).