

# *Sylvan United Church*

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**SYLVAN UNITED CHURCH – 2020 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**For Annual Congregational Meeting – November 21, 2020**

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## 2020 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

### AGENDA

Call to Order by Chair

Opening Prayer

Orders of the day

Chair

Recording Secretary

Voting

Adjournment

Approval of the Agenda

Minutes of the last Annual Congregational Meeting – March 8, 2020

Errors, Omissions, Adoption

Business Arising

Treasurer's Report

- as printed

Recognition of Service

Looking Back – Slide Show

Adjournment

Benediction

**SYLVAN UNITED CHURCH  
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
March 8, 2020**

Meeting called to order at 10:50 a.m. by Rev. Katherine Brittain who welcomed everyone.

**Orders of the Day**

**Chair**

Moved by George Power that Tom Baxter act as meeting Chair and that Brenda Sober act as Recording Secretary. Seconded by Don Thomson. CARRIED

**Voting**

Moved by Betty Lord that as per B.3.7.1 of The Manual 2019 of the United Church of Canada, all people present for this Annual Congregational Meeting be afforded full voting participation. Seconded by Judi Todd. CARRIED

**Adjournment**

Moved by Nan Goodship that the meeting close at 11:45 am. CARRIED

**Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Judy Duncan that the agenda be approved. Seconded by Melissa Howard. CARRIED

**Approval of the 2019 Annual Report**

Moved by Peter Spohn that the Sylvan United Church 2019 Annual Report, with the exclusion of the Operating Budget for 2020 (Page 20), be adopted. Seconded by Brian Young. CARRIED

**Presentation of 2020 Budget**

Treasurer Brian Young noted that the proposed budget for 2020 projects a deficit of \$5,225. He explained that when the mortgage repayment figure is finalized, the amount of the deficit should be less.

**2019 Sylvan Council**

Tom Baxter introduced the Council Convenors who were in attendance and expressed his thanks to them for their work over the past year. Tom noted that Melissa Howard (Women Together), Derek Coughlin (Communications), Don Thomson (Finance) and Brian Young (Treasurer) would be stepping down and expressed the gratitude of the congregation for their service.

**2020 Sylvan Council**

Tom Baxter reported that the Finance Team will be served by Co-Convenors in 2020 who will also be Co-Treasurers – Anne Marie MacLean and George Power.

**Moved by Brian Young that Anne-Marie MacLean and George Power be named as Co-Convenors of the Finance Team and as Co-Treasurers. Seconded by Don Thomson. CARRIED**

**Moved by Nan Goodship that Anne Marie MacLean and George Power be granted signing authority for Sylvan United Church. Seconded by Brian Young. CARRIED**

**Moved by Melissa Howard that Melanie Weaver and Maria McDonnell be named as Co-Convenors of Women Together. Seconded by Anne Marie MacLean. CARRIED**

### **Recognition of Exceptional Service to Sylvan United Church**

Tom explained that in 2019 an Exceptional Service award had been instituted with Jane and Hap Shapley being the first recipients. For 2020, Tom was pleased to name Marian and Bill Davies as recipients. Marian and Bill were the chief cooks for the Men's Fellowship Dinners for many years and prepared monthly dinners which were always enjoyed by the Fellowship group. The Davies could always be counted on whenever barbecues or other meals were needed for our special events, and of course, Marian has been a Co-Convenor of Hospitality for several years. Unfortunately, Bill was preparing for a trip and not present, but Marian was on hand to receive this well-deserved recognition.

### ***Planning Today, Thriving Tomorrow (PT3)***

Reverend Katherine gave a brief overview of the PTTT initiative that was undertaken by the congregation in 2015. The three main questions studied were:

- Who are we?
- Who are our neighbours?
- What have we been called to be?

One of the outcomes of the PT3 process was a wish to develop partnerships within the broader community. Three examples of partnerships that have been established are: The Hand in Hand Thrift Shop with St. John's Cobble Hill, the partnership with Camp Pringle and the *Food for Thought* Dinner and Movie Nights. Just in the last months, new community partnerships have been a pop-up Children's Choir, a Sparks troop and the possibility of a Brownies troop in the Fall.

To facilitate discussion among the meeting participants, small groups were formed with a member of Sylvan Council in each group as a recorder. The task for the first breakout session was to consider three questions:

1. What brought you here?
2. What excites you about being part of a community like Sylvan?
3. What is one wish/hope you have for this church in the year ahead?

A summary of the outcomes of these small group discussions is attached as Appendix 1.

The second exercise that the congregation was asked to complete was to continue the small group discussions and consider the list of 11 big ideas which resulted from the Council retreat held on January 11, 2020 to consider Sylvan's future (Appendix 2).

Participants were asked to discuss those ideas and suggest others that the congregation might use as a goal moving forward. Recorders from each group reported out and a number of ideas were added to the 11 from Council (Appendix 3). Everyone was then given three dots (Dotmocracy) and asked to place them beside the ideas they liked best. As meeting participants enjoyed a sandwich, the dots were counted.

A revamped music program and a playground for children received the greatest number of dots. Since an approved playground can cost many thousands of dollars, the music program was the chosen focus for the coming year. Rev. Katherine noted that a number of initiatives were already under way which could be built upon. Eve Daniell and Catharina De Beer, our two wonderful musicians, have already instituted a pop-up children's choir and a young performers' program whereby local music students have an opportunity to play during a regular worship service. Ideas such as a music café and summer concert series have also been suggested. The Worship Team is also exploring what music means. It was agreed that the heading for the initiative would be "Music Ministry" which could be internal and also reach out.

A number of people supported the idea of a building fund, and it was noted that Council would continue to do long-range planning, especially with a view to building plans. It was agreed that Council could develop an action plan with a music ministry as a focus for the year and perhaps select one other program as they see fit.

Motion for Council for 2020:

**Moved by Janet Power that the Sylvan Council develop an action plan using a Music Ministry as a lens through which to focus our efforts for the coming year.  
Seconded by Peg Cox. CARRIED**

**Review and Adoption of 2020 Operating Budget**

**Moved by Peter Spohn that the 2020 Operating Budget be approved as presented.  
Seconded by Don Thomson. CARRIED**

**Adjournment**

**Moved by George Power that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by John Kamphof.  
CARRIED**

**Closing Prayer**

Rev. Katherine offered a closing prayer to send everyone on their way.

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Tom Baxter, Chair

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Brenda Sober, Recording Secretary

## APPENDIX 1

### OUTCOME OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

#### 3 QUESTIONS

##### 1. What brought you here?

Church was warm, friendly, welcoming  
Church had a good feeling  
Sunday School  
Church was close by  
Minister's laughter  
Place to pray  
Katherine's sermons  
Mary Oliver poetry group  
Looking for spiritual community  
Hospital visits from Murray and praying with Nan  
Found church after "shopping around"  
Visited church and received invitations for dinner  
Music and choir  
Ad in the paper  
Liberal approach of minister and congregation  
Invitation  
Jazz Vespers  
Needed to talk to a Minister  
United Church background  
Murray

##### 2. What excites you about being part of a community like Sylvan?

Fun in Sunday School  
Teaching Sunday School  
New friends  
Outreach to community  
Gardening group  
Openness to creativity  
Relatively open to new ideas  
Energy – this church shows up  
Good humour  
Generosity of spirit – diversity  
People

**3. What is one wish/hope you have for this church in the year ahead?**

Larger Sunday School

More teens

Outreach to community to grow the church

Meaningful existence

Renting building

Commitment to develop music program and be more contemporary

Lively, rich and well-funded music is a unifier

Practical initiatives – like Foot Clinic and Nourish Cowichan

Encourage more youth

Start a building fund

Improve music

Children

## APPENDIX 2

### IDEAS FROM COUNCIL RETREAT (JANUARY 11, 2020)

Senior's Drop-In Community Centre – 6 dots

Climate Change Initiatives – 5 dots

Engage with Indigenous People – 4 dots

Revive Jazz Vespers – 1 dot

Revamp Music Program – 23 dots

Community Garden – 1 dot

Build on our Relationship with Pringle – 4 dots

Refugee Sponsorship – 5 dots

Become Actively Affirming – 3 dots

Active Advertising – 11 dots

Start a Community Drop-in Coffee & Centre – 2 dots

### APPENDIX 3

#### ADDITIONAL IDEAS RAISED AT THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Start a building fund – 16 dots

Community Needs Assessment Program (land use) – 4 dots

Quarterly Guest Speakers – 7 dots

More use of Labyrinth

Meditation – 1 dot

Healthy living ministry (food and drink, hikes, bocce, yoga) – 13 dots

#### CHILDREN'S IDEAS

Invite people to church so they can have people to trust

Give money to the poor

Offering basket at the front of the church so people do not have to wait until the end of the service

Help someone if they are poor

Help people take care of children their children

Build a playground so children don't get bored and visitors have some place to play – 23 dots

## Minister's Report

What a long, strange trip it's been.

March 8<sup>th</sup> 2020, we gathered in the Sanctuary, for our Annual Meeting, with flip charts and dots and ideas and plans for the ministry we wanted to embody in our world. One week later, the entire world shut down as a mysterious virus took hold, and we've been living the last year and a half in the reality of a global pandemic that forced us all to do everything – from grocery shopping to travel to church – differently.

Throughout these crazy, confusing, frightening and frustrating months, there have been moments of beauty, creativity, connection and wonder. The earth got some breathing space as we all stopped madly rushing around in business as usual. People learned how we are created to be in connected community – and learned how to do this virtually. The number of you who learned how to Zoom is inspiring! I launched on the learning curve of what I have been calling “televangelism”, and had a lot of fun filming worships in vineyards, on mountains, in front of a beaver dam, on the beach, in my kitchen and in the woods. I learned to preach what was in my heart, not necessarily what I wrote on my page, and started each week with “beloved community....today I'm coming to you from...”. I even brought you all to camp with me with the Postcards from Pringle worship series.

The community that we call Sylvan tuned in, filmed an online pageant, gathered in the garden (which looks amazing from all the care!), called each other, organized drive-by visits and at least one Anniversary party, had coffee mornings, and showed up to Wild Church. We worshipped under a tree, in the labyrinth garden, and on our screens and had drive by Ash Wednesday blessings. We even had people gather on Zoom to have coffee and check-in Sunday mornings, celebrate communion and share at least one meal together.

In short – we were church. Not what we craved or are used to. But vital. Vibrant. Connected. Sacred. Church.

When the Hebrews fled slavery in Egypt, when they faced exile in Babylon, when everything that they were used to and understood was important and sacred was taken away from them – they learned that God went with them. God isn't static, tied to one place, one land, one temple, one understanding. God goes with the people. Jesus wandered the whole countryside, going into villages and towns and wildernesses and mountains and waters and places where no respectable Rabbi would go. And God was in all those places.

No matter where we go, God is already there. This time of wandering has also been a time of discovering new and wonderful ways to understand and worship God. .

So, while we worry and lament what we haven't been able to do, don't forget what you have discovered – ways to feed your soul, connect with Creation and feel the presence of the Divine – in new and wonderful ways. It's been a long, strange trip, this COVID time – and I am so glad to have been on it with you, beloved community of Sylvan United Church.

Rev. Katherine Brittain

**Passages 2020**

**We remember . . .**

Joanna Weston August 21, 2020

**Passages 2021**

**We remember . . .**

Lois Stephenson January 13, 2021

Gloria Davies July 11, 2021

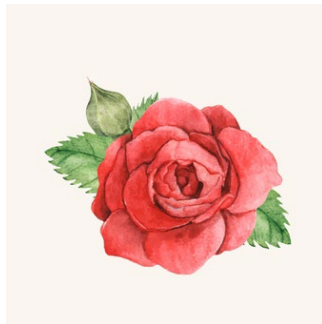
Maureen MacLeod September 5, 2021

**We celebrate**

**the baptism of . . .**

Oliver Scott Wharton August 1, 2021

Talia Sveistrup October 10, 2021



## Chair of Council

It was less than two weeks after our last Annual Congregational Meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 that the Province of British Columbia declared a state of emergency in response to the growing spread of the Coronavirus and Sylvan's doors were closed.

It has been a long road back with many restrictions, phases, plans, starts, restarts, partial openings, bubbles, social distancing, sanitizing, outdoor, indoor, masks and vaccinations. And we are still just beginning to approach something similar to the normalcy of life before COVID.

Through all the disruptions that the pandemic has caused for our community, three things have remained constant: Reverend Katherine has adapted and continued to provide spiritual guidance, support and inspiration through on-line technologies and safe outdoor spaces when possible; Council has continued to meet in virtual space and endeavoured to respond to the ever-changing landscape imposed by the pandemic; and the Congregation has steadfastly maintained its financial support for the church and when occasion allowed, joined in celebration together while respecting necessary safety measures.

The Annual Report for 2020 is another casualty of the Coronavirus. The virus has kept the normal workings and meetings of our teams from happening, making it difficult to formalise activities into reports. Council decided to focus the Annual Report for 2020 on the important and necessary Financial Reports and include the minutes of the last ACM for congregational review prior to adoption.

I look forward to seeing everyone in person in the coming year and to things becoming better than normal.

Tom Baxter,  
Council Chair

## Ministry and Personnel Committee

Our M&P committee continues to consist of John Kamphof, Bill Wallace & Monika Morgan.

It's been another interesting and challenging year at Sylvan.

As the pandemic lingered on, our familiar church routines were no longer there. Our dedicated office administrator Brenda Sober had planned to retire well over a year ago, but did not feel comfortable leaving until things became a bit more normal.

We did start advertising for her position late fall but did not receive suitable candidates. Serendipitously, we learned of a potential candidate & have hired a very suitable replacement in Laurel Walton. Brenda was finally able to retire in early September when Laurel started. We are very pleased that Brenda continues to worship with us.

Laurel is presently working 10-2pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday . We welcome her as our most recent employee & look forward to working with her.

We continue to be blessed with our two pianists, Eve Daniell, and Catharina De Beer. We appreciate their continued commitment and flexibility during the months of changes. Unfortunately, due to COVID we have not resumed choir practises.

Our custodian remains Terry Valley who has recently resumed weekly cleaning services. We also much appreciate his flexibility in providing service for us sporadically this year.

Kim Henneker continues to be our dedicated book keeper.

We have had a couple of work sessions with Camp Pringle, and hope to continue to foster that relationship.

We continued to be blessed and grateful to all these folks at Sylvan.



Brenda Sober



Laurel Walton