

Page 4623
PRESBYTERY OF ESSEX-KENT
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2022
Paulin Memorial Presbyterian Church – 7:00pm

The Presbytery of Essex-Kent was called to a Special Meeting on Wednesday, June 1, 2022 within Paulin Memorial Presbyterian Church, Windsor at 7:00pm

Call to Order – Moderator Barbara Sargent called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

Prayer and Constitution – Moderator offered prayer and constituted the Court able and willing to deal with any matter that properly comes before it.

ATTENDANCE

Present in the Court were Revs. Andy Cornell, Lisa Aide, Tim Reddish, Shalini Sankarlal, Chuck Congram and Shirley Murdock (Clerk)

Elders Present were Barbara Sargent (Moderator), Mark Labadie, Bonnie Pittock, Jane Lung, Wendy Streptak and Bob MacVicar.

Others present were Rev. Brian MacGuffin (LSA Lead Pastor)

Regret

Regrets were received from Revs. Mike Maroney, Lillian Wilton; Elders - Alison Brown, Jeri-Lou Brown, Jayne Broughton, Robert Ivison, Bryan Stirling, Sandra Smith and Elaine Ross and WMS Rep – Carolyn Reid

Welcome

Visitors from LSA were welcomed – Connie Hale-Duncan, Cathy Innocente, Shane Davis and Audrey Bauman as well as Glenna Lane, Clerk of Session for Knox, Leamington

SIT and CORRESPOND

Motion: That the above guests be invited to sit and correspond (Voice without vote)

Moved by Cornell and Reddish.

Motion Carried.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

TO DISCUSS ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH LAKESHORE ST. ANDREW’S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Moderator moves from the Chair

Rev. Lisa Aide to sit as Moderator for this meeting

Rev. Shirley F. Murdock – Clerk

Receive and Consider

MOTION: That the Statement of Rev. Andrew Cornell and the Report of the Administration Committee be Received and Recommendations considered

Moved by

Acting Moderator Rev. Lisa Aide calls for Statement from Rev. Andrew Cornell, IM, LSA

Statement to presbytery re Lakeshore St. Andrew's visitation May 31, 2022

Several times during the three years and eight months I've been called to LSA as interim moderator, I have been exhausted. After a good night's sleep and time with the Lord, I bounced back. But something's changed.

It started April 22 with an email from a former member of session sent to LSA staff and shared with me by a third party. This retired elder raised the alarm over the audited LSA balance sheet which included \$131,000 owed to the denomination for unpaid pension assessments. Session had already decided that LSA was obligated to pay. The email didn't raise anything new and it contained errors and misunderstandings. I dismissed it.

The next thing I knew, it was late evening on April 26. I received an email from one of the LSA ruling elders saying we need to change the date of the annual meeting because new information had come to light. It was obvious that the misinformed opinions of this former elder had found their way to some members of session. I replied instantly, saying that this retired elder had no idea what he's talking about. But the ruling elder who contacted me insisted that the rest of the session was on board and wanted an emergent meeting. So, I agreed in the hope that I would be able to talk to session as a group and calm the waters. I called an emergent meeting for the next day.

A few hours prior to the meeting, I received an email from LSA staff talking about the AGM being cancelled and do I still want payment to go to my supply preacher in Dresden? I replied "no, who told you that?" No reply. I start calling, texting and emailing around to find out what's going on. Silence.

I entered the emergent meeting with a strong suspicion that the decision had already been made. It became clear very quickly that ruling elders and senior staff had already met and that the emergent meeting was simply to rubber stamp their decision. I told the ruling elders that they were making a decision based on

Rev. Shirley F. Murdock – Clerk

Page 4625
Presbytery of Essex-Kent
Special Meeting – June 1, 2022 – Paulin Memorial, Windsor

misinformation. The ruling elders were choosing to follow the opinions of a man whose actions have been proven to be divisive (to the extent that we no longer accept his advice) over my proven support for them as well as the authority I have as interim moderator.

As I was trying to make sense of this the next day I reached out to this retired elder by email. In his reply, he told me he didn't believe I have the best interests of LSA in my heart. That spoke volumes and explained why he went to staff, not me. But what's telling is that staff and the ruling elders didn't think to involve me. What did this retired elder say to them?

At that point, I reached out to presbytery for support.

On the issue of making decisions without authority (operating congregationally), I can report that LSA session has met and we've talked. I believe the issue is on its way to being resolved. But it's still worth including in the visitation terms of reference.

I am pleased to report that session had a very encouraging and productive meeting last week with its finance committee. After months of division, most of the committee members were back on board. Both session and the committee compromised. It was very encouraging. What led to the division is still worth examining by presbytery.

The larger issue here is the debt LSA owes the PCC for its unpaid pension plan assessment. What happened for the ruling elders and staff to suddenly change the minds and want to challenge the denomination?

I want to state clearly and for the record that I support Brian's leadership. I am impressed with the Word that is proclaimed and with the ministries that are being developed. I support the elected and ordained ruling elders.

I also believe in our presbyterian model of governance. Presbytery is responsible for the health of its congregations. Visitations are simply part of the way we do things; they're designed to share the burden, to bring additional insights and to help us see what we are unable to see on our own.

My prayer is that this visitation will see the very good things that are happening while at the same time point to areas which need fixing. May this be good for the Kingdom.

■ Rev. Andy Cornell

Rev. Shirley F. Murdock – Clerk

Page 4626
Presbytery of Essex-Kent
Special Meeting – June 1, 2022 – Paulin Memorial, Windsor

Acting Moderator Rev. Aide invited guests from LSA to speak to the Statement.
No comments were shared.

Acting Moderator Rev. Aide calls for Report of Administration Committee with
Recommendations for Terms of Reference for a Presbytery Visitation.

Moderator Barbara Sargent presents Report of Admin. Co.

VISITATION TO LAKESHORE ST ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TERMS OF REFERENCE

RECOMMENDATION 1

***That the Presbytery of Essex/Kent create a Visitation Team to Lakeshore St Andrews
Presbyterian Church.***

Moved by Sargent and Lung

MOTION CARRIED

*The Visitation Team will meet independently with the Interim Moderator, the Lead Pastor, the
Session, Committees of Session, the Congregation and Staff to:*

- *Learn of the health and future vision of the church.*
- *Ensure that the Session and Lead pastor are knowledgeable of and adhering to polity
and procedures of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.*
- *Create an understanding of the obligation to the PCC Pension fund and the need for a
process of repayment.*
- *Discern an understanding of the working relationship between all committees of Session,
the Lead Pastor and Session.*

RECOMMENDATION 2

That the Visitation Team consist of:

- 1. Rev Michael Maroney, Convenor***
- 2. Rev. Shalini Rajack-Sankarlal***
- 3. Rev Tim Reddish***
- 4. Phyllis May***
- 5. Michael Currie***

Rev. Shirley F. Murdock – Clerk

Moved by Sargent and Lung
MOTION CARRIED.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That a report of the Visitation Team be presented to the Presbytery of Essex/Kent at a meeting as soon as possible.

Moved by Sargent and Lung
MOTION CARRIED.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That the Presbytery give power to issue to the Ministry and Doctrine Committee in collaboration with the Administration Committee to appoint an interim Moderator to Lakeshore St Andrews Presbyterian Church

Moved by Sargent and Lung
MOTION CARRIED.

Report as a Whole

Moved by Sargent and Lung.
MOTION CARRIED

PERMISSION TO INCLUDE ONE ADDITIONAL ITEM OF BUSINESS –

Moved by Murdock and Reddish
MOTION CARRIED

Kathleen Knott of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Amherstburg had originally been appointed Elder Commissioner for GA. Due to health issues, she is not able to fulfill that duty.

MOTION: That Barbara Sargent, Elder of First Church Chatham (Next on the list for elders) be appointed as Alternate Elder Commissioner for the 2022 General Assembly.

Moved by Murdock and Reddish
MOTION CARRIED.

Moderator Barbara Sargent resumes chair

Thanks is offered to Rev. Lisa for sitting as Acting Moderator.

Next Meeting: Service of Dissolution for Knox, Leamington
Presbytery meets at 5:30pm – Sunday, June 12, 2022
Service begins at 6:00pm

Rev. Shirley F. Murdock – Clerk

Page 4628
Presbytery of Essex-Kent
Special Meeting – June 1, 2022 – Paulin Memorial, Windsor

Next Regular Meeting – Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at LSA
Details to be determined.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Moved by Reddish and Cornell

MOTION CARRIED.

Prayer and Dismissal – Moderator offered prayer. Court was dismissed at 8:15pm.

Barbara Sargent. – Moderator

Rev. Shirley F. Murdock – Clerk