



FAIRLAWN
Connect with what matters in life.

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Type:	FAUC Governing Council		
Meeting Topic:	See Below (MER)	Recording Secretary: Mary Ellen Richardson	
Date:	Wednesday, May 30, 2018		
Attendees:	Douglas duCharme (DDC), Steve Dunk (SD), Esther Ewing (EE), Allan Hux (AH), Rob Metcalf (RM), Jim Pollock (JP), John Ryerson (JR), Kathy Salisbury (KS), Marlene St. Jean (MSJ) Guests: Daniel Reed (DR), Rosemary Pryde and Patti Vipond		
Regrets:	Bill Dines, Jennifer Arp (JA), Vicki Stuart (VS)	Time:	6:00 – 9:00 pm

AGENDA ITEMS	DETAILS
	WELCOME, DOUGLAS AND DANIEL! Meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.
1. ES Moment (Esther) 6:10 – 6:25 pm	The group did an exercise, chaired by Esther, intended to deepen our knowledge of each other (and ourselves), by asking each other -“who are you?” which helped us appreciate the depth and breadth that exist in each of us.
2. Update from Transition Team: orientation for GC (DdC, Rosemary Pryde, Patti Vipond) 6:25 – 7:15 pm	<u>MOTION: To approve Rosemary Pryde and Patti Vipond joining Douglas duCharme in a presentation by the Transition Team and subsequent discussion</u> First: Steve Dunk Second: Kathy Salisbury Approved: Unanimous Abstained: <u>Overview and objectives of the presentation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of team members; work and learning thus far; and next steps. • Develop a relationship with both the GC and –with them-- the congregation as a whole. • Seeking GC ideas and advice. <u>Report from TT:</u> <u>Work thus far has included :</u>

- Recognizing that they have a lot of important work to do, and wanting to start that work “grounded” as a team, have spent time developing the team, building understanding, respect and trust. Understanding how people came to Fairlawn and their sense of belonging and where they are on their faith journey.

Discussions have included:

- distinguishing between a committee (task-oriented) and a transition team (involved with the process of coming to terms with why need a transition team in the first place;
- What the work ahead looks like; how to operationalize the “Fairlawn Call”, etc..
- Determining what is moving them and worrying them so that they can deal with it and move forward.
- See the work of the team as a positive way of helping the congregation to become even better than they already are.
 - This is an opportunity to broaden their perspective.
- provide leadership to the GC specifically as it relates to ‘taking risk’, as there will be some changes
 - Want to be able to provide encouragement to the congregation.

Learning thus far has included:

- The difference between change and transition.
 - Change is generally an event that happens ‘outside the ecosystem’, which has downstream ripple effects;
 - We see the results of the change but may not understand the reasons for the change. The tendency is to act on the results and try to fix them. However, if don’t understand the reasons behind the change, we won’t be able to fix the causes. The TT believes it is important to determine the potential reasons for the change.
 - Transition can be a reaction in an attempt to adapt to the change. Typically, it is a deliberate action to delve into more carefully and determine some of the reasons for that change.
- Considering “system thinking”-
 - Look at all the parts of the whole, and how the parts are interrelated.
 - Acknowledging that solving one part will not address the whole. Rather, need to understand how all the parts interact and where changes can be made.
 - The Church is a social organization that functions as a family. When systems get ‘out of whack’—which is what happens when there is change---people get “unglued” in the presence of change—especially when it matters to them emotionally---and they begin to react in rash ways and ‘behave badly’, because there is grief involved. A change that has happened for distressing reasons is more difficult.
 - The TT will attempt to deconstruct the issues, and look at all interactions from several angles and is engaging in a fairly intricate process to excavate some new energies/directions/skills/abilities and learning to move into new opportunity in the organization. By deconstructing the issues, and looking at all interactions from several angles, the TT is striving to understand more fully what has happened
 - The TT feels that this is an incredibly hopeful process of engaging energy (which has been released by people in change). The team wants to come up with some of the theory and then bring the story to it. They acknowledged that “change events” have a lot of

history, especially in churches, and this will take time to figure out. This is why they are moving slowly and deliberately.

- Congregation/church size theory
 - A one page handout was distributed (**Attached Appendix A-walk in**).
 - The TT will consider this theory—indicating that each church size has particular characteristics-and transitioning between them can be difficult.
 - This gives another layer of where Fairlawn might need some help and a better understanding of why we are reacting the way we are.
 - For example, as move to a larger size—the church might function as a ‘program size’ rather than a Pastoral size: --which ‘depersonalize’ the entity. This can be a rattling experience.
 - Douglas noted that Churches constantly plateau below 200 because the entire organism ‘knows that they don’t want to get bigger than that’. This is basically where Fairlawn is. This inertia is caused by change in personal relationship—there are implications of moving to a ‘bigger cell’—e.g. “can’t know everyone, can’t find a parking spot, people sit in your pew that you don’t know, the worship committee chooses weird hymns. The relationship to the whole changes”.
 - When begin to look at the dynamics of what happens-- it becomes quite nuanced.
 - Many more sessions will be spent on this before start applying to the Fairlawn story.

Next Steps

- Communication:
 - Transition team wants to have frequent communication with the congregation and with GC, to help deal with change, communicate what is being learnt and how moving forward together
 - The presenters reiterated how important this was as -when there are changes, and anxiety about change- it is critical to tell people what is happening, and invite dialogue. This makes it easier for people to feel involved.
 - Additionally, it was noted that -since the transition team has no decision-making authority-communication will be very important to inform the GC decision-making processes.

Discussion:

- Ideas on how the TT and GC could best collaborate.
 - Regular communication is important. TT wishes to move forward in tandem with the GC. GC wants to understand the thinking and where the TT is going--the GC doesn’t want to be any more than a month behind.
- .Desire to
 - Have one member of the TT come to GC each time they meet and give update and dialogue.
 - Coordinate the congregational communication with GC/TT so messages are consistent.
 - Have something to share with the congregation in June.
 - Involve the congregation in some exercises that will generate some learning for the TT—that will ask congregants to talk about: congregational history; where their story “plugs into” the Fairlawn story; at what point they had a sense that everything was “ticking over “ and that Fairlawn was making a difference given what else was going on in the

	<p>world; where do we see ourselves and where we would like to see ourselves, and the challenges of moving the church (and all its constituent parts) from the present to that future state. In this way, the entire congregation can be a part of creating the “story”. (It was noted that part of the examination involves the governance model, and this GC in particular. The GC is not an uninvolved party to this exploration and discernment process.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider having a retreat with GC/TT to discuss learning/next steps, or have someone from GC be a part of the TT. ○ Other observations/commentary/thoughts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ So much is about ‘us getting to know ourselves’. ○ “I just want a plan”.....how this activity is integrated in every aspect of the organization so as to keep this as a hopeful conversation. This is about ‘making it happen’---watch what we do, and not just what we say. This helps when we go to communicate to the congregation. ○ There is a huge gap between those who come regularly, those who only come at Xmas and Easter, and those who never come. When talk about change---how to make sure that bring the whole congregation with us as well as the visitors, so they are not getting a lecture on corporate governance when they come to find God. ○ Re Church size paradigm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider not using the “Corporate” word—it has become ‘loaded’ ○ Rather, what are the pluses and minuses of being various sizes, what are the characteristics of really big churches/successful churches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask ourselves “Were there things we hung on to, which we should have let go of?” ▪ Want to know that we are staying at a sustainable level of congregants. It is very hard to keep up energy when it feels like there is no one else to “pass the baton to”. ○ There is a pastoral piece to this work because a lot of people in the congregation have been through a difficult, painful time, and there is a temptation to say ‘we are all good’, and carry on. Frankly there are ripples of emotion--hurt and a sense of loss-- that are deep, and in some cases go back to before the most recent change. Churches, like families, have a tendency to retain culture. There is a lot of emotion and Douglas is very conscious of this. ○ The TT is not yet ready for a major engagement with the congregation but would like to identify one or two tasks that would be good to do and to be seen doing. They welcome ideas. <p>Rosemary and Patti were thanked for their excellent presentation and left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>Action Item: Jim Pollock to include TT update in all future GC agendas.</p>
<p>3. Approval of Minutes (All) 7:15 pm</p>	<p><u>MOTION: Approval of April 24 Minutes</u> First: Esther Second: Steve Approved: All Abstained:</p>
<p>4. Fairlawn Festival update (Esther) 7:20 – 7:30 pm</p>	<p>Esther reported that the Fairlawn Festival was a financial success, in the sense that broke even.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Pavolvitz was best in the morning, people talked warmly about his service on Sunday morning. • Eight to ten youth ministers were in attendance on Friday, and Daniel found it very useful for his ministry. • There were many things that John said that resonated. E.g. we shouldn’t let dogma and doctrine get in the way of getting to know our neighbours,

	<p>we should invite them to come to the table and be prepared to change our mind and be prepared to embrace conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had people from six other churches. He was entertaining and a good speaker. • It was felt that we should consider another future event. We should consider how to promote in the future, as the Fairlawn attendance was somewhat disappointing. There was some discussion of making this ‘part of an annual retreat’ . <p>Action Item: Esther Ewing will formally thank Presbytery, acknowledge the funding, and report what happened to them. (Perhaps indicating that we hope that this is the start of an ongoing future ministry of this nature).</p>
<p>5. Information session for congregation on goals and roles of staff (Marlene) 7:30 – 7:55 pm</p>	<p>Marlene indicated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entire office has completely changed from what it was even a month ago. There is a healthier attitude , and all grateful to have Douglas and Marylene with us. • Marylene has done a great job. The tempo is much healthier and enjoyable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Marylene just picks it up, and gets it done. • At the last GC meeting, there was a conversation to tell the congregation about what staff was doing; perhaps just give people the benefits, and not all the features. There is a thought that have some ‘good news’ story, and would like to present a more positive inspiring update. ---e.g. have entered relationship with Capstone; may proceed with a small Montessori in the Fall, have summer camps, interacting with the community and starting to open up the church. Starting to gel as a team. • Marlene would like to deliver this on a Sunday, with the GC playing a supporting role---want to convey how excited they are in taking the Fairlawn Call and “amping it up a little bit’ since feel like where the church wants to go is still possible. A very brief message in church, with Marlene being available after church. The message is that the staff is ‘here to help the congregation do what they have decided to do’. • In September, there may be a need to have a more formal discussion if we are awarded the grant, which will address some financial restrictions. We will know as of June 19th. • Action Item: Marlene will distribute a copy of the 130-page proposal. It needs to be considered confidential at this stage. • Action Item: Marlene will produce an “FAQ” of “who does what”, and “who do you call to get “certain specific tasks ”done” • Action Item: It was requested that the GC have a special meeting about how the grant will be used, if the proposal is successful. Marlene indicated that there is a timeline associated with the grant. It is very structured. And, the idea is to fold “EA” into each of the events. Note: none of the events are happening until September. There is an interest in understanding how this will touch and tie into the various ministries of the church. Marlene agreed that there is a need for clarity of processes as it crosses across ministries.
<p>6. Update on Alternative Ministry (fleshed out plan and budget) (Daniel) 7:55 – 8:05 p.m.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See plan and budget circulated in advance of meeting (Appendix 1A) <p>Newly formed “Six Degrees” group will be meeting every two weeks starting next Tuesday— Dates; June 5, 19, July 3, 17, 31; August 14, 28. The program will be evaluated in the Fall.</p> <p>They will be working with St Felix (1,000 people per week), there from 5:30-7 and then a debrief afterwards to discuss what has taken place in their lives spiritually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel asked that the GC consider coming, and also invite people that might enjoy the program.

	<p>Action Item: Marlene to change the name on Facebook.</p> <p>Action Item: Explore Spirituality council will manage what will appear in the June 3 bulletin re: this group..</p>
<p>7. Trustee's Report: Quarterly updates on Legacy Fund (Jim to lead) 8:05 – 8:15 p.m.</p>	<p>Report circulated in advance. (Appendix 2) and Bill Dine's notes below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy fund report was reviewed; no questions or concerns • <u>BILL'S NOTES ON REPORT:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The legacy Fund is impacted by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legacies (none this quarter) 2. Investment income (dividends and interest will always be positive, gains or losses on disposal of investments (negative this quarter), and change in market value of securities (negative this quarter) 3. Capital items (only one this quarter) 4. Church's operating deficit • Jim indicated that, having spoken to Bill Dines, he relayed that no representation on the GC is necessary, and that getting the minutes was sufficient. The trustees will deliver the quarterly report. <p><u>Action Item:</u> Jim Pollock to advise Trustees that Douglas DuCharme a) wishes to receive notices of Trustee meetings and b) will be attending the Trustee meeting.</p> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member asked whether there were other trustees that might like to attend GC. Jim indicated that the trustees did not feel it was necessary to have a representative at the GC. Apparently, it was decided some three years ago that the trustees not have to attend. <p>It was felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is inappropriate that the Minister should be the conduit from the Trustees. • It is unnecessary for a trustee representative to be in attendance, as their role is to manage the money effectively. They can come if one party feels it is necessary to come. • Some of the trustees would provide quality input as members of the congregation and that another voice and perspective might be a positive contribution. A concern was expressed that the smaller the GC becomes, the narrower is the contribution. • Conversely, the larger the GC becomes the more inefficient it becomes. • It was felt that there were other ways of ensuring that there is 'porousness' in the GC. • Overall, it was felt that the situation "is healthy and it is not broken". • If there is a retreat, there should be an effort to make sure that some of the trustees come.
<p>8. "Being alone together" and the Roxburgh Project: Finding God in the Neighbourhood (Kathy, John) 8:15 –8:35 pm-</p>	<p>See Being alone together" article circulated in advance via email. (Appendix 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project is different but complementary to the work contemplated in the grant---it will allow us to overlay the results of both research initiatives • This seems to be a really good fit with some of the other things that are going on. • The Roxburgh project: a small group who is connecting with other churches under SE Presbytery, who are coaching them in a "listening process".

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based upon a book that suggests we need to “...turn away from “fixing the church’ and instead embrace how we might discern what “God is doing in our neighborhoods’ so that we can join God there.” • There are different steps to this discernment, first and foremost being a listening process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FAUC is in the infancy steps of listening. How well do we know each other? Sharing stories. Getting together with simple questions and attentive listening. ○ Sharing stories and listening to one another is critical. This is based on “Parker Palmer” ‘circle of trust’. The importance of being seen, and people feeling that they matter (like Walk-in Support and Boarding house ministries). ○ Then, need to listen to “what God is saying”---dwelling in the words found in the Bible ○ Then, listening to the neighborhood---this is the step that the group is still trying to operationalize— how do we get to know our neighbours. As a first “step”, on June 24, John Ryerson is going to invite members of the congregation to take a walk after church, to observe, and to talk about what they have observed. ○ In addition, Daniel suggested that the current plan for the Campfire Connections is to integrate the Roxburgh listening into Campfire Connection---“has anyone experienced something in the last week that has them wondering, and how might your spirituality integrate into that?” He may integrate a neighborhood walk into that. • Note: Dates for Campfire Connections: Every Wednesday, starting the last Wednesday in June. • Question: Is there some communication piece that could be used to invite people to various Fairlawn events...e.g. to come to the Campfires? • Action Item: Marlene to prepare a communication piece to describe “Six Degrees” and “Campfire” –something that people can hand out to their neighbours and distribute at Village Day. • Action Item: Daniel to ensure that announcements on Sunday June 3 include a request for three more volunteers needed for the Village Day. • Reflecting on the article that was circulated, it was noted that mental health, loneliness, and addiction are common issues, and it would be good to talk about them at church Action Item: Esther to consider in what spaces this could be raised, and what support might be offered.
<p>9.. Open and closed meetings (Jim) 8:35 – 8:50</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the Imagine article and the email on this matter (Appendix 4 and 5) <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that the intention is not to decide on an approach at this moment, as it would be premature to the entire TT learning. • John shared that most of his career has been involved with boards that are public. He felt that the default position is that the meetings are open, with consideration to what should be held in camera sessions. People should be invited to come, though not talk. People wishing to make deputations to GC meetings, would have to advise the Chair in advance. . • Logistical issues were identified: room set up; requisite notices; deputation process; minutes handling, etc.. • There are implications for structure and efficiency issues. • “Potential Rules” : Have to be members of the congregation..This is not a town hall, or an ‘open mic’ process.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the interim, it would be helpful for the GC Chair to communicate to the congregation what is done at GC , perhaps by way of a 'short note' indicating that the GC met and what was discussed. This would give people an idea of what is done ,and what happens, and where the discussion took it. It was felt that this would be a good start to have people feel more connected to what is happening at GC, and go a long way to "open up the table". Action Item: John: will draft five or six lines for Jim to review and send.
10. June Meeting (Jim, All) 8:55– 9:00 pm	<p>Items for next GC meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covenanting service (September 23rd). Douglas indicated that there is no need to talk about it further, as it is 'well in hand'. Project Updates form (Marlene). The template that provides a status report of various projects. This was deferred for now. Action Item: Jim Pollock to confirm Fall GC dates.
Adjournment/ Prayer 9 pm	<p>Esther</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On to The Abbot for a pint!
NEXT MONTH's ES Moment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer for next meeting: Allan Hux
Note: Upcoming Meetings:	<p>GC: Tuesday, June 26, 2018 6:00 – 9:00 at Jim Pollock's house (80 Fairlawn Avenue) for a BBQ pot luck dinner. Jim will provide the meat. Details TBD</p> <p>GC: Tuesday, September 25, 2018 6:00 – 9:00</p> <p>*Meetings held on the last Tuesday of every month.</p>

Program Briefing Document

Program Name: Six Degrees (previously Second Ministry)

Six Degrees. How did we arrive at this name? You've heard the phrase *six degrees of separation*. The point being that ultimately, within a finite group of questions, any two people can find their common place of connecting. At Fairlawn are connected to God and to each other by Love. *Six Degrees* is just another step in bringing us closer to help us live out our mission.

1. Please identify the 2018 strategy this tactic supports:

From the Explore Spirituality Council:

“Provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to explore their spirituality, participate in engaging events and experience belonging within our fellowship”

2. Objective(s):

(Why is Fairlawn offering this?) Please be specific and include qualitative and quantitative goals:

To implement a pilot program of an ES offering, which increases engagement with the community, and with Low to Medium (LME) engagement congregation members. We are projecting, by the spring of 2019, there will be 30 new participants (a mix of approximately 10 high-engagement members and a blend of 20 new community and LME participants).

Qualitative Measures

Anecdotal

Explain what information you will be seeking for Anecdotal analysis:

The participants:

1. Feel and foster their connection to Fairlawn. More specifically, a fostering of their spirituality and their connection to God and their broader community, with Fairlawn being the means to make this connection.
2. Will have moved their *conceptualization* of doing good in their community towards an *actual feeling* that they have done good in their community by contributing their time and talents.
3. Feel they have translated their need for meaning into something actionable, with the desire to continue and have more experiences provided by this program/ministry.

Survey Measures

Explain what information you will be seeking via survey feedback/what questions will you ask:

To what extent do you feel that you have had the opportunity:

- 1) To speak authentically and vulnerably with others,
- 2) About how to integrate spiritual/ethical principles into everyday life,
- 3) To inspire one another in spiritual practice, and
- 4) To do good in the community?

Quantitative

Attendance Measures

What is your baseline attendance target in the beginning (what will make this a worthwhile endeavour based on your goals?)

We do not anticipate that all members will attend every session (in particular, because we are entering the summer season where attendance tends to drop). As such, we have developed a grid showcasing projected attendance figures in three categories (Core Group, Regulars and Interested participants).

	Core Group (at 90% of events)	Regulars (60%)	Interested (30%)	Total Members
Portion of Group	27%	60%	13%	100%
3 Month	2	4	1	7
6 Month	4	9	2	15
12 Month	8	18	4	30

**1-Year Goal: 30 ongoing participants (a mix of approximately 10 high-engagement members and a blend of 20 new community and LME participants by June 2019).*

Repeat Attendance Measures

How will you track repeat attendance?

We'll track attendance manually as the group is small.

New Attendees A (Tracking 'New Attendees')

This will be done through a personal ask by Daniel. We will also add new names to Fellowship one to assist in creating groups for the purposes of communicating digitally as well as making notes/tracking preferences. This is also key as we track migration of individuals from outliers (LEMs/Community) to more full-engaged constituents (e.g. we'll make notes along the way to better understand what specifically contributes to deepening engagement with these groups for use in other programming).

New Attendees B (Engaging with non-congregants)

How will you be intentional about engaging with anyone new/anyone who rarely comes to church?

The program is based on the stated needs of people who are loosely affiliated with the church or are spiritual but not religious. There are a small number of people in this category who've

been involved in focus groups or a pilot program. We expect that participants who enjoy the program will invite their friends.

We'll also be using targeted Facebook advertising and advertising at the BBQ, at Village Day, and at Campfire Connections, which are already places where low-engagement people connect with the church.

Cost vs. Benefit

The program will cost money, as we can see on the Cost/Benefit Calculator, although the primary cost will simply be Daniel's time. The program is a tight fit with our 2018 strategy, in a way that other programs are not, and is supported by solid research with program participants.

3. Desired Audience:

Primary

Gender: All

Age Bracket: 20-45

Audience: Non-Attendees (neighbourhood/community)

Secondary

Gender: All

Age Bracket: 45-90

Audience: LME members

4. What known need are we fulfilling (Why are we doing this from the perspective of our desired audience)?

Have you done research (e.g. focus groups with the desired audience) to determine this programming is an unfulfilled need in the community? If yes, please explain:

Yes. With focus groups, one-on-one conversations, and with other Ministers, ultimately speaking with 20 stakeholders. A summary of these findings concluded that our desired audience has the need to participate, regularly, in giving back within the community coupled with an opportunity for authentic and meaningful discussion. These individuals are seeking a regular spiritual practice, hence the format of this program.

And/or, did we receive feedback on our survey asking for this? If yes, please explain:

On the survey, we asked whether congregants are “interested and would attend a service at another time during the week.” 28% of responses (51 people) said they agreed with this statement, and another 5% (9 people) said that they strongly agreed.

And/or, did we receive a verbal request from many members of the congregation/community? If yes, please explain?

n/a

If none of the above, please try your best to explain the ‘why’ behind this initiative.

n/a

Appendix 2

Interim Report

Legacy and Ministerial Support Funds

Three months ended March 31, 2018

	Legacy Fund	Ministerial Support Fund	Total
Balance December 31, 2017	1,261,888	1,000,000	2,261,888
Bequest:			
	-		-
	-		-
Investments:			
Dividends and Interest	11,942	10,273	22,215
Realized gains losses)	(2,176)		(2,176)
Change in market value	(93,570)		(93,570)
Other	-		-
Investment management fees	(3,078)	(2,438)	(5,516)
Capital Expenditures:			
Airtime Communications	(2,916)		(2,916)
	0 -		-
	-		-
	-		-
			-
Transfer out to cover church operating deficit	<u>(36,945)</u>	<u>(7,835)</u>	<u>(44,780)</u>

Balance March 31, 2018

1,135,145

1,000,000

2,135,145

Appendix 3

Loneliness and Isolation:

One day in 2013, I phoned a professor at the University of Chicago to talk about loneliness. John Cacioppo, head of the school's Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience, was a pioneer in the study of the damaging health effects of loneliness, which he and other neuroscientists determined could be life-shortening in extreme cases. He was, as you can imagine, an extremely busy dude.

Prof. Cacioppo eventually got back to me and told me he could squeeze in a quick early-morning interview. When we finally connected, his generosity and passion for the subject kept us talking for a good half-hour: He walked me through the way loneliness can increase levels of stress hormones in an individual and how an increasingly individualistic society was fraying social connections. "One of the things we've seen is a movement away from a concern for others," he said. "Economics basically says you should be concerned about your own short-term interests."

That conversation and that generosity have stuck with me over the years. I was shocked to read last month that Prof. Cacioppo had died at the age of 66. He left behind a groundbreaking body of work including the book *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection*. He told another interviewer that he became acutely aware of the stigma attached to isolation when reading his own book in public, with the giant screaming word "Loneliness" on the cover. He considered taking the cover off or turning it upside-down.

In the past five years, the attention paid to loneliness as a public-health issue has only increased. The Conservative government in Britain appointed a minister for loneliness after a decade of shredding the social safety net, which is a bit like the fairy-tale witch giving a lollipop to kids in the oven as she bakes them. The Dutch government [announced](#) this month that it is investing €26-million (\$40.8-million) to combat loneliness among the elderly.

In Canada, a widely quoted figure reveals that 1.4 million elderly people experience feelings of loneliness. At the other end of life, 66 per cent of Canadian university students admitted to feeling isolated in the previous year. More of us are living alone than at any point in our country's history (although this can, of course, be a blessing: Living with someone does not preclude loneliness, as anyone in a bad marriage can tell you).

And yet, where does this pain present itself? Not on the pages of Instagram, the land of endless vacations and cocktails that magically refill themselves. Nor on Facebook, the digital wedding and baby registry, where designer couples are joined at the lips and require a surgeon to separate them. We all know that social media require a Maggie Smith level of performance and that we are rarely shown the mess backstage, but that doesn't make it hurt less when the performance seems so flawless.

And this is what makes the Loneliness Project so refreshing: It's like Facebook if Facebook woke up at 4 a.m. wondering what the hell it all means or Instagram was forced to shed its happiness filters. The [Loneliness Project](#) is simply a web site, a place to record those middle-of-the-night thoughts, which for many people occur at all hours of the day, often in the presence of co-workers or family. Reading through the stories, which come from seniors and teenagers, singles and married people, you realize there is no "right" way to feel lonely, and the only thing common to their experience is how common it is.

One young man talks about wandering through IKEA on his own, because he has no one to share the day with: "I ate two hot dogs and bought nothing." People write about having no one to sit with at lunch, or accompany them to surgery, or wait at the finish line of a marathon. Others are surrounded by people, but feel unmoored. Loneliness,

someone writes, is “a feeling of not being understood, a sense of worthlessness.” Not surprisingly, the contributors are anonymous, identified by first name or not at all. There are no carefully edited profile pictures.

The Loneliness Project is the brainchild of Toronto graphic designer Marissa Korda, who began collecting the stories last year (she now has more than 1,400 entries from 60 countries). It was a way, she says, of expressing empathy and finding connection in the world. “Loneliness is a normal part of being human, yet there’s so much stigma around it that can make it very hard to talk about. When we read and share stories, we not only have a better understanding of other people, but how our own stories fit into a wider human context. I want to bring loneliness in the open and start a conversation around it.”

This stigma leads can lead to a self-defeating cycle: Our brains, longing for social contact but thrown into self-preservation mode by perceived rejection, put up defences that make connection even harder. It’s a situation heartbreakingly encapsulated by an 18-year-old student on the Loneliness Project, who finds himself ignored by his roommate. He writes, “Loneliness is a bubble around me that’s constantly pushing out bad vibes to make sure it’s never cured.”

For Prof. Cacioppo, the stigma wasn’t just unfortunate, it was misplaced. He suggested that we think of loneliness not as a failing, but as a biological signal, in the same way hunger tells us to eat or thirst makes us head for water. Loneliness is a sign that the brain craves contact with the rest of the herd. Unfortunately, that signal can turn into a shrieking alarm for a chronically lonely person, drowning out the overtures of friendship that might be happening all around.

Prof. Cacioppo suggested loneliness could be relieved by recognizing the signal, and acknowledging it, and seeking some kind of meaningful contact that wasn’t threatening – volunteering somewhere welcoming, for instance. It’s not easy. It was probably never easy, but harder now, with the illusion of connection reflected at us from every surface.

Appendix 4

The Case for Open Board Meetings

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

Guest Writers

Transparency & Accountability

Boards & Governance

Elizabeth McFaul

For many nonprofits, board meetings are closed-door affairs. Few nonprofits actively ask for opinions from their membership on a regular basis, or open every board discussion to outside participants. However, with recent discussions surrounding privacy, transparency, and accountability in the private sector, similar discussions arise in nonprofits.

The discussion surrounding open board meetings can be a difficult one. Do we open up our discussions to more scrutiny by our members? Can a guest participate in the meeting? What about confidential topics? How do we advertise the meeting and its contents? Will anyone even come?

Reasons Behind Open Meetings

Transparency and accountability are two driving forces behind the push for more open governance. Ontario's past Information and Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian [describes](#) open governance as key for democracy, as it "allows citizens to scrutinize the activities of elected officials and public servants to ensure that they are acting in the public interest." Government bodies often have rules surrounding meetings that are open to the public, and when an in-camera or closed session can occur. For nonprofits, open board meetings are not required, so it is up to the stakeholders to decide their board's decision-making processes and the level of scrutiny.

Arguments for open board meetings can happen after the membership feels that a board handled an issue inappropriately or feels that they were not adequately consulted. "There are times when the notion that others are deliberating an issue behind closed doors can be disconcerting," [notes GDP Consulting](#), especially when the issue affects you directly, affects your family or friends, relates to your values or beliefs, or focuses on a topic that you believe should be discussed or decided on by the membership. Providing stakeholders an opportunity to express concerns or complain early in the decision-making process can prevent rejection of decisions or costly rework.

US-based The Chronicle of Philanthropy interviewed Anne Wallestad, president of Boardsource, [in a feature on open board meetings](#) in 2013. She presents a more strategic argument, where "If it creates a sense of community ownership, that could be positive," says Wallestad, "And the idea of cultivating new leaders who could support the organization, whether as a board member or committee member, could be a potential benefit."

Concerns

A board may conduct all closed meetings because they believe that the stakeholders should not be aware of the discussion and only the final outcome. Others conduct all closed meetings because they feel that most of the agenda contains items which are political or sensitive in nature because they relate to personnel, communities, or internal business processes. Others cite the inability to discuss items that were not publically announced as a frustration.

Since more participants often leads to longer meetings, the extreme demands on board members' time may be a factor in closed meetings. The worries that board members will not be free to speak their minds if others are in the

room, or that stakeholders will use what they hear to influence the board member are other arguments against open board meetings.

For smaller nonprofits, the reason for closed meetings may be resource-oriented. Open board meetings involves advertising the meeting and encouraging individuals to attend. A lack of interest in the proceedings leads to the thought that open board meetings are unnecessary or not worth the additional effort.

Things to Consider

A board that is considering opening their meetings to the public should outline the expectations of the open and closed sessions in terms of content, attendance, conduct, and participation. A good example of this is the Cancer Care Ontario's [Board Policy on Open Board Meetings](#).

- An agenda needs to be circulated to the membership in advance and items outside the agenda should not be discussed.
- All board members should have a good handle on items that should be covered in a closed session so that confidential items remain confidential.
- The board should decide on the level of participation of guests in meetings and how the board is expected to address their concerns. A question and answer period, full participation, or no participation all impact the effectiveness of an open session and the board's engagement with public.

Participating Guests

Guest participation in board meetings can seem unwieldy and impractical. It requires patience and extra time to allow for additional opinions, and they can be frustrating if guests do not have the full picture of a discussion that spans multiple meetings. Managing the discussion of a board can be challenging for a board chair; adding in guests presents an additional challenge.

An alternative to an open board meeting is an open board forum, where board members host a public session that can include formal and informal discussions with the community. This allows for more participation by members and a chance for the board to review the suggestions and discuss them further in a private setting.

When to Close the Meeting

A closed session or closed meeting should deal with confidential issues. The Certified General Accountants Association of Ontario [defines confidentiality](#) as the act of preventing “undue harm to the organization and its assets, including volunteers, board members and staff”. Agenda items for a closed meeting or a closed session often revolve around HR, legal, or financial issues, such as:

- Holding preliminary discussion about new facilities or the possibility of a facility closure.
- Discussing personnel matters where an individual employee or potential employee's name, competency, or qualifications are discussed.
- Hearing disciplinary/dismissal cases.
- Discussing a donation when the donor has requested anonymity.
- Analyzing materials and information or consider legal advice for pending or potential litigation.
- Reviewing the results of an Executive Officer, board member, or board evaluation.
- Examining documents protected by privacy acts.

In [In Camera Board Sessions: Careful How You Use Them](#), E. Grant MacDonald argues that in-camera or closed sessions should only be considered when necessary. “In-camera sessions challenge boards to assess whether the

motivation for a closed or private deliberation is tied to the need for confidentiality and/or secrecy. While confidentiality is important to good board governance, secrecy can, and will, undermine it,” says MacDonald. With the push for greater accountability for boards by their stakeholders, it is critical to balance the need for confidentiality with the desire for a more transparent governance process.

Opening your board meetings can be very rewarding. It gives your board a chance to connect more actively with stakeholders and get feedback early in the decision making process. As long as you can manage the additional challenges of an open board, more transparency and more accountability can ultimately give your stakeholders more confidence in the great work you do.

About the Author

Elizabeth McFaul is a digital marketer based out of Waterloo, Ontario with an interest in non-profit communications, boards, and organizational design. She has volunteered with the [Kitchener Waterloo Little Theatre](#), including two years as the Secretary of the Board and the Social Media Officer. She also writes for the region’s alternative monthly paper: [The Community Edition](#).

Appendix 5: Excerpts from an E-mail circulated to GC from Jim Pollock, May 22, 2018

Re: article on open meetings at:
<http://www.imaginecanada.ca/blog/case-open-board-meetings>

This is something I will circulate to the rest of the board for discussion at the May meeting.

Some of my thoughts, below, linked to quotes from the article.

Jim

Providing stakeholders an opportunity to express concerns or complain early in the decision-making process can prevent rejection of decisions or costly rework.

I agree that our process should include the opportunity for GC to hear and understand the concerns of congregation and staff. The principle of our hearing these early enough in the game that they can be duly considered is appropriate.

I could see us inviting staff members in to a special GC meeting (or section of the regular GC meeting) so that individuals have an opportunity to state their concerns and encourage discussion.

There are other mechanisms, of course, that would likely play a role. M&P is, as I see it, the main vehicle through which staff concerns (either individually or collectively) can be addressed. Jennifer and/or individual M&P reps could present HR issues (as that is what they likely are) to GC when M&P feels that is warranted.

*A board that is considering opening their meetings to the public should outline the expectations of the open and closed sessions in terms of content, attendance, conduct, and participation
I do believe GC should create a document that outlines our approach to meetings and to vehicles/ processes for providing staff and congregant input and discussion, as well as identifying times when closed sessions would be necessary, as the Certified General Accountants Association of Ontario did. I say this not in the context of our considering having open meetings all the time – that, in my opinion, is not on – but in the context of considering creative ways of providing appropriate and effective opportunities for congregational and staff input.*

*An alternative to an open board meeting is an open board forum, where board members host a public session that can include formal and informal discussions with the community. This allows for more participation by members and a chance for the board to review the suggestions and discuss them further in a private setting.
Here, I am reminded that we have our DFDs which permit opportunities for us to inform but also seek input from the congregation. Going forward with the transition and our focus on improving the culture at Fairlawn, we can investigate other ways of ensuring that the proverbial doors of communication are open and that GC is providing updates.*