



FAIRLAWN
Connect with what matters in life.

GOVERNING COUNCIL UPDATE

Notes from November 27, 2018 Council Meeting

Dear Fairlawners,

Your Governing Council met on November 27 and much activity in various areas of our church life were highlighted.

In our moment of Exploring Spirituality before we got underway, Esther Ewing provided a reflection on our being 'watchful.' Reading from *Book of Faith: Advent Reflections – Making All Things New* by Kae Evensen, Carolyn Coon Mowchan, Margaret A. Krych, Peter W. Marty and Debbie Trafton O'Neal, she read a commentary arising from Mark 13: 32-37 in which we are told to Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come [when adversity or something unexpected might visit you]. The whole passage is cited in the Appendix to our [Minutes](#).

The commentary posed some questions:

- What keeps you awake at night? What is your greatest worry?
- In what ways is it helpful for you to know that you and your loved ones are already taken into God's story, a story brimming with promise?

... and we closed with the prayer:

Gracious Christ, it is your deepest joy to gather our story into yours. Keep us awake to your promises, promises that renew us each moment, each day. Amen.

Following up on Governing Council's discussion in October about the role of Council and the concept of leadership, we spent a good part of an hour considering The Fairlawn Call, whose mission statement is *We help people connect with what matters in life through the ministries of Explore Spirituality, Experience Belonging and Embrace Action.*

Governing Council discussed The Fairlawn Call from a variety of perspectives: its strong acceptance/ embrace by the congregation; its success in encapsulating what Fairlawn is essentially about, focusing on the three ministries of Explore Spirituality, Experience Belonging and Embrace Action; its relevance today and how it may inform, and be changed by, the insights we gain through the Fairlawn Transition.

Such discussions help your Council and the Transition Team in ensuring that the work being done together is comprehensive and provides insights for how we envision our church community in the future.

A key help in those discussions is our being mindful of listening carefully to what others are saying. The Transition Team reported to Council that the Listening Project session held after the church service on November 4 brought forward many reflections and insights on the power of listening.

Don Smith indicated that the feedback from the Listening meeting showed that people wanted to feel that they were heard and valued. It was encouraging to the Transition Team that this was a valuable initiative. Notes on that meeting were circulated to all those who attended; if anyone would like to see the notes, please get in touch with me at **jimpollock@bell.net**.

The Transition Team is currently evaluating its work plan and priority items, to share with your Council and the congregation in the new year.

One of the highlights in the Council updates was the felt need to provide the congregation with further clarity on the breadth and depth of volunteer activities at Fairlawn, and to enter into conversations with congregants to understand better the interests they have and the gifts they can bring in the life of the church. To that end, there will be in the next while some communications from Councils, including a display during Coffee Hour of council and lay ministry team work during the first quarter of 2019.

John Ryerson, who has been our Presbytery rep on Council, now continues as a Region 10 representative as the Presbytery has now ceased operation. John will continue to network within what is now this region, a geographic region spanning all of Toronto and north of Barrie. We appreciate all that he has done, and continues to do, in connecting with North Toronto church communities and other Toronto churches and agencies. One example of cross-church collaboration is a Networking meeting which will bring together members of various general councils on January 20. Hosted by Manor Road United Church, it will provide a great opportunity for your Governing Council members to meet their counterparts in other churches and to establish good contacts for further sharing of ideas and insights.

Other highlights at the Governing Council meeting included:

- Experience Belonging Ministry: 24 packages were sent to University students in November
- Embrace Action: A Dialogue information session on the refugee program will be held on January 27, following the Social Justice Sunday service

We ended the meeting with a hearty round of applause for Daniel Reed, Minister of Children and Youth, acknowledging his being approved for ordination. Daniel is currently in the process of seeking a call or appointment to a ministry position into which he will hopefully be ordained in May-June 2019.

Your Governing Council meets again on December 18.

Until next time,

Jim Pollock

Chair, Governing Council

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