



FAIRLAWN
Connect with what matters in life.

**FAIRLAWN AVENUE
UNITED CHURCH**

28 Fairlawn Ave.,
Toronto, ON M5M 1S7
www.fairlawnchurch.ca
416-481-6848

Visioning for Fairlawn — A Report from the Minister

January 2024



In January I met with members of the Governing Council, Fairlawn Forward Committee, Search Committee and Staff. The reason for the day was to begin a visioning process.

This was not to set aside any of the visioning work of the past, I expected that we would be bringing those lessons and expectations.

I needed, as the new minister, to learn some things together with these leaders. The report is coming to you now because we agreed to take time to review what is in here before I sent it out to all of you.

Folks brought their A-Game, and their love for and commitment to our community of faith were evident.

I asked a series of questions, including

- "What do you miss at Fairlawn?"
- "What would you give another hour a week for, for Fairlawn?"
- "What are your nightmares about Fairlawn?"
- "What are you dreams for Fairlawn?"
- "If you had all the cash in Fairlawn's bank account, what would you do with it for Fairlawn?"

The answers and conversations told a story about our core values, our energy levels and their implications and suggested next steps.

Goals

I had four goals for the meeting.

1. An "energy audit" and revealing of core values
2. To discover how we want to direct our hope.
3. To find out how to move into thriving mode.
4. To have a short list of gleanings and suggestions for action Governing Council (GC) could begin to discuss in their upcoming meetings.



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Assumptions I Brought to the Meeting

1. We are in the business of encouraging people on their spiritual journey and embodying hope.
2. We are all we have right now, we may inspire others to join in but we have to start with us.
3. We have who we need and will have who we will need.
4. We are not after people to take up the reins, we want to bring in new people because we are perceived as relevant and let them decide how much energy to.
5. As we talk about and set priorities, we will be giving direction to our current structure (e.g. if we determine that we need to broaden our understanding of spiritual journeys, Exploring Spirituality or a sub-group will be tasked with this).

Some Implications of What We Talked About

1. We need to upgrade our online presence
2. We need to rethink our staffing model
3. We need to re-think our use of space (we already have a sense of this from our rentals).
4. We may (or may not) tweak the job descriptions for our committees, so people feel free to move from one to the other and others can be invited on board depending on their interest and energy.

Moving with Our Ideas (aka ministry direction)

1. We believe we are called to minister with younger people, and need to discover what is relevant to them. This requires us to engage with them where they are (our online presence must be excellent and engaging), build on what we do that draws them to us, and surface the youthful spirit in many of us for the sake of an ongoing conversation (one example may be to have an invited sit-down with the Choir members whom I think represent a significant representation of that demographic [promising them this is a one-off moment, not a slick way to get them onto committees]).
2. We want to do fun events, that may be new or may be from past joys. With teams that only have to plan one a year. I suggest we think of something quarterly.
3. Climate Change: How do we become more of a community beacon for engaging with the effects of this new reality we are living into?
4. We want to be a busy building, perhaps for youth or seniors or LGBTQ2IA+ members of the community without displacing important ministries like Walk In.



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What's Next?

We start with Governing Council. I have asked them to suggest that in each idea we come up with one initiative (max. 2) so we aren't handing anyone or any group a bucket of responsibilities. We can add new ones in the years to come.

You are next. Now that you are reading this Governing Council has begun to offer suggestions to each other. What initiatives/ideas would you like to see in the four areas of "Moving With Our Ideas?"

During this time, we will be

- Paying attention to what comes at us unexpectedly, what knocks us off course, as opportunities
- Doing ongoing "energy audits" to make sure people are engaged and we are spending what we have for the right things. For example, to ask ourselves if we need the time we think we do for the things we think we need to do.
- Staying aware that none of our next steps are intended to suggest we abandon anything we are currently doing unless we all agree we can set something aside for the time being while we spend our energy on something else.

Here, again, is my ask of all of you (please don't get wrapped up in how we might do these things, just share what possibilities come to you)

What initiatives/ideas would you like to see in the four areas of "Moving with Our Ideas?"

email me: cameron@fairlawnavenueunited.ca

Thanks all,