

Report of the Joint Worship Committee
for Chalmers and Sydenham United Churches

I. Mandate, Membership and Meetings

In June 2017, the congregations of both Chalmers and Sydenham Street approved the *Final Report to the Congregations on a Proposed Model of Shared Ministry/Staffing between Chalmers and Sydenham Street United Churches*. Contained within the report were a number of recommendations, including:

That Chalmers United Church and Sydenham Street United Church establish a Joint Worship Committee to begin planning for shared worship services beginning in January 2018.

Ruth Wilson, co-chair with Juliet Huntly of the Joint Churches Committee, subsequently sent a note to representatives of both congregations involved in planning and overseeing worship to take a first step towards implementing this congregational motion. Because it was summer and the two congregations are organized in different ways, it was early September before the committee was established, with the following members:

Barb Fletcher, committee co-chair (CUC)
Lynn Freeman, member, Joint Churches Committee (SSUC)
Sue Irving (CUC)
Rosemary Thoms (SSUC)
Eileen Woloshyn, committee co-chair (SSUC)

In October, David Spooner (CUC) joined the committee, establishing equal committee representation from the two congregations, a principle that all members considered important.

The committee has met three times--September 6th, October 2nd and October 23rd.

Our conversations were wide-ranging and congenial, with all participants thoughtfully engaged in imagining worship within the proposed new shared staffing model.

Decisions were made by consensus, with priority given to two major issues--the location for our shared worship and leadership in worship before a new Minister of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care is called to begin ministry with our congregations. Other issues or questions were identified, some for future consideration by a worship committee and some by other groups or our congregations. Our recommendations follow.

I. Shared Worship

Recommendation 1 -- That, beginning on Sunday, January 7th, 2018, Chalmers and Sydenham Street United Churches worship together, alternating between sanctuaries on a monthly basis, with worship at CUC in January and SSUC in February and continuing on this monthly rotational pattern until June 2019.

Recommendation 2 -- That, beginning in July 2019 and each subsequent July, worship be held in the same church as the preceding June, with the regular rotational schedule to resume in August. This annual adjustment in the Worship schedule will allow for each location to host Advent and Christmas services in alternate years.

Recommendation 3 -- That laypersons participate regularly in all aspects of worship, including communion and other sacraments.

Recommendation 4 -- That laypersons from both congregations serve as greeters, collection takers, scripture readers and other roles in worship at both locations;

Recommendation 5 – That the rotational schedule for worship be printed in each weekly bulletin and appear on each congregational website as well as posted on the main entrance doors of each church building.

II. Supply Ministry

Recommendation 6 -- That Chalmers and Sydenham Street United Churches employ a full-time supply minister, beginning January 2nd, 2018 or as soon thereafter as possible, and continuing until the appointment of a newly called Minister of Worship, Sacraments and Pastoral Care or June 30, 2018, at which time the appointment may be extended until the anticipated start date of the newly appointed called Minister.

Recommendation 7 -- That a committee be established, with a minimum of three representatives from each congregation, to identify and engage one suitable candidate for full-time supply ministry, beginning January 2nd, 2018 or as soon thereafter as possible and appoint on an interim basis one or more supply ministers to lead worship and provide pastoral care on a temporary basis until a short-term supply minister is confirmed in this role (as per Recommendation 6 above).

III. New Worship Committee

Recommendation 8 -- That Chalmers and Sydenham Street United Churches jointly establish a new Worship Committee, with a minimum of four representatives, at least one of whom who served on the Joint Worship Committee (the latter for continuity), from each congregation, with ex-officio members, Minister of Worship, Sacrament and Pastoral Care and the Minister of Music, as soon as possible,

Recommendation 9 -- That the new Worship Committee be mandated to provide leadership, through planning, visioning and oversight in the development and delivery of shared worship and special services that support the spiritual growth of congregational members.

Recommendation 10 -- That the existing Joint Worship Committee with the newly appointed Worship Committee meet once, possibly twice, before the end of the 2017 calendar year to define terms of reference for the new Worship Committee.ⁱ

Recommendation 11 -- That the existing Joint Worship Committee be disbanded no later than December 31, 2017 since its mandate (i.e. to begin planning for shared worship services beginning in January 2018) will have been met.

IV. Accessibility and Inclusivity

The Committee embraced Accessibility and Inclusivity as aspirational principles to guide the shared and separate governing councils, committees, ministers and administrative staff, of Chambers and Sydenham Street United Churches, in collaboration with each other.

Drawing on work previously undertaken by Chalmers Church, we agreed that Accessibility and Inclusivity should include, but not be limited to:

- a. *Physical accessibility*: i.e., can the congregant get to church, into the church, get into their seat, be able to manage the choir loft and other chancel locations if need-be, get comfortable afterwards to chat and have coffee, accessible washrooms, etc.; is everyone made to feel comfortable at worship and other congregational events, such as church suppers, guest speakers, church-sponsored arts performances?
- b. *Accessible communications*, i.e., are the bulletin and web-site being easily read and understood, understandable order of service, comprehensive notices and announcements included, clearly enunciated contact information, attractive and easy to follow design, location of the next service and regular schedule of location of services clearly laid out in all communications going to congregants and to the public? Do we have braille capabilities? Are people trained to make announcements and project their voices up front, is the microphone adequate, are there sufficient hearing assistance devices at both worship locations are there other locations where sound baffles should be installed to facilitate a multiplicity of small personal conversations in larger rooms?

- c. *Diverse and Inclusive content of service, i.e. inclusive language, have ways in which congregants may be taught and feel familiar with new hymns (make it a social time i.e., once a month - coffee after?), do congregants want more varied content i.e., liturgical dance, art, more audience/congregant participation, guitars, how much input from the Worship Committee will be received by the new minister or supplies? Place for children and young families*

Respectfully submitted to the Joint Steering Committee, Chalmers Church Council and SSUC Executive and their respective congregations, by Joint Worship Committee co-chairs:

Barb Fletcher
Lynn Freeman
Sue Irving

David Spooner
Rosemary Thoms
Eileen Woloshyn

November 1, 2017

ⁱ In the process of preparing this report, members reviewed the terms of reference for worship committees of other United Church Worship Committees and prepared a integrated of possible role. This compilation is provided below as a starting point and reference in the preparation of terms of reference for a new Worship Committee.

- Receive, consider and normally respond to suggestions, comments and criticisms regarding worship and music
- Oversee, in cooperation with the Minister(s), the policy on baptisms and confirmation of children and adults, marriages and membership
- Support pulpit supply substitutes in the absence (planned or emergency) of the minister
- Provide support, as appropriate, for ushering and greeting, lay readers, communion servers and element preparation, audio-visual technical support
- Support the choir and individuals participating in the Ministry of Music
- Manage materials used in worship, i.e. flowers, banners, symbols, decorations, and miscellaneous liturgical items
- Recommend (or comment on) policy on alternate use of sanctuary
- Develop and manage the Committee's budget