

ELORA UNITED CHURCH ANNUAL MISSION & LEADERSHIP REPORT for 2015



Annual Mission & Leadership Congregational Meeting
May 29, 2016

Elora United Church

2016 Mission & Leadership Meeting

May 29, 2016

Proposed Agenda

Overview of Vacancies

Introductory Business

Opening Prayer

Purpose of the Meeting

Election of Chairperson and Secretary for the Meeting

Nominees: Curt Hammond

Nominees: Judy McMullan

Approval of Agenda

Participation of Adherents

Mission Reports

Mission Board

Minister for Worship, Spiritual Development & Pastoral Care

Minister for Children & Youth

The Presbytery, Conference, and General Council

Project Welcome Refugee Sponsorships

Initiatives

Kinship Groups

Building Partnerships Task Group

Oktoberfest Dinner and Auction

Leadership for 2016-17

Nominations and Elections

Plan for vacant positions

Adjournment

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ELORA UNITED CHURCH 2015 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

February 22, 2015

There were approximately 52 people at the meeting.

The meeting was preceded by lunch. Greg Smith-Young outlined the vacant leadership positions. Greg began the meeting with prayer. The business portion of the meeting began at approximately 1:10 pm.

MOTION by Carolyn Skimson / Bronwyn Hill that Brent McDonald serve as Chairperson and Judy McMullan serve as Secretary for Elora United Church's 2015 Annual Congregational Meeting. CARRIED

MOTION by Amy Weaver / Nancy Van Veen that the agenda for this meeting, as found on page 1 of the 2014 Annual Report, be approved with the addition of a Music Discussion before the Trustees Report. CARRIED

MOTION by John Wilkie / Curt Hammond that the membership grant voting rights for this Annual meeting to those who are adherents of Elora United Church on financial and administrative matters. CARRIED

MOTION by Carolyn Skimson / Menai Wardle that the minutes of the March 2, 2014 Annual Congregational Meeting, as found on pages 3-4 of the 2014 Annual Report, be approved. CARRIED

Curt Hammond led the discussion of the Financial Reports.

MOTION by John Wilkie / Rick Hulley that the financial statements for 2014 as found in the 2014 Annual Report, pages 15 and 30-32, be approved. CARRIED

MOTION by Randall Howard / Laura Alessio that the Elora-Bethany Pastoral Charge budget for 2015, as found in the 2014 Annual Report page 33, be approved. CARRIED

MOTION by John Beggs / Coralie Corlett that the Elora United Church Budget for 2015, as found in the 2014 Annual Report pages 34-35, be approved. CARRIED

MOTION by Melanie Anderson / Amy Weaver that the Special Gifts Fund Budget for 2015, as found in the 2014 Annual Report page 36, be approved. CARRIED

MOTION by Bronwyn Hill / Kim Saunders that Elora United Church's Mission and Service Fund Objective for 2015 be \$30,100, not including the United Church Women's contribution. This is an increase of 3.3% over the actual givings in 2014. CARRIED

Music Discussion

Amy Weaver outlined the discussions that had taken place in Council, for information. The current electric piano is barely working and it was felt that it was not worth repairing. There was a proposal to replace it with a baby grand piano. One query was whether we might replace the electric piano AND look into purchasing a baby grand piano.

Trustees Report

John Wilkie presented the report. Randall Howard made a plea for a person comfortable with numbers to join the Trustees.

MOTION by Carolyn Skimson / Tom Skimson that the Trustees Report for 2014, as found in the 2014 Annual Report pages 27-29, be approved. CARRIED

General Reports

MOTION by Coralie Corlett / Curt Hammond that the non-financial reports for 2014, as found in the 2014 Annual Report pages 5-26, be approved. CARRIED

Considering a New Governance Model

Laura Alessio and Greg Smith-Young presented the proposed new governance model. Rather than one Council, the proposal would be for a **Mission Board**, for leadership and inspiration and a **Resources Board** for financial and property needs. Both would function as spiritual bodies, seeking the celebration of God.

MOTION by Carolyn Skimson / John Wilkie to support the development of the model put forward, for consideration at another congregational meeting. CARRIED

MOTION by Rick Hulley / Bronwyn Hill that the following people be approved by the congregation to serve in the positions and for the terms indicated.

Council Member-at-large: Carole Kennedy (1 year, renewable)

Trustee: Randall Howard (4 years)

CARRIED

Positions still remaining open on Council: Christian Education Rep, Outreach Rep, Finance & Stewardship Rep, 2 Member-at-Large positions, 2 Presbytery Reps.

As there was no other business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at about 2:45 p.m.

ELORA UNITED CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, May 24, 2015

Approximately 30 people were present.

CHAIR: Bronwyn Allen Hill

RECORDING SECRETARY: Judy McMullan

Greg opened with prayer.

MOTION by Carolyn Skimson/Gerrie Ainley that Bronwyn Allen Hill be chair for this meeting and Judy McMullan be recording secretary. CARRIED

MOTION by Bonnie Young/Curt Hammond to approve the agenda. CARRIED

MOTION by Gerrie Ainley/Nancy Van Veen to allow adherents to vote at this meeting. CARRIED

Greg gave an overview of the proposed changes to church governance structure. The proposal is to change from a Council structure to a Mission Board and a Resources Board.

MOTION by Curt Hammond/Tom Skimson that Elora United Church move to a Leadership Model which includes:

a Mission Board as the congregation's governing body, responsible for leading Elora UC's mission on behalf of the congregation, and consisting of 8 members selected by the congregation including 2 representatives to Presbytery; and

a Resources Board, responsible for managing the congregation's resources to support its mission, and consisting of 6 members selected by the congregation; and

at least two congregational meetings annually, with one in February focussing on the congregation's finances and property, and one in May focussing on the congregation's mission and leadership; and

a Board of Trustees with 4 members selected by the congregation; and

a Ministry & Personnel committee with 2 members selected by the congregation and 1 member selected by Bethany United Church.

CARRIED – none opposed, no abstentions

MOTION by John Beggs/Laura Alessio that the Mission and Resources Boards be empowered to approve a detailed description of this new model, ensuring it is in compliance with United Church bylaws in The Manual. CARRIED

MOTION by Tom Skimson/John Beggs that a congregational meeting be scheduled before the end of September at which time leadership positions will be filled and the new model will be implemented. CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.

ELORA UNITED CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, September 27, 2015

Approximately 55 people were present, including Greg and Barb Smith-Young. Greg opened with prayer.

MOTION by Richard Burt/Phil Irish that John Wilkie serve as chair for this meeting and Judy McMullan be recording secretary. CARRIED

MOTION by Arlene Callaghan/Camille McDonald to approve the agenda. CARRIED

Greg reviewed the new leadership model which we established at our Congregational meeting in May. We will have a Mission Board and a Resources Board. They will likely each meet monthly and on the same night. In the past, similar meetings have been held on the second Tuesday of each month. There are 8 places on the Mission Board, including 2 representatives to Presbytery, and 6 places on the Resources Board.

Some nominations had been made before the meeting and these were presented. Further nominations were made by the congregation, at this point.

MOTION by John Beggs/Melanie Anderson to close nominations. CARRIED

MOTION by Phil Irish/Coralie Corlett that the following people be approved by the congregation for serve in the positions and for the terms indicated.

Mission Board member	Bonnie Young	3 years, renewable
Mission Board member	Phyllis Waind	3 years, renewable
Mission Board member	Melanie Anderson	2 years, renewable
Mission Board member	Lois Amos	2 years, renewable
Mission Board member	Amy Weaver	1 year, renewable
Mission Board member	Arlene Callaghan	1 year, renewable
Mission Board member and rep to Presbytery	Dorothy Hemingway	4 years, renewable
Mission Board member and rep to Presbytery	Carole Kennedy	2 years, renewable
Resources Board member	Curt Hammond	3 years, renewable
Resources Board member	Richard Burt	3 years, renewable
Resources Board member	Tom Skimson	2 years, renewable
Resources Board member	Blair Winch	2 years, renewable
Resources Board member	Virginia Burns	1 year, renewable
Resources Board member	Nancy Van Veen	1 year, renewable

CARRIED

Greg led a covenanting ceremony for those appointed to the Boards.

The Chair declared the meeting closed.

ELORA UNITED CHURCH LEADERSHIP 2015/16

*terms end after the Annual Meeting in the year listed
 i.e. one serving from Feb 2008 to Feb 2011 has a retire date of (2011)

		Retire *
Mission Board members	Bonnie Young	2018
	Phyllis Waind	2018
	Melanie Anderson	2017
	Lois Amos	2017
	Amy Weaver	2016
	Arlene Callaghan	2016
Mission Board members and reps to Presbytery	Dorothy Hemingway	2019
	Carole Kennedy	2017
Resources Board members	Curt Hammond	2018
	Richard Burt	2018
	Tom Skimson	2017
	Blair Winch	2017
	Virginia Burns	2016
	Nancy Van Veen	2016

Appointed by the Board:
 Virginia Burns – Property Coordinator 519-846-0642

CHURCH COUNCIL SECRETARY: Judy McMullan

STAFF:	Ordained Minister:	Greg Smith-Young	519-846-2542
	Children & Youth:	Barb Smith-Young	519-846-2542
	Music Coordinator;	Betty Weinstein	519-787-2089
	Administrator:	Judy McMullan	519-846-0122
	Treasurer:	Kim Saunders	519-846-0122
	Cleaner:	Suzanne Flewelling	519-846-0122

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: (4 Year Term)	John Wilkie	(2017)
	Randall Howard	(2019)
	Kim Saunders	(2016)
	John Beggs	(2018)

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL:		
Rob Hull (Bethany chair)	(2017)	519-846-0008
Brent McDonald (Elora chair)	(2017)	519-846-5706

WATERLOO PRESBYTERY EXTENSION COUNCIL: vacant

PASSAGES

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?
John 14: 1,2

In Memoriam 2015

Ruth Darrington
Bronwyn Allen Hill
Connie Dickinson

++++++

The power of the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born of water and the Spirit, you may be a faithful witness to Jesus Christ. Amen

Baptisms 2015

Kelvin Dennis Ribey
Connor James Plant
Emery Robert Bryan Winch

We rejoice that two people have chosen to commit themselves to a life of loving faithfulness.

Marriages 2015

Russell Turk Whitehead and Judith Anne Lowry
John Taylor McKee and Irene Van Vliet
Jonathan Matthew Lawrence and Alice Ann Phillips

Minister for Worship, Pastoral Care and Spiritual Development

Greg Smith-Young

At Elora UC we continue to worship God, care for each other, and serve our community. Some of these things we do together as a congregation. In many other ways, we do them separately, in our day-to-day lives. Yet even then, we are doing them as the church! For whether we are physically gathered in one place, or scattered into our communities, we are Jesus's people, following him.

Here's a summary of some of the work I've been doing as your minister in 2015 and the first four months of 2016. I've reported on the goals I set early in 2015, and some new goals for the 2016-2017 year. Please follow-up with me to find out more.

"Growing Deeper as Followers of Jesus" Spiritual Development for Adults and Families

Goal for 2015: become more intentional in offering small groups

I developed a "vision for small groups" which I shared with the Council. The Council offered some very good ideas, and I hope to revise it based on those. In the meantime, significant work is happening to build groups which strengthen connections among people in our congregation.

- **Scripture, Song and Faith.** Louise Elder initiated and led this group which met every 2 weeks on Monday mornings.
- **Vital Practices for Growing Disciples.** We met 7 times in the spring, and used a resource called *Animate: Practices*. Our focus was key activities that form us as Christians: prayer, food, scripture worship, sacraments, money, service and community. There were 6 people who regularly participated.
- **Amateur Theologians.** This group continues to meet monthly for reading and discussion. We were challenged by Dietrich Bonhoeffer's classic *Discipleship*. Then we began *Wesley for Armchair Theologians*.
- **Making a Scene in Scripture.** During Lent 2016 this weekly group looked at the account of Easter morning in John 20, and imagined how it could be staged as a dramatic performance. Some participants wrote their own monologue/dialogue. This was an interesting and fresh way to enter into a very familiar Bible episode.
- **Exploring Our Faith Together.** In Winter 2016 I began this biweekly conversation group. We meet around a coffee table and candle in the Bissell Room, and talk about basic questions and what we believe. For starters, we're using the United Church's "A Song of Faith" as a springboard for our conversations.
- A **Book Group** meets monthly. It is coordinated by John Markvart and Menai Wardle.

Also . . .

Messy Church. We held events for families with young children, roughly every 1-2 months. Its continued success owed everything to a small group of volunteers. However, our attendance dwindled along with our volunteer team. After our last event in the Spring 2015, I decided to stop Messy Church for now. Since it is a good way to serve young families, inside and beyond our congregation, so I hope we can restart it again sometime.

Kids' Camp. In July I helped lead the science station, and didn't blow anything up!

Risen. This new film was shown at The Gorge Cinema over the Easter weekend. In return for advertising it, the Cinema let me advertise a conversation time. I hosted it on Tuesday, March 29 at Wreckless Eric coffee shop. Five of us had a good chat about the movie.

Some Goals for 2016-2017

- *Stewardship: How we use our God-given resources faithfully is one of the important things for disciples to ask. We'll be having a stewardship focus for much of the fall. I'll be looking to put together a team to lead this.*
- *Prayer resources: I'd like to develop some resources people can use to deepen their own intimacy with God in their day-to-day lives.*
- *The Amateur Theologians group will continue working through Wesley for Armchair Theologians. We will decide together which book/topic to look at next.*
- *Lenten Challenge: I'll be inviting people to join me through the season to deepen our discipleship, using a resource prepared by United Church colleagues in BC.*

"Looking Higher to Celebrate God in All We Do" Worshipping Together

Goal for 2015: develop another regular time for worship

Simple Worship. Our first "New Worship Experience" happened on a Saturday evening in June. We met in the Thomsons' backyard, shared a potluck supper followed by singing, praying, reflecting, and conversation. We then had a "Carols and Cider" evening (with potluck supper) in December, also at the Thomsons'. Barb Smith-Young took over leadership of this in January, to allow me to focus more time on the church's "Project Welcome" refugee sponsorship initiative. We gave this alternative worship service a new name, "Simple Worship." The team had two more events in early 2016: February and April, again at the Thomsons'.

Also . . .

Sunday worship centres us within the embracing love of God the Trinity, shapes us into people of praise and prayer, and equips us to faithfully follow Jesus in the week ahead.

For much of the year, I focused us on the Gospel of John. Roughly once a month in the Winter-Spring, I continued to explore different ways we show our love for God (again, this continued a theme started in 2014). In July-August we shared worship with Knox Presbyterian Church, and Knox hosted them in August. The Fall saw a variety of themes, including the work of the United Church's 42nd General Council, the United Church's beliefs, the post-residential schools journey of reconciliation with our Aboriginal neighbours. During Advent, I explored what it means for us to centre our faith and life on Jesus Christ. In January, I used dramatic monologues to reflect on the Story of Esther; we finished that theme with our own adaptation of a Purim festival celebration.

Guest worship leaders were: Wendy Smith (twice), Bronwyn Hill, Donna Mann, Carole Kennedy (speaking about her pilgrimage on the Camino route in Spain), Debbie McMillan (anniversary service), Paul Miller, Jeff Smith, Rabbi Cory Weiss (reflecting on the question, Why Judaism?), Dorothy Hemingway, and Carole Kennedy again.

Special services were:

- April 3 Good Friday with Knox Presbyterian, hosted by Elora UC in 2015
- Jun 7 Celebration of the United Church's 90th anniversary at Melville UC (Fergus)
- Jun 14 Annual Outdoor Worship and Picnic, at Bethany UC in 2015
- Oct 18 Elora UC 180th Anniversary
- Nov 8 Mental Health focus
- Nov 15 Memorial Service for those for whom we are grieving
- Dec 13 A multi-congregation Carols & Readings service at Melville UC
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Celebration at 5:00
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Communion at 11:00
- Feb 10 Ash Wednesday: I was the preacher at St. John's Anglican Church's service
- Mar 27 Good Friday with Knox Presbyterian, hosted by Knox in 2016

Some Goals for 2016-2017

- *I'd like to reignite our Worship Leader initiative. This was a Re:Genesis goal. We began this with 6 leaders during my sabbatical two years ago. For various reasons, people stopped serving in this role, so now we just have 2. I'd like to identify at least 2 new people for this work, and develop a regular training/equipping program to support them in this ministry.*
- *Suggested General Worship Themes:*
 - *A King for God's People: The Story of King David*
 - *Advent: The "Canticles" (songs) in Luke 1-2*
 - *Continuing the Gospel of John: chapters 8-11*

"Reaching Wider to Share Blessings with our Neighbourhoods and Beyond" Ministries of Welcome, Service, Justice and Partnership

Goal for 2015: Evaluate our outreach ministries and discern how God might be calling us to further grow our congregational outreach and social justice work.

While no work was done specifically on this goal, the past 16 months have been very fruitful for our work of "sharing blessings" beyond our congregation.

Elora Water. In July our church council put its support behind the concerns raised by Friends of Elora Water about the proposed take-water permit on Middlebrook Road. In August, I was part of a delegation to the Centre Wellington township council. We presented various concerns about the proposed take-water permit on Middlebrook Road. The council took our concerns very seriously. We continue to be engaged as the process with the provincial Ministry of the Environment unfolds.

Project Welcome. Refugee work emerged in the fall as an unexpected focus. The tragic conflict in Syria is producing millions of refugees (which is but a part of the broader tragedy of refugees in our world). We helped launch Project Welcome CW. For administrative and legal reasons, it is rooted in Elora UC but is actually a broad-based community effort. In November, we offered a fundraising "Supper for Syrians" at the high school, and raised more than \$11,000 for the Red Cross. Our focus then turned to refugee sponsorship. Our goal "is to support a refugee family from Syria so they have a smooth immigration experience into Canada. We want them to arrive in our country with the physical, emotional, social, and financial supports in

place which they will need to successfully integrate and thrive in their new community.” I’m sharing coordinator work with Donna Pardy and Bonnie Norris. We’ve assembled a great team of volunteers, are in excellent shape with our fundraising, and are developing plans to welcome and support our sponsored family. We have applied for a family of 3 (mother and two sons), and are hoping they will arrive soon.

Also . . .

Healing and Reconciliation Service. I’m sharing leadership for this monthly service for residents of the Portage residential substance abuse rehabilitation centre for adolescents, just north of town. This service is run by people from the Anglican Church, and we alternate locations between St. John’s Anglican and our sanctuary.

I continued to serve our **Centre Wellington** community through:

- the Ministerial Association (as treasurer and chapel services coordinator);
- offering chapel services at Wellington Terrace, Highland Manor and Caressant Care, and doing chaplain rounds at the Groves Hospital. Clergy take turns doing these, and my turn comes about every 3 months;
- organizing the Remembrance Day services in Salem and Elora.

I served within the **broader Church** by being:

- an elder on the Presbytery’s Council;
- a commissioner to the 42nd General Council in August;
- on the board of *Associates Resourcing the Church* (ARC) ministries.
- on the board of *Cruxifusion*, an association of Christ-centred ministers.

Some Goals for 2016-2017

- *Refugees: Supporting the work of Project Welcome as we greet and support our refugee family will continue to be a major focus of my attention and time.*
- *Reconciliation Journey Learning Circle: Last year I’d hoped to start a group to explore relationships between First Nations peoples and those of us who are “Settlers,” especially we whose churches ran residential schools. The urgency of our refugee focus put this on hold. I want to recommit to it.*

“Drawing Closer as a Community”

Ministries of Caring and Support

Pastoral Care. I continue to share prayerful conversation for anyone in need, in our congregations and beyond. The focus of my time continues to be on those living with illnesses, addictions, the challenges of aging, and relationship concerns.

Funerals: I led services in 2015 for Jim Roth (at Alma UC), Bronwyn Hill (Elora UC) and Connie Dickinson (Elora UC). Rev. Donna Mann led a service for Ruth Darrington (Elora UC) while I was on vacation. In 2016 (Jan-April) I’ve led services for Jean Copeland, Sadie Harrison (Elora UC) and Mary Fasken (Elora UC).

Weddings.

January 2015	Turk Whitehead & Judy Lowry	at Elora UC
July 2015	Irene Van Vliet & John McKee	in Guelph
October 2015	Jon Lawrence & Alice Phillips	at Elora UC

I am working with 4 pre-marriage couples for 2016.

Some Goals for 2016-2017

- *Kinship Groups: Some of our Mission Board members have taken this to heart, as a way of fostering deeper relationships among people in our congregation (particularly our more senior members). I'd like to support them in developing these groups and integrating them into Elora UC's life.*
- *Care Callers: These are people who have worked faithfully and with love to support our homebound members (in their own home, or in long-term care homes). I see a need to revitalize this group and provide better support to them. This will include monthly gatherings for learning, support and prayer.*

Leadership Structure

Goal for 2015: to move to a new leadership model.

I've been developing a leadership policy document. The congregation approved the basic principles at a meeting in May. In September we began to implement it by selecting members for our new Mission and Resources Boards. We have been operating under this new structure and, from my perspective, it is working well. Next steps will be:

- continuing to evaluate and fine-tune our leadership structure.
- the Mission and Resources boards will need to approve the final version of the policy document. It is almost finished; some details need to be worked out.
- once approved, the presbytery will need to give its approval.

Designated Lay Minister for Children and Youth 2015/16 Report

Barb Smith-Young

I am intrigued by this Bible verse in Acts. It speaks about the early followers of Jesus and what was important to them as a community of faith.

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper) and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42)

The words *“teaching, fellowship, sharing meals, and prayer”* stand out to me. Each of these was a vital part of how they journeyed together in their Christian faith. They also *“sold all their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.”* (vs 45). Following the way of Jesus is a serious commitment!

How do we journey together as followers of Jesus 2000 years later? At Elora United Church we have a mission and vision statement (a little more wordy than the Acts verse, but yet very similar). I have been thinking about our statement and asking “what does that look like?” Here is what I experience through the lens of children and youth ministry.

What does “Growing Deeper as Followers of Jesus” look like?

Growing deeper is most evident at Elora United Church on Sunday mornings. People of all ages come together to learn the way Jesus. This starts in our family worship time at 11 am and continues for the children and youth in ministries that are created for them to explore faith in their own age groups.

In the winter/spring of 2015 the children explored some of the stories of miracles Jesus did, pondering how these miracles point us to God. In the 2015/2016 school year our theme was “Big Old Names”. We learned about some folks from a long time ago who trusted God, like Ruth, Moses, Esther, Noah, Daniel and Jonah. We are blessed by an incredible team of Leaders who plan and prepare for the entire year. The team uses an online curriculum called “Spark” which serves our diverse children very well. **Thank you Susan Wilson, Kim Saunders, Lisa Miller, Sheila and Brendan Keane, Janet Weinstein and Stephanie Morrison.**

Youth Exploring Faith (YEF) is a time for youth to grow deeper as followers of Jesus. We explore a lot of faith questions using a curriculum called “re:form”. These youth love to chat and ask deep questions (and yes, they also love to eat!). **Thank you Camille and Brent McDonald** for helping me to lead this group.

YEF + was created for the 2014/2015 school year to give some extra time with some of the older youth who may be ready to confirm their baptismal vows and become full members of the church. Four youth confirmed their baptisms in May 2015; Emily Weaver, Luke Alessio, Abigail McDonald, and Melanie Weinstein.

The youth are also privileged to have some Sundays mornings called “Tech for God” (TFG) led by **Curt Hammond**. They have been growing deeper in their Christian faith by learning to blog about their thoughts and questions on a website they created.

We do have great leaders and ministries for children and youth, however, the most influential people in their spiritual development is their **parents**. That is why I believe ministry for

families/for parents it so important. When my position was decreased to 13.5 hours in 2013, family ministries was removed from my responsibilities. However, parents were still seeking guidance on how to spiritually nurture their children. In response to this need, I brought back "Faith At Home" workshops for parents. In March 2015 we discussed "Beyond Bunnies and Butterflies - Living Lent, Good Friday and Easter with Our Children", and in November 2015 we discussed "Celebrating Christ in Christmas".

What does "Looking Higher to Celebrate God in all we do" look like?

It looks like people of all ages praising God. Our Sunday morning 11 am family worship time it just that. The children and youth then transition to Children's Worship and Youth Exploring Faith. Our worship of God continues when we leave the sanctuary. It also continues when we leave the building and go into our weeks.

Some special worship times to note would be Youth Exploring Faith leading worship in May 2015, the children sharing music at Christmas time, and our Purim celebration in February 2016. Also, we enjoy the music leadership of Exploding Church Fury (ECF) as they help us all to sing praise to God.

A group of us have also been exploring other ways of worshipping God together. Our first worship experience was called "Backyard Worship" in June 2015 and then we hosted "Carols and Cider" in December. In February and April of 2016 we hosted 2 worship nights called "Simple Worship". All of these experiences have included a potluck meal (remember the Acts verse - "sharing meals") and an informal worship time that encourages discussion as we grow in faith together. It has been a joy to work with this team of youth and adults as we plan and prepare for each worship time. And it has been wonderful to see the Holy Spirit encouraging and challenging us as different ages worship God together. Our hope is that Simple Worship evenings will be a place where everyone, including folks with little or no church experience, feels welcome to explore faith in God. **Thank you team (Alenna Medeiros, Janet and Melanie Weinstein, Jasmin Thomson, Jamie and Emily Weaver and Phil Irish)** for your inspiration and great ideas and thank you **Susanne and Colin Thomson** for the use of your home for our worship evenings.

What does "Reaching Wider to Share Blessings with our Neighbourhoods and Beyond" look like?

It looks like an awesome, fun summer camp that serves children and youth from our Centre Wellington community. Our 2015 Summer Kids Camp (July 7 - 10) marked 10 years of us sharing blessings with our community (we also shared leadership of this camp with Knox Presbyterian for an additional 10 years). It was an incredible week that served 35 youth and 49 children, as we saw "God's Love in Action". Our theme "G-Force" kept us hopping as we experienced God's unstoppable love. **Thank you to the youth and adults** who give enormous amounts of time for this important ministry, and thank you **Mel Anderson** for coordinating this venture with me year after year!

Come and join the youth if you want to see what "reaching wider" looks like. They are passionate about wanting to make God's world a better place. In April 2015, we had a 24 Hour Famine to raise money for "poverty and hunger" projects of the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada. In September, some us had a taste of homelessness while we

slept in cardboard boxes for the annual Shantytown event. This event is a fundraiser and awareness raising event for The Door Youth Centre of Centre Wellington. At the end of November, we once again worked with the Centre Wellington Food Bank to collect food donations during the Elora Santa Claus Parade. And twice a year we help with the monthly Community Dinners that are held at Knox Presbyterian. We have been helping with these dinners in Fergus for a few years. Now the dinners are also in Elora on the first Friday of the month. Elora United Church takes responsibility for preparing and serving the food two times a year. Many adults are involved in this ministry of “reaching wider” and so are the youth.

In Children’s Worship, we designate a few Sundays every year to explore how we can “share our blessings in our neighbourhoods and beyond”. In February 2015, we learned about loving our church family, community and our world. In May 2016, we shared our blessings by bringing in items for a school backpack for Faris (the 13 year old boy of the refugee family Project Welcome is sponsoring). And on Christian Family Sunday (May 8), the children celebrated with our church family as they prepared and served at fellowship time after worship.

What does “Drawing Closer as a Community” look like?

It looks like toddlers and young parents joining in family worship and continuing their building of community while they play together downstairs. It looks like children and youth learning and having fun together on a Sunday morning. **Thank you parents** for showing your children what it means to part of a church community. **And thank you to the whole Elora United Church community** for loving each of these young members of our family.

It looks like youth enjoying their monthly Youth Nights at Elora United or Melville United Church (MUC). For the 2015/2016 school year we had 3 groups of youth, Grade 3 - 5, Grade 6 - 9, and senior High School. The Grade 3 - 5 group is a new group, in partnership with MUC. The Grade 6 - 9 group is also in partnership with MUC. Both these groups meet once a month. We have a lot of fun together while learning the way of Jesus. The Grade 3 - 5 group finished the school year with a Celebration Dinner with parents, where we learned about each of our families’ heritage and story. The Grade 6 - 9 group had a Food Sharing themed afternoon and overnighter where we worked in the community garden at Melville United, prepared food for a weekly Community Ladies Lunch, and of course, shared food together. Sharing together with food is an essential component of youth ministry, and as Acts 2 says, an important part of any Christian community. Thank you **Phil Irish** for sharing in leadership with the Grade 3 - 5 group and thank you **Rob and Patrick Hull** for your leadership with the Grade 6 - 9 group.

At Elora United, we are blessed by many different ages who come together to worship God. In the spring of 2015 and 2016, the youth of Youth Exploring Faith enjoyed hosting the “Acorns and Oaks Lunch”. This lunch is prepared by the youth and they each invite someone from our church family as their guest. This is a great opportunity for the youth and their guests to get to know each other better and to encourage each other in their faith journey.

My family and I feel very blessed to part of the Elora United Church community. I pray that, as followers of Jesus, we will continue to devote ourselves to “teaching, fellowship, sharing meals, prayer, and sharing with those in need” (Acts 2: 42- 45).

Barb

The Year+ in Review – Elora United Church Music

As I reflect on the last 1 ½ years, I note that our church community continues to be blessed with an array of musically talented people who are willing to share those gifts numerous times.

My official start as Music Director was January 2015 and I put both feet in the water, leading the choir, Praise Team and Exploding Church Fury. Both Praise Team and ECF complement the adult choir with their contemporary songs during worship.

Adult choir members are: Norma Beggs, Lyn Barrett-Cowan, Joan Drimmie, Dean Percy, Jeff Smith, Laurie Haladyn, Gerrie Ainley, Laurelyn Grant, Lois Amos, Megan Winch, Ink Lee, Shannon Shan and Olivia Hindley.

Praise Team members are: Phil Irish, Ink Lee, Barb Smith-Young, Amy Weaver and Olivia Hindley.

ECF is comprised of Emily and Jamie Weaver, Thomas MacDonald and Caleb Smith-Young.

In April 2015 we hosted the joint Good Friday service between Knox Presbyterian and EUC. In May a special men/boys chorus sang during the service on Mother's Day.

We combined our voices with five other choirs at Melville United last June for the 90th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada. Wow, what a fantastic sound! It was lovely to be with other area churches for that celebration. Plans are underway to be together again this year at Melville on June 12.

Last June we also had a ladies chorus singing for Father's Day and ECF worked hard to learn some camp songs to lead at Vacation Bible Camp in July.

This past November a group of 5 enthusiastic students sat with Adrian Jones to learn some drum patterns on the congas. We hope to incorporate some of those drum patterns into our songs.

A big thank you to Olivia Hindley, Gerrie Ainley, Louise Elder and Janice Hindley for filling in on organ and piano during my Sundays away.

Appreciation and thanks go to our vocal and instrumental soloists and duos: Wendy Smith, Amy & Emily Weaver, Jeff Smith, Phil Irish, Megan Winch and Gerrie Ainley, Jane Adair and Julia Burns.

Thank you to Ink Lee for joining with me to play organ/piano duets during Easter and Christmas 2015 and Mel Anderson for leading carols at the late Christmas Eve service with guitar. Thanks also to John and June Wilkie, as well as Steve Hornsby for joining us at Easter for the special music.

I apologize if I have omitted anyone who has enhanced our music ministry with their musical gifts.

As we approach the warmer weather and start thinking of summer vacations, the three music groups will be winding down for a well-deserved rest. You'll see them return in the fall to share their talents.

Betty Weinstein

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

I would like to start by thanking everyone in our church for all their help and donations to make our annual Shamrock Supper a success.

Throughout the year our group supports several of our church organizations such as church youth, choir, youth camp, coffee hour supplies and whatever else we can help with.

We also support our community, women & children in crisis, the Fergus Community Living group and the Centre Wellington Food Bank, to name a few.

It is your continued support that gives us the funds to accomplish this. So, thank you so much.

If there is anyone who wishes to join our group, we meet the third Thursday of the month in the Bissell Room at 1:30. The exceptions are a potluck lunch in September and our December tea & gift program. If interested, please call Norma Wallace at 519-846-9934 or the church, for more information.

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy summer.

Norma Wallace

THE BOOK STUDY GROUP IN 2015

The Book Study group meets on Sunday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. in the homes of members. The evening begins with refreshments followed by free ranging discussions. There are 11 members on the email list. The average attendance was 8 people.

The group met five times in 2015. Two books were discussed. The first was, *The Inconvenient Indian* by Thomas King. The second was *What's Happened to Politics* by Bob Rae.

John Markvart

WEBSITE and EMAIL

Elora UC is found in a few places on the web. A Google search for "Elora United Church" brings up our website **elorauc.org** as the first item. That's exactly what we want. The second hit is **elorabethanyuc.org** which is also very good. The third ranked result is our Facebook page.

So people should have no trouble finding us on the web if they know our name.

Our main website, **elorauc.org**, is updated with the Sunday News weekly and other information about once a month or as needed.

elorabethanyuc.org is our Pastoral Charge website and mainly has pointers to the websites of Elora and Bethany churches. We also have our Pastoral Charge Accessibility Policy there and there might sometimes be other Pastoral Charge documents. (e.g. a JNAC)

We are also in Google Places on maps.google.ca.

The main email address for the church is **elorabethanyuc@bellnet.ca** . That goes to the office for Greg and/or administrator Judy McMullan. Mail sent to that address for Betty Weinstein or Kim Saunders will be forwarded to them. Greg's confidential email is **revgreg@bellnet.ca**.

Judy McMullan

WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL POTLUCK

This group met six times in 2015. We are about reflection and spiritual development rather than “doing”. Most of us are involved in other groups, as well.

We bring items for inspiration and discussion. Examples might be a poem, a scripture, a song – these are our potluck items rather than food. Some may also come simply to seek the inspiration that others bring. After time for fellowship and discussion, we close by praying for each other and the world.

Our ages range from 15 to 80ish and those who attend vary quite a bit. Quite often we find someone there for the first or second time. So, if you join us for the first time, you will be in good company.

Judy McMullan

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Ministry and Personnel Committee Members 2015:

Bethany United Church:

Rob Hull

Elora United Church:

Brent McDonald

At this time in the year it is always important to pause and reflect on how blessed we are to have the dedicated and caring staff in their respective roles supporting both of our congregations. There is so much work that goes on behind the scenes to bring our congregations together in both churches each Sunday and to help our church communities flourish throughout the year. We are very grateful for the commitment each of our staff has to their responsibilities and for the enthusiasm they bring to their roles.

Our current staff includes:

Greg Smith-Young	Minister for Worship
Barb Smith-Young	Lay Minister for Children and Youth (Elora)
Judy McMullan	Office Administrator
Kim Saunders	Treasurer (Elora)
Judy Howse-Ward	Treasurer (Bethany)
Suzanne Flewelling	Cleaner (Elora)
Marlene Darasch	Cleaner (Bethany)
Betty Weinstein	Worship Music Director (Elora)
Brad Halls	Musical Accompanist (Bethany)

After exploring using technology in creative ways and guest musicians at Bethany over the course of this year a search resulted in securing the musical talents of Brad Halls. Bethany's congregation is very much looking forward to Brad's accompaniment enhancing worship over the course of the upcoming year.

The role of the Ministry and Personnel Committee is to support our staff and to act as a liaison between the congregation and staff. As members of the committee we often receive feedback and answer questions related to the roles and responsibilities associated with each of our staff positions. This helps ensure that the scope of work for our staff remains manageable and that there is a place to go should anyone have questions about a particular role.

In November each year, the M&P Committee reviews the roles and staffing obligations for the upcoming year. After reviewing information from Presbytery, recommendations on salary are submitted to Bethany's Board and Elora's Board as part of the annual budget process.

Congratulations to all of our staff on a wonderful year and on their individual and collective successes. Our thoughts and prayers are with each of our employees and their families for a successful 2016.

Brent McDonald

ELORA MINISTRY CONVENORS/CONTACT PERSONS 2016

Book Group (formerly Amateur Theologians): Greg Smith-Young 519-846-0122

Book Discussion Group John Markvart 519-846-8678 Menai Wardle 519-846-0846

Choir: Betty Weinstein 519-787-2089

Church Library: contact the office 519-846-0122

Children's Worship Library:

Children's Worship Team Leader: Barb Smith-Young 519-846-2542

Children's Worship Treasurer: Judy McMullan 519-846-0550

Church Accountant: Kim Saunders 519-843-4833

Coffee and Juice (Fellowship Hour): Sheila Calvert 519-846-8675

Communion Preparers and Servers: Janet McPherson 519-846-5857

Marg Ewen 519-843-5117

Centre Wellington Food Bank:

Flower Convenors: Ethel Hornsby 519-846-9763, Sheila Calvert 519-846-8675

Friendship Community Living Group: Norma Wallace 519-846-9934

Greeters: Susanne Thomson 519-362-7506

Lay Readers: Coralie Corlett 519-846-0073

Property Co-ordinator: Virginia Burns 519-846-0642

Quilters: Connie Percy 519-846-5965

Stamps: Bonnie Arnew 519-843-7521

UCW Contact Person: Norma Wallace, 519-846-9934

Social Convener: Phyllis Waind 519-846-9936

Websites: Judy McMullan 519-572-3833 (webmaestro@elorauc.org)

Women's Spiritual Potluck: contact the office 519-846-0122

Worship Planning Team: Greg Smith-Young 519-846-0122

Elora United Church

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Phone: 519.846.0122

FAX: 519.846.2905

email: elorabethanyuc@bellnet.ca

website: www.elorauc.org

Office Hours: Rev. Greg Smith-Young is usually in the office mornings, Tues-Fri
Contact Barb Smith-Young via the office or at 519-846-2542
Secretary Judy McMullan is in the office Thursdays & Fridays 10 to 4:30
from Sept to June