

Knox United Congregational Open Conversation January 14, 2018 Fiscal Planning

This report has been created to bring forward a verbatim account of comments made at our Open Conversation meeting, to identify trends, and to give context upon which recommendations will be made to Knox Council and the Congregation regarding next steps of action to secure our fiscal health for long-term. Also included is a four-pillar approach to next steps for consideration.

Our mission statement is actioned by the following four Pillars of Financial Health and Sustainability.

To show the love of God by being like Jesus, showing mercy, promoting justice, offering hope, forgiving, accepting and loving all (others).

Four Pillars of Financial Health and Sustainability

- 1/ Immediate Action Steps - Low hanging fruit
Comments included suggestions for several action items that, without cost, will improve our experience together on Sunday mornings, and throughout the life and work of our church family. Inside the doors and outside.
- 2/ Planning Action Steps for decision making
- 3/ Revenue Acquisition Action Steps
- 4/ Communication Action Steps

1/ Immediate Action Steps - Low hanging fruit

This category of action steps is important because it demonstrates that the committee / Council is listening to our members, listened at our congregational facilitated conversation, and is willing to take immediate action on small, medium, and large items.

- Remove the word “others” from our mission statement – the word implies us/them.

- Reinstate nametags for folks on Sunday mornings and anytime we gather. Don't assume people know your name.
- Reinstate hymn sings before worship to help satisfy the conflicting need for "older hymns / Upbeat music"
- Identify during worship, an oldtime fav, and an upbeat fav. Maybe folks don't recognize which is which. We could put suggestion papers in the pews for folks to fill out and give us back every Sunday with suggestions for hymn choices that we can work into upcoming services.
- Add support / volunteers and contributed goals from the meeting, to the communication team – create goals and objectives and get to work, building on their existing dedicated contributions. Partnership opportunity with other churches, Sackville.ca, etc
- Establish a monthly / bi-monthly congregational facilitated session with updates from Council on all action steps, and as well, to discuss suggested "family business" as we move forward. Suggestions could come forward from members.
- Look at implementing a high school rotation / lunch hour hosted by Rev Ross and a young member or two
- Do open houses / create an inviting space OUTSIDE
- Weddings/receptions/flea markets
- etc

2/ Planning Action Steps for decision making

- a) Create a small team to talk with Cobequid Cultural Society to look at benefits / costs of potential facility partnership. We have some people that have already established relationships with the group, and could lead the conversation. This would also require budget/business plan development pricing for some modifications to the sanctuary to meet the needs of both groups.
- b) RFP development / review / analysis regarding a full re-development of our property as per Don Farmers proposal. This should be a small group of 4 or 5 people, hopefully bringing RFP development, project management, facility development, financial skills to the table. Consideration to be given to the existing "old" sanctuary to determine if and at what cost (grants are available) we could re-build/move or reconvene the old historic worship space. This idea came to us after the meeting, verbally.

3/ Revenue Acquisition Action Steps

Create a team to work on acquiring grants from UCC and other resources to assist us in all the above endeavors.

4/ Communication Action Steps

Create a document to share with congregational members about living within our means and what that will look like, and that it will NOT include reducing staff but instead will highlight the value and skill of the team we have. It may however, include a recommendation for no new hiring until our planning activities are complete. This will be important in terms of providing stability to our staff AND our congregation, showing our intent to follow through on the planning exercises, looking for revenue opportunities, as well as some belt-tightening.

Obviously the above 4 categories would be developed further by small teams working together in skill and interest areas, reporting back to Council and the congregation.

Respectfully compiled on behalf of the congregation,

Attachment 1

Verbatim Comments from Congregational Facilitated Conversation

The following is a list of verbatim comments brought forward by participants in response to questions created by members of the Finance Committee tasked with bring the financial conversation forward.

Blue Recipe Card Comments

- Need a young dynamic less expensive minister eg Rock Church
- High school church services at lunch hour Rev Ross could go to different schools
- We need a less expensive minister and a pastor rather than an administrator
- Music is important. The concerts sometimes cost us money. Do we need to spend what we are in order to have “good music” I think not
- Fix the foundation – long term goal is RFP
- Everyone is welcome.
- Very friendly
- Reaching out to community like country church
- Giving to Beacon church
- Minister is very approachable and his sermons
- Choir is so beneficial and spiritual
- Compassion shown to those in need
- For the snow days’ parade, many people congregate at the intersection to watch the parade.
- It is also cold outside
- It would be a prime opportunity to open the church for tours or an open house
- We show love to the community ie COME, IWK, volunteers, nursing home visits and services, outside non-profit groups use our premises ie seniors, mental health, GA, AA, NA
- We need more visibility in the neighborhood – advertising?

- Sackville development web site maybe...using “flying cow” and other flyers our Knox news could be put out in places like Sobeys, superstore and other places of business
- We need to bring in young people with an attractive program and they in turn will bring their parents.
- Make the outside look pretty, as it is terrible looking out there. The grounds, we mean not the building. Apply to the Sackville Dev. To pretty the whole area up and make it park-like by getting trees, benches, where the old church was in particular.
- Show love to community
- Community meals
- Open doors
- Outside groups
- Community health exercises
- Sessions with different faiths
- More advertising – tap into free
- Are there services we can tap into
- Come and see blitz – what is happening at Knox
- Break down resistance to “church”
- Mass media blitz get a message and do a BIG marketing/advertising
- We have a product we need to advertise
- Get a sponsor eg Manual Life
- Flyers blitz tv, radio Need slogan – “Come See”
- Church is changing let people know
- The people who look out for each other
- Need to welcome new people so they come back
- More people wearing name tags
- And a person assigned to actively encourage people putting on name tags
- Music-joyful, modern, guitar, band
- Rental of sanctuary for concerts
- Rental of hall
- Weddings, receptions, flea market
- Short term:
 - Community outreach meal program expanded to be a daily not just once a month
 - Involve not just community churches but other service groups and individual families
 - Bring in more people
 - Offer the church to a justice of peace to have at least one wedding on Fri and 3 on Saturday
 - Have a price which covers more than just our costs

Youth coordinator

- Only hire when you have the right person for the job AND they will need support.
- Donation box at funerals
- Monitor copier use – limit use
- Evening service – recorded sermons from the morning service. May bring in younger generation Tie it in well with youth “meeting”. Bring children – staff for short service “tea” after
- Fundraising with a purpose
- Music is great have a suggested ticket of minimal price
- Tithing – move discussion about why this is important, and responding to the Lords challenge to be tested on the benefits of tithing
- Rent the church to other groups
- Dances with a paid custodian / senior community groups / electronic gaming night

- Do other activities under the name of the church – outside. Yard sales, grocery fund raisers
- My one concern is why we are not encouraged to bring and open our bibles in church
- In school, we need our books of instruction to learn. Is this not part of “Gods Classroom?”
- Sell parking lot. Tear down hall and put hall in basement. The hall now becomes the parking lot.
- I wrote a letter to session re hymns – wanting familiar ones it was brought up at session but nothing changed.
- Keep the people we have happy (by playing the old hymns)

Table Sheet Comments

1. What do you love about Knox

- Very friendly
- Offer hope
 - Mittens
 - Beacon house
 - White gifts
 - Muffins
 - Community dinner
- Justice
 - Petitions
 - Mental health
 - Support John Howard Society
- Church family is inclusive, welcoming, offer hope, outreach meal, caring and support when need arises. People step up, welcome to do what you are good at – not pressured into doing tasks you are not capable of; availability to community in their time of need; accepting environment
- Loving all others
- Offering hope – for the future
- Accepting and loving others COME and other committee work
- Change and Growth – funeral/celebration of life
- We are a church evolving to meet the needs of the world.

2. **Knowing what we love, how do we acquire additional resources?**

- Monthly fundraiser from elevator
- 2-3 pie sales/year +/- or turkey burgers \$10/pie
- 1 other major dinner
- active solicitation of bequests
- step program for stewardship campaign 15k-20K
- find a government to rent to basement
- basement converted to self-storage
- advertising on seaside radio, sackvillens.ca,
- accountability to all expenses
- no unnecessary expending
- communication needs much work
- Opening our church to share sanctuary with another church family, rental, or school (private)
- Elevator would allow acceptability to other groups. Fund raiser for a particular purpose – use

fundraise with purpose.

- Food auction
- Share our building with another congregation
- Find another organizations to use our facilities
- Try to get younger families to come
- Need to offer something for everyone
- Increase giving population
- Reach out to individuals
- Using church and renting out areas
- Reach out to other areas
- Pray for God's guidance
- Elevator – help with rentals
- Promote PAR
- Cultural Centre – partnership
- Rent parking lot
- Merge with another church

3. What have you thought of/seen that you think will help us keep our doors open?

- Word of mouth
- People want to be entertained
- Ask to donate more
- Explain finances
- Do we think of our church as a place to go when we need it or does the church need us?
- Youth need to know what church is all about
- Easy access for locating information about Knox seaside radio
- Donation bins for specific needs
- Donations to church during funerals
- Food and a service during the week
- Service for parents during youth group meeting / Sunday night live
- Wine and cheese auction
- Televised service on eastlink
- Need a young dynamic minister – lower cost
- Janitor replaced with volunteers
- Vine-yard café
- Outside decorations and light displays
- Emmanuel Baptist – dynamic minister
- Old time gospel songs /
- Donation bins for: mission/parking lot repairs/organ fund/Christian youth/roof repair
- Girl guides – thinking day services
- Boy Scout – Parents will come with the kids. Hosting the event once a year with other churches
- More baptisms – lots of people come from away
- Youth groups
- Merge / partner with Cobequid cultural society to convert our sanctuary into a community cultural space and use it for Knox to worship on Sundays / etc via scheduling
- Re-construct the original sanctuary to be re-convened as a worship space on the site/historic building / move to Acadia Park as a wedding chapel/worship space
- Advance an RFP to do analysis regarding market value/costs/benefits to redevelop parking areas as well as existing whole site. Potential mixed use alternatives ie community

space/worship space/community kitchen supported by multi-unit housing revenues in several stories

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEnISgWjzkY>

Written submissions received from:

1. Don Farmer

2. Al Darrach

See Attachment 2

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Knox Church
Future

Open Conversation

Planning for our Healthy Fiscal