CLASSIS HURON CHURCH VISIT REPORT

DATE - TUESDAY, November 30-2021 - 7:30 pm

LOCATION - GUELPH CRC, Water Street Church, Guelph, Ont.

Attendance - 11 Guelph CRC office bearers & Rev. Martin Dam & Stan Puklicz (member Stratford CRC)

Note – Rev. Tigchelaar was not in attendance at the beginning of the meeting but was scheduled to join the meeting later in the agenda.

Meeting was opened with a reflective devotional focused on Judges 6 & 7 - the Gideon story.

Devotional highlights pointed to Gideon learning not to look to worldly solutions and provisions, such as a big army to secure victory, but to listen, trust, and rely upon God’s leading. It was suggested that there was wisdom to glean from the Gideon experience for Guelph CRC, given the transitional place they find themselves in.

We then engaged in opening prayer & Adopted the agenda for the evening.

The Council chair reported that Guelph council has an agreement with Rev. David Tigchelaar that reflects the following: Rev. Tigchelaar will continue to be fully active and carry out all pastoral responsibilities including Sunday to Sunday preaching until Dec 31-2021. Effective Jan 01-2022, Rev. Tigchelaar will begin a sabbatical that will run from Jan 01-2022 to June 30-2022 where upon he will take up his accepted call to Heritage Christian Homes in Brampton, Ont. The Chair did share that the council still needed to sort out the “memorandum of understanding” in which there would be no expectation from Guelph CRC for Rev. Tigchelaar to fulfill any of his normal pastoral responsibilities to Guelph CRC.

As per council, the congregation is “on board” with the agreement, however it should be noted that the agreement has never been voted upon by the congregation. It was also discussed whether Classis involvement was required, and it was concluded that church polity did not require any Classical input.

Question was asked if any concerns raised by the congregation. Most of the few questions revolved around the “financial” obligation of the congregation for the 1st 6 months of 2022 (Jan-June). It was agreed that this arrangement was a good and gracious solution for both the congregation and the pastor. It was also affirmed that the relationship between congregation and the pastor continued to be amicable and gracious. Pastor Martin stressed the importance of a unified voice from the council to the congregation when explaining any decision, but especially ones of this nature.

The matter of appointing a church counselor for Guelph CRC, was discussed briefly, and the church visitors assured the council it would be dealt with at next Classis meeting. The question of classical appointments was also raised, and Pastor Martin explained that Water street was already on the 2022 list, having been discussed and instituted by the Classical Advisory Committee.

The meeting now moved into a time of general discussion - Pastor Martin posed 2 questions to the council- What are / have been the joys & excitement & what are / have been the concerns (if any) ??

* Finding ourselves in this time of transition in leadership while at the same time dealing with the challenges of the COVID protocols
* COVID has created roadblocks to ministry goals
* Has created a measure of anxiety for some, and at the same time pastoral challenges
* At the same time, in many ways, relationships within the congregation have grown stronger
* Prayer, both on individual basis, as well as congregationally has grown as a discipline
* Christian love between brothers and sisters has enlarged
* Many successful efforts to stay engaged within the community and feeding community needs
* Council members believe that the congregation is ready to venture into this transition period both with a measure of anticipation and at the same time a measure of trepidation, but believing that God is leading them thru this process.

Final challenge from Rev. Dam - Council and congregation needs to strive to maintain a healthy relationship between Rev. Tigchelaar, his family, and with the Guelph congregation. It was agreed wholeheartedly that this is God’s desire in this process as well.

Rev. Tigchelaar then entered the meeting, and we all engaged in a time of circle prayer. At the close of this prayer time, the church visitors left the meeting.

Submitted by church visitors.

Rev. Martin Dam

Stan Puklicz -