

**Comments Received During and After the
ALL SAINTS TOWN HALL MEETING September 25/16¹
regarding the June 30 2016 Draft Report Of Options For The Best Use Of The
Resources To Support The Mission And Ministry Of The Anglican And Lutheran
Church In The City Of Peterborough**

Comments on Option 1

Comment

Positive:

- only 2 church buildings left to manage
- both have a lot of space for programs
- both would be hard to sell
- both have funds to help support them
- one governance structure would be much more efficient
- one priest in charge could coordinate worship & programs, and save money
- allows for different worship styles

Negative:

- both churches very large—people from smaller congregations & the Lutherans might feel intimidated, overwhelmed or ignored and just might leave both churches downtown, no presence in the “suburbs”
- I am not sure about all the suggested extra positions mentioned on p. 5: deacons, lay leaders, nurses, counsellors, spiritual directors—are these all volunteer positions? Isn't that a bit optimistic? Or is there a suggestion that we would be able to pay for some of these people rather than a priest or part time priest? Again, it seems optimistic to think we would have funds for this, when we are having to consider closing churches due to lack of funds.

I agree with the committee that it makes sense to keep the 2 large churches open as they have trust funds etc & would be hard to sell.

I am not too keen on the bit about the corner of Water & Hunter becoming a spiritual gateway to St. John's. Sounds like spending \$ unnecessarily to glorify St. John's.

Rather than rent out satellite locations, perhaps we should be partnering with other faith groups to offer some of our outreach programs. For example, perhaps we (esp. people from St. B) could partner with St. Stephens or Edison Heights Baptist church to offer Messy Church.

¹ This document contains Comments received from All Saints parishioners during and after a September 25 ALL SAINTS TOWN HALL MEETING.

This report extracts some of the comments received to create a document that generally reflects all the comments we received. In addition to extracting text from the comments received, this report has been edited to try to remove any reference the commenter's identity and any comments that in our opinion could be directly attributed to a commenter, likewise, we have tried to exclude comments that could be construed as referring to specific people.

Comment

This option is very clear with no room for misinterpretation. The actual configurations and ministries of the two remaining sites has been, rightly so in my opinion, been left to the implementation phase.

My only suggestion is that you consider removing the “Temporary Satellite...” statement. I say this based on the discussion at last night’s meeting that clearly indicated the implementation of any option will take 2 – 3 years at least. Therefore, existing sites will not close in the near term thus rendering the temporary satellites unnecessary.

Comment

Advantages that All Saints Church would contribute.

- After the fire in the 80’s, the entire chancel, and church ceiling and organ were completely replaced
- The heating system has been recently replaced with a super efficient system
- The church roof has been replaced
- The lighting is replaced with energy efficient LED lighting
- The church can accommodate 500 worshipers
- The Sanctuary is the only one that can accommodate a choir of the size it is
- The acoustics are better than in any of the other buildings
- The church has the ability to host large scale concerts

Comment

We must preserve St. John the Evangelist. No question. It is the iconic, first Anglican Church, it is central, it has a great presence, it has a strong outreach/community involvement history, it has a good organ, it has provenance, and a strong core of dedicated parishioners. It needs a bit more parking, it needs a new roof. It is worth a lot of money and is a strong asset to the Anglican community here. Once we establish which churches we will worship in, THEN we can proceed with reviewing the various options for worship that can be integrated into our Anglican/Lutheran community. I look forward to attending the Lutheran services, I would love to participate in a jazz eucharist and I hope we will always have the wonderful traditional services as well. I would love to see a regular series that ties daily events and struggles with Christian concepts as part of the ministry. There is a lot we can and should do, but we first need to settle on our spaces. I would encourage the committee to focus on this primarily and not confuse us so much with the options. We can debate those once we know WHERE we are going.

We must preserve All Saints.

- It is the only Anglican presence south of Charlotte St.
- It has a history of serving the less well-off in the community and is situated in a poor and rough neighbourhood that would benefit from outreach, and outreach should come out of the doors of a church that is active and has a community presence as its parishioners go about their worship.
- It has extensive outreach, and is a “complex” church, having to administer/manage St. Albans, its Terrace apartment complex, not to mention its Parish Hall and church infrastructure. This is a huge and demanding task that would have to be taken on by a surviving church to manage.
- All Saints is worth a lot of money. If it were sold, a sizeable amount would have to be transferred to the Diocese. It is better to retrain our assets here.

-Church of England music is marvellous – choirs singing by candlelight on Christmas Eve and organs making the rafters rock is our legacy and we MUST preserve it. All Saints is the best venue for this and their music program even now is the main reason most of the remaining parishioners come to church at present.

-If there is to be any growth in attendance, we need a church that can accommodate growth and All Saints is best suited for this.

-All Saints can continue to manage St. Albans without any disruption in this process as we are comfortable with this now. Keeping these two churches to me is the least disruptive to the process of amalgamation. I respect that many of St. Barnabas and St. Lukes are going to have to make significant changes, but surely, we are mobile. I would add that if All Saints were to close, I would be upset predominantly because to me, it would be illogical,

Comment

Keep St John's and All Saints open on their own. Keep one other open if viable – close the others.

Comment

I endorse Option 1 strongly. In general it makes good sense; it would outline a sensible and effective approach for the Peterborough churches for the next 10 years. It is inevitable that the Ang./ Lutheran church will not "grow" membership in the long run (despite all the best laid plans for alternative services, enhanced mission etc). The essence of Anglicanism is the liturgy, its worship style and its Canons; without following them we are not distinct from other denominations really; we could just be a "club" promoting and living by "good" values and ethics". If we want to maintain (preserve?) some form of Anglicanism, we need to be able to adhere to these distinctions. Otherwise it might be best to close all Anglican places of worship and all congregants could easily find other places to praise God, pray and live lives following Christ's example. I don't believe we need messy church, circle services etc. Other churches offer these.

So for Peterborough, one parish having 2 alternative structural locations for worship would be the best option - the 2 locations that make financial and historical sense are AS and St John's. Whatever assets from the sale of the other three churches that do not go to the Diocese should be ploughed into the operation of the one (new) parish.

Comment

St. John's, because of its historical status, seems to be a front-runner to stay open. I know that you will disagree with that, but it does appear that way. It would be a shame to close other churches simply because they are not as old as St. John's. There are a lot of people who attend the other churches and who have close ties with those churches who would feel uprooted for no other reason than their church is not as old as another.

Comment

I agree with the committee that it makes sense to keep the 2 large churches open as they have trust funds etc & would be hard to sell.

Comments on Option 2

Comment

Option 2

Positive:

- presence in one of the suburbs
- maintain one smaller worship space that would be more intimate

Negative:

- 2 sets of wardens, etc might be a drain on potential warden material
 - Also potential to duplicate programs, etc which could be coordinated if under one governing structure
 - Expensive to keep 2 big churches open
 - Expensive to have more than one incumbent
- St. Luke's has good parking & newer building

Comment

It would demonstrate the utmost arrogance if the parishioners of All saints and St John's failed to recognise and respect the rights of the three smallest churches to decide for themselves how they want to proceed. The only way to avoid this is to vote for Option 2, but I am concerned that so many people just want this situation resolved and no longer care how it happens. The parishioners of All Saints and St John's together could cause Option 1 to win the vote. With Option 2, St Barnabas St Lukes and the KLutherin Church will work together what they want to do and St John's and All Saints will do the same

I hope the Committee can come up with an amendment to Option 1 or simply offer Option 2 for an accept or do not Accept vote.

Comment

With regard to Option 2, I see 3 different options. How do they decide on this option?

Comment

How do you decide on Option 2 without the details of the next steps? We need more detail on the next steps.

Comment

As I suggested in Option 1, I recommend removing any reference to "Temporary Satellites..."

Under the first Column of Option 2, I suggest a rewording of the "this group..." to the following: "Under the guidance and support of the Diocese, this group of churches would initiate a process to decide which location to use."

Under Column 2 of Option 2:

The current wording includes, in effect, a third option. I suggest the Commission settle on either retaining either one or both of St. John's & All Saints'. If the Commission recommends that only one remain, then I would recommend a wording similar to the first column re how to choose which church

to keep: “Under the guidance and support of the Diocese, these two churches would initiate a process to decide which location to use

Comment

St. John’s would present challenges to those requiring handicap parking and to the elderly population in general since it is on a hill. The parking at St. John’s is not great and it is supposed to cost \$50,000 to just add more handicap parking places. St. John’s requires a new roof costing at least \$100,000 and yet All Saints’ just had a new steel roof installed. When comparing the heating systems of the two churches, we know that All Saints’ just had a new heating system installed and at great expense

When comparing the stats in regards to weekly attendance, finances etc., it appears that All Saints’ is doing better than the other churches, despite the fact that the average weekly giving per person at All Saints’ is a bit lower than the others. However, with more people attending, that is offset. For the total number of people attending all of the churches, All Saints’ is likely the only one that can accommodate that many people together in one place.

Comment

I would much prefer to keep at least one worship space with pews (and kneelers) as that is part of the tradition of Anglican worship. A bunch of chairs just inspires me to talk, rather than listen & reflect.

Comment

It does not make much sense to have a parish with two locations (e.g.) an amalgamated parish of St. John’s and All Saints’. The overhead costs associated with insurance, heat, hydro, custodial and repairs for a second location would bleed the finances dry and that money could be better spent on other things (missions, programs for local people etc.).

Comment

What about Option 2 with one name? Essentially one parish of Peterborough but choosing the location based on how Option 2 reads.

General Comments

Comment

In reviewing the complex but thorough review of the draft, it becomes clear to me that there are really two major issues here: the first is what the physical layout for the Anglican/Lutheran community will look like, and the second is what the formats for worship, outreach and other church activities will be within this physical structure. I am concerned that we are being asked to make decisions about the latter, which to me is far more complex and open to debate, than the former issue, and masks the underlying logic around choosing our worship venues. Let’s go stepwise, notwithstanding that the committee has done a great job articulating the various worship options available under each venue scenario.

Comment

It's all about money, physical plants we can't afford. Get rid of up to 4 churches. Put all on market at same time and the market makes the decision. Let the market decide. We can pick up the pieces. Easier on an emotional level.

If 4 churches opt for Option #1, situation not practical for Lutherans as there are 2 separate legal entities. How can 4 churches close? Yesterday Scott said they can't, so Option 1 needs to be taken out.

Comment

How in the final decision to be made? Does the decision have to be unanimous among churches?

Comment

No matter what we do, we have to undergo major changes.

Comment

We don't have to do outreach as we have done up to now. Just because each church did " a bit of this; a bit of that" doesn't mean that we need to retain the same deliveries and programs. Let the new parish think anew about more meaningful and effective outreach to the community. (not taking time to put any more commentary here on my thoughts on this.)

Let's get into new governance systems/ structures SOON to enable better financial security.

We need complete new hiring of clergy; we need to be able to select clergy who are fitted to the new way of business and organizational challenges. We are hamstrung by the Diocesan dictates about remuneration of clergy and their benefits package/ support for living expenses. If we are stuck with these strictures from Diocese (and we are!) we may need to look at hiring one experienced, focussed incumbent to lead the new parish and " young" clergy assistants (under his/ Her tutelage) where the remuneration package is not as onerous on operating percentages.

The right clergy will be key to the future viability of Anglicanism in Peterborough.

Comment

We need to look closely at volunteers in the system. We need much more significant recognition of the contributions of Deacons. At least at AS' the Deacons have carried an enormous load of the incumbent's work over the last few yearsvis: the new 3 month meal contract; officiating at weddings and funerals; pastoral visiting; care of our elderly congregants; support to choir members etc. At least, in a new regime, we should consider providing some form of expenses/ stipend for such contributions.

We do not need to "reconfigure" the sanctuaries of AS' and St John's. I am very against this. Keep the sanctuaries sacrosanct please! Each church has parish hall facilitiesevents, meetings, meditation etc can adequately be held there. Keep the sanctuary for worship.

Comment

Re: Human Resources part of your report

- We don't need an incumbent to be the lead on making HR deliberations for the 1 Parish future; get a fresh look at things from other people.

Otherwise, we need to dispose of the physical, structural assets we don't need for the future of 1 Parish as FAST as possible; we need to consolidate finances as quickly as possible; we needed to have " moved" on changes about a year or more ago.

Comment

Concerning sensitivities of parishioners re: " the difficulty of handling change" (e.g. the trauma of closing churches etc. I think most of us would say to all you Covenant folks let's just get on with it. Everyone has had a lot of time to " stew" over the fact that things are going to change; borrowing from Corporate Nike " Just do it"

Comment

Why are the Lutherans in the mix? Would it not be simpler for them and the rest if they were not.

Comment

Potential to do outreach via music ministry. Note that there are 12 young adults under 25 who attend All Saints regularly in the choir. They are joining us in regular worship and also receive support and fellowship in the choir. We have potential to expand this ministry to neighbourhood children.

Comment

The vacant lot at the corner of Hunter and Water Streets and the front grounds of St. John's Church would be ideal property for a developer to build a high rise in the downtown. The land downtown is much more valuable than land in other parts of the city. Revenues derived from the long term lease of that land along with the other properties built on land belonging to St. John's would be an excellent and sustaining source of income for the future Anglican church(es) in Peterborough.

St. John's, because of its historical status, seems to be a front-runner to stay open. I know that you will disagree with that, but it does appear that way. It would be a shame to close other churches simply because they are not as old as St. John's. There are a lot of people who attend the other churches and who have close ties with those churches who would feel uprooted for no other reason than their church is not as old as another.

Comment

I think whichever churches close; we will lose at least half of those congregations completely. They will look at other churches in their neighbourhoods or just stay home.

Comment

I think that if cuts are going to be made that we need to do it all now and with the future in mind. In other words, let's leave just one church open. Let's not have to repeat this process in eight or ten years from now. Let's cut to the bone now and save the future pain. Also, it would save a lot of money as per my next point.

With some churches about to close and one or two churches remaining open and likely with a new name, it would put a fresher appearance of renewal to change all of the clergy. We need some younger (or younger at heart) clergy who will better connect with the young and the elderly too. Someone who will have the energy and interest to really make things better. We need someone with an outgoing personality who will make church vibrant, relevant and interesting so that people of all ages will want to come to church and perhaps be associated with various church programs being offered during the week.

Comment

We need transparency in decision making and a better way of communicating decisions being made. Publishing minutes of church council meetings and even meetings of the wardens would create a sense of transparency and accountability to the parishioners that these members represent.

Comment

Two Alternative Approaches:

Alternative #1: 2 parishes

All Saints & St. Luke's combine with one incumbent

St John's separate parish

-More space for community programming if 3 buildings open

-Diversity of worship, programming styles

-Share admin staff

-Large spaces (churches) maintained

-One suburban church which has good parking, meeting rooms, and smaller worship space for smaller groups

-Keep trust funds in place

Alternative #2: Bold option

Combine St. Luke's & All Saints, and close St. John's

-Only one incumbent needed with option to have part time clergy and deacons

-Only one administrator set of wardens, parish council

-Advantage of one newer building with parking

-Option to expand parking at All Saints

-No need for costly reno/upkeep at St. John's which has uncomfortable pews, tiny chancel, no parking, difficult access

-All Saints has already done pointing, roof, heating upgrades & is more accessible

-More room for music ministry & choir

If we keep 2 or 3 churches open, how many priests would we need? In rural areas, one priest often has responsibility for 2 or 3 parishes. A few years ago, we

had only one priest but he had to look after 400+ families, and held 3 Sunday services and a mid week service. So could 2-3 **churches manage with 1 or 1.5** priests? I am not really sure about this, but clergy salaries are a huge part of the cost of running a church.

I think it might be efficient to have a paid administrator for all the churches that remain open to relieve the clergy of picky little details for which many are not trained and which waste their time & talent such as overseeing staff, maintenance, cleaning, accounting, hiring, etc. Hospitals no longer waste medical training on running a hospital or doing clerical work. This could provide consistency and coordination between all the churches. It also could provide consistency, avoid errors and relieve wardens & other volunteers of responsibilities for which they are ill prepared and have little time to deal with. The turnover of staff, wardens, volunteers, and clergy can lead to no one really knowing what has been done previously, how to do things, etc.

Comment

The references to the Lighthouse & Community Diner (p8/9) aren't really accurate, as the Lighthouse is a rental agreement with CMHA, and All Saints will not be submitting a proposal to host the community diner.

Comment

Details of how the buildings will be used probably do not need to be discussed until we decide which ones are being kept open.

Keeping St. John's open for awhile would mean it could potentially be used to develop housing in the downtown core as they have a lot of land. The province wants the city to increase higher density housing in the core. There is a need for affordable housing in Peterborough, and a need for long term care & assisted living for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Examples of churches that have reinvented themselves are College St. United Church in Toronto, which has built condos around and over its original church building and Parkdale United which has transformed itself into a church in an apartment building for single people:

<http://www.parkdaleunitedchurch.com/history.html>. There are also plans to redevelop St. Albans in downtown Ottawa to a co-housing project for seniors (see Anglican Journal Oct. 2016 p.1). Ideas such as these might make creative and positive use of the land & space occupied by St. John's.