

RICHMOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Deep with God, Wide with the World

Session Notes – June 2021

Session had a rare Wednesday evening meeting this past week because Presbytery met on the Tuesday, because of General Assembly meeting earlier in the month.

Two major items occupied us for most of the time: business arising from the General Assembly, and preparation for the Annual General Meeting part 2 (AGM2) on Sunday, June 27. Both of these will be covered separately and extensively over the next short while, so discussion here will be brief.



General Assembly

General Assembly was held online from Sunday, June 6 to Wednesday, June 9. With some exceptions, each presbytery sends one commissioner for every six members of presbytery. This year our presbytery, the Presbytery of Westminster, sent 5 ministers and 5 elders, plus one Young Adult Representative. No assembly was held at all in 2020 due to the pandemic, but the decision was to hold a virtual assembly this year. RPC, unusually, had 2 commissioners this year: Victor was one of the minister commissioners and also served as the Convener of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, and Isabel Evans was a last-minute replacement for another elder commissioner from another congregation within our presbytery who had to bow out. By far the most impactful business was dealing with the 2 remits on human sexuality, which were approved. Session discussed how the remits may affect us and how we will move forward. You will shortly be receiving a letter on this, and there will be opportunities for questions and discussion once we can gather again. Although the remits had supporters on both sides, almost everyone agreed that a virtual assembly was difficult, and the medium was not conducive to open discussion and interaction among attendees. The presbytery has agreed to hold a special meeting in the fall to provide pastoral support for ministers and elders and to seek a way to navigate through what will be complicated waters.

Session also spent much time reviewing the various team and committee reports that will be presented to you at ACM2. Again, no details here, but you will have received a mail out package and we encourage you to join the Zoom meeting after worship on June 27.



One other important piece of Session business was a review of our Indigenous Acknowledgement. One beneficial outcome of the Truth and Reconciliation initiative has been the awareness that most of us are not the original inhabitants of this beautiful part of the world. For some time now, our pre-pandemic printed bulletin contained an acknowledgement that we are uninvited newcomers and that we gather on First Nations territory. A differently-worded acknowledgement has been used for our virtual services. There was a feeling that the wordings were not expressing well what we wanted to say. With research from various sources and input from the Rev. Dr. Ray Aldred, member of the Cree nation and Director of Indigenous Studies at VST, and Dr. Anne-Marie Ellithorpe, who has experience with this same issue with the Maori peoples of New Zealand, we have approved 2 new Indigenous Acknowledgements.

For in-person worship and online streamed services:

We are honoured to be worshipping on the traditional ancestral unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples and do not take this privilege and responsibility lightly. Richmond Presbyterian Church seeks to learn from Indigenous wisdom as to how we can live in right-relatedness with Creator, creation and all peoples.

On our website and other formal documents:

We are honoured to be worshipping on the traditional ancestral unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples and do not take this privilege and responsibility lightly. We acknowledge the importance of connection to land, culture, spirituality, family, and community for the well-being of all Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who lived and continue to live here and we at Richmond Presbyterian Church seek to learn from Indigenous wisdom as to how we can live in right-relatedness with Creator, creation and all peoples.



A big part of the ACM2 on Sunday will be plans around a return to live worship; it will be gradual, and it will look a little different, but we will be together again. As well, at ACM2 you will be part of our vision for moving forward as a congregation post-pandemic. You will want to attend. Please pray for RPC as we emerge from the pandemic restrictions, that we will see and seize opportunities to be a vital part of God's mission in Richmond and to the world.

*Faithfully,
Graeme Stager
Clerk of Session*

WHATEVER YOU DO,
DO EVERYTHING FOR
THE GLORY OF GOD.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31