

## MCC TORONTO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

# Meeting Summary - January 2025

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January 22, 2025 / 6:15 pm / Hybrid (in-person and remote)

## AGENDA

- A. Congregational Care Update
  - B. Finance Committee Update
  - C. Year End Appeal
  - D. Staff Performance Feedback
  - E. Congregational Decorum
  - F. Non-profit Policies and Procedures
  - G. February Town Hall
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### A. Congregational Care Update by Rev Junia Joplin

- Majority of recent cases are from individuals outside the MCC Toronto community.
- Few financial assistance requests originate from active congregation members.
- Many financial aid requests exceed the church's capacity, including international requests, particularly from refugee claimants.
- Traditional prayer requests form a significant portion, typically requiring no follow-up.
- **Defining the Boundaries of Congregational Care**
  - Congregational care is distinct from therapy, crisis counseling, or social work.
  - The church cannot provide assistance with job searches, housing, or financial aid beyond its established limits.
  - Determining whether certain cases should be handled by MCC's Human Rights Centre or the church's congregational care team.
- **Handling Financial Assistance Requests**
  - Requests from non-congregants are more frequent but are limited to \$50 grocery cards, not cash.
  - Larger financial assistance requests are rare and typically come from within the congregation.
  - Ongoing challenge of responsible stewardship of benevolent funds, including repeat requests from the same individuals.
- **Challenges in Congregational Care Communication**
  - Congregational care relies on members sharing information; however, many do not use the provided reporting systems.
  - Some individuals expect support but do not communicate their needs, leading to gaps in care.
  - The current system is not intuitive for seniors and those uncomfortable with technology.

- **Automation and System Limitations**
  - Efforts to automate congregational care have faced challenges, as the process inherently resists automation.
  - Similar issues have been encountered in other church initiatives (e.g., event registrations, volunteer coordination).
  - Data collection is inconsistent, with missing or incomplete contact details.
- **Volunteer Engagement and Support Services**
  - Past initiatives, such as U of T volunteers assisting with resource lists (e.g., mental health support, food, and housing assistance).
  - Potential for volunteers to take on tasks such as accompanying individuals to appointments
  - Ensuring that volunteers are well-matched to their roles for efficiency and effectiveness
  - Identified a need for administrative support in Congregational Care.
- **Addressing Accessibility and Congregational Inclusion**
  - Concerns raised about church members who cannot physically attend services due to age, illness, or disability.
  - No current system in place to identify or address these needs.
- **Proposed next steps:**
  - Clarify the role of Congregational Care: Establish clearer guidelines on what falls within its scope and communicate clear boundaries regarding the scope of congregational care. Evaluate potential improvements to the virtual support system.
  - Review current policies on handling financial and international requests.
  - Proposal to create a structured volunteer recruitment process, including job descriptions, applications, and interviews
  - Plan to identify and recruit two administrative volunteers to support congregational care efforts
  - Develop a system for identifying shut-in members: Consider ways to track and assist members who are unable to attend services in person.
  - Improve communication strategies to ensure that congregational needs are reported effectively.

## **B. Finance Committee Update**

- Efforts are underway to complete updates for November and December. Tax receipts are expected to be issued by the end of February 2025.
- The Finance Committee is looking to improve real time access to critical financial data for better governance and oversight.
- There is a need for better management routines to ensure financial transparency and accountability.
- Updating and organizing financial records to support the 2025 audit process.
- **Staffing and Process Improvements**
  - Recommendation to staff the finance function with 1.5 roles rather than a single person to reduce dependency risk.
  - Need for better management routines to set goals, track progress, and ensure accountability across all departments.
  - Review of financial and organizational practices to prevent future oversight issues.

- **Proposed next steps:**
  - Finalize a decision on whether to hire a finance manager or outsource financial management. If the decision is to outsource, develop clear business requirements i.e. timelines and deliverables
  - Ensure financial records are cleaned up to allow for accurate reporting.
  - Implement structured management routines for staff oversight and accountability.

**C. Year End Appeal**

- **Initial fundraising target** - \$125,000 and the **current estimated total** - \$100,000.
- Additional donations are pending verification, particularly those through United Way.
- The mail strike impacted traditional check donations, affecting the overall total.
- **Next steps:** Verify additional United Way donations and finalize year-end appeal numbers.

**D. Staff Performance Feedback**

- A new 360-degree staff appraisal process is being implemented using Microsoft Forms.
- The survey is currently being tested before rollout to staff on February 3rd, and will remain open for two weeks.
- Staff will have the opportunity to provide feedback on their colleagues.
- **Analysis and Feedback Process**
  - After the survey period, results will be analyzed to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and key trends.
  - Individual feedback reports will be prepared for each employee, outlining specific development areas.
  - One-on-one discussions between managers and employees will follow to review feedback.
  - Quarterly follow-ups and development plans will be implemented (June, September, and December) to monitor progress.
- **Board Support**
  - The board expressed interest in supporting the rollout of the 360-degree appraisal.
  - Two board members volunteered to assist with the review and refinement of the process.
- **Proposed next steps:**
  - Board members to review the process after the first cycle and consider any structural improvements.
  - Potential discussion on organizational structure improvements based on the findings.

**E. Congregational Decorum**

- Final tweaks have been made to the congregational decorum document.
- **Next step:** Determine the dissemination plan for the congregational decorum document.

**F. Non-profit Policies and Procedures**

- A list of required Canadian nonprofit policies and procedures was compiled to ensure that MCC Toronto is compliant. These include policies like Code of

Ethics and FIPPA privacy policies. Some policies can be sourced from government websites, while others may need to be developed.

- **Proposed next steps:**
  - Confirm which policies are applicable to MCC Toronto.
  - A Code of Conduct for all MCC staff and volunteers is being prioritized.
  - Finalize the list of required policies, obtain necessary documents/links, and review wording.
  - Circulate finalized policies for board feedback before implementation.

#### **G. Feb 2nd Town Hall Preparation**

- **Objective:** Utilize town halls to gather insights from the congregation to help shape the strategic plan.
  - Two key questions: What brought you to MCC, and What made you come back a second, third, or fourth time?
- **Expected Outcome:** Gather perspectives to understand who the congregants are, their needs, and their motivations for staying engaged.
- **Connection to Strategic Planning**
  - The responses will provide insights into the church's evolving community and help balance tradition with current expectations.
  - To be effective, questions may need to go deeper rather than remaining at a surface level.
  - The feedback will be reviewed and structured to inform the strategic planning day discussions.
- **Proposed next steps:**
  - Review and refine discussion questions to ensure alignment with strategic planning goals.
  - Determine how collected insights will be processed and utilized in the strategic plan.
  - Assess congregational interest—if well-received, consider hosting town halls 2-3 times per year.

**NEXT MEETING:** February 26, 2025