

TO: First-St. Andrew's United Church Council
FROM: FSA Ad Hoc Planning Committee
DATE: April 17, 2018
RE: Recent developments and next steps

General Remarks

The Ad Hoc Planning Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis fueled by the active participation of members Rev. Michelle Down, Steve Elson, Barrie Evans, Kerry Hill, Kathryn Patton and Bob Swartman. Nancy Johnson has been unable to participate of late due to her husband Mark's recent illness. Bob Slater has also served notice that he will no longer be able to continue to be an active member for health reasons.

Music and the Arts

Kathryn Patton and Nancy Johnson are the Planning Committee's representatives on this active working group. As a follow-up to last October's Community Round Table on Music and the Arts, a Wine and Cheer reception will be held in the FSA Atrium on Tuesday May 8th. It is being called Arts after 5 and all of the people invited to the October 4th event have been invited to come back and reconnect. Andrea Halwa, Executive Director of the London Arts Council will speak at this event.

Vision Statement: To provide a meeting place for members of the Arts community where ideas and collaboration can flourish

Mission Statement: Arts after 5 facilitates networking between groups involved in musical performance, visual arts and dance – all aspects of the Arts
The gathering helps to build relationships between the participating members through sharing, listening, collaborating, learning about the role and activities of arts groups in London
The group meets throughout the year on Tuesdays at 5:00 pm (frequency to be determined)

FSA Garden Project

Under the very capable leadership of Barrie Evans, this working group has been meeting frequently to move this exciting project forward. A final design, which is a combination of several designs developed by Fanshawe College students (on display in the FSA Atrium), has been developed and it will now be translated into specifications that can be used by landscaping firms to bid on a specific proposal.

Given the scope of the project, it has been divided into three phases. The initial phase will include a staging area near the front entrance of FSA facing Queens Avenue, a labyrinth with seating spaces and plantings, and an Indigenous medicine garden. The desire for implementing this phase 1 is the summer and fall of 2018.

Nurturing Spiritual Growth

On a very blustery Wednesday, April 4th the Planning Committee welcomed representatives from 12 different United Church congregations from Middlesex Presbytery to FSA to participate in our second Community Round Table – focusing on nurturing spiritual growth. Approximately 25 people participated. In keeping with the round table approach, most of the time was spent in small discussion groups and they addressed two topics: what is happening to nurture spiritual growth; and, from a community (of churches) perspective, how can we foster collaboration.

Notes from the meeting have been collated (thanks to Mason Robichaud) and summary notes are being prepared. These notes along with an invitation to a follow-up meeting to plan collaboration opportunities in worship will be sent out shortly.

Under discussion - Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a structured approach to investigating what people find of value and appreciate about a situation or organization. A personal face-to-face approach is used. The premise is to identify and build on what is positive (rather than negative). A number of churches have used this approach to connect with their members in a more personal and meaningful way. The results are then used to help foster greater involvement and participation in church life.

The Planning Committee is considering how it might go about using this approach as it considers the third “arm” of our planning mandate – working in service to others and building community through social action and partnerships [Service].

Respectfully submitted

Steve Elson