



PARKDALE MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
Thursday, May 22, 2008 at St. Anne's Church

Attending:

St Anne's: Phil Cooper, Roy Schatz, Diana Schatz  
Epiphany & St. Marks: Ken Marshall, Anne Barcham  
St. George the Martyr: Max Woolaver, Joe Medeiros  
St. Mary Magdalene: Harold Nahabedian, Brian Clarke, (Chair) Heather McGregor  
St. Matthias: Jeffry Kennedy, Catherine Dennison  
St. Stephen's: Christian Swayne, Roxy Kendall  
St. Thomas: Kevin Toyne  
Diocese of Toronto: Philip Poole  
Secretary to the Council: Norah Bolton  
Regrets: Jim Houston, Dorothy Peers, Sharon Chandler Eleanor Emmel, Marcia McClung.

**1. Welcome, opening prayers and reflection**

Brian Clarke welcomed those present and asked the bishop to lead in opening prayers and reflection. Philip Poole read and commented on a passage from Romans 12 observing that discernment is a community enterprise.

**2. Approval of the agenda**

The chairman asked for approval of the agenda as circulated. Kevin Toyne asked that an item be added for information and this was placed after #3 since Kevin indicated he had to leave before the conclusion of the meeting

**3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting and business arising**

The minutes were approved as circulated. Under business arising that the Parkdale Deanery website ([www.parkdaledeanery.ca](http://www.parkdaledeanery.ca)) had now mainly been brought up to date with a few exceptions which were expected to be remedied soon. A blog ([www.parkdaledeanery.blogspot.com](http://www.parkdaledeanery.blogspot.com)) is also now attached to the site and parishes are encouraged to have members read it and comment. Ongoing entries can form a means of communication and feedback for a wider audience. Initial news items include reports of Parkdale's two winning finalists in the CBC national competition for choirs in the church/temple category.

**4. Information request and update**

Kevin Toyne reported that he had updated his own parish Advisory Board regarding activities of the Parkdale Council. In the course of the meeting, his rector reported that

there was talk of disestablishment of one of the Parkdale parishes. Kevin requested that some information on the matter be shared.

Philip Poole responded that he did not want to share personnel information but he invited the discussion to be turned over to Max Woolaver and Joe Medeiros.

Max noted that personnel matters were only part of the issue. He had met with Bishop Colin Johnson and Bishop Poole at their request on May 5 and was surprised to find that the items for discussion were disestablishment of St. George the Martyr and the rector's leaving in a matter of months. He had thought that the subject matter might relate to personal issues with a pastoral purpose, because of his family's recent bereavement, and had brought a draft business plan for St. George's. This was relegated by the earlier items, which were a shock. He felt blindsided and was particularly bothered by the behaviour of the Diocesan bishop, who, he felt misunderstood his family situation. His own understanding included that his current personal situation was not a good one in which to move or make important decisions. Nevertheless he recognized that there were clearly two subjects, - one relating to personnel and another relating to the future of the parish. He personally felt that the parish was making progress in finding new lay leadership. Concurrently the parish has been approached by a reputable developer and has new opportunities and options. Since the meeting with the bishops, comments that felt like a verdict have been modified and new discussions are taking place. A second meeting including the wardens suggests that a move has been reiterated but disestablishment has been postponed.

Max indicated that in his view there are clearly two issues, a move and disestablishment. In a future meeting with the Diocese, he expressed a desire to have someone else present. It is a time of great stress for the family and ill timed in terms of trajectory. But there are also people on the ground to carry forward. This is a current conversation and some questions about process around the PMDC table would be appropriate.

Max invited Joe Medeiros to add any comments and Joe remarked that he supported what had just been said and had no additions at this time.

There were immediate questions as to whether a priest has any rights in such a matter and some questions regarding process, including the role, if any, of the PMD Council

Philip Poole responded that he also was present for the one and a half hour meeting and had a different opinion and memory. He referred members of the Council to Canon 10, which describes a series of processes regarding personnel issues. He strongly reiterated that competence was not on the table. Max's own preceding remarks clearly attest to this. His services, which he has attended, show the same thing and he is impressed with the Liturgy at St. George's. The diocese is under different pressures. In the past Bishops have been criticized for not taking action. In effect the Diocese has completely paid for salaries for almost the last two years. He also noted that disestablishment can be interpreted in more than one way and is not necessarily negative. Precedents include the Church of the

Redeemer and All Saints, both of which now have significant ministries. He also commended Boards of Management as structures.

Conversations have had to start but are at an early stage. He had asked for ones with the wardens before the recent meeting and had two informal ones in advance of it. Again the process of Canon 10 merits observation. He did want to correct the impression above and reiterate that Bishop Johnson has deep concern for Max and his family. He also confirmed his own concern and noted a continuing pastoral relationship.

The chairman asked for comments.

Heather McGregor wondered whether affordable housing was now off the table. The response was that the conversation is wide open and could be a possibility. Max also noted that the existing housing project of St. George's had taken 91 people off the street and that four parishioners sit on its board. He also noted the need for Board members and asked the Council for help to add another four to six persons. (ACTION: PMDC Council)

Kevin Toyne noted that he had asked for information and had no intention to pry but was satisfied that information had been provided. He asked that the Council be kept informed.

Christian Swayne noted that one of the roles of the Council was to explore new ways of doing ministry

Other comments included:

- There are dangers in old ways of doing things, but a need to focus on the ongoing ministry of the Gospel
- A desire for involvement in the process in which we have spent the last two years
- The opportunities also present a new role for the Parkdale deanery which need to be explored
- We can start on the easy stuff and leave ourselves open
- We need to scope out what is really going on with the Council itself; we are not seeing a whole lot happening
- We need to communicate what we *are* doing
- We need to energize ourselves and our parishioners
- Housing people may be a new ministry
- Are we six or seven parishes in the Parkdale deanery process now?
- If we have lost the land as part of the big vision, possibilities are diminished and we have lost a strength
- We are unified by consensus for joint activity

## **5. Where we are now as a Deanery: statistical and financial summaries for 2007**

Consolidated summaries of these reports had been previously circulated to members of the Council. For discussion, new documents (attached) with totals only were distributed

in document and graphic formats and the meeting was encouraged to focus on the big picture.

Comments on the statistical summary included the following

- It is remarkable that we are doing as much as we are with what we have
- Spending on youth was encouraging in some places, but not as a whole
- Membership decline is evident and discouraging
- The number of marriages is actually encouraging in view of current cultural norms
- There could be a clearer sense of what it means to be a member
- The demographic shows maturing congregations
- Are we actually creating new families?
- We don't follow up on newcomers in any systematic way
- Ceremonies as important events in our society are diminishing
- The stats show complicated issues
- This is who we are now; we are a very small number in the total society that surrounds us

The focus then turned to the financial summaries. Initial comments included

- How well are we spending \$1.8 million?
- What's happening in our spending in relation to diocesan priorities?
- How well can we afford to run so many church buildings?
- How well are we responding to the real malaise in Canadian society?
- How well are we responding to the difficulties that Anglicans have re encouraging growth and new members?

The chairman noted the lateness of the time and suggested that the discussion of finance continue in the next meeting. There was also agreement to table the motions from the Administration and Evangelism task groups with one exception.

Kennedy Marshall noted that the discussion of the last fifteen minutes was the most important he had heard to date and urged that it continue.

Catherine Dennison noted that the last meeting had urged her group to focus on a joint picnic. Space was available in Trinity Bellwoods Park for June 22 or 29. After the council discussed the pros and cons at some length, Philip Poole encouraged the Council to take the risk and go ahead. The date was set for June 22 with flexible arrival and departure to accommodate different congregations. Promotion to be distributed in all parishes would be forwarded for bulletin inclusion in the preceding weeks and the task force would take responsibility for both promotion and implementation.

## **6. Other business/announcements**

The Trinity Divinity Associates Conference *Human Rights: The church living in the presence of Jesus, the human one*, takes place June 23-25, 2008. It is open to everyone. For more information contact: [juliaparish@trinity.utoronto.ca](mailto:juliaparish@trinity.utoronto.ca)

A suggestion was made that common templates for Sunday bulletins be developed. The Shepherd's Guide offers an opportunity for church listings.

**7. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 12. Further information, location and agenda will be forwarded in advance

**8. Closing prayers and adjournment**

The Bishop led in closing prayers and the meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.