

**REPORT OF THE JOINT WATERLOO PRESBYTERY / HARCOURT
MEMORIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT WRITING TEAM**

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The Harcourt Community

We are a people of God called together and sent forth by Christ to

Seek / Connect / Act

Our Mission: Inspired by the Spirit, we participate in Christian practices that
strengthen us in the building of just, compassionate, and
non-violent relationships

Our Vision: To be an authentic community of spiritual growth and service

Our Core Values: Risk...Respect...Responsibility...Vulnerability...Trust

Our Purpose: To welcome and strengthen in community all who wish to serve God's
world and follow the way of Jesus

Introduction

This report seeks to distill the essence of several facilitated events held within Harcourt following the retirement of Rev. Wendy Brown in June 2016 and the results of the October 22, 2016 Congregational Joint Needs Assessment Meeting facilitated by Rev. Paul Miller. It does not attempt to treat exhaustively any of the topics it addresses. Rather, it is designed to give prospective applicants a preliminary understanding and to lay the groundwork for exploratory discussions with those who are interested.

We don't know what the future holds for the church. The one thing we are sure of is that what will be in the future will not be what we experienced growing up. We move forward, then, willing to risk exploration, listening carefully to the whispers of the Spirit, trusting what we hear, and open to transformation.

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Community Profile

Guelph is a city in southern Ontario, about 100 km west of Toronto. According to the 2011 census, the population is 122,000. According to the Ontario Government's Place To Grow plan, the population is projected to grow to 177,000 by 2031.

The City of Guelph is renowned for its original town plan and architectural heritage of fine stone buildings that together give it the flavour of a European city. Guelph has a very active community life: arts, entertainment, service clubs, social and sports organizations. A mix of industries, educational institutions, and branches of government provide the commercial foundation of the city. Redevelopment in the past few years has seen young professionals move into the downtown core.

The major employers are Linamar (parts manufacturing), University of Guelph (academia) and Upper Grand District School Board (education). There is a strong mixed economy, with a particular strength in agribusiness supported by the Ontario Agricultural College and Ontario Veterinary College. The Homewood Health Centre is a significant mental health facility. The city enjoys a high level of volunteerism and community engagement.

Guelph has a relatively low unemployment rate and median family income about 20% above the national average (see reference 2 below). There is significant economic disparity among neighbourhoods. The number of individuals living below the low-income measure is 11% and the prevalence of food insecurity is 16.4% (see reference 3 below).

80.4% of the population reported English only as mother tongue, 1.3% reported French only, and 17.0% reported only a non-official language. In comparison, the provincial / territorial percentages were 68.2% for English only, 3.9% for French only and 25.7% for only non-official languages (see reference 2 below). The top ten countries of origin for the 1148 immigrants in 2015 were Eritrea, India, China, Afghanistan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Iran, and Egypt. In 2016, Guelph and Wellington County received between 300 and 400 refugees, most presumably from Syria.

Harcourt is in a well-settled area known as the 'Old University Neighbourhood'. The church is within walking distance of the University of Guelph (to which it is the closest church), schools, shopping plazas and parks. Harcourt is the only United Church in Guelph that is south of the Speed-Eramosa Rivers, an area that has experienced much development and population growth in the past 20 years. Many residents in this area commute to work in Toronto and nearby communities.

Harcourt is part of Guelph United Ministries (GUM), a collaborative and co-operative organization of local United Churches. There are many other churches and religious organizations in Guelph. The congregation has used the Loyola House retreat centre (Jesuit) and Crieff Hills retreat centre (Presbyterian) for congregational retreats. Our ministers and lay members are involved and connected with Waterloo Presbytery, Hamilton Conference and National Office at various levels.

For further information about Guelph, please refer to the following.

1. City of Guelph Community Profile <http://guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012CommunityProfile.pdf>
2. Census Profile <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMA&Code1=550&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&Data=Count&SearchText=guelph&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR=35&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>
3. 2015 Report To The Community & 2016 Action Plan, Guelph & Wellington Task Force For Poverty Elimination <http://www.gwpoverity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/2015-Report-to-the-Community-Action-Plan-2016.pdf>

Pastoral Charge Profile

The first meeting of the Harcourt congregation, which grew out of the Brooklyn Mission, took place in 1956.

Harcourt is an Affirming church and part of Affirm United. We strive to create safe space for all people to come to and from which to go out into the community. We try to create places and processes where it is safe to be who you are, safe to share personal stories and safe to show a caring response. We want to provide safe space for small groups to experiment and live into their mission.

We seek to be transparent and participatory in our decision making. We are not afraid to name tough issues and explore them, as we did for example in reconfiguring our ministry with children, youth and families in 2013. We try to listen and learn from others' perspectives.

We have 550 members on the roll, of whom approximately 200 are involved in worship on the average Sunday. The 9 AM service is held in the chapel for those who prefer a more intimate and contemplative worship; it attracts about 19 people. The 10:30 AM service is held in the pew-equipped sanctuary, with 30-voice choir and musical ensembles; it attracts about 145 people. The Manna Community, established two years ago, is an inter-generational, experiential service that is led by lay people. It is focused on building community and creating a safe space for the participants to explore their own spiritual growth and what it means to be Christian. It is a replacement for the traditional Sunday-school approach and attracts about 33 people.

We have an extensive and high-quality music program; concerts are part of our 'face' in the broader community. We are glad to be the unofficial home of the Rainbow Chorus of Waterloo Wellington, a community chorus that welcomes members of all genders, sexualities and gender expressions, as well as allies of the LGBTQ+ community.

We are vibrant, with an extensive number of activities. Many of these are listed in the Harcourt Collage developed in June-August 2016, which is available. The 2015 Annual Report lists 95 members serving on our Council and Committees; many others serve in other ways.

We are predominantly well educated and affluent. For example, our active congregation includes upwards of a dozen retired ministers of religion, a similar number of retired university professors and teachers and many others with high levels of professional development and skill. Many of us are retired; 76% of us who participated in the Identity, Mission and Needs Analysis survey were over 60 years of age, and 45% over 70.

We have a fairly clear idea of the commitments that hold us together: commitment to Christ, to a liberal or progressive theology, to diversity and learning from it, to experimenting with new ways of being Christians and of being Christian community, to shared values (especially the safety and dignity of persons), to strong internal and external communications, to transparent, participatory decision-making, and to living for a purpose

larger than ourselves. All of these we experience within a loving community that equips us in turn to be loving.

In June 2016 we summarized our understanding of our shared future into three overlapping understandings. At the time, we worded these as follows:

“The Narrative Of Slow Death: Many participants spoke of aging, declining energy and death. They are concerned about Harcourt’s finances and growing dependence on rental income. They lament the lack of hospitality outreach but want to support friends, take on manageable tasks and give financial support. Some want to scale back expenses while keeping high-quality worship and music; others want to enhance ministry to the sick, shut-ins, dying and bereaved.” (Through several discussions since June, we have come to recognize this narrative as a natural process of growing old and dying. The death of the congregation may be a final termination or a transcendence, largely depending on how successfully we can live out the other two narratives.)

“The Narrative Of Revitalization: Some participants believe Harcourt can be revitalized without profound change. Congregants are seen as spiritual consumers, and we need to market our ‘spiritual products’ better and respond to the needs of target demographics. Some suggest copying congregations and denominations seen as successful. More effective links to the surrounding community are seen as key, as is enhanced use of social media and internet tools.”

“The Narrative of Radical Change: Some participants are unwilling to put their energies into ‘propping up the status quo’: they want us to experiment with diversity and dynamic change. They see Harcourt becoming a community of small, intimate groups focused on spiritual development, missional outreach and passing on our sacred stories. They want us to live a discipleship model of shared ministry; to be more open to learning from other socioeconomic groups and cultures; to investigate deeper sharing with GUM; and to allow ‘ahas’ to bubble up as we explore who we are in a rapidly changing society. Manna is held up as a prototype.”

As we have reflected on these narratives, two insights have emerged:

1. These three narratives and the creative tension between them will help to shape the skills and characteristics needed in our paid accountable ministry team. They co-exist within the congregation and to differing degrees within each of us. The creative tension between them is made tolerable by the sense of loving community and friendship that pervades Harcourt.
2. Allocating resources between the demands of the three narratives presents a dilemma. Medical emergencies and deaths are increasing the demands on ministers for pastoral care, yet the more resources we allocate to pastoral care, the less will be available for other initiatives (such as justice & outreach or youth programming) and for investments in the future as described in the narratives of revitalization and radical change. At the same time, congregant deaths are eroding the congregation’s financial base. Harcourt is no longer in an ‘additive’ mode, where we keep on adding tasks that require additional staff, but in a ‘substitutive’ mode, where we stop doing something in order to do something we deem of a higher priority.

Our hope is that by making these narratives explicit, we can discuss them openly. In the processes that led to this report, some of us wanted to defer its completion until we had resolved the tension between these narratives through a renewed focus on our mission and vision statements, clear decisions about strategic priorities and resolution of associated issues. However, the consensus view, which shapes the Ministry Profile later in this report, is that the narratives provide sufficient clarity of direction for us to make informed decisions, live with creative tension, and trust in our ability, together with a skilled and flexible paid accountable ministry team, to discern our way forward.

Our current decision about resource allocation is reflected in the Ministry Profile later in this report. However, we anticipate that the allocation will change over time. We use a strong narrative budget process which should be helpful as we do this. The ability to live with the attendant uncertainties and adapt to ongoing change will be important attributes of our paid accountable ministry team.

Other issues that we face now and/or in the coming years include:

- A. The lack of religious programming for youth. Our youth groups, numbering about 30-35 participants split between Friday and Sunday evenings, are run as an outreach program. They are based on Harcourt's values but without explicit religious content. Our covenanted spiritual companions work with counterparts from Dublin Street United Church to offer a teen version of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius called "Encounters"; three teenagers from Harcourt are enrolled.
- B. Inclusivity. Despite our determination to embrace diversity by treating each individual with dignity and respect, it is unlikely that some demographics would be attracted to or comfortable in our congregation, for example people living in poverty or people holding conservative or fundamentalist beliefs. Nonetheless, we would like to be more inclusive by finding ways to reach out to and connect with people outside of the typical Harcourt demographic (e.g. visible minorities and those who are marginalized).
- C. Sanctuary configuration. The suggestion of replacing the sanctuary pews with flexible seating to enable more varied use of the space for alternative worship services and community events has surfaced a number of times and is contentious.
- D. Transitioning to becoming a community of small groups where people, some of whom may not participate in formal worship, find their intimate network of personal and spiritual support.
- E. Living into our commitment to discipleship, living a gospel of inclusion and justice, at all times finding ways of being truly with and for others. Integral to this commitment is the embrace of a lifelong journey of spiritual growth and sharing through stewardship, which is to live with joy and responsibility, stewarding well our time, talent and money, so as to address persistent vacancies in Council and Committee positions and difficulty in replacing people who step down from such positions, as well as persistent incurrence or last-minute avoidance of ~\$10,000-\$20,000 deficits in our operating budget.

We believe item E to be attributable at least in part to the declining numbers and energy levels that go along with the narrative of slow death. We need encouragement and support

from our paid accountable ministry team and from each other in being good stewards of our individual time, talents and money, and in changing our corporate structures to optimize our use of what is available.

We make significant donations of food and clothing to Chalmers Community Services, and several of us volunteer there. Our outreach also includes a significant level of individual donations to the Mission and Service Fund. Harcourt is the largest contributor to M&S in Hamilton Conference, although giving levels have declined by about 15% over the past five years.

At a Consultation in October 2016, we met with community organizations and not-for-profit agencies to discuss needs and resources. Harcourt resources that seemed of interest to participants were physical space, the youth group, our volunteer resource base, the fact that we are an Affirming congregation, the possibility of Harcourt playing an advocacy role, and the expectation of a positive response if we are able to help with a need they phone us about. Also, several people said that spiritual needs were mentioned by their clientele.

The Consultation helped us to see that our role in the area of justice and outreach has two parts.

- A. One part is to support and encourage congregants in the social justice work they undertake as individuals in the community, such as volunteering at and providing financial support to organizations such as Hospice, Chalmers, Amnesty International, Stroke Recovery Canada and Go-Go Grandmothers.
- B. The other part is to undertake some forms of justice and outreach work as a community, such as raising money for M&S, greening the church, running the youth group, hosting the Community and Communal Gardens, and working in partnership with Chalmers Community Services Centre, the Ecumenical Campus Ministry at the University Of Guelph, and GUM.

We need the paid accountable ministry team to provide mentorship to the people seeking to breathe fresh life into this area of our corporate life, for example in establishing stronger relationships with local organizations and not-for-profit agencies, including First Nations.

For more information about Harcourt, please refer to the web sites <http://www.harcourtuc.ca> and <https://www.facebook.com/Harcourt-Memorial-United-Church-Guelph-Ontario-280433658696935/timeline/>.

For more information about Guelph United Ministries, please refer to <http://www.guelphunited.com>.

Ministry Profile

At Harcourt, ministry is held to be the work of all the people. Led by Council, there are lay-led groups responsible for all areas of congregational life. The paid accountable ministry team is viewed in essence as resource, not as directive leadership.

We have found that any ministry is apt to run into trouble when the congregation assigns it to a few people, whether paid or unpaid, and otherwise has no active involvement in it. Therefore collegiality and collaboration are important to us.

There are currently two paid accountable ordained ministers one, a called minister, the other a one-year appointment while we complete our Joint Needs Assessment, and a part-time director of music ministry. They are referred to herein as the 'paid accountable ministry team'.

Lay leadership is skilled and knowledgeable, and the congregation embraces life-long learning. However, with the aging of the congregation people have declining ability and/or willingness to assume leadership positions. There are vacancies in the governance structure, and difficulty is experienced in finding replacements when incumbents need to step down, whether because of term limits or burn-out.

Responsibilities of the paid accountable ministry team

The paid accountable ministry team is expected to have particular responsibility for the following:

- supporting the congregation in (a) devising good processes to weave together the narratives it is living, including making strategic choices about direction, and (b) rebalancing congregational resource allocations and ministerial priorities as we proceed;
- supporting the growing edges of Harcourt, notably the Manna community, leading other experimental ventures undertaken in pursuit of radical change, and helping the congregation to explore new ways of being Christian community;
- designing and leading worship, in conjunction with the worship committee and drawing on the lay liturgy team;
- providing 'urgent' pastoral care especially for those nearing death and for the newly bereaved, in conjunction with the pastoral care team who focus on visiting shut-ins;
- encouraging and supporting the people seeking to breathe fresh life into our social justice and outreach work, and all of us to maintain or increase our engagement in social justice movements in the communities beyond Harcourt;
- helping us to engage the youth cohort in developing our youth ministry and outreach activities;

- helping us to reach out and connect with people outside of the typical Harcourt demographic, for example visible minorities and those who are marginalized;
- Inviting people to embrace a lifelong journey of spiritual growth and sharing through stewardship, which is to live with joy and responsibility to steward well their time, talent and money, particularly in taking on leadership positions within the congregation's life and in providing financial support to the congregation;
- helping us to see ways of changing our corporate structures to optimize our use of the limited resources available.

The paid accountable ministry team

Rev. Jim Ball currently serves Harcourt, and will continue to do so. Similarly, Alison MacNeill continues as director of music ministry. We are seeking an additional paid accountable minister to work in an equal, shared ministry that embraces innovation and collaboration that will help Harcourt grow in and into our changing Harcourt community.

The nature of shared ministry requires great flexibility and ability to work well with all staff and lay people in a team environment. Accordingly, no hard and fast breakdown of 'time on task' is deemed appropriate, although our hope is that the congregation and the paid accountable ministry team will be able to allocate about 25% of our resources to activities undertaken in pursuit of the radical change narrative. What is paramount is that the ministerial roles, as outlined, be accomplished effectively with sensitivity and compassion. They are continually accountable to the congregation.

After the new paid accountable minister is in place, we plan to add a lay community support facilitator, accountable to the Ministry & Personnel Committee. The facilitator will work within and outside the congregation, complementing the current team of ministerial and paid staff, making connections and facilitating communications amongst small groups. The person is pictured as a congregational spark plug, with duties such as crafting social media messages, sourcing materials and resources, finding people to assist with a task or committee and so on. This person will be hired on a 2-year contract, with part-time hours determined by resources available. We will be exploring sources of grant funding for this experimental position, as well as fundraising within the congregation.

The new paid accountable minister

In keeping with the Vision and Mission Statements of Harcourt Memorial United Church, the Joint Needs Assessment, and with recognition of shared ministry, responsibilities of the new minister will include the following.

Worship

Share as part of the ministerial team responsibility for full worship life of the congregation (including weddings and funerals) in conjunction with a lay worship team working toward the development & implementation of new models of worship, such as Manna. In the usual course of events, one minister or the other would be expected to preside at a worship service, wedding or funeral, with lay liturgical support; only in unusual circumstances would both ministers participate in a service.

Pastoral care

Share in providing pastoral care within a continuum (see model below) of needs for all ages by supporting individuals, small groups, the Pastoral Care Committee and community professionals.



Justice and Outreach

Share in the support of individuals and small groups in the development of social justice programs and outreach for all ages in the broader community. Share in the leadership of ongoing congregational renewal to reach out and build relationships with the Guelph community including GUM.

Christian formation

Share in the support of spiritual growth within the congregation through such forms as small study/sharing groups, guided prayer events, spiritual companions and youth groups.

Administration

Participate in the activities of the Church Council and its committees on an equally shared basis with ministerial colleague. Attend to administrative matters associated with fulfilling ministerial responsibilities.

The position description will be finalized after the new minister is called and in consultation with the paid accountable ministry team.

Skills Profile

The skills we seek in our paid accountable ministry team are alluded to or implicit in the Pastoral Charge and Ministry profiles. We need ministers who can

- function collegially and collaboratively within the paid accountable ministry team and with lay leaders, on occasion leading and delegating as well as supporting;
- serve as mentor, consultant, teacher and coach to lay leadership in all areas of the church's life;
- recognize and draw out skills from the congregation and encourage good stewardship of time, talents and money;
- draw on their strong theological and biblical scholarship so as to relate to a well-educated congregation with a liberal-progressive theology;
- understand and contribute to group processes and group dynamics so as to care for us as a community;
- help us to discern and renew our mission and vision;
- accept uncertainty and be flexible as we shape our future together;
- be creative, energetic and willing to take risks and think outside the box in finding innovative ways for us to engage in experimental ways of being church;
- design and lead worship that opens people to the movement of Spirit, and preach sermons that relate sacred texts to everyday life;
- provide leadership for developing spiritual life;
- listen empathically to individuals so as to provide pastoral care;
- bring passion for and experience in leading social justice and outreach, particularly in environmental awareness and action;
- make and manage linkages with the Guelph community, community development and partnerships;
- relate to people of all ages, and bring experience in working with youth and young adults/families and in supporting and nurturing the development of programs and activities;
- be outgoing and personable;
- foster and work with diversity;
- manage time well;
- be proficient in computer skills, such as word processing, spreadsheet and Power Point presentations;
- be comfortable in utilizing social media (Twitter, Instagram, Blog, etc) to disseminate materials and resources to support individuals and small groups and to reach the broader community;
- practice self-awareness and self-care.

Resources Profile

Harcourt Church was built in the 1960's. The AV-equipped sanctuary with seating capacity for ~350 underwent a major renovation in 2006. The building is accessible. Over the past few years we have added solar panels, a communal orchard and a community garden to grow fresh produce for Chalmers Community Services.

Private offices for staff, a chapel, music room, meeting rooms, gymnasium, library, preschool space, well equipped kitchen and office, gracious memorial community gardens and a sizeable parking lot make Harcourt an attractive centre for congregational and community events. Harcourt does not own a manse.

Harcourt has a team ministry. Current staff members include two full-time ordained ministers, a director of music ministry (25 hours per week), church administrator (30 hours per week), office and tech support help (13 hours per week) and a full time custodian. Two of the dozen-or-so retired ministers in the congregation serve as Voluntary Associate Ministers.

A grand piano has replaced the organ in the sanctuary. There is an upright piano in the chapel and in the music room, one meeting room and the gymnasium. A set of hand bells is put to good use by the hand bell choir.

In 2015 there were 551 members in the congregation. Average Sunday attendance in October-November 2015 was 197 (19 at the 9 AM service, 145 at 10:30 in the sanctuary, 33 at Manna). Annual operating income for the year was \$479,150, of which 84% was from congregational offerings, 10% from rent, and 6% from fundraising and other. In addition, outreach income was \$90,246 including \$85,000 of individual donations to M&S. Trustee-administered reserves are organized into four "pillars" which at December 31 2015 had balances as follows: Property \$222,000; Outreach \$141,000; Music and Arts \$32,000; Spiritual Life and Education \$17,000. Annual reports with detailed financial statements are available on request.

The congregation is governed by a Church Council consisting of the chair, vice chair, secretary, presbytery rep, vision implementation rep, m&p rep, ministerial team and five umbrella councillors who oversee and support Christian Life, Congregational Life, Operational Life, Justice and Outreach, and Stewardship sub-committees. Many dedicated and well qualified volunteers work individually and collectively within the congregation and in the wider community and a team of 21 lay liturgists supports the Worship Committee. Two handbooks are available to support lay leaders in leading worship.

Harcourt has five covenanted spiritual companions who provide spiritual direction and every two years offer people within and outside the congregation the opportunity to do the 40-week Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius In Everyday Life. Lay people provide leadership for mid week activities (e.g. Guides, Brownies, Scouts, Beavers, Youth Group), lead adult study groups, assist with pastoral care visitation, conduct a communications program across print and electronic and social media, provide a/v support, lead environmental initiatives, staff the church library, help with routine office tasks, maintain the building, deal with space rental policy, maintain the memorial gardens, plant, tend and harvest the community garden, tend the orchard and assist with other projects as needs arise.

Terms Profile

- Full time, ordered minister
- New Compensation Model - Category 4 (category for Guelph)
 - Category A-C (1- 7 years of eligible service)
- Comprehensive Salary – 10 % above UCC compensation model (2016- \$59,924 (Category A) - \$63,419 (Category C))
- Extended Health Benefits to Minister and dependents
- Pension
- Vacation leave of 4 weeks annually (number of Sundays to be specified)
- Continuing Education Allowance- \$1500 annually
- Study leave of 21 days annually.
- Sabbatical of 3 months after 5 years of service
- Travel allowance- \$.41 km (to be confirmed)
- Internet/ phone monthly costs (amount to be confirmed)