

August 15, 2017

Dear members of Mark Street United Church,

Your Temporary Council has invited Community Mediation Peterborough to provide some support and resources to assist in finding your way forward as a long-standing United Church community in East City. The intention is to offer this to you as a community dispersed, whether you are attending Mark St, Lakefield, elsewhere, or taking a break. All members of Mark Street United Church are invited to participate.

Community Mediation Peterborough (CMP) is a neutral, non-profit, voluntary service for neighbours and groups who want to find a more peaceful way to be in community, whether together or apart.

We do not generate solutions and are not attached to outcomes. Instead, we hold space and a clear, structured, supportive process for dialogue. This helps participants stay present with each other and generate their own mutually respectful strategies. Mediation is only one way we offer support. In large groups, it often makes sense to also provide training and tools while facilitating a range of conversations that make room for everyone to be heard. That is what we'd like to offer Mark Street.

Conflict is a natural part of community life, and some conflicts are bigger than we can comfortably manage on our own. In Christian communities, we strive to honour the call to "Love your neighbour as yourself." But, when we're in conflict, that choice is harder; especially when we are upset, grieving a loss, or just want to avoid the whole thing. Then, a neutral third party can make a positive difference.

No matter what happens next at Mark Street United, it will require each member to exercise their gifts and skills, which we hope to enhance as part of this consultation and dialogue process. At its core, this is a powerful opportunity to be fully heard and to practice our faith and the teachings of Jesus. It's an opportunity to deepen personal and spiritual growth alongside community.

We hope you'll consider participating.

With much care,

Marion Little
Community Mediation Manager

Peter Williams
Volunteer Mediator

P.S. On the reverse side of this letter, you will find a proposed timeline of activities.

Suggested timeline: Implementation depends on scheduling within the Church calendar and participation from congregational members on all sides of the present conflict, including those who have chosen no side. Dates will be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the life of the community.

Mark Street United Church Consultation & Dialogues		
Timeline July - December 2017		Completed
Jul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Street Temporary Council contacts Community Mediation Peterborough (CMP) • Conversations to explore engaging CMP as a support for the Mark Street community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the Temporary Council Between Temporary Council & CMP Between Temporary Council & Presbytery 	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presbytery meets with Marion & Peter to determine if CMP will be engaged • Mark Street Temporary Council meets with Marion & Peter to discuss possibilities • Mark Street Temporary Council receives the CMP proposal & provides feedback • Worship Leader @ Mark Street & Retired Supply Minister @ Lakefield meet with Marion & Peter to discuss logistics 	✓ ✓ ✓
Sep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Street staff meet with Marion & Peter to discuss logistics • Mark Street Worship Committee meets with Marion & Peter to discuss logistics • Mark Street congregation members at Mark Street meet Marion & Peter • Mark Street congregation members at Lakefield meet Marion & Peter • Mark Street members and Temporary Council name & invite Congregational Listeners • Congregational Listeners receive training to facilitate Kitchen Table Conversations • Kitchen Table Conversations begin (if possible) 	
Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen Table Conversations begin or continue • Online Congregational Surveys • Congregational Dialogue Gathering 	
Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Street United Small Group Discussions • Report to Mark Street United members on themes & possibilities identified so far 	
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Street United Gifts and Offerings Circle(s) as part of advent season • Explore what follow-up will look like in the New Year • Plan for an Epiphany service in January to honour outcomes collectively generated by the members of Mark Street United Church 	

"This work is too urgent to rush."

Dominic Barter, Restorative Circles (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)