

Association of Dundas Churches

Annual Report May 1, 2016 – June 1, 2017

1 Objectives of the ADC include:

- to promote regular communication among the churches
- to expose to the Christian community and beyond the social and spiritual needs of the Dundas community at large
- to encourage inter-church activity and fellowship as a witness to the community
- to encourage individual and congregational participation in social action and social justice
- to provide liaison between community bodies wishing communication with and assistance from the congregations of the Association of Dundas Churches
- to provide programmes of mutual interest to the Christian community at large
- to maintain interest in ecumenical concerns by bringing the news and views of the churches in Dundas to the attention of the entire membership of congregations

2 Membership

In 2016-2017 our membership changed with two new congregations joining the Association: Christ Church Flamborough (Anglican) and Grace Valley Church (Presbyterian Church in America), a new church plant that has begun its meetings in the Air Force Club. One of our church members changed name from Christian Life Assembly to Life Community Church.

As of the June 1, 2017 AGM membership includes 12 churches – 10 congregations and 2 church agencies: Christ Church Flamborough (Anglican), Christian Science Society (Christian Science), Dundas Baptist Church (Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec), Grace Valley Church (Presbyterian Church in America), Knox (Presbyterian Church in Canada), Life Community Church (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada), St. Augustine's (Roman Catholic), St. James (Anglican), St. Mark's (United Church), St. Paul's (United Church) and two Christian agencies: Ellen Osler Home and Family and Community Services (both Salvation Army)

Over the course of the year two other churches in Dundas closed. Valley Community Church (Church of God, Anderson, Indiana) disbanded as of Jan. 31, 2017. They had been active in Dundas for 37 years and participated as able in the ADC throughout those years. Recently Pastor Junior Spooner was a member of the Dundas Ministerial. From materials given by VCC member Margaret Wiebe, Rick Spies wrote a brief historical outline of VCC and their ministry in our community. The other church that closed over the course of the year was the New Apostolic Church (located on Hatt Street).

Clergy or equivalent staff are members of the Association as well as up to two lay representatives elected from each congregation.

We received new members among us: Christine Aiken (St. James), Rev. Steve Hallford (Christ Church Flamborough), Rosemary Horsewood (Christ Church), Margaret Monds (Christ Church), Rev. Sue Nicolls (Christ Church), Nellie Noack (Salvation Army Ellen Osler Home), Wayne Poole (Knox), Rev. Paul VandenBrink (Grace Valley), Yvonne Wilson (St. Augustine's) and Cathy Zorn (Grace Valley).

We bid adieu to several members throughout the year: Rev. Steve Hallford (Christ Church) – because of longterm disability, Jan Sullivan (Life Community Church) – deceased, Craig Knapman (St. James), Anne Redish (St. Augustine's), Wim Feunekes (Knox)

We give thanks for the contributions of all and note some ADC members were able to attend the funeral of Jan Sullivan. We continue our prayers for Rev. Steve Hallford. We recognized the longterm devotion to and participation in the ADC by Wim Feunekes and Anne Redish.

3 Meetings

Nine regular meetings were held by the ADC. The Executive held one meeting (March 20, 2017) to establish a nominating committee for the year 2017-2018 and to review brainstorming ideas about promoting Christian unity arising from the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity study. Our various task groups held meetings as needed.

4 Communication

Wim Feunekes headed our communication efforts for a good part of the year followed by Rev. Alison Mock. Articles several times over the year appeared in the Dundas Star News: Advent Walk, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Lenten Lunch. Notices for events were also placed on sign boards: Dundas Community Services and Eccles on King St. and the Lions Club community board on Market St. Posters for various events and programmes were made by Susanne Crago of St. Paul's.

Over the course of the year we approved joining our Communication and Media groups into one which is currently headed by Rev. Alison Mock.

Our website is maintained by Rev. Wayne Irwin. Our Constitution and By-laws are posted there as are our minutes and information about various events. Links are provided to the churches as well as to related organizations. Contact for the website is through Rev. Alison Mock.

We ran a joint ad in the Dundas Star News for Christmas services.

Reporting in our congregations

It was emphasized at some of our meetings that ADC members are to report to the appropriate body in each congregation. Some churches make it a practice to share ADC minutes with Outreach or Board (or equivalent) members. ADC events and news are published in some church bulletins and newsletters. This communication could be more effectively done. Small news items throughout the year keep ADC in the minds of congregants.

5 Archives

Kim Gumbert took over the responsibility of keeping a scrapbook of articles from The Spectator or the Dundas Star News that relate to ADC activities. Periodically we send past minutes and other materials to the archives of the Dundas Museum.

6 Community Liaising/ Reporting

We received regular reports throughout the year from:

- Dundas Chaplaincy Routes Youth (per Susan Laing),
- Ellen Osler Home (per Marguerite Ward and Nellie Noack),
- Dundas Community Services (per Rick Spies and Mary Anne Tangney),
- Community Dinners (per Anne Washington)
- and we began receiving regular reports from EcoWHam (per Wim Feunekes and Wayne Poole).

We also received periodic reports from

- Salvation Army Community and Family Services (per Shirley Molloy or from the chair seeking out information to on Dundas Food Bank)
- Hamilton Family Health Team (HFHT) (per Rick Spies and Jean Archbell)
- Hamilton Faith Communities in Action (per Anne Washington)

Occasionally we received notices from

- Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction (per emails)
- Hamilton Organizing for Poverty Elimination (HOPE) (per emails)
- Canadian Council of Churches

ADC / Dundas Ministerial involvement in other organizations

Rev. Rick Spies emphasized the importance of having ADC members involved in other organizations in Dundas in order to raise awareness of the life and work of the churches in our community. This is no longer a given in our culture. It is important that ADC be represented on bodies such as the Hamilton Family Health Team (Rev.

Rick Spies for the past year and now Rev. Jean Archbell) and Dundas Community Services Board (Rev. Rick Spies who will need to be replaced as of June 2017). Other ad hoc groups in our community do arise and as Chair of ADC, Rev. Rick Spies has been welcomed as at a gathering sponsored by DundasWorks.

7 Speakers / Guests

In May 2016 we received Carla Borstad Klassen and Shahzi Bokhari from the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) explaining their desire to meet with ADC churches in support of work being done for Hamilton Family Health Teams. This is part of their gathering information about activities in Dundas that promote social well being.

In May 2016 we also received Sue Carson from EcoWHam who shared information about that group – its membership and its goals. We agreed to receive regular reports of EcoWHam activities at every ADC meeting and we also agreed that they could bring items to our attention for which they are seeking our endorsement.

In June 2016 we received Craig Foye who works for Hamilton City Legal Clinic and who shared with us a 2016 Report on Poverty in Hamilton that was presented to the United Nations. This followed a 2006 report. Copies of the 2016 were made available to us all. One action he encouraged was for us to support Bill 185 (later Bill 6) sponsored by MPP Paul Miller in the Ontario Legislature. This bill calls for social assistance rates for Ontario Works and ODSP to be recommended by an independent body on evidence based need – the same way MPP salary figures are moved forward.

In September 2016 we received Harriet Woodside, Anne McMahon and Rose O'Connor from Dundas 55+ group which is working toward a Dundas Seniors Centre being created along the line of the Seniors Centres in Sackville and Alberton. They explained their goal and their “in the meantime” creation of programmes and spoke of the need of space. Various churches indicated space availability.

In October 2016 we had hoped to receive Shawn Fisher (Marketing) from Dundas Community Services. Due to ill health he was unable to meet with us and it was agreed to wait until a new Executive Director was appointed. With the announcement of the new DCS Executive Director, Jane Allen, we expect we will receive her in the fall of 2017. (In place of a speaker, Rev. Rick Spies prepared a short quiz on the history of the Reformation – as a small educational moment among ourselves).

8 Worship, Witness and Fellowship

We gathered for ecumenical witness, worship and study several times throughout the year and have made plans for the year coming.

a Dundas Seniors Fair

Susan Laing headed up our witness in the Seniors Fair organized by Dundas Community Services on June 14, 2016. She was happily supported by several other ADC members. About 100 people stopped by our booth and it was agreed this witness was well worth the effort.

b Cactus Festival Parade

Christine Aiken headed up an able crew of people for our entry into the Cactus Festival Parade on August 18, 2016. The Noah's Ark theme served us well. We were joined and assisted in the parade by representatives from EcoWHam.

c Advent Walk

About 350 pilgrims participated in our **24th Advent Walk** on November 27, 2016. The weather that evening was fine indeed. Mary and Joseph, kings and shepherds led the walk from church to church and at the final stop (St. Paul's) were welcomed by carollers singing Christmas hymns. Over \$1,100 was given in donations to Ellen Osler Home to be used in projects they determine to make the place more “homey.”

d Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

For a fourth year we observed this week, January 18 – 25, 2017 with two programmes: Entertaining Angels and an Ecumenical Study.

“Entertaining Angels” involved two or more representatives from each church visiting other churches. This is for the most part well received and we agreed to continue the practice and use it as a tool to build awareness of each other. Apart from creating visibility for the ADC on a Sunday, this provides for hospitality offered to each other.

Our two part ecumenical Bible Study drew on materials and theme published jointly by the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order and the Roman Catholic Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The theme was built around the concept of “reconciliation” arising from the commemoration in 2017 of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. There were over 40 participants from United, Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army and Pentecostal communities. The study was led by Rev. Jean Archbell, Rev. Shawn Erb and Rev. Rick Spies. The first part of the study considered how the Reformation came about and the different groupings that emerged in Western Christianity. The second part considered the work of reconciliation among churches and the ministry of reconciliation in the world that has occurred these past several decades. We became more aware of the various approaches to Christian unity including awareness of joint mission through Canadian Foodgrains Bank (supported by almost all denominations in the ADC), Project Ploughshares (peace), Kairos (environment), Canadian Council of Churches, Evangelical Fellowship of Churches, World Council of Churches and so on. We began to see that we in the ADC and Dundas Ministerial are another local expression of the worldwide desire for unity.

Brainstorming in the second study produced a list of ideas that could be pursued to promote unity and reconciliation among ourselves as Christian churches and to promote our ministry of reconciliation in the world. A report was prepared by Rev. Rick Spies and this material was first discussed by a task group, then by an ADC meeting and then referred to the Dundas Ministerial for further consideration.

e Reformation 500 Worship

The ADC postponed its AGM and its regular May 25, 2017 meeting to June 1, 2017 in order to allow ADC members to participate in a time of worship (common ecumenical prayer) commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation on that day. “From Conflict to Communion” was organized by LARC (Lutheran Anglican Roman Catholic Inter-church Committee). About a dozen people from ADC churches travelled to the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate in Guelph, Ontario for worship that involved thanksgiving, repentance, peace and commitment.

Rev. Jean Archbell was one of the Anglican leaders in this.

f Lenten Lunches

For six Wednesdays in Lent beginning Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2017 through April 5, 2017 we met together for a half hour of worship and then a simple lunch. Churches shared worship leadership building on the theme of “reconciliation” that arose from the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and also shared lunch preparation and serving. St. Paul's acted as host for all six lunches.

This year attendance ranged from 105 to 122 and we were able to give \$2,565 which we divided into equal portions to Routes Youth and the Good Food Boxes to be given to the Dundas Food Bank.

2017 was the 8th year we have held this ecumenical time of worship and fellowship. The first was in 2010. This is well rooted now in the lives of all of our churches.

g Blessing of Coexistence Service

Some members of ADC participated in a “blessing of coexistence service” held at Addis Israel Synagogue on March 22, 2017. This event had emerged on short notice as a witness to interfaith cooperation and dialogue.

h Other Worship Observances?

The idea of our having some other times to gather for worship together was raised through the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity brainstorming. The idea of a Good Friday walk or pilgrimage seems not workable so some wondered if something like that might happen around Pentecost. The idea would be to draw attention to our common concern for social justice. The idea of a song service was also suggested. This was left to the Dundas Ministerial to discuss in a positive way.

i Dofasco Men's Chorus

We were approached by Dr. Bob James of the Dofasco Men's Chorus about sponsoring fundraising event involving that choir. We agreed that this might happen in the spring of 2018. Mary Anne Tangney, Secretary, is our lead contact on this which will be followed up in the fall of 2017. One suggestion was that this fundraising be for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank as almost all ADC member denominations are part of this "bank." It would highlight our joint global mission. St. Paul's has shared a growing project for CFGB with two Ancaster churches for over 25 years.

j Canada 150 – An Interfaith Event

A sub group consisting of Pastor Shawn Erb, Patty Jackson, Mary Anne Tangney and Anne Washington did some brainstorming and research and an Interfaith Event observing the contribution of religious groups to the life of Canada is being planned for the fall of 2017 with participation from a variety of faith traditions: Aboriginal, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, etc ADC will receive grant money from the Hamilton Community Foundation to help with this event.

k Witness through Awareness

Rev. Rick Spies began work on a small pamphlet outlining the Outreach / Compassionate ministries and contributions of all ADC members in the past years. The purpose is to create better awareness among ourselves and perhaps have a summary that can be shared with others in our community. We are in a time when the general population is less and less aware of what churches do and are really about. Susan Laing has agreed to help him with this.

Rev. Rick Spies drew attention to 2018 being the 50th anniversary of the Association of Dundas Churches which was formed in 1968. We agreed in principle that a pamphlet or booklet ought to be created. Rev. Jean Archbell, Rev. Alison Mock and Rev. Rick Spies agreed to help with this project.

9 Participation in Social Justice/ Social Action

ADC approaches its mandates a) to encourage social action and social justice and b) to bring social and spiritual needs of our community to awareness in a variety of ways.

- We endeavour to be more aware of social and ethical issues ourselves and to discuss them in our meetings.
- We receive reports from various groups working to improve life and serve needs of our community.
- We take action or make statements together as the ADC raising money, supporting causes, raising concerns.
- We communicate with and meet with our government representatives and other community leaders.
- Sometimes we simply raise awareness and encourage individual members or churches to act in their own right.

Education

We continued our efforts to educate ourselves as seen by our various guest speakers and to join in conversation with community leaders of various levels of government about social justice issues: social housing, supportive housing, inclusive zoning, living wage, food banks, Ontario Works, ODSP, guaranteed annual income, climate change, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and so on. Reporting to our churches our hope is to foster wide discussion and awareness and action in our church congregations and agencies.

Reports

Reports from EcoWHam, Ellen Osler Home, Routes Youth, Dundas Community Services, Dundas Food Bank, Hamilton Family Health Team keep us in touch with social actions in Dundas. Connecting with Hamilton Faith Communities in Action and the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction is a help in helping us understand the background of social justice issues and aware of local actions.

Community Dinners

We continued to encourage those churches that have undertaken sponsoring community dinners. All four Mondays are now covered: Knox, St. James, St. Mark's, St. Paul's being host churches each funding in their

own way. Grace Valley Church has undertaken the 5th Mondays and does so using St. James' facilities.

Advent Walk and Lenten Lunch Offerings

Advent Walk offering of over \$1,100 was given to Ellen Osler Home.

Lenten Lunch offering of \$2,565 was split between Routes Youth and Good Food Boxes for the Dundas Food Bank. (This will provide 85 food boxes over the year – 7 a month).

Meeting with Filomena Tassi, MP – March 4, 2017

8 members of ADC met with MP Filomena Tassi and her Executive Assistant, Antioco Puddu in a 75 minute meeting. We asked about her experience as an MP and commended the government for various actions: return to the long census form, the Prime Minister's apology to language minorities for comments made in Sherbrooke, Quebec, renewal of Canadian Foodgrains Bank matching funding of \$125 million, a positive tone in governing. We then raised concerns developed from ADC members suggestions: refugees, electoral reform, indigenous peoples (TRC), childcare, housing, climate change, world militarism. We ended up in a discussion about the term "Canadian values" – a term the MP used several times – which some of us questioned. A written report of the meeting is available and was shared in our churches.

Town Hall on Climate Change

We endorsed EcoWHam's call for MP Filomena Tassi to hold a Town Hall on climate change – which she did.

Living Wage

ADC, through Chairperson Rev. Rick Spies, called on Councillor Arlene VanderBeek to support having all City of Hamilton employees receive a living wage – including those who are part time. Councillor VanderBeek did not endorse that measure citing budget restraint. We still see this as a justice issue that would have the City of Hamilton set an example and help create an expectation. A living wage in Hamilton in 2017 is \$15.95 per hour.

Transgender and Gender Nonconformity

Rev. Rick Spies drew our attention to the Transgender and Gender Nonconformity protocol being considered by the City of Hamilton. Individual ADC members and churches were encouraged to express their thoughts to Councillor Arlene VanderBeek and a number did so, some in emails, some in person, some in attending the hearing on this. Councillor VanderBeek supported the new protocol.

Bill 6

Rev. Rick Spies communicated to our MPP Ted McMeekin our support for this bill which seeks to have recommendations for social assistance rates set by an independent group on evidence based cost of living. As well individual ADC members and churches communicated to our MPP on this matter.

As of the writing of this Annual Report, this bill has passed second reading and has been referred to a standing committee.

City of Hamilton Housing

ADC Secretary Mary Anne Tangney sent an email to Councillor Arlene VanderBeek commending Hamilton City Council for earmarking \$50 million for supporting housing needs in the city.

Guaranteed Annual Income

Following communications from ADC in support of new testing of the idea of a Guaranteed Annual Income (along the line of the OAS supplement) and following raising this issue over several years with our MPP and provincial candidates, ADC Secretary Mary Anne Tangney sent an email commending the Ontario government for making Hamilton one of the test communities.

Reconciliation in the World

Ideas from the brainstorming session in the ecumenical study of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were referred to the ADC and to the Dundas Ministerial to consider. They included concerns about support for mental health needs, climate change, end of life issues.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Indigenous Concerns

ADC meetings have periodically discussed indigenous concerns. Some discussion was held about the commission looking into the issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women. Discussion was around the appropriateness, the timing, the way to secure impact for a “red dress campaign” with its roots in an artistic work. Some churches of the ADC (Christ Church, St. James, St. Paul’s) have right relations groups and interests.

Outreach Report for ADC Members

In 2016-2017 work began on preparing a pamphlet outlining the work of ADC member churches in the area that could be broadly understood as “outreach” in order to better appreciate all the efforts that are made in the areas of social action and social justice and in “mending a broken world.”

This work is assigned to Rev. Rick Spies and to Susan Laing.

Marijuana Legislation

We agreed (April 2017) to consider sending a letter expressing some concerns about proposed legislation involving the legalization of marijuana.

Rev. Jean Archbell and Rev. Rick Spies were to draft a letter for consideration at our June 1, 2017 meeting.

10 Dundas Ministerial

The Dundas Ministerial is the gathering of clergy (primarily those in lead ministries) in the congregations of the community of Dundas. Its membership is sometimes wider than that of the ADC with ministers/priests/pastors whose congregations are not members of the ADC still participating. In 2016-2017 the Ministerial continued to meet fairly regularly and with excellent attendance over meals mainly at the home of Rev. Rick Spies but also at the home of Rev. Jean Archbell.

ADC refers some matters to the Ministerial to plan – Advent Walk, Lenten Lunches. ADC has also referred other matters to the Ministerial to discuss:

possible forum on assisted dying now that legislation allows this and recognizing different church positions, follow up on the Christian Unity brainstorming. The Ministerial fosters good relationships, good sharing of awareness of each other’s congregations.

It should be noted that we are blessed in both the Dundas Ministerial and the Association of Dundas Churches with broad participation. We should not take this for granted as it does not always happen that Roman Catholic, Anglican, mainline Protestant, and Evangelical groups and clergy can sit and work together. A spirit of cooperation and reconciliation is strong among us. This is for all of us seen as a gift from God – and a calling.

11 Thanks

This report endeavours to provide a snapshot of the life of the Association of Dundas Churches. Thanks are due to all who have contributed time and effort in fostering the life of this unique and vital ecumenical body. There exists in Dundas a heart for ecumenism and a vehicle for giving expression to it.

We look forward to continuing our effective programmes in the new year as well as new initiatives that will emerge.

Respectfully submitted
Rev. Rick Spies
Chairperson, ADC
June 1, 2017

