

Church Extension Committee – Role, Activities, Support for Communities of Faith

The Church Extension Committee supports Communities of Faith throughout the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region by providing shared financial assistance and advice with respect to projects involving their buildings and facilities.

The Committee's Terms of Reference were approved by the Regional Council on October 5, 2019 saying that the Committee provides advice and assistance with respect to:

- new buildings and facilities;
- renovations and upgrades to equipment and facilities;
- providing suggestions and advice regarding ways to approach their projects;
- providing financial guidance and support through loans or grants to cover a portion of the costs; and,
- management of financial assets and land holdings entrusted to Committee.

Church Extension Committee

The Church Extension Committee is a corporation operating under the laws of Ontario. Its Letters Patent and By-Laws were revised in late 2018 to confirm the relationship with the Region.

Directors: Ted Brett*, Graham Campbell (President), Bert Cosman, David Debenham, Alan Gale, Catherine Grant, Judy Harms-Potter*, Daniel King, Charles Knight, Mike Nyeuhuis, Don Reynolds*, Linda Suddaby*

EOORC Appointments: Rev. Brian Cornelius, Rev. Carla Van Delen
Rev. Rosemary Lambie (Resource Person)

The Committee's Vision Statement was approved on November 4, 2020:

***Our Vision:** Striving to support the health and continuance of Communities of Faith throughout the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region with excellent advice and shared financial support for their projects to repair and renew their physical assets.*

Supporting Communities of Faith Since 1961

Looking back, the Committee operated between 1961 and 2019 within the former Ottawa Presbytery. The original capital for the Committee's work was provided by the congregations of the former Ottawa Presbytery. The Committee purchased land which was later donated for the creation of 12 new churches, it provided loans or mortgages to 22 congregations for major renovations or additions, and it provided grants to 14 congregations for smaller scale improvements to their buildings and facilities. Since the mid-1980s, the Committee supported congregations in the former Ottawa Presbytery with loans or mortgages totalling \$1.3 million.

The Church Extension Committee became part of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region in January 2019. Between May 2019 and October 2020, the Committee has provided ten Communities of Faith across the Region with advice and financial support totalling \$109,200 for their projects.

Working With Church Extension

Each Community of Faith is responsible for management of its physical assets such as church buildings and manses, for maintaining and creating facilities to meet their current issues, and for upgrades to support new forms of ministries that will emerge in the future. The Church Extension Committee supports Communities of Faith to address these needs.

Communities of Faith are welcomed to work with the Church Extension Committee in three areas.

1. Application and Advice for Projects: A guideline is available which provides information on the Committee's requirements when considering requests for grants or loans.

Congregations seeking funds meet with the Committee to make their proposal for shared funding to support projects for their buildings or facilities. Their representatives often consult with individual members of the Committee in advance to explore alternatives and identify practical and often less expensive ways to meet their needs.

This advice is very useful to the representatives of the congregations if they do not have the expertise, experience or contacts in building-related matters.

The Committee has advised several congregations on ways to make the best use of their facilities in order to supplement their income and increase their engagement with the surrounding community. Examples of alternative uses are renting space and facilities, hosting community events at the Church, or providing space for a children's day care.

In addition, one member of the Committee has taken the lead for the Ottawa Presbytery working collaboratively with congregations to make arrangements for selling Church buildings.

2. Financial Advice: During meetings with representatives of congregations, the Committee discusses the financial aspects of the project in some detail. Typically, the sources of funding will be from the congregation's reserves, from fundraising activities, and from Church Extension. The Committee makes suggestions about other sources of funding and works out repayment terms that match well with the financial capacity of the congregation. This advice on the financial aspects of the project leads to an improved funding arrangement for the congregation.

3. Support to Sustain Congregations: Many congregations come to the Church Extension Committee for assistance with projects which will enable them to keep going even though their membership is declining and their financial situation is strained.

The Committee recognizes the importance of providing funding and advice to sustain the life of the Community of Faith. There are several examples where the funding provided by the Committee has been successful in doing so.

The committee's strength is its diverse membership. At present, the 11 members of the Committee have expertise in:

- Buildings and facilities;
- Financing projects;
- Financial management;
- Legal matters;
- Real estate; and,
- Management of Church projects.

Contacting Church Extension

The Committee anticipates an increase in demand for its services. For instance, many congregations may not have had access to funds for their buildings and facilities. Some may have facilities that need upgrades to meet regulatory requirements for accessibility.

The Committee meets twice each year to consider applications in the April/May and in October/November in conjunction with the corporation's Annual General Meeting. If urgent requests are received, the Committee will meet between these regular meetings.

Thank you for your interest in working with the Church Extension Committee.

Graham Campbell, Church Extension Committee, 7 November, 2020