

**February 24,2004**

Minutes of the meeting of the Presbytery held at TrinityUnited Church on Tuesday, February24,2004 at 4:00 PM, duly called and with a quorum present, John Culter-Chair.

**Present:**

Ordered: Deb Bowman, Philip Cable, Ruth Wright, Terri Scallon, Deborah Laing, Rob Pollock, Barry Morris, Sharon Copeman, Robin Jacobson, Brenda Faust, Marianna Harris, Rose-Hannah Gaskin, Dan Chambers, Brian Burke, Seiichi Ariga, Edwin Searcy, Cheryl Black, Art Griffin, Eleanor O'Neil, Sandra Severs.

Lay: Elinor Byers, Carol Kidd, Susan Henry, Pat Burns, Shawn Shenfield, Simone Carrodus, Trevor Watson, Glenys Melsom, Susan Chambers, Bill Davie, Karen Millard, Diana Millar, Trevor Harris, Barbara Matiru, Coleen Blair, Katheryn Karst, John Culter, Jennifer Richmond, Laurene Lewis, Syd Lewis, Karen Wootton, Tracy Murton, Jean Moore, Sheila Stanway.

Guests: Sallie McFague, Janice Guthrie, Margo Howe, Elaine Howe, Traudi Schaffer, Ulrich Schaffer, Betty Robertson, Fred Robertson, Kris Honeyman, Rita Brunneski, Jen-Beth Fulton, Dorothy Yates, Colleen Adair, Rosie Hyde, Anita Horgan, Olly Jorquera, Dorothy Chambers, Jeffery Smith, Gail Sokalski, Jack Odell, Jane Power, Lyle Simpson, Shirley Simpson, Audrey Hall, Gerry Hall, Justina Nicolasian, Don McKenzie, Doug Jamieson, Don Stiles and parents, plus three additional who did not register or stay for dinner.

**Regrets:**

Linda Gunn, Sally Harris, Stephen Hershey, Shelagh MacKinnon, Sue Parker, Janice Young, Gabrielle McLarty.

**Opening:** The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and explaining that the meeting would focus on the presentation by Sallie McFague. He made the following announcements:

- 1) Three copies of 2003 Annual Reports from Congregations need to be forwarded to the Secretary as soon as possible.
- 2) Presbyters were encouraged to attend the re:VIVE event on March 27<sup>th</sup> at St.Andrew's-Wesley which will serve as the next meeting of the Presbytery. Register on line at [www.bc.united-church.ca/revive](http://www.bc.united-church.ca/revive)

Janice Guthrie welcomed Presbytery on behalf of the congregation of Trinity United Church who hosted the meeting with food provided by St.John's United Church-Vancouver.

**Presentation:**

Brian Burke on behalf of the Faithful Public Witness Committee introduced Dr.Sallie McFague, Distinguished Theologian in Residence at the Vancouver School of Theology. Dr.McFague holds a Bachelor of Arts (magna cum laude) from Smith College, a Bachelor of Divinity (magna cum laude) from Yale divinity School and Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Yale as well as an Honourary Doctor of Letters from Smith College. Prior to joining the faculty at VST she was Carpenter Professor of Theology at Vanderbilt Divinity School. She has written many books including most recently "Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril". Additional information on the book and related study guide may be found on line at [www.fortresspress.com](http://www.fortresspress.com)

The following were a few highlights from Sallie McFague's presentation:

Religion really matters in the scheme of things, who we are and what we should be doing is shaped by our religious beliefs. 85% of world population belongs to a religion.

Economics/Ecology/Ecumenical all come from the root word meaning house.

Three basic rules have been identified for basic global wellbeing:

Take only your share

Clean up after yourselves

Keep the house in good repair for future occupants.

Regarding distributive justice and sustainability, a different model is possible from the current greed based model.

Religions have supported individualism by going along with and not speaking out against problems with neo-classical economics. Religions need to be more critical of neo-classical economics and support an economic model that promotes a sustainable ecological model. Detailed descriptions of characteristics of the neo-classical economics model were compared to the equivalent characteristics of an ecological economics model.

In linking the ecological economic model to Christianity the issue of who is invited to share the food means who lives and who dies.

Steps for Christians to take could be:

- 1) Become conscious of the ecological economic model as an alternative to market capitalism
- 2) Develop visions that are sustainable e.g. basic necessities for all, medicare, education
- 3) Publicly advocate for the ecological economic model including becoming informed, joining with other Non-Governmental Organizations, and accepting consequences of own lifestyle
- 4) Rethink what such a change would mean for our theology e.g. salvation could mean the flourishing of creation.

The glory of God is every creature fully alive.

Following dinner a panel comprising Barry Morris, Susan Henry, Art Griffen and Brian Burke joined Sallie McFague to respond to questions arising from her presentation.

Questions dealt with urgency, living it, Jubilee, native spirituality, sacrificial atonement, role of communication in the rise of individualism, starting by helping neighbour, and the future of the church.

On the last point Sallie indicated that the decline of the established church may be a good idea. Established churches fall too easily into the wider culture. Perhaps our role should be on the fringe of society where we are able to critique. Different forms of being church may be needed such a less dependence on a building.

Brian Burke thanked Sallie on behalf of the Presbytery for her thought provoking presentation.

**Worship:**

A Shrove Tuesday service of worship was led by Barry Morris with Art Griffen, Terri Scallon, Susan Henry and Brian Burke participating. The service included the signing of ashes and concluded with the following commissioning:

Go and may the peace of God be with you in  
all that you do

May God's spirit take the ragged edges of our  
lives and knit their tattered pieces into wholeness,  
Planting our lives with love, watering them with joy,  
and bringing forth the fruit of justice. Amen.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM

**Next Meetings:** Executive meets March 16<sup>th</sup> at Trinity United 2-5 PM.

Presbytery:

March 27<sup>th</sup>, attendance at re:VIVE Event. Please register at

[www.bc.united-church.ca/revive](http://www.bc.united-church.ca/revive).

April 27<sup>th</sup> at Mt. Seymour United, 4-8 PM.