



November 2022

Dear Members of Wilmot and St Paul's United congregations,

We are writing to introduce ourselves to you and to introduce the process that we have been invited to facilitate with Downtown United.

The congregations of Wilmot and St Paul's United have agreed to develop a collaborative process that will produce a joint project to serve downtown Fredericton, as well as serve as a model for possible future collaboration. A planning committee made up of 4 people from each congregation invited Credence & Co. to facilitate the process.

Credence & Co is an organization devoted to helping congregations and workplaces thrive. Our team focuses on facilitating organizational health, discernment, visioning, strategic planning, conflict transformation, mediation, diversity work, and more! Your consultants for this process (Marijke and Cathy) are both ordained ministers with extensive experience guiding congregational processes.

We have chosen as our guiding theme these words from Frederick Buechner: *"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."*

The first steps in this process are to listen around the questions of "gladness" (your congregations' joys and strengths) and "hunger" (the needs of your congregations and of the community around you).

Our collaborative process will include:

- a) A survey to listen for your joys, challenges, and hopes as congregations (January 2023)
- b) Individual interviews with each congregation's Staff members
- c) Group interviews with approximately 5-6 committees in each congregation
- d) A half-day retreat, offered at 2 different times (in March)
- e) 2 or 3 joint congregational meetings (Spring 2023)

Closer to January 8 you will receive a link for an online survey (hard copies will also be available). We invite you to participate in this survey which will contribute to the direction of this venture.

We look forward to taking these next steps with you.

Cathy Stewart and Marijke Strong

Consultants, Credence & Co.



CONSULTANT: CATHY STEWART



Cathy Stewart has been guiding congregations through difficult conversations and conflict for over 30 years. Early in her career as an ordained minister, Cathy worked with a congregation struggling with a very tough situation. She sought mediation training and since that time, Cathy has become a leader in guiding congregations through crisis into greater health, helping congregations discern their sense of purpose and calling, and encouraging them to listen for how to be faithful to God. Cathy provides assessments, mediation, circles, coaching, and facilitation of critical conversations, renewal, and change processes.

Cathy's passion is to make connections between spirituality and conflict resolution. She sees listening skills to be at the heart of spirituality, in addition to being crucial for the transformation of conflict and congregational life. Cathy welcomes every situation as a chance to learn and grow. Cathy is a Qualified Mediator (Q. Med), trained Interim Minister (Inter Ministry Network), holds a BA (Hons) in English Literature and French from the University of Winnipeg, a Master of Divinity from McCormick Seminary (Chicago), and Certificates in Conflict Management and Mediation, and Conflict Management and Congregational Leadership from Conrad Grebel University College affiliated with the University of Waterloo.

CONSULTANT: MARIJKE STRONG

Marijke is a professional coach, mediator, pastor, trainer, speaker, and facilitator. With over 20 years of experience leading individuals and groups, she focuses on healing relationships and organizations through conflict transformation, community learning, and adaptive change.

Marijke finds joy in creating safe, challenging, and creative spaces that support individuals and organizations to grow towards health. Drawing on her knowledge of emotional intelligence and community building, she brings deep listening skills to all areas of her work and life. As she facilitates opportunities for individuals and communities to pursue their personal and collective goals, she walks alongside those with whom she works, ensuring that people feel heard and respected throughout the conversation.

With an educational background in English, Theatre, and Theology, Marijke uses her many talents to serve those with whom she works.

