



## Final Report

SUBMITTED TO:

DATE:

PREPARED BY:

Sharon Hope United Church

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# LOVE, LISTEN, LEAD

*Guided by our core values—Love, Listen, Lead—Credence & Co. supports churches and their leaders, helping them to thrive and flourish. Through tailor-made interventions, we commit to caring deeply, listening well and leading with integrity.*

## Introduction

In August 2018, members of the Council of Sharon Hope United Church (SHUC) in Sharon, ON met with Marg Van Herk-Paradis of Credence & Co. (Credence) to discuss the workplan based on the recommendations from the assessment completed in May 2018. From there the following occurred:

- Leadership coaching began for the Interim Minister and the Transition Team, with a final meeting in June 2019;
- Three “Real time” coaching sessions during Council meetings occurred to provide (a) counsel regarding managing current and/or upcoming issues (b) facilitation, as needed, during challenging conversations and/or decision making and (c) support with communication to the congregation;
- Members of the Transition committee met to plan the “Crucial Conversations” with the facilitator. They continued to meet for planning and debriefing throughout the process, with a final meeting in May 2019.
- The congregation met on November 25, 2018, January 13, March 3, March 30, and April 28, 2019 for both learning and conversation related to Vision, Mission and Values and “Crucial Conversations”. There were three phases to this process. Firstly, a timeline of key moments in the life of the congregation was created. Secondly, the congregation was invited to turn towards the future by embracing the present. This was done via a “What We Think We Know” document and by engaging in a time of discernment and prayer. Thirdly, the congregation engaged in action planning related to the creation of strategic anchors, behavioural commitments, vision, mission and a core values statement.

## Next Steps

- In Fall, 2019, the Transition Committee will bring the final document containing the strategic anchors, behavioural commitment, vision, mission and a core values statement to the congregation for ratification.

## Looking Ahead

The people of SHUC are invited to live into their commitments to one another and to continue to work towards listening better to one another, appreciating differences, and building each other up.

It is recommended that the document below be reviewed annually and updated as the congregation grows and changes.

It is also recommended that the Council review all of its activities in light of the document below and engage in a process to evaluate what should continue, what might need to be reviewed, and what new ideas might be started.

## Closing Remarks

It has been a pleasure for me to work with SHUC. The congregation is full of potential. People enjoy being with one another. The energy during worship is palpable, the congregation is committed to practicing inclusion and welcome by listening to all voices; and the congregation is committed to being a people of faith together. Together these characteristics form a strong foundation upon which the congregation can thrive.

# Our Common Story

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The congregation has history more than a century old. In 1885, Hope Church joined with Sharon and Queensville Methodist to form a three-point charge. The churches joined the church union in 1925 to become part of The United Church of Canada. This three-point charge continued until 1954. At that time, Hope Church amalgamated with the Sharon Church. The congregation continued to grow, and the church building became overcrowded. In 1982, it was decided to work toward the establishment of a new building on 2.16 acres south of the church on Leslie Street. On December 6, 1987 the Sharon-Hope congregation was dedicated and opened its doors.

Today, Sharon-Hope is a wonderful, accessible space, providing us with an open, welcoming worship space, and room for gatherings within our congregation and extended community. These have included coffee following Sunday worship, concerts, pageants, and dinners of various types.

Music has been an integral part of the life of Sharon-Hope, with a dedicated Music Director and choir. Strong, interpersonal relationship, friendships and support are at the center of our life together. At present, there are multiple small group ministries active within the congregation, linking people together to address common needs or interests. These include two book study groups, Healthwatchers Walking Group, Healing and Hope, Lectionary Bible Study, Caring Crafters, Choir, MASH, discernment committee, and one diaconal student.

## Strategic Anchors

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Strategic Anchors	
We are rooted in, and connected to, the larger community of Sharon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This place is bigger than us, and we regard ourselves as an extension of the church's mission.</li><li>• We honor our history and the people who have gone before us.</li><li>• Our rootedness gives us stability.</li><li>• We build connections with our local community, and the larger United Church body.</li><li>• We are committed to supporting outreach projects locally and world-wide through donations of money, food, clothing and other necessities.</li></ul>

Sharon-Hope is a safe and welcoming space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People come for a variety of reasons to Sharon-Hope, and we honor the uniqueness of each person’s experience.</li> </ul>
Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We commit to making consensus-based decisions.</li> <li>• We trust Council chairs to work with their committees in collaborative and respectful ways.</li> <li>• We as a Council will work together as Council chairs to keep the needs/desires of the church at the forefront of our work.</li> <li>• Council chairs will bring motions to the table for approval.</li> <li>• We agree as a church body that decisions that significantly impact the church will be decided on at the Council table and will be followed through.</li> <li>• The constitution will outline who and how decisions are made in the church. Lines of accountability and authority will come from this document.</li> </ul>
Healthy Relationship and Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a strong bond among many of the congregants and a strong sense of caring for one another.</li> <li>• We accept that conflict is a natural part of being in relationship with one another and will work to be patient, respectful and listen to one another.</li> </ul>
Financial Needs and Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We acknowledge that there are different values related to finances and we agree to continue to have respectful conversations around this.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We commit to emailing the bulletin out on a weekly basis</li> <li>• We commit to using the sign outside the church to let people in our community know what is happening at the church and to be a sign of welcome</li> <li>• We commit to listening in order to understand and to be attentive to our words.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council commits to sharing a “Minute for Council” every month at the end of worship</li> <li>• We commit to having more regular congregational meetings as they foster greater communication and understanding</li> <li>• The Council commits to continuing to work on their internal communication</li> <li>• Inappropriate communication needs to be referred to the Council Chair or Vice Chair for review.</li> </ul>
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## Behavioural Commitments

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Behavioral Commitments	
We use curiosity instead of judgement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With intentionality, we work to engage with each other through the stance of curiosity, understanding, and deep listening.</li> <li>• We are compassionate, non-judgmental, assuming the best in others as we honor each person we encounter.</li> <li>• We are deeply committed to one another and in for the long haul. We acknowledge that sometimes we will hurt each other, and work towards reconciliation and forgiveness.</li> </ul>
We are mutually supportive, and accountable to one another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are present to one another as we work together on committees.</li> <li>• Policies and practice support and encourage health and well-being for leaders, staff and congregant’s.</li> <li>• We trust and appreciate each other’s contributions.</li> <li>• We actively collaborate and are accountable to the Council.</li> <li>• In turn, the Council is accountable to the congregation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We actively seek to keep the lines of communication open through regular feedback/check-in sessions.</li> <li>• The Council shares a commitment to financial stability and staffing stability.</li> </ul>
Leaders are honest and kind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As leaders we chose to engage with one another in ways that are respectful and bring out the best in one another. When we seek clarification, we do this from a stance of curiosity.</li> </ul>

This is a living document that should be reviewed on an annual basis to remind people of what they have committed to.

## Vision Statement

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Our vision is to be a vibrant christian community where faith, hope and love thrive.

## Mission Statement

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Our mission is to:

- **integrate Jesus' teachings** into our daily celebrations and challenges;
- **pray and reflect** on thought-provoking sermons;
- **celebrate our faith** through a variety of musical offerings;
- **share our resources** and **take action** to help our world, and our local community;
- actively engage in **community outreach**.

## Our Core Values

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- We **value hospitality** to all people and believe in **servicing** one another;
- We **nurture and support** one another through our actions;
- We **encourage** each other to grow;

