

MACLEAN ESTATE COMMITTEE

Interim Report, May 2020

We honour the lands we are on in Crieff, Ontario. An acknowledgement is on our website: “We acknowledge with gratitude this traditional territory inhabited by the Attawandaron people before Europeans settled here. We acknowledge other First Nations neighbours including the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe and the Métis nation. We seek a new relationship with the Original Peoples of this land based on honour and deep respect.” This property is ripe for reconciliation and partners for this work are actively being sought.

Renovations to the old schoolhouse, Maclean Hall, are now complete. Rob Summerhayes of Ardis Kitchens Baths and Beyond – Ability Design Build (Jerseyville, Ontario) provided excellent leadership and helped reduce costs by working with our inhouse staff. A night of celebration, lavish food and music by the Rev. Hugh Donnelly and Ms. Sydney O’Brien was held in October to celebrate its completion. This large project was made possible by using a portion of the Crieff Hills Accessibility Fund. The scope of the work included:

- asbestos flooring was safely removed by qualified professionals;
- doorways were widened and an automatic door opener was added to the new front door;
- office space was reinvigorated, creating an open and accessible entryway for all visitors;
- washrooms were improved and now include men’s, women’s and a gender-neutral barrier free washroom;
- uniform commercial flooring was installed to reduce tripping hazards;
- a new barrier-free emergency exit was created on the street side;
- new paint, chairs and vintage school photos on the walls made the space warm and beautiful.

Food preparation and service also underwent sweeping changes this year. Damien Ingrao, a highly skilled local chef, was hired mid-2019 and with his skilled leadership we have accomplished the following:

- new menus are based on local, seasonal ingredients;
- buffet style meals include those with a wide variety of dietary restrictions;
- the kitchen was upgraded with stainless steel counters and shelving;
- two of three commercial refrigerators were replaced;
- a baking station added at the rear;
- food service is expanding to include off-site catering to local homes, churches and businesses.

We are blessed with a large number of buildings and we strive to be good stewards of this resource. This year our major work included the replacement of septic systems at Prophet, Matthew, and Mark. The exterior of Conference Hall and Luke and two barn roofs were painted and one of our two off-site rental houses was updated with bathroom repairs, electrical upgrades and black mold removal. Work began on Prophet House that will continue into 2020, beginning with the removal of asbestos flooring and extensive black mold by qualified professionals.

Our outdoor spaces require extensive upkeep each year and we strive to be faithful caretakers of God’s creation. We reduced our lawn cutting in 2019 by allowing some areas to return to meadow and eliminated all chemical pesticides and fertilizers from the property. Our volunteer gardeners tended to our extensive gardens, including the raised demonstration garden at Maclean Hall that was beautifully filled with herbs and vegetables again. A third of the overgrown vegetable garden near Dove House was reclaimed and put back into fruitful service and our beehives are tended to by faithful volunteers. Unfortunately, with the advance of the Emerald Ash Borer, large numbers of ash trees have died and need to be safely removed in the next few years from near the hiking trails. A new group of volunteer Trail Stewards will tend to this and other work to ensure the health of our forest and the safety of our guests.

Traditional programs such as the Christmas buffet lunches, bird banding and the Church Administrators’ Conference were offered again this year. The Rev. Linda Patton-Cowie was the speaker for the annual Women’s Conference and the 2019 Music Conference was called Cultivating Generous Space: Worship, Music and Intersectional Justice, led by Mr. Chris Fischer and Ms. Wendy Vanderwal Gritter. Manna Days included: Encountering Henri led by former Moderator, the Rev. Daniel Cho, and the Executive Director of the Henri Nouwen Society, Ms. Karen Pascal; The Power of Welcome led by the Rev. Theresa MacDonald-Lee; and Befriending Death: Explore Living Well at the End of Life with nurse and author Ms. Michelle O’Rourke. New events were offered as well, including We Will Feast: Rethinking dinner, worship and the people of God with Ms. Kendall Vanderslice, Fall Forage and Feast with local chef Mr. Stephen Allen and the Advent Supper and Lantern Labyrinth Walk.

Crieff Hills is grateful to have so many donors and volunteers who generously support this mission. Here are some of this year's highlights:

- Arbor Memorial provided \$2,500 for eight locally made wooden chairs with arms for the Upper Conference Hall to ensure the comfort and safety of seniors;
- The Presbyterian Church in Canada awarded Crieff Hills \$4,500 for office equipment in the newly renovated office, including a reception desk to accommodate guests using a wheelchair;
- TD Friends of the Environment contributed \$3,000 for the creation of a heritage orchard with pear, apple and paw paw trees;
- Dufferin Concrete supplied materials for the accessible Maclean Hall parking lot as well as a team of volunteer workers who spent a day installing the new heritage orchard;
- a Canada Summer Jobs grant paid for three students to work full time in maintenance from June to August;
- St. Paul's, Simcoe bought and installed new doors for the prayer shelter.

The Maclean Estate Committee works closely with our Director, the Rev. Dr. Kristine O'Brien, to provide excellent facilities for a variety of religious organizations and a wide diversity of clients. This year, she and her family moved on site in order to provide greater security as well as better service to our guests. We are very fortunate to have an excellent staff who are enthusiastic and faithful, making sure that visitors are well cared for every day of the year. As God welcomes us, we seek to welcome others and hope to offer service that reflects the love of Jesus Christ. We trust that congregations and individuals will make use of Crieff Hills, whether for a conference, study, renewal or simply to enjoy God's creation up close.

The Maclean Estate Committee is composed of 12 members who serve a three year term. Every year as we celebrate the accomplishments of the past year, we also have to say goodbye to two of our members. This year we thank Ms. Anne Church and the Rev. Kathy Fraser for their service to the Maclean Estate Committee and to the Crieff family. We thank them for their work and wish each of them well.

David Phillips
Convener

Kristine O'Brien
Director