



CHAIR OF TORONTO SOUTH PRESBYTERY  
Toronto Conference of the United Church of Canada  
149 Wanless Ave., Toronto, ON M4N 1W3

2007 NOV 29 P 3: 00  
November 27, 2007

Ms. Colleen O'Neill  
Committee Secretary  
Toronto Preservation Board  
Room 102  
100 Queen St. West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: Intention to list Deer Park United Church, Timothy Eaton Memorial United Church and St. Matthew's United Church as properties of historical interest

Dear Ms. O'Neill:

I am writing to advise that representatives of Toronto South Presbytery will attend the meeting of the Toronto Preservation Board on December 6, 2007 and to request an opportunity to speak to the Motion.

Toronto South Presbytery has general concerns about the implications of the Motion on its ability to make decisions about properties of the United Church of Canada that are consistent with its mission and which support and enhance its ministries within the City of Toronto.

In many cases, the heavy financial burden of an old church building coupled with a continuing trend of declining membership, limited or no capital reserves and, lack of financial support from the community in which it is located, require difficult decisions. We are facing many such situations in this Presbytery and are actively exploring options to redevelop sites to better support congregations in their current location, amalgamate or close congregations and to sell surplus property.

The circumstances of each of the above-noted churches are unique but they have a common concern about the future that could follow from being listed as a property of historical interest to the city and of possible designation at a later date.

As an example, the congregation of Deer Park United Church and Toronto South Presbytery are currently working through a process to make decisions about its future due, in some part, to the recent relocation of Imperial Oil and the sale of its property adjacent to the church.

Deer Park has for many years been heated by steam supplied free of charge by Imperial Oil and has no independent furnace; this arrangement will terminate in the spring of 2008. The estimated cost of \$500,000.00 to install a new furnace and heating system in the church are beyond the capital reserves of Deer Park

and its annual income is too low to cover the additional high cost of heating. The congregation is unable to continue to operate and maintain this church property and has decided to move its worship and fellowship to a neighbouring church.

Toronto South Presbytery contends that listing these three United Churches restricts our efforts to be good stewards of the gifts of property and money we hold in trust, in that:

1. Listing affects the value of properties that may need to be sold as a result of amalgamation, church redevelopment or closure. Funds realized from such sales are an important financial asset for furthering the ministries of the United Church of Canada in the City of Toronto and elsewhere in the province.
2. Listing adds to the length of time required to sell such properties and during this period they must be maintained and kept secure at significant cost. In the case of Deer Park, for example, we might have to install a furnace in the building because of problems selling it.
3. Listing is likely to lead to designation in the future and this may incur preservation costs which will be beyond the ability of congregations to absorb or pose an impediment to implementing significant property renovations in response to new or expanded ministries or to improve our environmental footprint.

We recognize and value the history of our churches in Toronto but, first and foremost, we must respond to the changing needs of the city, the people in our communities and our members. The Moderator of the United Church, The Right Reverend David Giuliano, said in a pastoral letter recently sent to all churches:

"The health and vitality of our congregations depends on our response to the suffering of the world around us.

I am praying that more of us become concerned with Jesus' call to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, and visit those who are sick, lonely, or in prison... ....I am praying that our worries about buildings and budgets are overtaken by excitement for the mission of our church."

It is in this spirit that we object to the listing of these three United Churches on St. Clair Avenue West so that we may be free to fulfill our mission as followers of Christ.

Sincerely Yours,



Thomas Clarke  
Chair  
Toronto South Presbytery  
The United Church of Canada

C.C. Rev David Allen  
Executive Secretary  
Toronto Conference of the United Church of Canada  
65 Mayall Avenue,  
Downsview, ON, M3L 1E7

Cc: Douglas duCharme, Secretary, Toronto South Presbytery  
Penny Keel, Chair, Finance, Property & Mission Support, Toronto South  
Presbytery  
Rev Andrew Stirling, Timothy Eaton Memorial Church  
Rev Katherine Brittain, St. Mathew's United Church  
Judith Kennedy, Chair, Executive, Deer Park United Church