



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

September 8, 2017

I'm confident that new opportunities to work collaboratively will emerge as staff move into a new workspace.

Labour Day is past, kids are back in school, and churches across Canada are gearing up for all the busy activities of the fall season.

At the General Council Office, we are in the midst of massive upheaval unrelated to the change of seasons. After months of preparation, and weeks of camping out in temporary office spaces, we are in the final stages of our big office move.



[Catherine Rodd, Executive Minister of Communications, and Alan Hall, Executive Minister of Ministry and Employment, review construction plans with a project advisor.]

No, this is not the move of the General Council Office to a new facility downtown, where a church has redevelopment plans that include office space for us. That process is taking longer than expected, so the current

step is to move from two-and-a-half floors of our current lease down to one. This will achieve a large financial saving for the church, while allowing us the security of a little longer for the lease of these premises, pending another move later.

I have been wonderfully impressed by the goodwill of our staff, as everyone has worked through recent weeks in very disruptive circumstances. Second floor staff moved to the third floor in late winter, and the fourth floor had to be vacated in mid-August, so everyone has been together in one floor since then. Two, three or four people are working in what was formerly the workspace for one, the Communications unit is working together in a former meeting room, and everyone is busy packing their green or gray plastic crates to move the contents of their offices to the space on the second floor. In the midst of it all, everyone is doing their best to do their jobs and serve the needs of the church.

Amazingly, instead of grumbling, I am hearing laughter and helpful words ... as well as eagerness about getting on with the move to the renovated second floor.

The second floor is the same size as the floor we are currently packed into, but will be configured in a way that gives everyone their own small workstation. All open concept with no private offices. There are small meeting rooms for private conversations, but no large meeting rooms to accommodate 50 or 100 people as we had previously. The new office will be different, but after all the preparation, I find myself excited about it.

We haven't been allowed to visit the second floor during the renovations (hard hats and safety gear are required), so there is a lot of anticipation about what it be like when we finally are in our new spaces.

While we can't fully envision it yet, I know that we will learn to work

together in some new ways, to use less paper (since we will have less storage space), and to be more conscious of how distracting conversations can be to neighbours. It seems likely that colleagues who previously worked on different floors will get to know each other better (that's starting to happen already) and I am hopeful that new opportunities to work collaboratively may emerge.

Meanwhile, just a heads up the church as a whole that our offices will be closed September 14 and 15 as the phones and computer lines are installed, and likely non-functional on the 18th too, as everyone unpacks their crates and prepares to live into the new reality.

Nora



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