

March 28, 2019

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA  
SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Communities of Faith Commission  
Thursday, March 28, 2019**

The Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on Thursday, March 28, 2019 by video conference. The meeting began at 9:03 a.m.

**Members Present**

Christine Smaller (Chairperson) Ross Leckie, Emma Pipes, Harry Ramsaran, Kevin Logie, Cindy Randall, Calin Lau, Jody Maltby (Staff Lead)

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone. She shared the story of Jairus' daughter from Mark 5 and led in a time of prayer. Members checked in. The commission agreed to ask the Staff Lead to find a chaplain for a critical situation in the region, offering an honorarium of \$500.

The chairperson constituted the meeting in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Agenda**

MOTION by Kevin Logie/Cindy Randall that the agenda, as circulated, be approved.

MOTION

CARRIED

**Minutes**

MOTION by Cindy Randall/Ross Leckie that the minutes of the meeting of February 28, 2019 be approved.

MOTION

CARRIED

**Business Arising from the Minutes**

- Letter from M. Fearnall

The Staff Lead provided an update on this matter.

- Visit to St. Lukes

The chairperson offered thanks to Emma and Ross for their work and excellent report. She invited questions for clarification.

MOTION by Ross Leckie/Calin Lau that the Communities of Faith Commission direct that the appointment of Andrew Macpherson not be renewed, with thanks for his ministry with this congregation and that the Pastoral Relations Commission seek an Intentional Interim Minister for a two-year appointment to work with the congregation.

MOTION

CARRIED

The commission asked the Staff Lead to consult with the Pastoral Relations Minister about communicating this decision with Minister and Congregation.

The commission reflected on learnings from the experience with St. Lukes. How can we set up reasonable expectations within congregations around what an appointment is to ensure that appointments are good experiences for both parties? This question will be referred to the Pastoral Relations Commission.

In the course of their work with a congregation, Listening Teams may hear important information that may not be within our mandate but may be important. How do we deal with this?

The commission needs to develop a clear process for Listening Teams including how they will be set up, and what communication will occur between the Team and the congregation and/or ministry personnel. One suggestion is that a standard letter be sent ahead of time, outlining the role of the Team and the process. It also needs to be determined if the report created by the Listening Team should be shared with the congregation and/or the ministry personnel.

- Governance Conversation

Christine and Ross reported on the conversation with the co-chairs of the Regional Executive, which they thought was positive and helpful.

Initially when the commission was set up the expectation was that the commission would be completely autonomous in decision-making. Since then the Executive has recognized that there needs to be a relationship around writing policy and particularly with respect to sale of property and distribution of proceeds. Our desire is to avoid duplication and delay in making decisions. We can feel comfortable that we will be in partnership in making decisions around property sales, recognizing that both the disposition of property and retention of property will be key in supporting our vision for ministry in the region.

The Executive trusts the commission to work closely with congregations, to make appropriate recommendations to the region and to help congregations make decisions regarding the 10% of proceeds that can be their legacy. We hope that congregations can eventually be encouraged to consider different ways to approach a limited future that might allow for an even greater legacy to the wider church. It will be important to tell the

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positive stories of how congregations have made different decisions that allow their assets to be used in life-giving ways for the wider church.

### **Omnibus Motion**

MOTION by Cindy Randall /Kevin Logie that the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council take the following actions:

- a) Approve the appointment of Maria Christina Conlon to the position of Davenport-Perth Community Minister from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019, full-time, with the terms for General Council category 8 step 12, Order of Ministry; Basic telephone - \$960 per annum; Continuing Education and Learning amount - \$1500 per annum; and all other terms according to the Manual.
- b) Approve the appointment of Barry Rieder at Jane Finch Community Ministry, Recognized Designated Lay Minister from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019, full-time, with the following terms for Order of Ministry category F of pastoral pay scale; Basic telephone - \$960 per annum; Continuing Education and Learning amount - \$1500 per annum; and all other terms according to the Manual.

*This is on the recommendation of the former Community Ministries Commission of South West Presbytery, which was responsible for these appointments under the previous structure. As per email from Paul Rose, February 17, 2019.*

- c) Approve the Collaboration Agreement of King City, New Hope and York Pines United Churches, dated January 2019.

*These three congregations worked with Karen Hilfman Millson, Minister for Clusters and Network Support Animation. This shared ministry agreement will allow the three congregations to search for a minister as one community of faith.*

- d) Approve the request of Midhurst United Church to use \$32,322 from their manse fund to support the capital project of repairing and upgrading their parking lot.

*This request meets the requirements of the Interim Manse Fund Policy that allows some or all of manse capital funds to be used for capital renovation projects. The policy notes requires a minimum value of the manse fund in reserve to be \$150,000 but where the manse fund capital values are currently less than \$150,000, this change in policy will have no effect. The congregation has demonstrated in attached Annual Report and email that they consistently have sufficient funds to cover ministerial compensation.*

- e) Approve the request from The Donway Covenant to sign an Agreement of Purchase and Sale with the purchaser listed as "Donway Cooperative".

*This is based on an email from Maureen Hall, dated March 19, 2019 that confirms that “Donway Cooperative” has been created by Options for Homes as a development entity to manage the project.*

MOTION

CARRIED

The commission celebrated the exciting work happening in all these communities of faith. It is important to find a way to share the good news stories perhaps at the regional meeting. The commission asked the Staff Lead to pursue a separate Communities of Faith page on the website where we can share resources, with a focus on lay leadership, but also where we can share some of these stories.

### **April Meeting – In Person**

The chairperson acknowledged that we have a lot of work to do and the commission has yet to meet in person. She recommended that the April meeting be a retreat. The commission will gather for dinner on the first day, followed by a time of building community and then have a full day to engage in strategic visioning and policy writing. Christine invited us to her property, located near Flesherton (approximately 90 minutes from Toronto and 2 hours from Parry Sound). The commission will cover mileage food supplies.

### **Presentation by Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble**

The commission welcomed Cindy Bourgeois from Affirm United/S’affirmer Ensemble to the meeting. Cindy is the recent recipient of Craig Chaplin Award for outstanding contributions made by a person from the LGBTQ2 community. She will be honoured at the Convocation of United Theological College in May. Cindy is currently serving a congregation in Regina.

Cindy encouraged us to focus on action plans, both as a region and in our support to congregations. These plans are often aspirational, but Affirm would like to see actual substantive actions. We need to be mindful of Jesus’ message that the last shall be first and the first shall be last. We must ensure that our structures support our action plan and are of particular help to people who are facing oppression and barriers.

Cindy offered two specific examples. There is a real problem that in allowing alternate voices to be heard we give a platform to homophobic, transphobic, racist and ablest arguments. If an alternative voice is encouraging exclusion and oppression, we do not need to give space to that voice. If two new ministries are competing for funding and one is going to do substantive things to help queer or trans folks or others who are marginalized, choose that one to fund.

Cindy reviewed the process by which regions becoming affirming ministries. This document should guide us in how we develop our action plan as a region and how we support and encourage communities of faith. She drew specific attention to the sections

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on support to communities of faith and the development of action plans. Affirm hopes that action plans will be living documents that lead to ongoing conversation between Affirm and communities about our intended actions, where we find success and where more work is needed.

Cindy encouraged us to consider how our commission can participate in the action plan of the region and how we can support communities of faith to do the same. She invited us to start the work and then come with questions. She is happy to join us again.

The commission offered thanks to Cindy for her time and her wisdom. Cindy left the meeting.

### **Proposal for Community of Faith Staff**

In the conversation with the co-chairs and the Executive Minister, Christine and Ross emphasized the need for additional staff support to communities of faith. The Staff Lead confirmed that steps are being taken to address this. The goal is to have another staff person who will be available to work directly with congregations identified by the commission as needing support in areas including governance, conflict, finances and decisions around viability. The commission noted that governance is a significant issue for congregations and more support is needed.

### **Additional Commission Members**

At the request of the Nominations Committee, the commission considered criteria for additional members. This included:

- gifts around intercultural ministries
- geographic representation, particularly from inner city Toronto
- gifts in governance, finance and property issues
- additional lay people

The commission asked the question “Whose voice is not being heard?” There is a desire to seek people with diverse genders, sexual orientations, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and physical abilities but this can sometimes make people feel that they are chosen for these reasons rather than for their gifts and skills.

Commission members will confirm by email to the Staff Lead, if they are willing to continue on the commission and their preferred term (one, two or three years). Each person was also encouraged to offer three names of potential candidates for the commission.

### **Community of Faith Commission Liaisons**

The commission considered a list of possible liaisons. The role of liaisons might be to participate in Listening Teams and report to the commission. They might also support a

particular congregation in areas of governance, property or finance. Commission members will send additional names to the Staff Lead with a word or two about their gifts and skills. They will also consider calling people that you think might be interested and share with them our vision.

Policy needs to be developed for recruitment, training and ongoing support for liaisons and for their role. The commission is committed to recruiting additional liaisons who have not necessarily been part of the previous structure and who bring particular skills.

### **Clusters and Networks**

The Staff Lead recommended the formation of a short-term Task Group to develop policy and process regarding Clusters and Networks. Their work would then come to the commission for decision. Specific questions for consideration include:

- Will any clusters and/or networks have a formal role/relationship with the region?
- Will any be able to speak on behalf of the region?
- Will any clusters and/or networks have access to resources (finances and staff time) and if so, how will this be decided?
- How will communication happen?

Emma Pipes agreed to chair the Task Group on behalf of the region. The Staff Lead will approach other potential candidates for the group. A number of staff people will be available as resources to the group including Karen Hilfman Millson, Jean Ward, Ren Ito and Susie Henderson.

### **Creating a Strategic Plan for Communities of Faith**

The chairperson shared her vision for creating tools to help with strategic planning and ongoing measurement. These could include a map of all congregations, so we see where they are, with overlays so we can see what resources are around them. Staff have created an excel spreadsheet based on those used in the former presbyteries that help to track what is happening in every congregation. We may also want to develop a set of categories to help identify where, and what, support is needed. We will begin this work at the retreat.

### **Next Meeting**

The Staff Lead will send a doodle poll with dates for a retreat after Easter. Kevin Logie and Ross Leckie agreed to prepared simple worship, possibly one in the morning and one at closing.

### **Closing**

Cindy Randall closed in prayer and the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.