



**SHINING WATERS
REGIONAL COUNCIL**
The United Church of Canada

Encouraging and Connecting Communities of Faith

Welcome to the online meeting of the Shining Waters Regional Council.

In recognition of the expressed desire of many members of our Regional Council to have more opportunities to interact with other members of our community in the new regional structure of The United Church of Canada, the Shining Waters Executive decided to hold not just one but two, meetings of our Regional Council in 2020. Then the pandemic struck and our best-laid plans went out the window. Our May gathering and Celebration of Ministry service was cancelled, and this October meeting is taking place online, in an abbreviated form. We all hope and pray for a return to our hoped-for “normal” pattern of two face-to-face meetings a year when medical conditions permit.

The theme for this Regional Council meeting, *Becoming One in Christ*, seems inescapable given the daily reality of newspaper headlines and televisions news. Against the backdrop of anti-black racism and the Black Lives Matter movement, protests against police anti-black police violence, the ongoing struggle to achieve right relations with Indigenous peoples, and the United Church’s commitment to the goal of being an intercultural church, we are reminded of the biblical injunction that Christians are one in Christ. But saying it, no matter how sincerely, does not make it so. Too many have a lived experience of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion in our society, and in our church. We are in the process of becoming one in Christ – we must work at it, and keep working at it, to make this vital goal a reality. This Regional Council meeting is one step in that ongoing work. The process of becoming one in Christ continues.

Just as our individual communities of faith have adapted to new ways of worshiping and serving their members and communities virtually in this COVID environment, I trust we as a Regional Council will be able to do the same. May our cup be not half-full, but overflowing.

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