

ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT OF SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

It has been an eventful year to say the least. With the challenges of Covid-19 and our continued work around the Calls to the Church, Black Lives Matters, Intercultural and Diverse Communities, our theme for our Regional meeting is *Becoming One in Christ*.

With our shift from a Transition Commission to Regional Executive, three members of the transition team joined our Executive. The remaining members of our Executive were new in May 2019. Our new Executive spent this past year working hard to support the work of the Region but also becoming familiar with each other and the work of the Executive within the Region and living into our new governance structure.

Key work of the Executive includes a continued focus on the document *Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle Calls to the Church* which outlines a new relationship for all of us. As our Executive met, we have continued to focus on the Calls to the Church while we continue in conversations with the Indigenous communities of faith, as they develop their new governance structure.

The Executive continues to work on decisions and policies which provide a basic structure to support the immediate and on-going work of the region. The Executive continues to live into its new governance structure approved at our 2019 Regional meeting. We have been grateful for the work of our commissions, committees, networks, communities of faith, outreach ministries, and staff.

Budget:

With transition, we are living into our new financial reality. Shining Waters Regional Council has considerably less financial resources than former Toronto Conference had in the past. With a priority around sharing across the church, Shining Waters receives over 1 million dollars less than the former Conference assessment realized. The region will continue to use funds from the sale of property to meet the budget and our mission priorities.

The 2019 Audited Statement of Shining Waters Regional Council is delayed this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Included in the resource material is our 2021 proposed budget.

Covid-19

The Regional Council Executive and staff shifted quickly in the spring of 2020 with the declaration of an international pandemic. The Regional Council staff and Executive have worked towards supporting the Regional Council with frequent Town Hall meetings for both lay and ministry personnel with a focus on addressing the daily challenges of Covid-19, from staffing, to budgets, to rental agreements. In addition, the national Church has provided many webinars supporting our many Ministries through this difficult period.

We hesitate to use the word unprecedented times, our nation and church lived through a pandemic in 1918. Nevertheless, we continue to live through this challenging period supporting each other, walking together, and experimenting with new forms of electronic worship and meeting

Practically speaking, Easter was celebrated in new ways, worship in our buildings was cancelled for many months, we delayed our Regional meeting and many communities of faith shifted to online worship.

Intercultural and Diverse Communities:

The intercultural and diverse communities' network has been working with the Executive for several months discussing how our denominational priority of intercultural and diverse communities can be lived out more fully in Shining Waters Regional Council. The Executive has prioritized this work and included this work routinely on the Executive agendas. Out of these conversations, the network has presented a proposal for an Intercultural Diversity Commission as a way to work towards living out a vision of intercultural and diverse communities within our region.

Confronting Racism in the Church and Society:

The Executive continues to prioritize the important work of confronting racism in the Church and society. The Regional Council, the Executive, the Commissions, Regional staff, along with many communities of faith are actively discussing and working on ways to address racism in our Church and society, which includes the creation of an Equity Committee in 2019 reporting to the Executive. This committee has been actively discussing and working at promoting equity within our Regional Council, including confronting racism in the Church and society.

Continuing as an Affirming Region:

Our Regional Council meeting in May 2019 supported continuing the relationship with Affirm United.

As the Executive considered the affirming statement of Toronto Conference, we realized the importance to continue to include those who are marginalized in any way. To that end, we decided to use the term 'equity' for our policy and for the committee name.

As we live into our new structure, the Executive felt that the new committee should have the opportunity to develop the actions and practices for the region. The Equity Committee has considered suggestions from, and consulted with, different constituents in the region.

Equity Committee and Policy Development:

The Equity Committee formed at our inaugural Regional meeting in 2019, continues to work at developing overall goals and an action plan to live out the vision statement that is the basis of our mandate. These long-term goals resonate with the language of the New Creed and will serve as our touchstone as we move forward with an action plan.

Long-term Goals

AS FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS of Jesus, we seek to live out life in its fullness in a good way that invites us to be hospitable, to respect and to learn from one another.

Rooted in the hospitality and justice of the gospel we will REMOVE THE BARRIERS to participation in our life and work that includes identifying bias at work in our policies and procedures.

We believe in God who has created and is creating, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We will respect the sacredness of our gatherings and BE OPEN TO THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT who calls us to bring our bodies, our minds, our hearts, our cultures, and our histories together in ways that will transform who we are, how we gather, and how we worship and work together.

We will walk the talk of our commitments to diversity and inclusion and rise to RESIST OPPRESSION, expressions of hate and discrimination, in our midst and in the world. We strive to WELCOME AND CELEBRATE people of all abilities, any sexual orientation and gender identity, racialized persons, and all others who are marginalized, in the life and work of the region in ways that are public, intentional and explicit.

Our action plan that will be presented to the upcoming Regional meeting will include both operational commitments and action to be taken by the Equity Committee and from across the Regional Council. The Minister for Community Engagement and Partnership provides faithful support to this committee of Shining Waters Regional Council Executive.

Staffing:

Staffing is a large component of the budget of any organization. The Executive, with the Executive Minister, continues to develop a staffing model which has been reduced from the previous Toronto Conference experience.

2019/2020 has seen a shift in staffing in Shining Waters Regional Council. Jean Ward and Ren Ito decided to end their time working for our Regional Council. In addition, with the completion of Jeffery Dale's contract supporting Youth ministry, three full-time positions were posted in Shining Waters Regional Council. The positions were posted in late 2019, Minister, Communities of Faith Support and Right Relations was filled by Kim Uyede-Kai, Minister, Social and Ecological Justice and Network Support was filled by Bri-anne Swan, and Minister, Faith Formation, Youth and Young Adults was filled by Jeffrey Dale.

Currently we keep in our prayers, Karen Hilfman Millson, Minister for Congregational Support and Cluster and Network Animation, as she is currently on long-term sick leave.

Executive Minister Policies:

These policies outline the responsibilities and accountability of the Executive Minister, including the budget process, correspondence, incorporated ministries, and marriage licenses.

Policies for the Regional Executive:

The Executive acts as the region between meetings of the Regional Council. The first policy provides the mandate, membership and responsibilities of the Executive.

Other Executive policies include: Mission, Sub-Executive, Conflict of Interest, Communication, Remuneration, and the Communities of Faith and Pastoral Relations Commissions. There are several policies with respect to property. There are two policies with respect to the Regional Fund and a new Right Relations and Indigenous Ministries Fund. The Executive committees are Nominations, Equity, Grants Review, and Mission Support. Our Regional policies can be found on our Shining Water Regional Council website.

Commissions:

The Executive supports its work through three commissions. These Commission include the:

1. Communities of Faith Commission (CFC) supports the work of communities of faith, visioning, transitioning and growth. This includes supporting communities of faith in areas such as clusters, networks, visioning, amalgamation, disbanding, and property matters. The work may be carried out in a variety of ways, including by staff or liaisons appointed for a limited time period.
2. The Pastoral Relations Commission (PRC) supports ministry personnel throughout their ministry, including equipping, covenanting, pastoral relationships, and retirement.
3. The Social and Ecological Justice Commission encourages, supports, and initiates social justice work within Shining Waters Regional Council, which encompasses but is not limited to anti-racism and becoming a critical intercultural church of justice.

Submitted to Shining Waters Regional Council:

President: David Leyton-Brown, Jingle Ayupan, Pat Edmonds, Allan Holditch, Kirsty Hunter, Isaac Kamta, Steven Loweth, Jessica McCrae, Lynn Mooney, Allyce Mutungi, Moon-Ja Park, Daniel Reed, Dong-Chun Seo, Jessica Stevenson, Martha ter Kuile
Peter Hartmans, Executive Minister and Rachael Howes, Administrative Support.