

October 21, 2020

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Communities of Faith Commission
Wednesday, October 21, 2020**

The Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 by video conference call. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Present:

Christine Smaller (Chairperson), Bronwyn Corlett, Carolyn Harding, Calin Lau, Amy Lee, Kevin Logie, Sandra Nottegar, Cindy Randall, Harry Ramsaran

Jody Maltby (Staff Lead)

Regrets: Chris Bennett, Gloria Tozek

Welcome, check in and prayer

The chairperson welcomed everyone. Jody gave an acknowledgement of the land and our commitment to being a safe place for all people to gather and participate in our region. Christine offered a reflection based on a psalm and celebrated the creation of the new Intercultural Diversity Commission. Christine offered thanks to Amy for her commitment and persistence in pursuing this vision.

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

Innovation Cluster – Diane Matheson-Jimenez

The commission welcomed Diane Matheson-Jimenez who will be doing contract work while Karen Hilfman Millson is on leave. Diane shared her experience of the Innovation Cluster gathering held in partnership with Edge, and hosted by Carla Leon. Eleven congregations and four social enterprises participated in valuable conversation including how we can partner across the region and share resources. Folks agreed to gather again for further conversation. The stories were recorded and Diane is able to share them with anyone interested.

Agenda

MOTION by Kevin Logie/Amy Lee that the agenda approved be as revised.

MOTION

CARRIED

Minutes

MOTION by Cindy Randall/Sandra Nottegar that the Minutes of the meeting of the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council dated September 16, 2020 be approved as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

Business Arising

- Collaboration Handbook – Cindy Randall

Cindy had a good meeting via Zoom with Islay Scott on Sept 30th which resulted in several revisions to the handbook. Cindy will review edited version after which Diane will continue the work with Islay. The commission offered thanks to Cindy and Islay for their work, care and diligence. This handbook will be useful for years to come. It will come back to the commission for consideration in November or when ready.

- Mapping Process – Jody Maltby

Jody reported that staff are following up with Edge to try and get the mapping process moving forward. We heard at the last meeting that this work and the information it will provide is critical to our equity work.

Wise Speaker: Jordanna Wright

The commission welcomed Jordanna Wright who coaches ministries and other organizations about equity. Jordanna offered a number of reflections some of which include:

- We can't build a vibrant community unless everyone locally feels included and welcome.
- Equity is an important stepping stone for the UCC in becoming the community it wants to be.
- In particular there are opportunities to do this work well with congregations in vibrant downtown diverse communities.
- Often, well-meaning people who want to do this work aren't able to make the necessary connections so that leadership and participation in the life of congregation reflects the diversity in the community.
- It is important to have diversity within any group creating equity policy.
- Make sure those affected by policy have input into the policy.
- Use equitable process to create equitable policy.
- Don't rely only on fellow ministers to reflect the lived experience of specific groups. Being expected to educate their peers can put unfair pressure on ministers.
- If someone is brought in to help with education it is important that they are fairly compensated for their time and expertise.

October 21, 2020

Following her comments, the commission asked themselves how we might help congregations to be sustainable and connected to their community. Is there a process that could bring all congregations to a place where they can start developing equitable relationships, policies and practices? Many congregations use a significant amount of time and budget just to get them to the baseline. Is there a role for the region to provide basic resources, thus allowing congregations to use their resources for big bold projects within the community?

The commission thanked Jordanna for her reflections, following which members checked in around the topic of equity. Some thoughts included:

- Equity as financial net worth v. equity in the church
- Equity is theological – God’s love for all people and all creation – a way to get there. Policies will help, process will help but that is not all we need to achieve vision of wholeness of who we are as church. It’s who, why, how and ultimate goal.
- Access, equipping, removing barriers; that is our challenge and it is diverse.
- One of the encouraging things about the new Intercultural Diversity Commission is that there are many different ways to get to equity and many different barriers and the commission will help us look at this.
- Some ministers struggle with where to put equity in terms of priorities in pandemic – right now everything is pastoral care and keeping people safe. Folks are afraid and isolated and it won’t get better as we head into winter.

Policy Review

The commission discussed how to engage in policy review in light of our commitment to equity. It was agreed that we would begin by hearing from different voices to inform our lens. Some issues we want to reflect on include ableism, colonialism, and ageism. We want to hear from Affirm and from the United Property Resource Corporation. When ready, the commission will take one meeting to look at all policies. This will also help us to see how the different policies impact each other and where are the gaps and overlaps.

Members were asked to think and pray if there are other voices from whom we need to hear.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 18th, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. via Zoom.
Opening worship: Kevin Logie, closing prayer: Bronwyn Corlett

Closing: Cindy Randall offered a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.