

May 19, 2021

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Communities of Faith Commission
Wednesday, May 19, 2021**

The Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 by video conference call. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Present:

Chris Bennett (vice-chair), Carolyn Harding, Amy Lee, Kevin Logie, Sandra Nottegar, Cindy Randall, Gloria Tozek (chair), Harry Ramsaran

Jody Maltby, Diane Matheson-Jimenez, Jeffrey Dale, Susie Henderson

Guest: Sharon Buttrey (EDGE)

Regrets: Calin Lau

Welcome, check in and prayer

The chairperson welcomed everyone. Gloria Tozek opened with a blessing from The Artist's Rule. Cindy Randall gave an acknowledgement of the land, and Gloria acknowledged our commitment to being a safe place for all people to gather and participate in our Region.

Members checked in.

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

Agenda

MOTION by Carolyn Harding / Sandra Nottegar that the agenda be approved as amended.

MOTION

CARRIED

Minutes

MOTION by Cindy Randall / Amy Lee that the Minutes of the meeting of the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council dated April 21, 2021 be approved as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

Email votes

The following decisions were made by email:

- Trinity Huntsville – Licensing Agreement with Town of Huntsville

Approved the Licensing Agreement between Trinity United Church Huntsville and the Town of Huntsville to allow the Town to encroach on the property of Trinity to upgrade the property between the two buildings.

Updates

Collaboration: Knox United Church, Sutton and Virginia United Church

Diane Matheson-Jimenez reported that both communities had congregational meetings on Sunday and have committed to moving forward in a collaborative partnership. Islay Scott has been appointed to work with them. Once they have collaboration agreement ready, it will come to the commission for approval.

St. Paul’s United Church, Brampton listening team

Diane Matheson-Jimenez reported that St. Paul’s United Church, Brampton has asked for a listening team to help them discern next steps. Carolyn Harding has agreed to represent the commission, for which we are grateful. In conversation with the Intentional Interim Ministry committee, there was a feeling that their participation in listening teams might help in considering when it might be appropriate to recommend an intentional interim minister. Jim Keenan has agreed to represent the committee. Rev. Margaret MacDonald has also agreed to help. She is the minister of a neighbouring congregation.

Dewi Sant Welsh United Church, Toronto

Diane Matheson-Jimenez provided an update on the intentional interim ministry at Dewi Sant Welsh United Church.

MOTION by Amy Lee / Carolyn Harding that Diane Matheson-Jimenez be appointed as second regional representative to support Dewi Sant Welsh United Church, Toronto during amalgamation talks.

MOTION

CARRIED

The commission expressed thanks to Diane for the work she is doing on behalf of the region.

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Living Faith Story and Mapping Process – *Kevin Logie, Chris Bennett, Susie Henderson, and Sharon Buttrey (Edge).*

The chair welcomed Sharon Buttrey of EDGE who has been supporting this project.

Susie Henderson provided an update on conversations that she, Kevin Logie and Chris Bennett have been having about folding the mapping conversation into a larger conversation about a Living Faith Story for the commission. She reminded us that the commission agreed to take our time with this project and hopefully gather in person to reflect together more deeply.

Sharon demonstrated how the interactive map works and how data can be layered.

The commission reflected on their learnings from an initial viewing of the maps.

What surprised you?

- the low number of Affirming congregations and at some of the areas with a low level of people who identify as United Church of Canada
- helpful to have demographics related to new ministry proposals
- as we look at amalgamations and collaborative ministries I can see ways to use the map as a reference point
- great resources for the church's living faith story. But most importantly we can use it for the expansion of church mission. It already puts the information together.
- how can we connect our mission with the community? This is good and useful
- look at the forest rather than trees, this will help us understand where to direct resources, expand mission.
- shows us information related to people who are not represented in our own data -- shifts the echo chamber of talking to ourselves
- how can this information help us direct strategy?
- we have lots of property in metro Toronto, but that is not where population is growing
- what are the needs in the community?
- this will also be a valuable resource for communities of faith
- love the layers of information layered over actual map to help us engage with the data.
- information from the current census won't be available until late in the year
- the last 15 months of Covid have changed the game in so many ways
- Edge can do individual congregation reports as a service
- we will have a set of maps in a directory; we have more data that we will use as an internal side

When you look at a map of the region, what do you see?

- I see potential
- concentration of communities of faith around the GTA

- Toronto has lots of communities of faith. Less populated areas have fewer. There is more potential north of Toronto.
- I see some communities really spread out and some really close
- water
- more northern communities are spread out in comparison to the clumping in the GTA.
- wondering how many communities of faith are viable?
- what is internet availability?
- our presence is not distributed proportionately to population. Most high-density FSAs don't have United Church locations
- wealth concentrates as you move south
- interesting to see pockets of higher income
- household income in the north is less, how does this intersect with age? areas in the north have a higher age and lower income
- northern part of the region is stronger in United Church of Canada affiliation
- some church deserts in suburbs of Toronto
- concentration of communities of faith in Toronto does not reflect affiliation
- the northern section of the region is more rural and appears less diverse
- some congregations attract people from outside their catchment area; how does this fit with our vision?
- How do we map online communities?
- churches are wondering how to better serve everyone post pandemic?
- How does the beyond border/boundary population connect and identify -- this is our Covid experience -- now what?

Susie invited folks to continue to offer questions and comments to her via email. United-in-Learning is offering a webinar series looking at the post-pandemic church: The Church has left the Building!: <https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/397-the-church-has-left-the-building>

The chair offered thanks to Sharon, Susie, Kevin and Chris for their work. This will be an excellent resource.

Updates (cont'd)

Saint Luke's United Church, Toronto: property development

Jody Maltby reported that the congregation is ready to submit documentation for approval and asked what supporting information would be helpful to the commission. We acknowledge that this is our first development approval so it will be a learning opportunity for the commission. Chris Bennett and Harry Ramsaran reported on the presentation from United Property Resource Centre (UPRC) on Monday. It was helpful to have the facts and important that the property will continue to belong to the United Church with the resources from the development supporting ministry. Some clarification is needed about roles between congregation, the region and UPRC. It will be important

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to know the congregation has the governance structure to support the project and that UPRC and the congregation will be able to move through the decisions that need to be made with support from the commission.

Don Mills, Toronto: property development

Jody Maltby reported that Don Mills United Church is having conversations with United Property Resource Centre (UPRC) and Toronto United Church Council (TUCC) about a possible development of their property.

Le Ministère Protestant francophone de Toronto

Jody Maltby reported on behalf of Kim Uyede-Kai that the congregation has decided to delay a covenanting service with the region and focus instead on a celebration of their 5th year as a United Church mission. The service will be on Sunday, July 4th at 12:30 p.m. All are welcome from the regional council and it would be particularly good if one or two representatives of the commission could join. Le Ministère Protestant francophone de Toronto and the congregation of Downsview United Church are deepening their relationship as a partnership in shared space.

St. Bartholomew's United Church, Brampton – Manse Funds

Jody Maltby reported that the Region of Peel is requesting a survey and remediation of all water connections with non-residential buildings. This will require removal of asbestos insulation from around the water pipes inside the entry point to the building. The quote for the work is \$5,000 to complete the work and provide certification of compliance to the Region. The congregation made a request to use capital from the Manse Fund previously for a roof repair which the Staff Lead was able to approve as per the commission's Finance and Property Policy. Because this is a second request, approval of the commission is required.

MOTION by Cindy Randall /Amy Lee that the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council approve the request of St. Bartholomew's United Church, Brampton to use approximately \$5,000 from the Manse Fund to complete the work required by the Region of Peel for the remediation of water connections.

MOTION

CARRIED

Jody Maltby reported that,

- The temporary amendment allowing congregations to defer their Annual Meeting has been extended to December 31, 2021.
- There are currently two nominations processes underway for the Intercultural Diversity Commission and the General Council Commissioners. Please consider if you know anyone who might be a good candidate and encourage them to apply.

The Commission took a 15-minute break.

Property Policy

Harry Ramsaran, Gloria Tozek and Jody Maltby presented their initial draft of a recommendation to the Executive regarding use of funds under the Sale of Property policy and where property is declared surplus in an amalgamation. They also presented a first draft of a policy regarding property development. The commission made suggestions. The task group will do further work and bring a second draft to the next meeting.

Funding Priorities Conversation

Gloria Tozek and Chris Bennett provided an update on the ongoing conversation regarding funding priorities. Current participants include the Social and Ecological Justice Commission, the Grants Review Committee and Mission Support Committee and the Executive. It was noted that there are overlapping and intersecting conversations and this can be a bit confusing. The working group is tasked with developing and recommending a framework for the granting processes in the region.

The next meeting of this group is May 26th.

Camp Updates

Jeffrey Dale noted that the recent announcement by Doug Ford that camps would open this summer has created confusion and concern for some and excitement for others.

Some of the camps plan to offer online programs while others hope to have onsite camping.

The GO Project and Camp Awesome are also developing modified programs for the summer. Camp Awesome is excited to have received 15 grants through Canada Summer Jobs program, including some in Canadian Shield Regional Council which will be a great partnership.

Joint meeting with Pastoral Relations Commission, June 15th, 1 – 3 p.m.

Jody Maltby reported on a joint meeting with the Pastoral Relations Commission on June 15th. The first hour will focus on the Pastoral Relations Commission Equity project and we will be joined by members of the Equity Committee, the Executive and some General Council staff. For the second hour, the two commissions (Communities of Faith and Pastoral Relations) will share some information. Susie Henderson will share about the work we are doing on Mapping and Living Faith Stories. An email with details will come out next week.

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Harry Ramsaran volunteered to give an acknowledgement of land and safe space for the gathering.

Closing

Gloria Tozek thanked everyone for their participation and offered blessings on the day. The meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Next Meeting(s)

June 15, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.,

joint meeting with Pastoral Relations Commission via video conference

June 16, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.,

Communities of Faith Commission meeting via video conference. Chris will offer a land acknowledgement and safe space. Diane is on deck for the next meeting.

