

February 27, 2020

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Thursday, February 27, 2020**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on February 27, 2020 by video conference. The meeting began at 10:00 a.m.

**Members Present**

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Alana Martin, Moon-Ja Park, Cameron Watts

Staff: Jody Maltby, Ren Ito, Susie Henderson

Regrets: Eleanor Scarlett, Donna Lang,

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone. Cam opened with a reading from Wendell Berry: Given, 2005, "Original Sin" followed by a meditation, and acknowledgement of the land.

The chairperson constituted the meeting in the name of Jesus Christ. There was a time of check-in.

**Agenda**

The commission agreed by consensus that the agenda, be approved with addition of Brian McIntosh joining at 12:00 to fill the commission in on his work with the Living into Right Relations Circle (LIRR), a response to the Wet'suwet'en crisis, and conversation about poverty and the teachers' strike.

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon/Moon Ja Park that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held December 3, 2019 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Correspondence**

It was agreed that anything that comes from outside the commission will be considered correspondence. Anything coming from commission members will be considered agenda items.

The Commission was asked to hold Beth Baskin in our prayers as she steps away from her work with the General Council Office.

## **Business Arising**

- Survey of Communities of Faith

The commission offered thanks to Cameron Watts for having done the work to put the survey together. Lois Brown noted that Unity's response was not included. Jody Maltby will follow up with Rachael Howes to see if any were missed.

It will be important to follow up with congregations that did not respond. Commission members are encouraged to promote the survey through their clusters and networks. We can share general information about the responses received but not information that is specific to congregations, as we do not have their permission, particularly with respect to contact information.

Rachael Howes will send a blank copy of the survey to commission members so that they can share it within networks. Completed surveys can be returned by email to Rachael: [rhowes@united-church.ca](mailto:rhowes@united-church.ca).

Some congregations responded before Christmas. Susan will create a simple thank you email to send to respondents indicating that the commission is reviewing the surveys and starting to consider priorities. Rachael will send the thank you email to respondents.

Ren Ito will start to create networks around three of the topics: climate/eco justice, racial justice, and being intercultural. Commission members will be included in the invitation, along with those from the surveys and other people and/or groups that might be connected.

The commission wants to gather further information from congregations that have responded and those that have not. Of particular importance is a contact person who can help us network with that community of faith.

**MOTION** by Moon Ja Park/Lois Brown that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission ask the Regional Council to provide up to \$10,000 so that a contract person can be hired and ask staff to explore the possibility of hiring that person through EDGE.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

- Relationship to GCO staff - Ren Ito

Ren Ito reported that he reached out to several staff at the General Council Office (GCO) seeking clarity about the relationship of this commission/regional council to GCO justice staff. Beth Baskin would have been the key person to connect with but she is stepping away. Ren will connect with Michael Blair and report further at the next commission meeting.

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Ren will serve as the formal conduit for information between the commission and the GCO, particularly around any item requiring a decision or action by the commission. This does not prevent individual members of the commission from engaging in national initiatives.

- Identification of United Church of Canada justice priorities

The commission considered whether to issue a response to the Wet'suwet'en crisis, and whether to engage in action relating to the teachers' strike or recent changes by the Ontario Government to how employment services are provided to people living on social assistance.

The commission asked staff to help facilitate a response around the Wet'suwet'en crisis and the increased vulnerability of people living on social assistance in response to recent government actions and cutbacks. We will use this as a test of how we want to do our work going forward. Ren will set up conversation with those on the commission who want to be part of this work.

Order of the Day: Brian McIntosh

The chair welcomed Brian McIntosh to the meeting to provide an update on the Living Into Right Relations (LIRR) Circle and Indigenous justice work that is happening in the region. The circle has had a number of meetings including a meeting with the Regional Executive in January where there was good conversation about status of the circle within the region and their role in building right relations. Part of the ongoing conversation will be how the circle relates to all three commissions and the Executive, although the primary relationship may be to the Executive. Both the circle and Executive are seeking to be guided by the Calls to the Church from Indigenous Elders.

Brian has drafted a mandate statement and circulated to Executive and circle with the hope that it will be approved in the spring. Included in this proposed mandate are education and the ability to animate statements about Indigenous concerns and support to Indigenous communities within the region, including funding.

The National Indigenous Council is giving Indigenous congregations the opportunity to choose to be part of the Indigenous Council and/or a local region, through a process of dual belonging. We anticipate decisions by the summer as to how congregations will choose to relate and what these relationships will look like. In the meantime, Shining Waters Regional Council continues to build relations with local communities through the LIRR Circle and through staff, primarily Karen Hilfman Millson and Todd McDonald.

The Regional Executive has set up a Right Relations fund, which receives monies primarily through the sale of property. We are still determining how funds will be dispersed in consultation with the national Indigenous church.

The next meeting of the LIRR circle is on April 7<sup>th</sup>. The circle still struggles with finding enough Indigenous leadership.

- Regional Partnerships – Susie Henderson

Susie Henderson presented an initial list of regional partnerships. At present, this is not a directory for publication although the commission may want to work toward that. The current document is for the commission to use to talk about building relationships and partnerships around priority areas of work. It may also inform conversations about representation and funding.

Commission members are asked to review the document and see if there are any gaps, or anything more that needs to be included.

- Regional Funding Priorities – Jody Maltby

Jody Maltby reported that we are still working on a larger picture funding conversation. There is a meeting with Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation (PTCC) in early April to better understand our financial picture with those funds.

### **Staff Reports**

Susie Henderson reported on a number of events she has attended recently including:

- Homeless Memorial and presentation of petition to the Mayor to declare homelessness an emergency in Toronto;
- Annual Strawberry Ceremony in honour of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and trans people;
- Service of welcome of Toronto Urban Native Ministry (TUNM) to their new office space at Holy Trinity Anglican Church.

Ren Ito reported on several areas of his work:

- Living Into Right Relations Circle (LIRR)—gathered with Executive on January 20, 2020

LIRR Circle and Executive both expressed desire for closer relationship

Indigenous communities want more/better interactions with structure

Next steps:

LIRR Circle and Executive will continue meeting

LIRR to develop new mandate, organisational structure (leadership, volunteer coordination, etc.)

Does this commission want a relationship with the LIRR Circle?

- Racism awareness campaign—currently in development, preparing for release next month

Format: gather and share anonymous stories about racism in the church

To be shared in print (posters hung in churches) and via social media

Aim is to spark thought and conversation

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Accompanying resources, educational opportunities will be made available  
Currently soliciting contributions of stories to share  
Initial plan was to launch in time for IDERD, but this may not be where the energy of the church is at the moment.

- Online course: Justice, Faith, and Theology—currently in development for April/May  
Goal: to help participants connect their faith and their justice work/activism through theology  
Will teach skills (critical analysis, theological reflection, communication) as well as knowledge (concepts, theories, etc.)  
Likely 5~6 sessions (every other week)  
Pilot—may lead to another series of sessions in June/July
- Decolonizing Christianity Canada—network of Christians of colour across Canada  
First in-person retreat planned for weekend of February 28-March 2  
Working somewhat parallel with “Kenosis Groups” (white Christians healing from and working against racism and white supremacy)
- Social Impact Business Challenge—EDGE event supporting social enterprise (April 4)  
Proposals will be judged, then selected for further development with on-site mentors  
Prize money awarded to help with start-up costs  
SWRC to contribute funds for second-place prize  
Would a commission member be willing to participate as a judge/report back?
- For future consideration:  
Public actions/witness—how to organize quickly to take part in wider actions?  
Does this commission need a wider volunteer base to support it?  
How do networks connect into the work/structure of Social and Ecological Justice Commission?  
Building connections between indigenous and other racialized people /communities in Shining Waters Regional Council.

### **Next Steps for Commission**

Tina Conlon spoke about an arts centre dialogue she is engaged in. She will keep the commission advised of possibilities to be involved.

The commission agreed to offer a workshop on May 23 in conjunction with the Regional Celebration of Ministries Service. This will be an opportunity to engage more deeply with folks who responded to survey. Cameron Watts is willing to help with planning

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after Easter. Other commission members are asked to consider if they can assist with this event.

We will put the event on the website with details to come. Jody Maltby to check with local arrangements about space.

**Next Meeting**

April 8, 2020, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. in person (tentatively at New Hope United Church).

**Closing**

The Chairperson closed the meeting with a Lenten blessing and the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

April 29, 2020

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Wednesday, April 29, 2020**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on April 29, 2020 by video conference. The meeting began at 12:00 noon.

**Members Present**

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Donna Lang, Alana Martin, Moon-Ja Park, Eleanor Scarlett, Cameron Watts

Staff: Jody Maltby, Ren Ito, Bri-anne Swan, Susie Henderson

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone, opened with a poem prayer by Walter Brueggemann, *Waiting for Bread ... and for God's Future*, a reflection on his reading of Micah. Members shared some of the struggles of this unique and difficult time. Susan Eagle gave an acknowledgement of the land, and acknowledged our commitment to being a safe place for all people to gather and participate in our Region.

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

The commission welcomed Bri-anne Swan, Regional Minister for Social and Ecological Justice and support to Networks.

**Agenda**

The commission agreed that the agenda be approved as amended.

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon/Moon-Ja Park that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held February 27, 2020 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

## **Business Arising**

- Update on survey follow-up

At the February meeting, the commission agreed to ask Edge to follow up with congregations that did not participate in the survey. Susie Henderson reported challenges connecting with Edge, possibly due to the pandemic. Staff are considering other options. We will try to be in contact with all congregations by the end of May. Donna Rutz will provide a mail chimp list from social justice gatherings that pre-dated the commission.

- Finances:

Jody Maltby reaffirmed that the commission can provide a budget to the Executive for consideration when ready. If there are specific projects the commission wants to pursue in the meantime, they can make individual requests for funds as we did with the survey follow-up.

- Review of Grant Criteria

Jody Maltby indicated that the regional discussion of funding priorities has been put on hold during the pandemic but we hope to get back to that conversation and the commission will be an important voice in that conversation.

- Workshop – May 2020

The commission discussed possibilities for program during the pandemic. It was agreed that we will still offer a workshop, preferably in early June. The workshop will be an online, well-facilitated conversation, likely an hour in length. We will use it as input to survey conversation rather than relying on survey to shape workshop.

Susan Eagle, Cam Watts and Bri-anne Swan will take the lead on developing the workshop.

## **Correspondence**

The commission discussed how to communicate between meetings to respond to time-sensitive requests for action. We don't always feel knowledgeable to respond, and rely on conversation with wider group to make an informed decision. It is important to be accountable in making these decisions so that the President can sign with confidence.

Jody Maltby, Susie Henderson and Bri-anne Swan will work on criteria to assist the commission to make decisions quickly between meetings. Criteria will include:

- Does the request come from a recognized UCC partner such as Kairos or ISARC?
- Does the request fall within an identified justice priority for the Shining Waters Region?
- Does the request fit with national UCC theology and areas of work?



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- ISARC request

Susan Eagle reported that she did not feel it was appropriate for the commission to respond at the time because we did not get enough feedback when the request was circulated. No further action is needed as the provincial government did take action on the matter.

- Campaign 2000 request

Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup> is deadline for groups to endorse this letter. Campaign 2000 is a good UCC partner who has been working with faith communities for some time now. Jody Maltby will send this request out for an email vote after the meeting. Members of the commission will review the background documents and respond by Friday noon. If the majority of the members are comfortable with the documentation, we will ask the President to sign on behalf of the region.

- Letter to John Tory

After some discussion it was determined that this request did not come from the congregations that originated the letter and they have not indicated if they want regional support for this project. The commission will take no action at this time but will let it be known that if there are things we can do to support or endorse responses to Covid-19 we will do so.

Cam Watts reported on some City of Toronto updates around popup food banks, extra washrooms, shelters and Ontario Works benefits to assist people who are homeless and are being affected by Covid-19. The city is trying to address needs for social distancing for those living in shelters or on the streets as the rate of infection is high.

Faith in the City was asked to engage faith communities to donate food, time, and money to assist in providing food for people living in poverty. The greatest concern is pockets of the city where people don't have access to food banks. They are looking for popup sites to collect and create food hampers and have them delivered to this vulnerable population.

The commission acknowledged that Shining Waters Region is a large section of Ontario and there are people living in poverty throughout the region. As a commission for the region, we need to look at the broader context. While we may at times lend our support to a particular issue in a particular area, in general our work is policy based rather than local fundraising and activities.

**Staff Reports – Ren Ito**

- Relationship with General Council

At the February meeting, Ren reported that he was following up with Michael Blair, Executive Minister for Church and Mission, regarding the relationship with justice staff at the General Council. Plans for a conversation with staff have been temporarily placed on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. One topic of conversation will be finding ways to make the justice work of the General Council more accessible to the wider church.

- Wet’suwet’en letter

Our regional letter was completed in consultation with some members of the Living Into Right Relations (LIRR) Circle and was sent to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Indigenous Justice. It was not circulated to the region until recently due to the volume of information that needed to be shared in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. There has been one dissenting response to the letter. It will be shared with the commission for response. The LIRR Circle is considering further action.

- Justice, Faith and Theology course

The seminar series for people in Shining Waters Region will offer two sessions and each has 10 -11 people registered. The focus of the conversation will be connecting our faith to our justice initiatives, considering such questions as “What does it mean to be an ally?” The intent is not to take positions or draw conclusions about specific issues.

The commission requested that emerging issues be shared to support the work of the commission. We will continue to work on a model for justice programs in the region.

**Visioning**

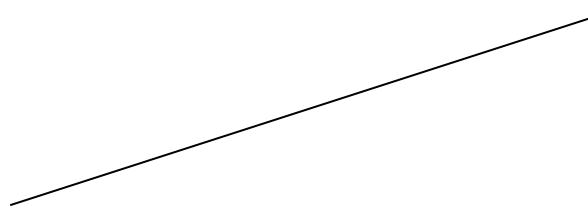
The commission agreed to defer this to a future meeting.

**Closing**

Tina Conlon offered a prayer for groups written by Pdraig O Tuama. The Chairperson closed the meeting at 2:46 p.m.

Next meeting:

Staff will send a doodle poll looking at a Wednesday meeting in the next month.



May 27, 2020

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA  
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**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Wednesday, May 27, 2020**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on May 27, 2020 by video conference. The meeting began at 11:00 a.m.

**Members Present**

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Alana Martin, Moon-Ja Park, Eleanor Scarlett, Cameron Watts

Staff: Bri-anne Swan, Minister, Social & Ecological Justice

Regrets: Donna Lang

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone, opened with prayer, gave an acknowledgement of the land, and acknowledged our commitment to being a safe place for all people to gather and participate in our Region.

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

There was a time of check-in.

An ask to hold up *Holy Manners* was made; that the Commission commit to leaving space to speak for those who are quieter or are taking time to form their thoughts in order to share with the group, and that one person be able to speak without others cutting them off. While there was no vote, the Commission agreed to center conversation around values of *Holy Manners*.

**Agenda**

The circulated draft agenda was approved by consensus.

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Eleanor Scarlett / Tina Conlon that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held April 29, 2020 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

## Email votes

The Commission voted by email in favour of the following:

- Endorsed a letter drafted by the Steering Committee of Campaign 2000 to the Prime Minister of Canada and members of Canada's COVID-19 Cabinet Committee on ensuring marginalized children have first call on federal resources in pandemic response and recovery.
- Endorsed sending a letter to the Premier of Ontario from the President of Shining Waters Regional Council in response to the May 11, 2020 letter of Rev. Rock and Rev Boot to the Premier discussing the re-opening of Ontario Churches; agreeing to disseminate the letter to all congregations in Shining Waters Regional Council, to creating and distributing a media release on the topic, and to distributing the letter to our ecumenical and interfaith partners for information.

## Business Arising

- Follow-up on letter to Premier re: church openings

Bri-anne Swan and Susan Eagle updated the Commission on the distribution of the letter signed by David Leyton-Brown. It had be circulated to all Communities of Faith (lay and clergy), as well as via social media channels. Bri-anne had not yet sent out a press release, but stated she intended to soon. A question was made about the list of media the release would be sent to — does the Regional Council have a list of media? Bri-anne explained that she has a media list from a previous campaign she was a part of, and that there would be an ask made to Ministers to send the release and letter to their local media.

It was suggested that the Regional Council should maintain a list of media contacts for future campaigns. **Bri-anne will follow up with Susie Henderson about this.**

- Update on Survey follow-up – *Susan Eagle & Bri-anne Swan*

At the last Commission meeting, it was suggested that the Commission hire somebody to contact those Communities of Faith who had not yet responded to the survey sent out in December. Through further conversation, Bri-anne and Susan now feel that contacting the Communities of Faith ourselves would help strengthen relationships with congregations. A list of Communities of Faith who have not responded to the survey has been divided between Bri-anne, Susan and Cameron Watts. It is hoped that out of these conversations will come some direction about priorities for the Commission. **Bri-anne, Susan and Cameron will have an update for the next meeting.**

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- Wet'suwet'en letter

There has been one negative response to the letter. Susan Eagle did not feel the Commission needed to respond, outside of thanking the member for writing. There was discussion about the Commission being able to see the correspondence that comes in response to public statements. **Bri-anne Swan will keep a compilation to share at meetings.**

- Finances

A conversation about finances was deferred to the Visioning section of the agenda. The Commission has already asked for \$10,000 to complete their survey work. With Bri-anne Swan, Cameron Watts and Susan Eagle doing the work themselves, can this money be spent in new and creative ways?

- Workshop – June 2020? – *Susan Eagle, Cameron Watts, Bri-anne Swan*

There was understanding that a workshop should come out of the Commission's named priorities, so this conversation is deferred until after the visioning process. COVID-19 has brought up many issues related to racism that have already been sitting on the surface. There is interest in a workshop digging into racial justice, an already named Regional priority. Cameron Watts, Susan Eagle and Bri-anne Swan will speak further after further conversations with the Communities of Faith who have not yet completed the survey.

### **Advocacy Criteria**

Criteria was put forward to be used as assessment for discerning which action requests from outside organizations to take on:

- Does the request come from a recognized UCC partner such as KAIROS or ISARC?
- Does the request fall within an identified justice priority for Shining Waters region?
- Does the request fit with national UCC theology and areas of work?
- Do we already have a policy position?

If the request is outside established United Church policy, the Commission felt the best course of action is to discuss items at meetings.

In addition, any request for endorsement or action needs to come from the source of the letter with an ask to endorse their position. There needs to be clarity on what is the actual request.

As we move through discerning justice priorities, the Commission was reminded that Racial Justice and Ecological Justice are named Regional priorities. These are lenses through which other justice work is approached.

A conversation took place about how there are few racialized clergy in the GTA other than in named ethnic ministries. What is the Commission's role in addressing this? It was noted that GC43 was a stark reminder that "we have our own house to put in order" while highlighting instances of racial injustice occurring outside the church.

### **ISARC & Ontario Health Coalition Letter**

ISARC has asked the Shining Waters Regional Council to endorse a letter calling for an inquiry or Commission regarding long-term care homes in the province, as well as a letter from the Ontario Health Coalition.

Regarding the ISARC letter, Commission members noted that the ask should be the very first thing in the letter. As it stands, the letter does not mention how the cuts, as early as last year, had affected some of the issues we're seeing in the long-term care and health facilities.

The Commission was prepared to provide the following feedback to ISARC:

- The Commission is supportive of the letter, but would like it worded more strongly.
- Funding for long-term care homes has been a crisis for 25 years, and that radical cuts that have happened to care (over multiple governments) have brought us to this place.
- There needs to be more of a historical comment on how things have become so bad for so many people.

Options:

- Ask ISARC to make the language of the letter stronger
- Write the additions
- Write our own letter
- Ignore it altogether

The Commission wondered if ISARC would be open to receiving edits. Susan Eagle thought they would be. There was discussion about endorsing the ISARC letter and then adding another letter from Shining Waters Regional Council.

**MOTION** by Moon Ja Park / Cameron Watts that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council endorses both letters, from ISARC and the Ontario Health Coalition, calling for an Inquiry or Commission regarding long-term care homes in the province, with an attached letter detailing additional concerns regarding recent provincial healthcare cuts.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

Cameron Watts and Eleanor Scarlett will write the attached letter.

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### **SJNOR Report – Tina Conlon**

Tina gave a brief report on the SJNOR virtual meeting from May 6th. All Ontario regions were represented. Tina reported to SJNOR on the activities of the Commission, including the Wet'suwet'en letter and the surveys to congregations. She also reported that Shining Waters now has a full time person working on the Social Justice portfolio (Bri-anne Swan).

Other regions presented their own reports. There has been an ask that members of the SJNOR stop referring to Regions, but rather, Regional Councils.

There are outstanding questions about how the SJNOR will continue to be funded. The SJNOR has interest in meeting monthly. The next meeting will be June 26th.

### **Staff Reports**

Bri-anne Swan gave an update on the letter re: re-opening Church buildings. She is working to get connected to other staff from across Regional Councils who share similar work, including connecting with GCO to strengthen the relationship between the work of the Commission and General Council. **Bri-anne will connect with Michael Blair as soon as possible and report at the next meeting.**

Ren Ito's contract will be ending in mid-June. The Commission thanks Ren for all the work he has done over the years. Susan Eagle will send him a note of gratitude and well wishes.

### **Visioning**

It was decided that visioning should be its own meeting of the SEJC, not part of a meeting where the Commission is dealing with business.

Bri-anne Swan's job description was shared with the Commission for information. The Commission asked to also see Kim Uyede-Kai's job description as well, since a portion of her work relates to racial justice and Intercultural ministries. Bri-anne will have this for the next regularly scheduled meeting.

### **Closing**

The Chairperson closed the meeting with a prayer and the meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Next meeting: The Commission will meet June 10th at 11:00 a.m. for visioning and July 15th at 11 a.m. for a regular meeting.

July 15, 2020

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Wednesday, July 15, 2020**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on July 15, 2020 by video conference. The meeting began at 11:00 a.m.

**Members Present**

Tina Conlon, Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Alana Martin, Moon-Ja Park, Cameron Watts  
Staff: Bri-anne Swan

Regrets: Eleanor Scarlett

Absent: Donna Lang, Lois Brown

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone, opened with prayer, gave an acknowledgement of the land, and acknowledged our commitment to being a safe place for all people to gather and participate in our Region.

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

There was a time of check-in.

**Agenda**

**MOTION** by Cameron Watts/Alana Martin that the agenda, be approved as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Moon-Ja Park/Alana Martin that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held May 27, 2020 be adopted as circulated with the correction of changing the word “radicalized” on page 4 of the minutes to “racialized”.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**



## **Updates**

### *ISARC letter – Susan Eagle*

Thanks to Cameron Watts and Eleanor Scarlett for the edits and additions to the letter. David Leyton-Brown signed the letter and it was sent out to the government and ISARC's partners.

### *Meeting with Regional Council Executive – Susan Eagle*

Executive was updated on recent Commission activities: setting its vision for justice work within the Regional Council, being in touch with Communities of Faith about justice priorities with a survey, issuing statements around Churches reopening amidst the pandemic and the ongoing problems around racism within our midst.

The chairperson was asked to comment on the proposed Intercultural Commission, specifically whether there was capacity within the Social and Ecological Justice Commission for this work.

### *SJNOR Report – Tina Conlon*

This was a short meeting and a follow-up from the previous meeting of May 6th. There was representation from Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council, East Central Ontario Regional Council, Shining Waters Regional Council, Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, Antler River Watershed Regional Council, Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council, Canadian Shield Regional Council, and the General Council Office. A decision was made not to meet in July or August. The next meeting will be in September, with no date yet set.

There was a sharing of reports of justice work from the various Regional Councils. It was noted that some Regional Councils have become involved in issues around mining justice and ecological justice. There seems to be little consistency among the Regional Councils in terms of justice initiatives. The benefits of a group spanning the province is that it gives each Regional Council's justice networks a sense of what is going on outside their boundaries. It is also the body that ISARC reports to.

### *Survey of faith communities*

Cameron Watts, Susan Eagle and Bri-anne Swan are still hoping to get this done over the summer. Emails have started to go out to set up times to speak with justice leaders within the communities of faith who did not return surveys. It is still hoped the additional surveys and conversations will inform the Commission's priorities.

July 15, 2020

### *Workshop planning*

Earlier in the year, the Commission was exploring if they might offer a workshop at the May annual meeting, which needed to be cancelled because of COVID-19.

In October, the Regional Council annual meeting will be held online and for one day. Ninety minutes of the agenda will be devoted to a discussion around racism and anti-racism. However, there is acknowledgement by the Regional Council that 90 minutes is not enough time to responsibly and authentically engage with Regional members around this topic. There is an opportunity to offer a much more in-depth workshop (or series of workshops) either the day before, or in the weeks leading up to the annual meeting.

Bri-anne Swan inquired as to whether one or two members of this Commission would take part in planning these anti-racism offerings, as part of a committee including members of Executive and possibly other commissions. Interest was expressed from this Commission to be part of such a group.

Questions arose around whether the content of the workshops and the ensuing discussion could potentially lead to a change in how the annual meeting moves forward, as well as the structure of the Regional Council. Are we willing to be changed by what we hear?

Potential ideas around topics for a workshop or discussion were:

- How to challenge the very structure of the church
- How to challenge the “default to white” mentality
- How to work with congregations where there is diversity of opinion around anti-racism initiatives

The Commission acknowledged that any undertaking would need to be done extremely well. The church already has a history of causing trauma for racialized members and we cannot contribute to more harm.

Once the annual meeting is finalized and approved by Executive, there will be more clarity about what the ask and parameters for this project are.

### *Media Contact List*

Bri-anne Swan will touch base with Susie Henderson and follow-up.

### **Staff Report** – Bri-anne Swan

Bri-anne shared highlights of her work over the past two months.

- A newsletter has been created for Social and Ecological Justice Commission members and interested members of the Regional Council, focused on justice-related activities with a connection to the United Church
- A video from the Black Clergy Network

- Supporting a United Church presence at a demonstration in Regent Park (Toronto), after a number of nooses were found on construction sites across the city, leading to the first instalment of the “do justice.” video series.
- Statement re: Anti-Black racism from the Region

Upcoming: Bri-anne plans to start a monthly podcast exploring faith and justice within the Regional Council.

### **Visioning & Racial Justice Discussion**

The planned visioning meeting was shifted to focus on the Commission’s internal work relating to anti-racism. There will be a follow up meeting continuing this anti-racism discussion, which will inform the visioning for the Commission. It has been acknowledged that it is important for the Commission to do internal work around anti-racism before engaging the wider Region.

### **Next Meeting**

Doodle polls will be sent to set the next regular meeting, as well as a separate meeting for additional anti-racism discussion and visioning.

### **Closing**

The Chairperson closed the meeting with a prayer and the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

November 3, 2020

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Tuesday, November 3, 2020**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on November 3, 2020 by video conference. The meeting began at 11:00 a.m.

**Members Present**

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Elizabeth Cunningham, Alana Martin, Moon-Ja Park, Eleanor Scarlett

Susan welcomed Elizabeth Cunningham as a newly appointed member of the commission.

Staff: Bri-anne Swan, Kim Uyede-Kai

Regrets: Cameron Watts, Donna Lang

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone, opened with prayer, gave an acknowledgement of the land, and acknowledged our commitment to being a safe place for all people to gather and participate in our Region.

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

There was a time of check-in.

**Agenda**

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Alana Martin that the agenda, be approved as circulated

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Moon Ja Park that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held July 15, 2020 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

## **Email vote**

The Commission voted by email in favour of the following in September:

- Endorse the private Member's Bill, M-46 Guaranteed Liveable Basic Income;
- Request that our Shining Waters president send a letter of endorsement for the Private Members Bill to the Prime Minister's office and to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland

The Commission also made acknowledgement of the Commission's Anti-Racism conversations held over the summer.

## **Business Arising**

- Update on summer Anti-Racism workshops and pre-annual meeting conversations about racism – *Susan Eagle*

Is there anything else that we need to be doing about that right now? After we get the feedback from the October 8 and 13 conversations, this will inform the ongoing work of the Commission and what next steps we might be able to take. HyeRan Kim-Cragg's presentation was informed by the pre-annual meeting workshops. These events are not one-offs. There will be additional follow-up. White clergy requested a conversation on their own. Also, a separate conversation for Asian lay/clergy. There was support for trying to dovetail any regional level anti-racism work with the work being done at General Council. It will be key for the commissions taking on anti-racism work to look to the diversity which exists within the Regional Council. The commission asked Bri-anne Swan and Kim Uyede-Kai to be kept in the loop about follow up conversations. There was some question about whether the same format of the pre-annual meeting conversations should happen again, so that those who were not able to attend would have another chance. Elizabeth Cunningham volunteered to be part of a working group, perhaps with members of other Commissions, to look at this work.

- Update on Basic Income strategy and Vigil – *Susan Eagle*

There was a small turnout for the in-person gathering in front of Chrystia Freeland's office due to there being a 25-person limit on outdoor gatherings. Vigil organizers were pleased with the support from Chrystia Freeland's office, with a representative of her staff joining the vigil, receiving the signed letter from Shining Waters Regional Council, and addressing the gathering.

The committee/coalition that's loosely formed between national and regional people will continue to meet.

November 3, 2020

General Council does not have a media list. Concern was expressed about needing to ensure we have a communication strategy in place, which doesn't seem to exist regionally or nationally.

Action items that were taken,

- Prayer sent out
- Regional President signed a letter of endorsement
- Information and a petition for signature was distributed throughout the Region

“Livable Income” is a new term, mirroring the language of the NDP bill. This is the language that should be used, in order to remain consistent.

- Commission Report to Regional annual meeting - *Susan*

The report was accepted for information. The report has been previously sent out to Commission members.

- Report from Bri-anne Swan

Bri-anne reported on her activities over the past few months. Highlights include:

- Supporting efforts to create a more welcoming environment for those who have been moved to the Roehampton-Hotel Shelter
- Along with Kim Uyede-Kai, Anti-Racism pre-annual meeting conversations
- Along with Kim-Uyede-Kai, Coordinating the plenary workshop about anti-racism with Dr. HyeRan Kim-Cragg
- Launching *do justice. the podcast*
- Creating justice focused Advent/Christmas/Epiphany materials that can be used for online worship (Calling with the Wilderness:  
<https://shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/programs-and-resources/justice/cwtw/> )

Part of the *Calling with the Wilderness* resource is a bank of music that can be used for online worship. Leaside United Church, Jubilee United Church and Metropolitan United Church have agreed to contribute pieces. The Commission was invited and encouraged to send Bri-anne material which may be helpful for this resource.

- Visioning follow-up

Congregations who are inclined to, have already completed the social and ecological justice survey identifying their priorities. It is unlikely we will receive any more, even after follow up. In order to move forward, the Commission needs to identify its priorities and passions. Ecological justice and racial justice are identified priorities on a Regional level. Bri-anne will send out an email for people to be able to identify where their passion lies, and what areas of work they would personally be willing to take a leadership role in.

- Finances

Discussion deferred to next meeting

- Workshop end of May

The workshop planned for May 2020 (cancelled because of Covid) is proposed for May 2021.

### **New Business**

- Upper York Sewage Issue

The Upper York Sewage Solution (East Gwillimbury) has been facing opposition from the Chippewas of Georgina Island. The Commission expressed interest in working with the Living Into Right Relations (LIRR) circle, starting with inviting Brandon Stiles, the Chippewas of Georgina Island's Environmental Coordinator, to come and speak to both groups about the proposed sewage plant. Bri-anne Swan will contact Mr. Stiles to check on availability and will be in conversation with Kim Uyede-Kai, who provides staff support to LIRR and Susan Eagle about a meeting date. Commission asked if Brandon Stiles could join us for some time at our next meeting on December 8.

- Christian College Accreditation as a University

There is concern about Charles McVety's Canada Christian College being given University accreditation and the ability to award degrees in arts and science (they are currently able to award degrees in theology and Christian counselling), circumventing normal accreditation processes. The Commission discussed the possibility of drafting a letter in opposition. Susan Eagle will forward the letter from her church when it is completed.

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Eleanor Scarlett that Bri-anne Swan conduct research about Canada Christian College, and consult with the Commission about her findings, with the possibility of a letter being written and sent by the Regional Council.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

### **Closing**

The Chairperson closed the meeting with a prayer and the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** December 8, 2020 at 12:30 p.m.

November 3, 2020

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**Agenda**

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Alana Martin that the agenda, be approved as circulated

**MOTION**

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**Minutes**

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**MOTION**

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### **Closing**

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**Next Meeting:** December 8, 2020 at 12:30 p.m.

December 8, 2020

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA  
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Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
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**Members Present**

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Elizabeth Cunningham, Donna Lang, Alana Martin, Moon-Ja Park, Eleanor Scarlett, Cameron Watts

Staff: Bri-anne Swan

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

Lois Brown welcomed everyone, opened with prayer, gave an acknowledgement of the land, and acknowledged our commitment to being a safe place for all people to gather and participate in our Region.

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

There was a time of check-in.

**Agenda**

**MOTION** by Moon-Ja Park, seconded by Tina Conlon that the agenda, be approved with some deferrals.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Elizabeth Cunningham, seconded by Alana Martin that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held November 3, 2020 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**BUSINESS ARISING**

• **Proposal for identifying Priorities and Passions Small Groups**

Susan Eagle proposed the Commission try a model of working in small groups to identify areas of need for the Social and Ecological Justice Commission. Because the Commission

only meets monthly, the Commission can't possibly cover every issue and cover it well. There is hope that by assigning people on the Commission to research and build networks in small groups, and then bring items forward to the Commission when something needs approval or action, more work can be done. Commission members were invited to identify areas they have interest and energy in working on and small groups were formed. These groups were also encouraged to identify ally organizations the Commission may be able to partner with. There will be space and time to evaluate whether this approach is useful.

Bri-anne Swan will offer support in identifying current United Church policy and any previous work that has been done in specific areas. It was noted that we often work from scratch, as if the United Church has never done any work on specific social/ecological issues before. There is already a breadth of resources available for the Commission to build upon.

### ***Priorities and Passions Small Groups 2021***

#### **Anti-Racism**

Eleanor Scarlett (Anti-Black and Anti-Indigenous racism)

Elizabeth Cunningham

Moon-Ja Park

Lois Brown

#### **Poverty/Income Inequality**

Susan Eagle

Moon-Ja Park

Tina Conlon

Elizabeth Cunningham (liveable income)

#### **Homelessness**

Elizabeth Cunningham (York Region, encampments)

Eleanor Scarlett (Peel Region)

Cameron Watts

Susan Eagle

#### **Israel / Palestine**

Alana Martin

Tina Conlon

Lois Brown

#### **Environment**

Moon-Ja Park

Alana Martin

Donna Lang

December 8, 2020

## **Right Relations**

Lois Brown

Cameron Watts

Tina Conlon

- **Upper York Sewage Solution** - Bri-anne Swan

Bri-anne provided a brief update on the Upper York Sewage Solution (UYSS). Brandon Stiles, Environmental Coordinator for the Chippewas of Georgina Island, has been approached to speak to the Commission and the Living Into Right Relations Circle. The town of Georgina has voted to cancel the UYSS. They are not able to do this unilaterally, but they are a voice at the table and it is an important demonstration of solidarity.

- **Christian University** – Susan Eagle and Bri-anne Swan

Bri-anne has researched the provincial government voting to grant Canada Christian College (a private Christian college in Whitby) university status with the ability to award degrees in arts and sciences. There was concern expressed about the college, and its president's homophobic and anti-Islamic comments, as well as the fast tracking of normal process for a political ally of the premier. Although the Omnibus bill containing the relevant legislation has passed, Bri-anne will write a letter on behalf of the Regional Council for the President to sign after approval from the Commission.

- **Living into Right Relations (LIRR)** – Lois Brown

Lois gave an update on the work of LIRR. There was affirmation expressed about seeking ways in which this Commission and LIRR might become more aware of each other's work.

- **Green Belt Conservation**

Bri-anne Swann gave an update on Schedule 6 of Bill 229, which provides for the expansion of Ministerial Zoning orders, overriding local conservation authorities.

- **Safe consumption sites** (deferred)

Bri-anne Swan offered a report from Jeffrey Dale for information about his work around harm reduction and safe consumption sites. Bri-anne will invite Jeffrey Dale to come and speak with the Commission at the next meeting.

- **Post-Covid Recovery** (deferred)

- **Anti-Racism** (deferred)

- **Livable Income** (Susan Eagle)

ISARC focused on liveable income during a recent online forum. It has been recorded and will be posted to YouTube, available to all who participated and beyond. It includes a reflection from Lois Wilson.

A national committee within the United Church is continuing to meet to develop a strategy around Guaranteed Liveable Income.

- **Advent resources**

Bri-anne Swan gave an update on how the justice-focused Advent resources she developed had been used throughout the Regional Council and country. Many congregations were grateful for access to music and videos for their services.

- **May workshop** - This item was deferred to the next meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**MOTION** by Elizabeth Cunningham, seconded by Eleanor Scarlett that, for 2021, the Social and Ecological Justice Commission will meet the third Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m. until June 2021

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

Meeting dates for January to June 2021:

January 19th

February 16

March 16

April 20

May 18

June 15

## **Deferred Items**

- Finances – what are our plans, what do we want to do?

- Correspondence

- Brian Macintosh

Letter requesting consideration that the forming UNJPPI network be connected to the Social and Ecological Justice Commission. Commission members will take time to read and consider in time for the next meeting.

- Donna Lang

ESG Energy Retrofit Summary was received for information.

December 8, 2020

**Closing:**

The Chairperson closed the meeting with a prayer and the meeting adjourned at 2:05p.m.

Next Meeting: January 19, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. by video conference.

