

## ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT OF SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

*John 8: 23-27, Jesus Calms the storm.*

### **Regional Meeting Report**

Our Regional meeting theme for this year is *A Time for Every Purpose*. This has been a challenging year for the Regional Council, communities of faith and The United Church of Canada. We continue to walk through the pandemic together. Staff and volunteers have worked countless hours, preparing, changing, experimenting, and succeeding in continuing as Church in new and creative ways. As an Executive, we have heard stories of sacrifice, perseverance and success. We have also heard stories of worry, stress, frustration and struggle. As a region, as community, we give thanks, we continue to be on a long journey together; we celebrate the resilience of our churches and the expression of the Gospel in many new and creative ways.

### **Connecting within our Regional Council**

Although this past year many of our communities of faith, outreach ministries, and camps have not been able to worship in our buildings, our churches have not been closed. Folks have used their phones, mail, video (Zoom/YouTube) for church. We have continued a ministry of caring and support and we have continued in new and creative ways. Volunteers, music leaders, ministry personnel, camp staff, outreach staff, congregational support staff have all worked tirelessly.

As a Regional Council, the region has hosted a number of townhall meetings for both Ministry Personnel and Lay Leaders for support, updates and education. Our website continues to be a key tool for communication within our Regional Council. Many local and a few regional networks and local groups have also met to connect, learn, challenge, listen and work together. We have tentatively planned (Covid 19 permitting) an in-person Regional Council meeting for May 2022!!!

### **Work of the Regional Executive**

Our Executive meets monthly (with the exception of the summer) and does the work of the Regional Council when our region is not meeting. Often the Executive has a very full agenda which includes oversight of the Regional Commissions, Regional finances, Regional Policy, Regional meeting, emerging work, and the Executive Minister and staff.

The draft 2022 budget will be presented at our Regional Council meeting. This past year's spending reflects an unusual year with Covid 19. Staff travel has been down dramatically but support to communities of faith increased. The Regional Council has a number of grant requests from communities of faith and the Regional Council, and we faced both unexpected expenses and unexpected savings. We have also created a 5-year budget projection for 2022, a requirement of our bylaws, to be updated yearly. The 5-year projection will be reviewed at our Regional Council meeting.

### **Monthly Work of the Regional Council Executive**

If you are interested in a detailed account and overview of the work of the Regional Council Executive, please see the Digest of Actions, which will be received for information at our Regional Council meeting. The digest offers an itemized account of the Regional Council Executive since

our last Regional Council meeting. It also gives you an idea of the monthly variety and work of our Regional Council Executive.

### **Working towards Right Relations, Anti-Racism and Equity**

The United Church of Canada is working towards becoming an anti-racist institution. For the United Church it means encouraging the General Council office, Regional Council offices and communities of faith and even Canadian society to pause and reflect. The United Church has allocated staffing and resources for both General Council staff, Regional staff and Ministry Personnel. The United Church is offering training, learning opportunities and discussion groups as part of a strategy of becoming an anti-racist Church. Practically, the Canadian Shield Regional Council and Shining Waters Regional Council staff have joined together on a one-year journey of reflecting, learning, re-learning history, theological reflection and discussion on how to become an anti-racist Church and work towards right relationship. Staff from both regions meet together bi-weekly to talk, learn, challenge, pray, reflect, and discuss on a path toward becoming an anti-racist Church.

Both Regional Councils have encouraged equity conversations at the Executive level, Commission and Committee levels of the church. The Equity Committee encourages conversation that addresses all aspects of equity in the church, working towards being a truly inclusive church.

This past March, Shining Waters Regional Council celebrated becoming an Affirming Region!

### **Staffing**

In 2021, we saw more transition of staff in our Regional Council. Bri-anne Swan decided to leave Shining Waters Regional Council. Bri-anne served as Minister for Social and Ecological Justice and Communication. Karen Hilfman Millson, Minister for Communities of Faith and Cluster and Network Animation, will be finishing her contract with the Regional Council December 2021. I have deeply appreciated their work with the Regional Council. We would have loved to have a party to celebrate Bri-anne's work in ministry, but due to Covid 19, we settled for a Zoom goodbye. We wish Bri-anne God's blessing as she enters a new chapter in their life, and Karen the same in 2022.

We will not re-hire a replacement for both fulltime positions and have delegated part of their work to other staff. I continue to deeply appreciate working with Jody, Susie, Jeffery, Kim, Dale, Todd, Karen, Donna, Rachael, Susan and Joan. We are blessed with incredible staff who have worked tirelessly over the past year. Thank you!!!! I am also grateful for our Executive and President David Leyton-Brown who have provided attentive leadership throughout the pandemic. Thank you!!!

As we look forward to a new year, I give thanks for the support of my family this past year as I have mostly worked virtually. I give thanks for the many worship services I have been able to witness virtually this past year across our Regional Council. I give thanks to God for the grace of community, the love of and support of the Spirit and the message of God's love and grace through Jesus Christ, which has provided incredible hope during a very challenging year.

Peter Hartmans (Rev.), Executive Minister