

January 19, 2021

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Tuesday, January 19, 2021**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on January 19, 2021 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

**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, Kim Uyede-Kai, Jeffrey Dale

Guests: Brandon Stiles, Betty Lou McNabb, Dave Gordon

**Welcome, check-in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone. Cameron Watts 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.

**Guest Speaker:** Brandon Stiles re: Upper York Sewage Solution

Brandon Stiles, Environmental Coordinator from Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, gave background and an update on the Upper York Sewage Solution (UYSS) in York Region. Brandon was asked to take on leading the opposition to the UYSS project, which was conceived in order to service population growth in Newmarket, East Gwillimbury, Aurora and upper York Region. The UYSS was proposed as a leading-edge sewage plan with benefits to Lake Simcoe (e.g. lowering phosphorus). However, Georgina Island was never initially invited to the discussion. Georgina Island considers the current environmental assessment to be outdated. It was only through the media that Georgina Island found out that the province has asked York Region to revisit a Lake Ontario option. They were never formally notified. Georgina Island is sending correspondence to get more information about a Lake Ontario option. There has been no consultation on how this affects Georgina Island. Anishinabeg territory extends to Lake Ontario. Currently, there is work being done on giving Lake Simcoe individual status.

There were questions about the current health of Lake Simcoe. Some of the conservation efforts in the past have worked. A number of groups have participated in conservation efforts around the health of the lake. e.g. It had been a long time since Lake Simcoe had eagles. They are now coming back.

What do we do next? Brandon says there is no one answer. Best thing to do is stay informed. There was a petition to oppose the UYSS which received over 35,000 signatures which did get the attention of the government. Georgina Island may opt to do something like that again.

The Commission thanked Brandon Stiles for joining them.

**Guest Speaker:** Jeffrey Dale, Minister for Faith Formation, Youth and Young Adults

Jeffrey gave an update on his work advocating for safe consumption sites, especially within the Barrie area. He described the opioid and toxic drug crises we find ourselves within, giving a brief overview of The United Church of Canada's policy from the 1980s through today. Out of a proposal from British Columbia Conference to GC43, Jeffrey has been working with General Council to create a three-part conversation for the wider United Church:

1. Harm reduction and what is The United Church of Canada's involvement
2. A theology of harm reduction
3. Why it matters to decriminalize illicit substances for personal use

These conversations will be hosted by United-in-Learning, but they would like to partner with Shining Waters Regional Council. There is no cost to Shining Waters.

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon/Eleanor Scarlett that Shining Waters Regional Council co-sponsor a three-part conversation around substance use and safe consumption sites, in partnership with General Council/United-in-Learning.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

### **Agenda**

**MOTION** by Cameron Watts/Moon-Ja Park that the agenda be approved as circulated

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

### **Minutes**

**MOTION** by Elizabeth Cunningham / Donna Lang that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held December 8, 2020 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

January 19, 2021

## **Business Arising**

### *Christian University Letter*

Bri-anne Swan has written a letter outlining concerns about legislation being passed allowing Canada Christian College to grant degrees in arts and sciences, particularly as this legislation passed before the proper assessment and accreditation process had been completed. (attached as Appendix A)

**MOTION** by Moon-Ja / Lois Brown that Shining Waters Regional Council send a letter to the Government of Ontario in opposition to Canada Christian College being granted university status.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

### **United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI) - request from Brian McIntosh**

UNJPPI is looking to create a more formalized relationship with the Social and Ecological Commission and the Regional Council.

There was recognition that this is a group that's already gathering and working together.

The Palestine/Israel subgroup will connect with UNJPPI to clarify questions around their ask for funding, reporting, staff support and further explore what a relationship might look like.

### **Reports back from sub-committees**

#### *Anti-Racism*

Have not yet met.

There was recognition that February is Black History Month and there is a need to highlight the work that Black Canadians have done.

#### *Poverty/Income Inequality*

Have not yet met.

Guaranteed Livable Income: Susan Eagle has been part of two conversations. One was with the national UCC network, identifying smaller networks of people to work on a strategy re: guaranteed livable income. The second was a senate poverty gathering.

## Correspondence

### *Letter to the City of Toronto*

A joint letter with dozens of Toronto community partners was written and sent to Toronto City Council on January 15th in anticipation of Toronto City Budget talks. (Appendix B)

There was discussion about the communication streams in Shining Waters Regional Council, and that it is not easy to send out an email exclusively to ministers and communities of faith within the City of Toronto. Currently, lists are divided into North and South of Hwy 407. Bri-anne Swan, along with Susie Henderson, has started on a list of media for the Regional Council.

There needs to be some discussion about when and how Regional communication channels are utilized, particularly for calls to action originating from outside the church.

Cameron Watts and Susan Eagle will have a conversation about communication.

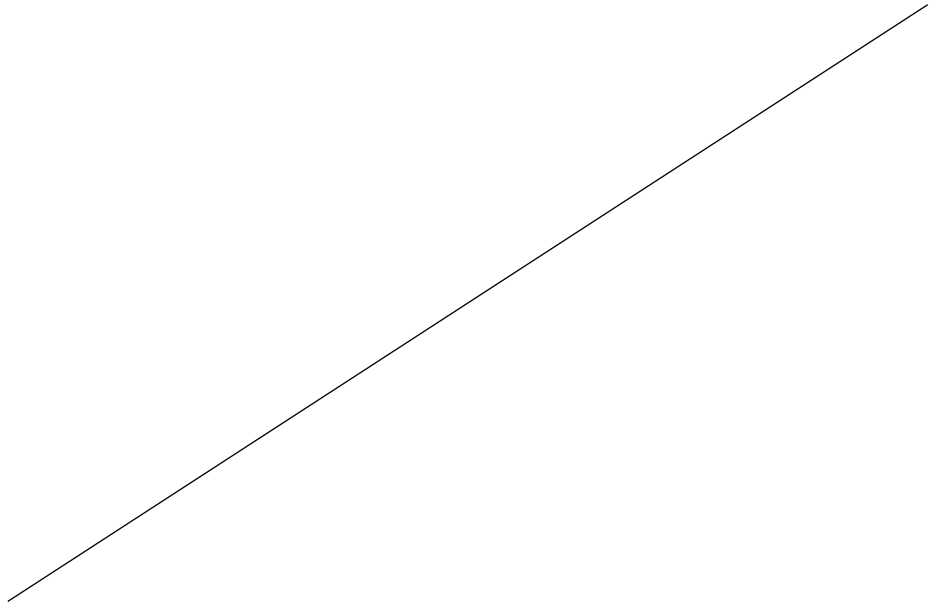
**MOTION** by Tina Conlon/Alana Martin that the Open Letter to the City of Toronto be distributed to communities of faith south of Hwy 407 encouraging them to contact their local councillors in support of the open letter.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Closing** – The meeting closed with prayer.

**Next Meeting:** February 16, 2021, 1 p.m.



January 19, 2021

**Appendix A**

by email only: [ross.romano@pc.ola.org](mailto:ross.romano@pc.ola.org)

Honourable Ross Romano, MP  
Minister of Colleges and Universities  
Ministry of Colleges and Universities  
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.  
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

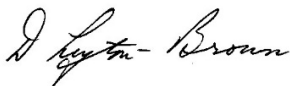
Dear Sir;

On behalf of Shining Waters Regional Council, I am writing to express our dismay and disappointment that your government has passed legislation making it possible for Canada Christian College to be granted university status with the ability to award degrees in arts and sciences.

Charles McVety, president of Canada Christian College, is well known for his Islamophobic, homophobic and transphobic comments — views that are also espoused by the College. As he is a close ally to Premier Ford, we are additionally concerned that the government is granting political favours and disregarding the college and its founder's troubling record of advocating for discrimination. We are not only concerned with the proposal that McVety's College secure University status in Ontario, but we are also deeply concerned about the undemocratic process utilized by your government to fast track Mr. McVety and Canada Christian College's request for degree-granting status. The proposal for re-designating the name change for the College into a University was buried in Omnibus Bill 213, *Better for People, Smarter for Business Act*. The very fact that this bill was carried before Canada Christian College had even completed the process of applying for re-designation is both alarming and undemocratic.

Shining Waters Regional Council is one of 16 administrative groupings within The United Church of Canada, with approximately 170 congregations spanning an area from the shores of Lake Ontario to northern Muskoka. We come from a tradition that understands God's deep love and affirmation for those of us within queer communities, as well as our neighbours who belong to traditions outside the Christian faith. It is heartbreaking to watch this government cater to the whims of hatred and exclusion, all the while not even following its own established protocols.

Yours truly,



David Leyton-Brown, President  
Shining Waters Regional Council

c.c. The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario ([doug.ford@pc.ola.org](mailto:doug.ford@pc.ola.org))

**Appendix B**

**Open Letter to Toronto City Council**

January 15, 2021

**It's 2021. Toronto's budget must tackle inequality.**

This is no time for business as usual at City Hall.

As Mayor John Tory and Councillors ponder the next municipal budget, our city's decision-makers need to be brave, and bold.

The draft 2021 budget presented yesterday fails to respond to the dire emergency impacting communities across our city.

Since last March, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed our city to us as never before. In the shadows of gleaming office towers, we see tent cities. In the midst of incredible wealth and comfort, we see poverty and distress.

Inequality and systemic racism are defining our city. We can no longer let this continue.

So much is at stake for so many community members: For persons with disabilities. For members of Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities. For women. For youth. For seniors. For essential workers and for those who have lost jobs. For all who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

Our city faces many challenges, and the 2021 budget is a unique opportunity to tackle them as part of the pandemic rebuild. With insight, compassion, and energy, we can make the changes we've needed for so long. We propose that the mayor and council do three things in their budget deliberations:

- **First**, focus on inequality. Council must identify new spending to tackle the inequality crisis, and make sure the scale of investment matches the scale of the problem.
- **Second**, focus and move resources to where they are needed most. This is especially important with regard to community-led alternatives to policing that will make life safer for persons with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, and racialized community members, the LGBTQ2S+ community, people experiencing gender-based violence, and people with lived experience of mental health issues.
- **Third**, develop a budget based on what our community needs during this crisis. Some voices in the budget debate will demand that we ignore great suffering in order to balance the budget. Instead, we urge you to listen to residents who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and ongoing inequities. We encourage you to make the needed investments and balance the budget through "assumed revenues" from the provincial and federal governments, even if those revenues are not yet committed.

We'd like to draw attention to the [ten principles for a bold, green, and just Toronto](#), which were communicated to Council in April 2020 (summarized in the Appendix). Thousands

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of residents and organizations took part in the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild's (TORR) process to create a vision for truly building back better in Toronto. The 2021 budget summary, released today, all but ignores the vision articulated by communities and residents through this work. We ask Council to try again to better align the budget with this vision.

As part of this work, we also urge the City to three lenses to guide the budget decisions:

- Equity – with an intersectional perspective – race, gender, disability, economic/poverty, age
- Indigenous self-determination – services developed by and for Indigenous people are a critical component, instead of simply providing equitable access to colonial systems
- Climate – an existential threat is posed by the climate emergency

As the pandemic grinds on, our Mayor and Councillors must bring their most courageous selves to the budget table. This is no time for half measures or mere good intentions.

Governments at all levels have recognized the need for exceptional measures during the pandemic. In December 2020, the federal and provincial governments funnelled an additional \$1.2 billion to the city to help address pandemic-related shelter and transit costs. That support helped avert a financial crisis. Our provincial and federal governments know that supporting municipal systems and services is key to protecting the health and well-being of Canadians. City decision-makers must continue to insist that higher orders of government, with the revenue streams to support our city, provide the necessary funding to fill operating and capital gaps and enhance investments.

City council has relied on assumed revenues to balance the books in the past. On two occasions, when confronted with extraordinary costs associated with refugee settlement supports, Council passed a balanced operating budget that assumed it would get \$45 million in 2019 and \$77 million in 2020 from the federal government – funds that had not yet been approved. The TTC's 2021 budget already assumes funding from other levels of government will cover their extraordinary pandemic-related costs. Council needs to be bolder in assuming revenues for vital services and its negotiating position and should address shortfalls by drawing down on its under-resourced capital budget.

Council must also commit to expand programs and redesign systems at the scale needed to start to address the racial disparities of the pandemic, the death toll of seniors in long-term care and, the lack of supports for persons with disabilities and people on fixed incomes, and the climate emergency. Given years of chronic under-investment in community infrastructure and social supports, these needs are large and include:

- Civilian crisis response programs to replace our expensive and too-often-harmful policing responses to people experiencing mental health crises. Investing \$150 million in safe beds, consumer/survivor initiatives, and other crisis services could move us quickly toward community-led alternatives.
- Over-policing of Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth must end. For \$65 million, the City could double the number of youth hubs and youth outreach workers and also provide peer mediation and alternative conflict-resolution

supports in all Toronto secondary schools. Such peer-led and community-led supports would work better and cost less than what the city does now.

- Addressing homelessness through policing is not working. For \$100 million, we could significantly expand homeless outreach, drop-ins, and safe consumption sites, and help more homeless Torontonians make the transition to supportive and affordable housing.
- Gender-based violence has increased during the pandemic. For \$25 million we could expand programs to support survivors and fund transformative justice to prevent future violence.
- The \$860 million in support that the City is assuming from the provincial and federal governments in 2021 will contribute to important transit, road, housing, and environmental projects (creating jobs and economic spinoffs, when work is safe to proceed). However, that level of support is not enough to support investments in services, programs and infrastructure to address the urgent, unmet health and survival needs of residents during the pandemic and to begin the planned recovery.
- The threat of climate change is not abating: a key learning from the current pandemic is that there is an unacceptably high human cost to inadequate preparation for crises (health or climate-related). Progress on Toronto's Climate Emergency commitments were largely delayed in 2020, and the proposed 2021 budget for the lead Climate department - Environment and Energy Division - is \$6M (or 33%) below the previously projected spending level. We must not lose another year in tackling the climate crisis. Effective and equitable climate action can protect residents, generate benefits for communities, and create good green jobs.
- The child care crisis must be addressed. [The City of Toronto Licensed Child Care Growth Strategy](#) needs to continue, and be modernized and expanded to provide the benchmarks, costs, and direction for new funding. The Safe Restart funding provided by the federal government was meant to sustain non-profit child care programs, however, the City needs to provide further funding dedicated to operating costs; increase affordability for families; decent work/wages for Early Childhood Educators; expand inclusion for all young children; and expand non-profit child care programs. [27 child care centres have permanently closed since the initial mandated closures in March, 2020](#). 40 child care centres remain closed with no known reopen date. Without significant funding from the City, and bold advocacy from the City to the provincial government, child care centres will continue to close permanently.
- If other orders of government do not provide appropriate funding to address the budget shortfall, the City plans to gut the capital plan for essential infrastructure. This will set the city back a decade or more and reduce the employment and economic benefits from needed infrastructure projects. Council needs to immediately take that option off the table.



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Looking ahead, Toronto City Council must continue to advocate for funding from other levels of government. However, in addition, Council must not hesitate to raise additional revenues in ways that push back against inequality.

Recovering from COVID-19 and building back better calls for a bold vision and must include major, transformative investments. It is time to raise our expectations for our city's budget.

Toronto depends on it.

Signed,

Labour Community Services  
East Scarborough Storefront  
North York Community House  
Centre for Connected Communities  
Toronto & York Region Labour Council  
Good Jobs for All Coalition  
Toronto Neighbourhood Centres  
TTC Riders  
Parkdale Activity – Recreation Centre  
Toronto Seniors' Forum  
Shelter & Housing Justice Network  
Health Providers Against Poverty  
Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC)  
Open Policy Ontario  
Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services  
Faith in the City  
Findhelp | 211 Central  
West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre  
Times Change Women's Employment Service  
YWCA Toronto  
Working Women Community Centre  
Scadding Court Community Centre  
Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre  
Lady Ballers Camp  
FCJ Refugee Centre  
Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic  
Margaret's Housing and Community Support Services  
Access Alliance Multicultural Health & Community Services  
North York Women's Shelter  
Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC)  
Syme Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre  
Woman Abuse Council of Toronto (WomanACT)  
Evelyn Fox - Mother of Kiesingar Gunn, Founder of Communities for Zero Violence  
Afghan Women's Organization Refugee and Immigrant Services  
South Asian Women's Centre  
Redwood Shelter  
Toronto Community for Better Child Care  
GTA Disability Coalition  
Social Planning Toronto

Toronto350  
Black Legal Action Centre  
The Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women  
The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto  
North York Community House  
KCWA Family and Social Services  
Louis March - Zero Gun Violence Movement  
Rexdale Women's Centre  
The Neighbourhood Group  
Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)

**Appendix: 10 Recommended Principles for a bold, green, and just recovery for Toronto:**

1. For best results, ensure the recovery and rebuilding process is transparent and community-led
2. Make evidence-based decisions, informed by disaggregated race-based and sociodemographic data collection
3. Advocate immediately and powerfully to secure a *New Deal* for Toronto from our Federal and Provincial Governments
4. Fast-track and improve Toronto's existing strategies, plans, and commitments in Toronto's recovery and rebuilding plans, in order to build a more equitable, healthy and climate-resilient city
5. Invest in, protect, and centre workers in recovery and rebuilding plans
6. Prioritize low-carbon infrastructure, social procurement, and equitable local job creation in recovery and rebuilding
7. Invest in public and community ownership of land and housing to ensure everyone is permanently housed, local food production is increased, and jobs are created
8. Support and sustain the community infrastructure that has developed in response to COVID-19 for ongoing response and recovery work
9. Encourage and prioritize community support and discontinue programs that increase surveillance and harm social cohesion and solidarity
10. Make permanent and expand the public supports and services that have been put in place to respond to this pandemic, rather than cutting services

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Tuesday, February 16, 2021**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on February 16, 2021 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:10 p.m.

**Members Present**

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Elizabeth Cunningham, Moon-Ja Park, Eleanor Scarlett (joined at 2:10 p.m.), Cameron Watts (joined at 1:35 p.m.)

Staff: Jeffrey Dale. Kim Uyede-Kai (notetaker).

Guest: Brian McIntosh (joined from 1:45-2:45 p.m.)

Regrets: Bri-anne Swan, Alana Martin

Absent: Donna Lang

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone, Elizabeth Cunningham opened with an acknowledgement of the land, prayer, 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.

**Agenda**

Agenda addition: Brian McIntosh will join the meeting at 1:45 to give an update on United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI) and outreach ministries.

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Moon-Ja Park that the agenda be approved as revised.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

## Minutes

**MOTION** by Elizabeth Cunningham / Lois Brown that the minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held January 19, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

There was a brief time of check in.

## Business Arising

The commission chair received a request from the Executive Minister asking that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission write a letter to Mayor John Tory urging action on warming centres, shelters, encampments, and resources for the homeless population. Because of the urgency of the issue, the commission chair worked in consultation with Jeffrey Dale and drafted a letter to Mayor Tory dated January 29, 2021, which was circulated to Commission members for email approval and then forwarded to David Leyton-Brown and Peter Hartmans to be signed by the Regional Council President. (Appendix A)

Commission members agreed that urgent actions such as this could be drafted and sent by the Chair on behalf of the commission between meetings.

## United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI)

Brian McIntosh was welcomed to the meeting. He spoke to the UNJPPI request for a more formalized relationship with Social and Ecological Justice Commission and the region. The request is for an organic connection to the region, advocacy for policies that government does not yet have in place, and lines of communication with the region to share resources, campaigns, information, avoid duplication, and to encourage advocacy that doesn't bear the name of UNJPPI but to speak as a regional network.

Brian noted updated wording to the request to two actions: 1. ~~Establish~~ Recognize the existing network of PALNET.; Delete 6. ~~Ensure and adequate form of Regional funding and staff assistance for this new Regional Network.~~

Anticipating that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission will potentially receive additional requests for recognition from various networks, including other networks on Palestine Israel issues, the Commission agreed to recognize this network as one network, to receive and request information and updates from them, and consider requests for action. The Commission's sub-group on Palestine Israel could connect them if other regional groups emerge doing similar work.

Brian requested a copy of the survey list of congregations who expressed interest in Palestine Israel in order to build capacity in this network/movement.

**Agreed by consensus**

February 16, 2021

### **Community Outreach Ministries update**

As a board member, Brian McIntosh reported on behalf of community ministries board which had engaged in a three-year long strategic planning process. Unable to find ways to make the two ministries financially sustainable beyond 2022 (\$200,000/year), the boards made the decision to close the ministries and develop legacy plans.

A lengthy discussion took place, noting that both ministries work with primarily non-White communities, with the poor, and are ministries that change lives. It was noted that the regional priorities need to match the budget allocations.

Cam Watts offered to write a letter on behalf of the Commission to express the Commission's concerns and to engage the Executive.

It was suggested that the Fall regional council meeting highlight outreach ministries and connect to other work such as anti-racism, housing, etc. Susan Eagle, Tina Conlon, Cameron Watts, and Lois Brown offered to form a strategy group.

The Commission thanked Brian for joining them.

### **Harm Reduction Update**

Jeffrey Dale gave an update on harm reduction, safe consumption, decriminalization of illicit substances. Statistical data has been gathered and Moon-Ja Park asked about data and educational materials for other language groups.

Jeffrey will work on this next month before national conversations happen and bring an update to the March meeting. He will explore ways to engage other language groups. Moon-Ja offered Jeffrey the name of an Asian group working with these issues.

**MOTION** by Elizabeth Cunningham / Tina Conlon that the Shining Waters Regional Council publicly endorse and support organizations that work toward education and community development on harm reduction efforts.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

### **Poverty, Income Security Inequality**

The chairperson reported that the Livable Income group is asking regions to help organize another vigil. The date is Saturday, April 10, the week after Easter. More details to come.

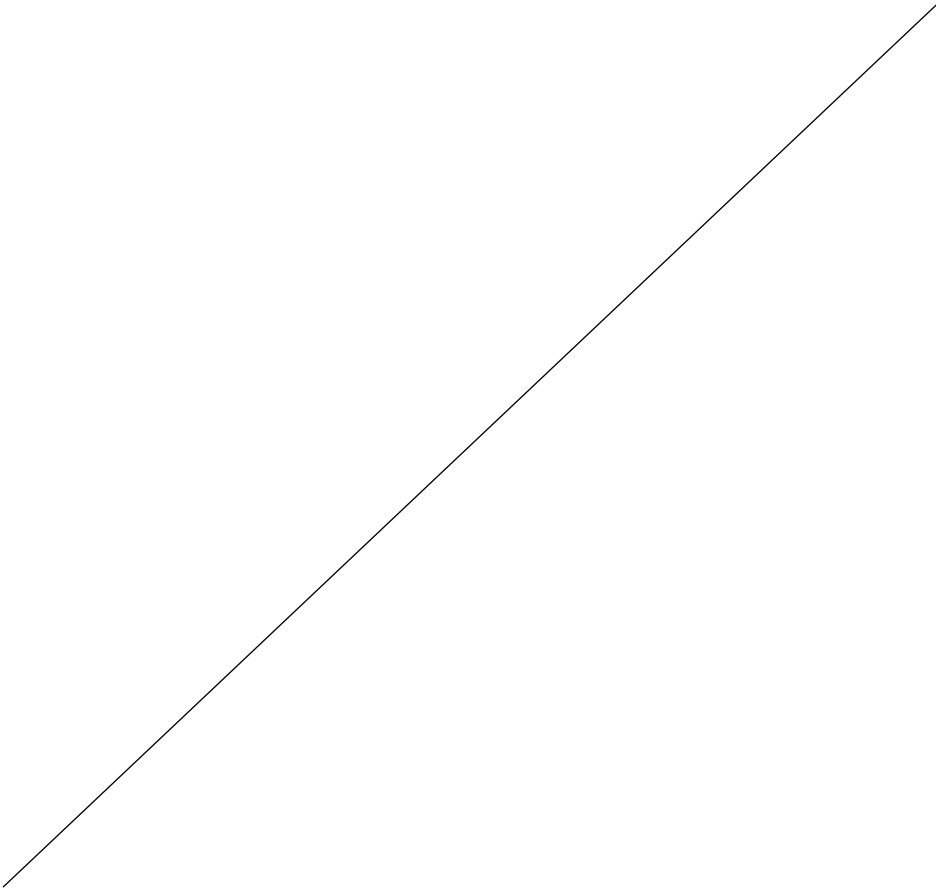
### **Deferred issues**

Reports from sub-committees. The chairperson asked that sub-committees send their updates in writing to be attached with the Minutes.

February 16, 2021

**Closing:** The meeting closed with prayer led by Cameron Watts.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021, 1 p.m.



February 16, 2021

**Appendix A**

January 29, 2021

Via: email and regular mail  
Email: mayor\_tory@toronto.ca

His Worship, John Tory  
Mayor, City of Toronto  
City Hall, 2nd Floor  
100 Queen St. W.  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Sir:

On behalf of The United Church of Canada communities of faith in greater Toronto, I am writing to urge that more proactive initiatives be taken to support the homeless population of Toronto, particularly during this crisis time of freezing temperatures, snow and freezing rain.

The urban Toronto region for The United Church of Canada includes 83 congregations and ministries in the GTA as part of the larger Shining Waters Regional Council.

It is a scandal and a shame to us all that in a country of enormous first world affluence we have so many destitute and vulnerable citizens who rely on charity for survival. While we commend the city for actions already taken through the many shelter spaces provided and staff working to assist people in need, we know that this is not nearly enough.

We urge you to take action in the following areas:

**Warming Centres**

The closure of many public and commercial indoor spaces because of the pandemic has created an urgent need for more warming centres throughout the city. These centres need to be open beyond the normal times established by the cold weather alert protocols. As well, and hence the need for more centres, these need to allow for longer visiting times by those who need them. We understand that currently visiting times are limited to two hours. This is not nearly long enough for someone who literally has nowhere else to go for the remainder of the day and night.

Already front-line workers are drawing attention to the increasing cases of frost-bite because of the inadequate provision of time and space at warming centres.

**Shelters**

A review of recent accommodation statistics for homeless shelters, as well as conversations with front-line staff, indicates that shelters are at or near capacity each night. And some who choose not to use shelters point to overcrowding and lack of safety as ongoing issues that prevent their stay.

cont'd ...

There needs to be more safe space immediately created for overnight shelter stays. We write this as very cold weather descends on the city and urge that immediate action be taken

February 16, 2021

to address this critical need before it reaches crisis proportions with fatal consequences. Already the city has a tragic death statistic for victims of homelessness.

### **Encampments**

We hear from volunteers and front-line workers and advocates that there are currently an estimated 1,200-1,500 residents living in encampments, and that when you factor in those sleeping on crates and transit, it is closer to 2,000 people, not the 300-400 statistic that has been offered through official channels.

While we can agree with the city that “the safest place for anyone experiencing homelessness in Toronto is inside, in a shelter, hotel or, ultimately, housing,” we urge that those safe spaces be created before encampments are dismantled. We call on the city to stop dismantling tiny shelters, provide support for people living in encampments and create rapid re-housing options for people living without shelter.

This would mean more and better access to public washrooms, the provision of more hotel spaces and using a harm reduction approach for all support services.

We encourage the city to work more cooperatively with the many agency and volunteer front-line workers who have daily contact with, and are trusted by, those who live in encampments.

### **Resources**

We concur with the recent open letter to the City of Toronto on January 15, 2021, signed by many community organizations which stated that “for \$100 million we could significantly expand homeless outreach, drop-ins and safe consumption sites, and help more homeless Torontonians make the transition to supportive and affordable housing.” We agree that this kind of pro-active initiative would, in the long run, be more successful and humane than short-term efforts to use policing to deal with the symptoms of homelessness.

We know that the pandemic has created financial challenges that will affect us and our economy for many years to come. However, the burden of cutbacks should not be borne by the most vulnerable in our community who are already in crisis.

As we believe we are called to care for our neighbour in need, we urge the city to step up its care for the marginalized with immediate implementation of supports and emergency housing. We urge you to support all citizens’ rights to self-determination, security, and dignity.

Yours truly,



David Leyton-Brown, President  
Shining Waters Regional Council  
The United Church of Canada



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**Members Present**

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Staff: Bri-anne Swan, Jeffrey Dale, Kim Uyede-Kai

Regrets: Eleanor Scarlett

**Welcome, check-in and prayer**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone. Lois Brown 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 Elizabeth Cunningham / Tina Conlon that the agenda, be approved as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Moon-Ja Park / Lois Brown that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held February 16, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

March 16, 2021

## **Business Arising**

### *Vote to endorse letter re: cessation of Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Benefits*

On March 10th, the Commission voted via email to:

Endorse the attached letter from the Social Assistance Coalition of Scarborough asking the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to update their policy regarding social assistance recipients and their collection of the Canadian Recovery Benefit.

Forward the letter with an endorsement to MCCSS, the Premier and leaders of the opposition parties.

The Commission had conducted an email vote endorsing a letter of concern regarding the cessation of benefits to OW and ODSP recipients by the Ontario government. Before the end of the voting process, the government backtracked on its plans. The Commission accepts the vote and is placing it in the minutes as part of their official record. There is concern that the Ontario government merely postponed the removal of benefits until the fall.

### *Letter to Executive re: Community Ministries*

A letter expressing the Commission's concern about the closing of Davenport Perth and Jane Finch Community ministries was written and presented to the Commission for review. Susan Eagle has had a conversation with Peter Hartmans regarding the Community Ministries and has requested time on the next Executive meeting agenda. There will be a conversation with the Communities of Faith Commission to talk about how communication happens between the two groups and how the commissions resolve challenges that arise. The Community Ministries Board has made it clear that it is a lack of secure funding, rather than the energy to keep going, which has led to the decision to close the ministries.

**MOTION** by Cameron Watts / Elizabeth Cunningham that a letter expressing the concern of the Social and Ecological Justice Commission regarding the closure of Community Ministries be forwarded to both the Executive Minister and Regional Executive of Shining Waters Regional Council with a request for time on the agenda at their next meeting.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

Tina Conlon abstained from the vote due to a conflict of interest.

### *Update from Jeffrey Dale re: Harm Reduction*

Seven Regional Councils, in addition to United-in-Learning, are now co-sponsoring the Seeking to Reduce Harm series of workshops. Bri-anne Swan is working on advertising materials and will offer tech support at the gatherings. Guest speakers are coming both from within and beyond Shining Waters Regional Council.

April 14: Karen Orlandi, Evan Smith, Sackville United Church

April 21: Gordon Casey, app for illicit drug use, mental health crisis

## **Report from Bri-anne Swan**

Bri-anne has recently returned after a leave to care for her father and has taken on the lead role for communications within the Region.

Highlights within her Social & Ecological Justice portfolio have been:

- developing an Action Page where people can go to customize and sign letters/petitions to their MPs or MPPs. To the right of the action is a list of everybody who has signed or taken action using the portal. It is meant to streamline how petitions and letters can be sent.
- continuing to release *do justice. the podcast*. Lent has featured interviews conducted by Rev. Alexa Gilmour.
- working with Peter Hartmans to create a directory for the Regional Council
- creating a Regional Council media list
- supporting Jeffrey Dale with Seeking to Reduce Harm and the subcommittee working on Good Friday worship materials re: homelessness

## **Reports/Updates from sub-committees**

*Anti-Racism (Eleanor, Elizabeth, Moon-Ja, Lois)*

The subcommittee has not yet met as an entire group. Moon Ja Park has been part of a Korean language group talking about anti-racism work and microaggressions.

A short conversation took place about books members of the Commission have found helpful. Bri-anne Swan will place them on the Regional Council website.

*Poverty/Income Inequality (Susan, Moon-Ja, Tina, Elizabeth)*

On April 8th, on the eve of the Liberal National Convention, General Council Office will be holding a cross-country campaign in support of a Guaranteed Livable Income. In-person vigils are being limited to five people each. There will be a vigil outside Finance Minister Cynthia Freeland's office in Toronto. Those who are not able to meet in person will be able to participate by lighting a candle at 12:30pm and posting the photo to social media.

*Homelessness (Elizabeth, Eleanor, Cameron, Susan)*

The subgroup has been working on a Good Friday liturgical resource centred around homelessness. Bri-anne Swan will be posting the resources to the Regional Council website. Jeffrey Dale has completed video interviews with a number of UCC ministers engaged with Community Ministry.

*Israel / Palestine (Tina, Lois)*

Palnet has requested a list of the communities of faith who have indicated (via the December 2019 survey) their interest in issues related to Palestine/Israel. Bri-anne Swan will compile a list and forward it on.

March 16, 2021

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission Israel/Palestine subgroup will continue to offer support to Palnet and also extend their support to other similar groups within the Regional Council as they emerge.

*Environment (Moon-Ja, Donna)*

Have not yet met.

*Right Relations (Lois, Cameron, Tina)*

KAIROS is holding a number of conversations and events related to Bill C-15, giving voice to the different perspectives about the bill (attached).

<https://parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-2/bill/C-15/first-reading>

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/federal-bill-to-implement-un-declaration-a-welcome-step-in-the-right-direction>

## **Regional Council and General Council Proposals**

A fuller discussion about proposals was deferred to the next meeting, although there was some initial conversation about who to let the communities of faith know about the proposal process.

## **Discussion about Communication**

There was a discussion about how the Commission is able to communicate with other communities of faith within the Regional Council, particularly for Toronto-specific campaigns. Bri-anne Swan will be creating a tag within the Regional Council MailChimp for congregations in Toronto.

## **Closing**

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.

**Next Meeting:** April 20, 2021, 1 p.m.





DATE

ADDRESS

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

We are the *Social Assistance Coalition of Scarborough (SACS)*, a group comprised of social assistance recipients, legal and policy professionals that meet to discuss issues related to social assistance and how they impact the lives of Scarborough residents.

We write under urgent circumstances, calling on the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to update their policy regarding social assistance recipients and their collection of the Canadian Recovery Benefit (CRB). Currently, the MCCSS memorandum states:

*“...the federal government’s three new Canada Recovery Benefits will be treated as **non-exempt income** for purposes of both OW and ODSP, in keeping with the treatment of EI benefits. However, existing OW and ODSP clients (those granted prior to October 1) who become financially ineligible as a result of receiving either EI or any of the new Recovery Benefits will be issued a nominal \$2.50 entitlement so that they can retain health and other benefits. **These changes will be in effect until the end of March 2021.**”*

This policy presumes the recipients accessed the CRB sequentially and will have used up their CRB by the end of March 2021; this does not reflect the reality of when and how people are able to and do work, which is why some will receive CRB until the end of September.

The policy was likely presumed to impact a small number of recipients. However, Prime Minister Trudeau's announced on February 19, 2021 that the CRB would be extended for an additional 12 weeks. This means a significantly higher number of Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients in receipt of CRB or EI beyond March 31, 2021 will be exited from the programs.

We are gravely concerned that OW and ODSP recipients who receive the CRB or EI amounts higher than their social assistance after March this year, will abruptly lose their

March 16, 2021

benefits package (See Appendix). If this happens, we are also concerned that they will have to re-apply for social assistance once their CRB or EI runs out (where their financial situation has not improved).

Exiting recipients from the programs will place an unnecessary administrative burden on staff as we expect the majority of former recipients would apply for Extended Health Benefits and Rapid Reinstatement. Both of these programs can be difficult for recipients to navigate and require a significant level of caseworker support to assess applications. Maintaining a \$2.50 benefit for eligible recipients is a way to streamline the system rather than put extra pressure on recipients and caseworkers who will have to piece together additional provisions in order to meet needs.

**We need the following:**

- For recipients who become financially ineligible as a result of receiving either EI or any of the new Recovery Benefits to continue to be issued a nominal \$2.50 entitlement so that they can retain health and other benefits until the end of the Recovery Benefits eligibility period.

Sincerely;

Social Assistance Coalition of Scarborough (SACS)  
[sacs.communitygroup@gmail.com](mailto:sacs.communitygroup@gmail.com)

Endorsed by:

## **Appendix**

There are certain benefits that are paid in addition to an allowance of \$2.50. These are benefits paid under s55 of the OW regulations and s44 of the ODSP regulations and include:

- Prescription drugs under the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) plan
- Dental benefits as prescribed
- Diabetic supplies
- The client contribution under the Assistive Devices Program (ADP)
- Medical transportation
- Batteries and repairs for mobility devices
- Eye exams
- Dog guides
- Employment start-up
- Up front childcare; and
- Other specified benefits under OW and ODSP (e.g. MSN)

April 20, 2021

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Tuesday, April 20, 2021**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on April 20, 2021 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

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

Staff: Bri-anne Swan, Jeffrey Dale

Absent: 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 / Eleanor Scarlett that the agenda be approved as circulated, with the addition of Business Arising regarding letters related to Paid Sick Days in Ontario.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Lois Brown / Elizabeth Cunningham that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held March 16, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**



April 20, 2021

## **Business Arising**

### *Community Ministries*

Since the last Commission meeting:

1. A letter was sent to the Regional Council Executive, as well as Executive Minister Peter Hartmans, expressing the concerns of the Commission. The letter was received by the Executive, but has not yet been dealt with.
2. Jody Maltby called Susan Eagle to propose a conversation with the Communities of Faith Commission (CFC) about how to relate to one another and talk about overlapping areas of responsibility and interest. There were 11 people on the call: several members of the CFC, staff and the Regional Council President. Susan was the only person present to represent the Social and Ecological Justice Commission (SEJC) and expressed that had she known there would be so many representatives from the Communities of Faith Commission she would have invited other SEJC members to join her. Within the meeting, there appeared to be two contrasting narratives: a) The outreach ministries saw the current funding phase was ending and have decided to close; that the board members have become burnt out. b) The board has been distressed that there is nobody looking for funding for the ministries but has been looking for ways to keep going. Seeing no way forward, and little support from the Regional Council they opted to close. The outcome of this meeting was that the two commission chairs would have a meeting with the Community Ministries board to understand their perspective in this conversation.
3. There was a meeting with the Board of Jane-Finch Community Ministry and Davenport-Perth Community Ministry, SEJC and the Communities of Faith Commission. The Board was very specific in saying that the *only* issue was funding and hoped that the Regional Council would see the ministries as a priority for funding. The Board expressed that they wanted to give their ministers ample notice if the ministries needed to close but were hopeful that they are not in palliative care. The Board said they have no understanding of where the rumour that they are tired came from and are distressed that this story is in circulation. The Board is waiting to see what the Regional Council is going to do next.

Susan Eagle has inquired as to whether there are additional pockets of funding available to keep the community ministries going. Funding sources identified include: Mission and Service, PTCC, TUCC. Questions were asked about who sets the priorities for the funding within the Regional Council. It was decided that this is the question for the Executive.

It was brought up that as Church we are called to walk with the vulnerable. We are a church moving towards being an anti-racist denomination. We need to be present in the communities where these ministries function. There are no churches present at Jane and Finch — they are all closed.

April 20, 2021

A discussion took place around whether the Social and Ecological Justice Commission needs to take further action at this point. Susan Eagle and Cameron Watts will be present at the next Executive meeting (April 27th) and will address the letter and ask about how funding priorities get set within the Regional Council. There was concern expressed that all communities of faith, as members of the Regional Council, need to have the opportunity to participate in the setting of funding priorities.

The Commission could propose there be a working group that would look at what could be done in regards to funding the community ministries. SEJC would want to be at the table for those discussions.

Discussion about the priorities would include requesting:

- up-to-date financial statements.
- a timeline for priority setting.
- requesting a working group (that includes SEJC) with the purpose of setting priorities

After receiving a statement of funding, the working group could create a plan which would be ready for the Regional Council Annual Meeting.

### **Update from Jeffrey Dale re: Harm Reduction**

Conversations titled *Seeking to Reduce Harm* have been set for May. Seven Regional Councils are participating.

The House of Commons has a bill before Parliament to change the Criminal Code re: illicit substances. This bill does not go as far as Jeffery would like in decriminalizing illicit substances for personal use.

Peter Hartmans has agreed to increase this Commission's 2021 budget from \$10,000 to \$12,000, so that \$2000 can be allocated to Harm Reduction education and programming within the Region.

**MOTION** by Elizabeth Cunningham / Tina Conlon that the Social & Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council ask that their budget be increased by \$2000, with that additional money allocated to harm reduction education and programming.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Bradford Bypass Action** (deferred)

April 20, 2021

## **Paid Sick Days**

Toronto Imams contacted Faith in the City in an attempt to gather faith leaders around a statement in support of increasing vaccine access in high risk areas and pushing the province to adopt (at least temporarily) sick pay for people who were ill, in isolation or needing time off work to get vaccinated. Seventy-two people/groups have so far endorsed the letter.

Bri-anne Swan has launched a Paid Sick Days action page on the Regional Council website. Individuals are able to send their own (customized if they wish) letter to the Ontario Government directly from the website. A tally is kept of how many people submit their own letter. Bri-anne has also drafted a letter for David's signature that can be sent on behalf of the Regional Council.

**MOTION** by Eleanor Scarlett / Tina Conlon that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council ask that a letter in support of Paid Sick Days for all working Ontarians be presented to President David Leyton-Brown for signature, and that the letter from Faith in the City be endorsed by Shining Waters Regional Council and distributed to communities of faith.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

## **Deferred Item**

### *Regional Council and General Council Proposals*

There is a new timeline for proposals intended to go to General Council. While normally proposals would be received in the spring, these proposals are now being requested for the fall. Bri-anne Swan will circulate the proposal template in anticipation of the next Commission meeting. There was agreement expressed that effort needs to be focused in supporting communities of faith through the process of creating proposals. Proposals intended only for the Regional Council use the same format at the General Council proposals.

Questions were asked about how the theme and agenda of the Annual Meeting get set. Last year, they were set by the President and the Executive.

### **SJNOR Report** – Tina Conlon and Bri-anne Swan

The last SJNOR meeting was primarily a large sharing session about the justice work being done in each particular Regional Council.

There has been a formal financial ask of Shining Waters Regional Council in 2021 to contribute \$1000 to the ongoing work of SJNOR. Peter Hartmans has approved this funding. The Commission thanks Peter for this approval.

April 20, 2021

**Reports/updates from sub-committees** (as required):

*Homelessness (Elizabeth, Eleanor, Cameron, Susan)*

There was very positive feedback from communities of faith about the Good Friday resources re: homelessness. These liturgical resources remain relevant beyond Lent, and Bri-anne will make sure they are archived and renamed on the Regional Council website along with other worship resources available to congregations.

*Poverty/Income Inequality (Susan, Moon-Ja, Tina, Elizabeth)*

Update of Guaranteed Livable Income Vigils, April 8:

All of the Ontario vigils needed to (very last minute!) move online because of a stay-at-home order issued by the Premier. Online vigils were held. Some MPs attended. Bri-anne Swan assisted with highlighting the social media posts of those who were lighting candles in support of Guaranteed Livable Income.

Bri-anne will be working with the videos and photographs submitted from the vigils held within the Region to increase awareness about Guaranteed Livable Income.

*Anti-Racism (Eleanor, Elizabeth, Moon-Ja, Lois)*

There are two different events for Asian Women being held nationally titled *Support, Strength, and Solidarity*. Kim Uyede-Kai is facilitating.

Sunday, May 2 (6:00-8:00 pm, Eastern Time)

Wednesday, May 5 (6:00-8:00 pm, Eastern Time)

There is a United-in-Learning webinar on May 18 titled *Lifting Up Asian Voices*. Tina Conlon will be one of the speakers.

<https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/webinars/395-lifting-up-asian-voices>

Tina also recently appeared as a speaker with the Committee on Asian/North American Asian Theologies (CANAAT — a theological resource and support to Emmanuel College).

<https://emmanuel.utoronto.ca/the-centre-for-religion-and-its-contexts/canaat/>

*Right Relations (Lois, Cameron, Tina)*

Lois Brown is the new Chair of Living Into Right Relations. There has been a meeting with the Executive and this Commission about the role of LIRR as a committee and access to funding.

April 20, 2021

*Israel/Palestine (Tina, Lois)*

Palnet is offering a virtual tour of Palestine/Israel. They are also looking to connect with communities of faith who are engaged with or interested in justice work related to Palestine and Israel.

There has been a request that the minutes from this Commission be forwarded to Palnet. The Commission minutes are available on the Shining Waters Regional Council website but Bri-anne will also forward minutes to Tina and Lois.

### **Report from Bri-anne Swan**

Bri-anne reported on:

- Supporting the Good Friday worship resources project (video re: Housing Charter)
- Paid Sick Days campaign
- Ongoing releases of the *do justice* podcast
- Increased social media conversations, support for Guaranteed Livable Income vigils
- Working with Nominations re: recruiting potential GC44 commissioners

### **Correspondence**

Letters from Tony Rennett re: prayers for the Unborn, and Trinity St. Paul's UC re: Right Relations were received for information.

Susan Eagle will go back to Trinity St. Paul's and ask for further clarification about their letter.

A response from the Province of Ontario re: Christian Colleges was received.

### **Closing**

A closing prayer was offered and the meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.

**Next Meeting:** May 18, 2021, 1 p.m.

The United Church of Canada  
Shining Waters Regional Council

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Tuesday, May 18, 2021**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on May 18, 2021 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

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

Staff: Bri-anne Swan, Jeffrey Dale

Regrets: Eleanor Scarlett

Absent: Donna Lang, Elizabeth Cunningham

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone. Cameron Watts opened with prayer, honoured the people who first inhabited the lands of the Regional Council, 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.

**Agenda**

**MOTION** by Lois Brown / Cameron Watts that the agenda, be approved as circulated, with the addition of the correspondence from Lawrence Park Community Church.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Cameron Watts / Tina Conlon that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held April 20, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

The United Church of Canada  
Shining Waters Regional Council

**Business Arising**

Meeting with the Executive

re: Community Ministries

Susan Eagle and Cameron Watts attended the Executive meeting to speak about the Community Ministries. The participation in the meeting was brief. The President said the Executive appreciated the Commission's input but they would be following and trusting a process that was already in place. Susan raised the issue of nominations and that we need more members for the Commission, especially within the area of environmental justice.

The Executive was also provided copies of the Commission's minutes up to the end of December 2020. There were no questions and the minutes were received for information.

The impression was that Executive is operating from a different narrative about the process re: the Community Ministries than the Social & Ecological Justice Commission is. There is a general agreement that the Commission would like to be involved in the process.

Susan also reported that there will be a review and vote at the November regional council meeting about whether the Social & Ecological Justice Commission will continue as a commission. This review was written into the original proposal in 2019.

Bri-anne will check to see if there needs to be any proposal sent to the Executive in anticipation of the meeting.

Priorities Funding meeting

Susan Eagle was part of a priorities funding conversation which was primarily focused on the Grants Review Committee and what grants may be provided to various ministries. The conversation didn't encompass the whole process of how funding is allocated and provided. There were questions about whether this is regularly done by the Executive, or if there is a finance committee because the process seems unclear. At the moment, Janet MacDonald is providing quarterly updates to the Executive. The priorities funding group will be meeting again.

Paid Sick Days Follow-up

Faith in the City decided to wait until September to send their letter in order to attach it to the September date the government has proposed for ending the new policy of three paid sick days. There needs to be a permanent solution.

Shining Waters launched a website where individuals and communities of faith could customize a letter and submit it to relevant MPPs directly through the Shining Waters website. Other Ontario regions shared the campaign to their members as well. Two hundred people signed the original letter. Approximately 140 signed the follow up letter.

The United Church of Canada  
Shining Waters Regional Council

Harm Reduction follow-up - Jeffrey Dale

Seven Regional Councils have supported the *Seeking to Reduce Harm* series. There have been 122 people that have registered and there were 68 people on the first call. Others who have registered will be able to watch the video afterwards.

Shining Waters Regional Council has signed a letter in support of a Supervised Consumption Site in Barrie. Grace United Church and Burton Avenue United Church are also signatories. The letter in support of a Supervised Consumption Site was sent by faith leaders throughout the Barrie area. It is the first instance of a letter being sent with signatures from communities other than the United Church congregations.

Request re: theme setting for Regional meeting

A theme has not yet been set for the regional annual meeting. This theme is normally set by the President in consultation with the Executive.

There was hope among the commission that the regional annual meeting not only be about institutional survival, as there may be a number of proposals in that theme, but rather about mission in the world and community. There was also a desire to have a place to celebrate the work Jeffrey Dale has done around harm reduction and to demonstrate that some very important work has been going on.

There was discussion about this Commission having some time on the agenda with break-out rooms, and to bring in a speaker who may be able to speak about mental health, homelessness, poverty, climate change, etc. Perhaps a young person from Fridays for the Future.

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Lois Brown that the Social & Ecological Justice Commission request from the Executive that there be a planning committee for the Regional Council annual meeting, with the Social & Ecological Justice Commission at the table as a participant.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Deferred Items**

Bradford Bypass Action

Bri-anne Swan reported that the Federal Government has intervened and will be conducting their own environmental assessment and further action was being deferred until that assessment was complete.

[In a follow up email Bri-anne has explained her mistake. It is the Hwy 413 project that will be assessed by the Federal Government, not the Bradford Bypass.]



The United Church of Canada  
Shining Waters Regional Council

Regional Council and General Council Proposals

*How should commission connect with groups like Palnet, and other justice-focused groups (such as Trinity St. Paul's re: Right Relations?) re: bringing proposals forward to either the Regional Council and/or General Council.*

*Would it be helpful for the Commission to host an evening re: How to write a proposal?*

It may be good to coordinate proposals through SJNOR with other Regional Councils. Further discussion will take place at the June meeting to talk about what proposals could be brought forward at the Annual Meeting.

[at this point, the Commission was without quorum]

**Budget for 2021**

Deferred to next meeting.

**Reports/updates from sub-committees (if applicable)**

- Poverty/Income Inequality (Susan, Moon-Ja, Tina, Elizabeth)  
Update of Guaranteed Livable Income Planning

There is a proposal to encourage communities of faith to identify October 17th as a Sunday to focus on Guaranteed Livable Income with some prepared liturgical materials, paired with the lectionary.

There was also a video that came out of the April 8th vigil day. Bri-anne Swan will place this video on the Commission's webpage.

- Right Relations (Lois, Cameron, Tina)  
Update from Right Relations Circle

LIRR is working on revising the statement of their mission, re-imagining what Right Relations might look like. Lois Brown attended Trinity St. Paul's UC Indigenous Rights Solidary Group. Their letters are able to be used as templates for writing letters in solidarity with Indigenous communities.

- Environment (Moon-Ja, Donna)  
North Toronto Churches Cluster Green Team

Susan Eagle attended a meeting of the North Toronto Churches Cluster Green Team as part of linking the work of the commission and the cluster.

The United Church of Canada  
Shining Waters Regional Council

**Report from Bri-anne Swan**

Bri-anne has been busy working on the Paid Sick Days campaign, Nominations on encouraging as diverse a slate of GC 44 commissioners as possible, supporting Jeffrey in the Seeking to Reduce Harm campaign and materials for Asian Heritage month.

**Correspondence**

*Nobleton United Church: forwarding response from Premier's office re: Paid Sick Days- Received. Shining Waters has not yet received a response.*

*Federal Government re: Basic Income - Received.*

*From Jim Keenan on behalf of Emergency Food Security Group in Toronto- re: appropriateness of seeking funding help from both the Federal and City levels. He asks "if what we are doing is against some United Church policy regarding the vulnerable and homeless sector" and if so to let him know.*

Bri-anne Swan will communicate to Jim that there is no policy preventing him from seeking funding and support from outside the denomination and that the SEJC commends the group for all the wonderful work they are doing.

*Lawrence Park Community Church*

The Commission received for information, correspondence that Lawrence Park, along with Manor Road and Humbervale, will be erecting crosses on their lawn as a sign of lament over the loss of life related to COVID. Other congregations are invited to take part as well. A similar action was taken at Queen's Park in relation to poverty and homelessness.

**Closing**

A closing prayer was offered and the meeting adjourned at 2:30pm

**Next Meeting:** June 15, 2021, 1 p.m.

June 15, 2021

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Tuesday, June 15, 2021**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on June 15, 2021 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Elizabeth Cunningham, Eleanor Scarlett, Cameron Watts

Staff: Bri-anne Swan

Guest: Robin Wardlaw

Regrets: Moon-Ja Park

Absent: Donna Lang

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone. Elizabeth Cunningham 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/Tina Conlon that the agenda be approved as circulated

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Cameron Watts/Tina Conlon that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held May 18, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

## **PalNet (Palestine Network)**

Robin Wardlaw shared the ongoing work of Palnet within the Regional Council.

Robin shared his story of how he became involved in issues related to Palestine and Israel as well as UNJPPI's transition to becoming *Palestine Network - Shining Waters (PalNet)*. Currently, they are exploring how we might arrive at a place of peace and justice in that part of the world. Their mission is to advocate for peace and offer opportunities for education, as well as generating support across the Region for human rights advocacy in Palestine/Israel. The group is very passionate about the work they are doing.

One of the theories is that if enough people around the world say we don't wish to own shares in companies that operate in the disputed territories, those advocating for the rights of Palestinians will eventually get the attention of countries like Canada, and encourage courage in speaking up. Can the United Church become more clearly identified with the divestment campaign? That is tricky, as there is sensitivity around appearing anti-Semitic. However, there are links being made to different kinds of colonial oppression around the world and PalNet is very mindful that there is a distinction between being critical of Israel's policies and practices, and being anti-Judaic.

PalNet has two proposals they are presenting to the Regional Council for consideration at the Regional Meeting this fall. One of the proposals is about education and the other about the divestment campaign. Robin described submitting the proposals to the Shining Waters as a "litmus test" prior to the General Council gathering in 2022. The former Toronto Conference held a leadership role in issues regarding Palestine and Israel prior to the structural change of the United Church.

PalNet is making a request for Shining Waters Regional Council (via this Commission) to recognize PalNet and the work they are doing. In addition, PalNet is requesting an introduction to Communities of Faith within the Regional Council.

Currently, PalNet is very centred in Toronto, but they are eager to expand their network across the Region.

**MOTION** by Eleanor Scarlett/Lois Brown that the Social & Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council recognize Palnet — Shining Waters as a partner in education and advocacy to promote justice and peace between Palestine & Israel.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

*Robin Wardlaw left the meeting.*

June 15, 2021

## **Business Arising**

### Priorities Funding meeting

At the last funding meeting, there was a commitment to report back to each Commission. Two questions emerge:

1. Multi-year funding. We have ministries that have ongoing connections to communities and there is recognition that it is not fair to make them (or those they minister with) to apply for funding every year.
2. Whether or not there should be deep or wide funding. No answer yet, except to acknowledge that where there are ministries we really want to affirm, we need to take care of those before we widen the base. There was also a feeling that we need to be open to where the Spirit may be moving us.

All of this is in the context of there being limited resources. We may not have looked at all the places the resources may be for funding. The interest of this commission is the community ministries, but there are other ministries involved that come through that channel: camping, chaplaincy, etc.

Question: are we adequately resourcing the ministries we feel are important? Are we really looking for those resources? Or, are we being negative, “Well, there is only limited funding...?” Do we need to put some energy into being less fatalistic?

### Right Relations

There was a question about whether the Regional Council could be included in the ceremony (referenced in a letter from Peter Hartmans to Michael Blair) acknowledging the repair of the apology cairn. We need to be a visible presence. This has come up between the Right Relations meeting.

It was acknowledged that we're at a place where we are talking about action while the aboriginal church and other racialized people are saying, “This is not the time for that kind of action. This is the time for us as a church, as a country, as a people, to sit in the pain, to hold it, to lament, and to journey, to walk side by side until every single one of those children’s bodies are found.” We need to see what colonization has done to the people. Only after that can we engage in action.

Eleanor Scarlett was asked if she would prepare a proposal regarding the need for lament to be presented at the Regional meeting this fall.

## **Annual Meeting planning request**

There is interest in this Commission's participation in the Regional meeting for next spring.

For the annual meeting in the fall, *A Time for Every Purpose* is the theme. The content of the meeting will be entirely focused on proposals.

Next spring may be an in-person gathering and the hope is that this Commission would be invited into the planning.

## **Proposals**

There is hope that we are intentional about doing our work, and everything we do, through an anti-racist lens, and that moving forward, the staff reflects who we are as a people, and the work we're trying to do. There was a question about whether this "hope" requires a proposal to be presented at the Regional meeting. If so, should we also include being affirming and intercultural?

Bri-anne Swan gave a brief overview of the format and timelines for proposals. There are two deadlines to submit proposals: September 24th and October 22nd. There will also be at least two town hall meetings to discuss the proposals ahead of the Regional meeting in November.

Questions arose about whether justice issues that were voted on in the former Toronto Conference, are automatically transferred into the Regional Council. The answer is, not necessarily (i.e. voting again to be an Affirming Regional Council). The thought was to move forward understanding the intent that any justice stances previously voted on would be carried forward. If, in the future, anything is challenged, the Regional Council can vote to reaffirm the position.

In the next few weeks, subgroups are asked to think about what proposals could be coming forward to the Fall Regional meeting.

## **Nominations Request**

The Commission needs to put forward a proposal about continuing as a Commission of the Regional Council. Susan Eagle has spoken to Peter Hartmans, and Peter has spoken to the Executive. They would like a proposal that outlines the work the Commission has done. Susan will do some work on this.

The Commission also needs Nominations to recommend some additional members for the Commission. Part of the proposal for the continuation of this commission would be that the current members of the commission continue with some members extending their term another year, some three years, and then set those starting with the Commission to a three-year term.

June 15, 2021

## Deferred Items

- Bradford Bypass Action
- Regional Council and General Council Proposals  
Proposals to go forward; Timelines, format, Town Hall conversations
- Budget for 2021  
Lawn signs for GLI campaign

The national Guaranteed Livable Income group is looking for each Regional Council to commit to purchasing lawn signs that would be available this fall ahead of a potential federal election. They asked if our Regional Council would agree to 20 lawn signs that we would purchase out of our budget.

**MOTION** by Lois Brown/Tina Conlon that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council commit to purchasing 20 lawn signs for the General Council Guaranteed Livable Income campaign in the fall with funds coming from the Social and Ecological Justice Commission budget.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

## Reports

- Report from Bri-anne Swan

Bri-anne gave a very brief overview of what she's been working on. Bri-anne and Kim Uyede-Kai have been very busy engaging with many different groups after the identification of unmarked graves in Kamploops. Much of what Bri-anne has been doing is explaining to those outside of the United Church what steps the UCC has already taken towards reconciliation and that we are not starting right from zero (i.e. the UCC provided copies of all of its archive material years ago, etc.).

Jeffrey Dale and Bri-anne worked on a video re: the 50th Anniversary of the War on Drugs.

Bri-anne has also been involved with nominations, and encouraging a diverse slate of commissioners for General Council 44 next year.

Bri-anne and Susan Eagle drafted a statement re: the killing of the Afzaal family in London that was sent out to the Regional Council.

- Homelessness - no report.
- Poverty/Income Inequality - no report.
- Anti-Racism - no report.
- Right Relations - no report.
- Update from Right Relations Circle - no report.
- Environment - no report.
- Israel/Palestine - no report.

### **Closing**

A closing prayer was offered and the meeting adjourned at 3:15pm

**Next Meeting:** September 14th, 2021 at 1:00pm via Zoom, with communication re: proposals happening via email before the meeting.



September 21, 2021

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Tuesday, September 21, 2021**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on September 21, 2021 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

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

Staff: Jeffrey Dale, Rachael Howes, Kim Uyede-Kai

Absent: Donna Lang

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone. Jeffrey Dale, as an opening prayer, played a video of the song *Prayer*, from the musical *Come From Away*. 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.

There was a time of check-in.

**Agenda**

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Lois Brown that the agenda, be approved as circulated

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Cameron Watts / Moon Ja Park that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held June 15, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

## Email votes

The Commission made the following decisions by email:

- Canada Summer Jobs Grant for Fall 2021:

approved the job description for a Justice and Faith Formation Animator, to be hired through the Canada Summer Jobs Program for 35 Weeks from September 6th – May 9th at 10 hrs per week and \$17.00 per hour.

approved the use of \$2,000.00 from their annual budget, to cover the extra expenses not covered by the Canada Summer Jobs Program in the hiring of a Justice and Faith Formation Animator.

## Regional Council Meeting

Commission Proposals:

### *a. Commission Review and Approval*

The Commission agreed to submit a proposal to the Regional Council that would enable this group to move from being a 2-year pilot project to being a permanent commission of the region. The deadline for the submission of the proposal is October 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be discussed at the Town Hall on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Susan Eagle will continue to work on putting the proposal together to come to the next meeting

### *b. Harm Reduction*

Jeffrey Dale had drafted a proposal on Harm Reduction which was circulated to the Commission prior to the meeting. He reviewed the proposal with the group, there was discussion and some amendments suggested. This proposal would go to the October 6<sup>th</sup> Town Hall

Eleanor Scarlett joined the meeting.

**MOTION** by Lois Brown / Moon Ja Park that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council approve the draft proposal on Harm Reduction with the addition of the amendments discussed and that it be forwarded to the Regional Council.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

### *c. Other*

Susan Eagle has a proposal around affordable housing. It will be ready for the next meeting.

September 21, 2021

Partner Proposals:

*a. Israel/Palestine*

This proposal is coming from PalNet. They will attend our next meeting to discuss it with the Commission.

*b. Right Relations*

Kim Uyede-Kai confirmed that there are no proposals coming on this topic.

Worship for Regional Meeting:

This Commission has been asked to provide worship for the Regional Council meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup> in the morning. It's best if it can be pre-recorded as it is easier for the online meeting.

The group discussed some ideas and follow-up will be to set some times to work on it and explore the theme.

**Other Commission work**

*Nominations:*

The Commission allows for up to 12 people and there are currently seven. The Nominations Committee have decided to recruit for this commission after the Regional Council meeting in November when the proposal to extend the work of the commission is dealt with.

The current commission members had a two-year term and the usual term is three years which means that all the current members will be done as of the November regional meeting. A motion can be brought at the regional meeting to extend the current members' terms an additional year, if the proposal regarding the continuation of the Commission is approved. That would allow the Commission to continue to do its work while the Nominations Committee recruits new members.

At the October meeting, Susan will invite the couple of people that she knows are interested in or thinking of joining the commission

Susan encouraged the commission members to actively seek out people that might join the commission.

*Church Polling (Student Position proposal):*

This grew out of the initiative to try to work with Communities of Faith; to try to connect with congregations to see what issues resonate with them and we had started into a process but then the pandemic hit.

Jeffrey Dale reported that the Canada Student Jobs program for the hire of an animator did not work out. He did, however, receive an email from a person at the Toronto

District School Board Adult Education and they have students who are engaged in adult education that are needing co-op placements. Jeffrey is hoping to receive resumes as soon as possible, and he will send them out to the Commission members to look at. It will then come to the next meeting for decision.

*Budget:*

Jeffrey Dale was able to give an update on the status of the Commission's budget.

*Sub Committee work:*

- Homelessness - Susan is working on a proposal.
- Poverty/Income Inequality:  
Guaranteed Livable Income (Oct 17 & Sign distribution) - working with national church to develop worship materials for October 17<sup>th</sup>; there are still signs available that the Commission bought; an email will go out to the Region about the resources available for October 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Anti-Racism – no report
- Right Relations – no report
- Environment - Susan met with North Toronto Churches Cluster Green Team - with this team but has not heard from them since.
- Israel/Palestine – will be on agenda for October meeting.

**Staff Report**

Jeffrey Dale shared:

- a summer student worked on an idea of an anti-racism bible study for youth and young adults; he hopes to loop in Adele Halliday at General Council; Shining Waters would be supporting the experimentation of making it work with youth and young adults in our region. He is hopeful that this Commission will help promote it.
- The regions west of us (Western Ontario Waterways, Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls), are hosting something around Earth Day April 2022 and asked if Shining Waters wants to partner with them and donate money towards making the event happen. Jeffrey can get some more information for the Commission as it is available.

Kim Uyede-Kai shared:

- the Intercultural Diversity Commission has had some difficulty finding a meeting date, and are looking into October for their first meeting.
- the Living into Right Relations Circle has been busy with Orange Shirt Day, the graves uncovered, and National Truth and Reconciliation Day on September 30.
- the National Truth and Reconciliation has offered a week-long event series particularly for school children.
- National Indigenous Ministries and Justice is offering a vigil on the evening of September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Toronto Urban Native Ministries is offering a service on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

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- Western Ontario Waterways, Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls and Shining Waters are looking at an All Saints Day event on November 1<sup>st</sup> around candlelight and song with various indigenous musicians and groups to participate.
- Becoming Nakuset was well attended across the country and made some connections with the Living into Right Relations Circle with four people coming in new to the Circle.

**Deferred Items:**

Bradford Bypass Action (deferred from last meeting)

This is an environmental issue and the Commission has not had the personnel to follow-up on it. It will stay as one of the deferred items. The issue seems to be a done deal at this time.

**Closing Prayer and Adjournment**

Susan Eagle offered a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** October 19, 2020, 1 pm

October 19, 2021

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Tuesday, October 19, 2021**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on October 19, 2021 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Eleanor Scarlett, Cameron Watts

Staff: Jeffrey Dale, Kim Uyede-Kai

Guests: Brian McIntosh, Barbara Lloyd and Adele Boy

Regrets: Moon-Ja Park

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed everyone and opened with a reading of a prayer/poem by Walter Brueggemann from his book, *Inscribing the Text*. She 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 / Eleanor Scarlett that the agenda be approved as circulated

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Lois Brown that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held September 21, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

## **Business Arising**

### Regional Council Meeting

a. Commission Proposals:

There are two proposals from this Commission going to the Regional Council meeting in November; harm reduction and continuation of the commission.

Jeffrey Dale outlined the process of presenting them, that a member of commission is needed to present the proposals and Jeffrey will be available to answer questions. Tina Conlon agreed to present the Harm Reduction proposal.

Susan Eagle reviewed the proposal for the continuation of the Social & Ecological Justice Commission.

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Cameron Watts that the proposal for the continuation of the Social & Ecological Justice Commission be forwarded to Shining Waters Regional Council.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

b. Worship for Regional Meeting:

The Commission is responsible for the worship service for the regional meeting in November. There was discussion on the theme; about addressing the questions, what are you reluctant to do, whose lives are you willing to save; discussed needing music, prayers, and a short reflection or dialogue. Eleanor Scarlett and Tina Conlon agreed to work on scripture and prayers; Susan will work alongside. Cameron suggested each Commission member record a 15-30 second video of them addressing the second question – whose lives are you willing to save – which would be put together to form the reflection/dialogue. Cameron offered to help with choosing the music. The service will be all pre-recorded.

c. Housing Proposal:

Since the last Commission meeting, Susan Eagle and Jeffrey Dale have had a conversation with Tim Blair of United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) because the Commission had talked about doing proposals around housing. Tim shared with them what UPRC are doing; they have some active proposals and sites identified for development going forward. However, that does not lend itself to housing proposals from our Commission unless we want to encourage United Churches toward what possibilities they have for re-developing their land. Even so, that would be a very limited number of churches that would have land for re-development given the size of lot needed to make something viable.

After that discussion, Susan looked towards whether there was some kind of activism or advocacy issues the commission might want to raise with the region's communities of faith. She concluded that possibly does not warrant a proposal to the regional

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council, but instead the Commission could develop an advocacy strategy around housing and send that out the communities of faith. This could be done over the next few months. The Commission agreed to go in this direction.

d. Partner Proposals:

Barbara Lloyd and Adele Boy of PalNet joined the meeting regarding the PalNet proposal to Shining Waters Regional Council, *Raising our Voice for Human Rights*. Barbara and Adele introduced themselves and their work and background on the issues of justice and peace for Palestinians. They gave information to the Commission on PalNet and on the proposal. The commission members then had an opportunity to ask questions.

Barbara and Adele left the meeting.

**Staff Report** (Anti-Racism Bible Study)

Jeffrey Dale reported Cheri DeNovo hosted a United-in-Learning event, *How to be a Christian Activist*. The videos of it are available. He also took part in an online World Parliament of Religions event and he shared how it made him realize how little we recognize the various ages and their engagement; the younger people are talking about the climate crisis and how the global south will definitely be affected by the climate crisis well before the global north; and how much these younger people are doing this work and not being heard and not being seen. This is a topic Jeffrey has been trying to figure how to bring more into this group's consciousness.

Kim Uyede-Kai reported that the United Church, through Adele Halliday, is hosting *40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism*, a series of videos from different people across the church. Because the profile of Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation has increased, people are more aware of the existence of Living Into Right Relations in the regional council and a number of people have expressed an interest in joining the network.

Tina Conlon mentioned the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is coming up in January. This will be an agenda item for the November meeting to look at ways the commission can promote it with the communities of faith.

**Closing:** The meeting closed at 3:20 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** November 16, 2021, 1 p.m.



December 7, 2021

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

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Social and Ecological Justice Commission  
Tuesday, December 7, 2021**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on December 7, 2021 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Eleanor Scarlett, Cameron Watts

Staff: Jeffrey Dale (Staff Support), Rachael Howes (Administrative Support)

Regrets: Moon-Ja Park

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

The chairperson welcomed all and opened the meeting with a reflection by Jessica Peterson of the United Church of Christ. She 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 / Tina Conlon that the agenda be approved as circulated

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Minutes**

**MOTION** by Eleanor Scarlett / Tina Conlon that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held October 19, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

### **Regional Council Meeting follow-up**

The commission members gave feedback on the meeting.

- Susan expressed thanks for the participation of the commission in preparing and presenting worship for the meeting.
- The Commission was approved for continuation as a Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council and the policy/mandate of the commission will be updated as a result.
- The proposal on harm reduction was passed.

### **Nominations follow-up**

Susan Eagle has talked with the new chair of Nominations Committee, which has not met yet. She re-iterated the need for more members of this commission and gave names of people who are interested in serving.

### **Mid-Winter Event**

Susan Eagle suggested the commission host a social justice clergy gathering, perhaps end of January or beginning of February; invite people to identify issues and places where they would like more support; preaching about social justice; issues congregations are interested in/more likely to respond to; perhaps bring in someone to speak about the topic and then move into break-out rooms.

Members discussed structure of such an event; perhaps give questions for break-out rooms prior to the event.

The Commission agreed to proceed with this and Susan, Tina and Jeffrey agreed to work on the planning and other members can provide input.

### **Commission Member updates from their areas**

Susan Eagle feels it would be beneficial to have commission members give updates from their geographic areas to share at the meetings. This will be a standing item on the Commission agendas starting next meeting.

### **Staff report**

Jeffrey Dale reported on conversations within the wider church and community:

- Harm Reduction, signed a letter supporting Canadian Organization for HIV and Hepatitis C Research, Support, and Information (CATIE) and the Decriminalization of Illicit Substances for Personal Use in the City of Toronto,
- Attended a meeting with Ryerson University for the creation of a Harm Reduction certificate,
- conversations with Trinity-St. Paul's and others around police violence and surveillance (looking at an early 2022 round table conversation),
- conversations with PalNet regarding Regional Council proposal and resources for communities of faith,
- *For the Love of Creation* meeting, conversations around the TRC and Camping Ministries.

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Tina Conlon brought the following four items to the attention of the Commission.

- Justice for workers, decent hours and scheduling in long term care workers, equal pay/benefits regardless of status (temp/contract workers, migrants) - this continues to be advocated by partners; a liveable income is approx. \$22 per hour in Toronto which is higher than the recent increase in minimum wage.

This item will come back to the January meeting.

- Food Drives – There is an excellent article on food drives this Christmas season by Elaine Power, Valerie Tarasuk and Paul Taylor, [https://www.thestar.com/cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.thestar.com/amp/opinion/contributors/2021/12/05/food-drives-are-not-the-answer-to-poverty-and-hunger.html?fbclid=IwAR3q-VnHayORK7bQu4LwokRE2aVtVUTBK-6IEd0BVWwsQptdMyjGEX\\_P\\_mA](https://www.thestar.com/cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.thestar.com/amp/opinion/contributors/2021/12/05/food-drives-are-not-the-answer-to-poverty-and-hunger.html?fbclid=IwAR3q-VnHayORK7bQu4LwokRE2aVtVUTBK-6IEd0BVWwsQptdMyjGEX_P_mA),  
*-“... take a minute to drop a note or email to your MPP and your MP and ask how they will commit to eliminating poverty and food insecurity in 2022. And please let CBC know that you don't want them using public resources to further enshrine charity as Canada's default response to poverty and food insecurity. We need CBC to promote clear-eyed analyses of why poverty exists, who is most affected, and how to solve the problem with just solutions.”*
- Reach Out Response Network. In February 2021, Toronto City Council gave the green light to create four new non-police response pilot programs. They voted to expand on these pilots by creating a multi-year plan to ensure that interventions involving vulnerable people are redirected to appropriate non-police local services. In July 2021, Council passed the SafeTO policy that promises to “embed the Community Crisis Support Service as a well-resourced, first-response service City-wide.” Tina urged contacting councillors to step up and keep their commitment to approve and fund the development of the four new non-police interventions with clear timelines, to help create programs as Council promised, and ensure community involvement in how these plans and programs are developed and implemented in the communities they serve.

Tina will do some more follow-up and bring it back to the Commission.

- Use of Artificial Intelligence Technology by Toronto Police Services – the Toronto Police Services Board believes this technology will benefit police services; but is very invasive and could racially profile people. Input on the policy is due by December 15<sup>th</sup>. Tina will be giving input and wanted to gather more from Commission members.

The commission had a discussion as to how best to get urgent items out to people in the region. A Slack account was suggested. Jeffrey will follow-up with that.

### **Guaranteed Liveable Income**

Susan Eagle reported that she attended the national network on guaranteed liveable income on behalf of the commission.

December 7, 2021

A template letter has been received from Prince Edward Island regarding Federal support for Guaranteed Liveable Income. It is being shared and intended as a tool for network members to send to their own MPs. The Commission discussed whether we wanted to endorse it.

**MOTION** by Tina Conlon / Cameron Watts that the Social & Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council endorse and circulate the Guaranteed Liveable Income letter received from Prince Edward Island.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

The commission agreed that this now be sent out to Communities of Faith to endorse and to the Shining Waters Executive.

**Follow-up on COP26 Climate Summit**

Joy Kennedy was at the summit and the Commission would like to invite her to attend our next meeting to speak about it. Susan Eagle will follow-up to contact Joy.

**Closing**

This was Eleanor Scarlett's last meeting as she is moving to a different region. The Chairperson expressed sincere thanks and appreciation for her work on this Commission and wished her well in her new Appointment.

The meeting closed at 3:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** January 18, 2022, 1 pm

