

## INTERCULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMISSION

*“So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near;  
for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to our God.  
So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and  
also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,  
with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.  
In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in our God;  
in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.”  
Ephesians 2:17-22*

The purpose of the Intercultural Diversity Commission is to encourage and engage the Shining Waters Regional Council, its Executive and commissions, and its communities of faith in honouring and living into intercultural mission and ministry.

The elected members, made up of six people who can speak from various experiences, ethno/cultural backgrounds and languages, have been meeting regularly from September 2021. We took the time to reflect on our gifts and strengths in intercultural ministry by acknowledging our differences, histories, celebrating together, and sharing our rich cultural backgrounds and dynamic spiritual life journeys as people of God in the United Church. Identifying lenses of Euro Canadian ethnic traditions is an important part of the dismantling of the “exoticism” of ethnic cultures.

Relationship is foundational to intercultural ministry. Before the commission worked on concrete programs and plans, it was important to take the time needed to share thoughts and gather collective wisdom that reflected ourselves on how we understand "intercultural," deepen understanding of our ethno/cultural communities, and the possibilities and ways in which the region’s intercultural ministry can be realized concretely and authentically. The commission also recognized the importance for the commission itself to find culturally authentic ways of working and to recognize when it is falling back on learned Eurocentric ways of working and holding meetings.

In this next phase of the commission’s life, short-term and long-term needs and priorities are being identified for the coming year. Three key areas for the short-term will be: select language translations of key regional policies, event support, and resources. The intercultural diversity network could be supported by the commission in building community amongst communities of faith.

As The United Church of Canada moves forward with the vision of an Intercultural Church and an Anti-Racist Denomination, the commission will work to achieve that goal in Shining Waters, praying that God will guide us so that the commission’s work can bear beautiful fruit in the region and communities of faith.

Respectfully submitted by  
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On behalf of Commission members  
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