

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission carries out its work under the following mandate:

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission will encourage, support, and initiate social justice work within Shining Waters Regional Council, which encompasses but is not limited to anti-racism and becoming a critical intercultural church of justice.

During the past six months, the commission, currently composed of five members, met by Zoom monthly except during November 2021, and worked in the following areas of concern:

- Preparation and presentation of worship for Regional Council meeting, November 2021.
- Staff and chair meeting with Tim Blair to explore regional council support of redevelopment of church properties for affordable housing.
- Commitment by commission to pursue housing advocacy strategies.
- Communications to communities of faith in south Shining Waters Regional Council re: homeless rallies in Toronto (January 20, 2022 and February 15, 2022).
- Communication to all communities of faith to explore temperature criteria for warming centres in local municipalities with a view to advocating for more humane criteria for access.
- Request to all communities of faith to include in their annual general meeting, commitment to an action in the coming year around homelessness, anti-racism, or environmental action.
- Hosting of mid-winter clergy social justice day, *How will you Preach on This? From Ottawa Occupation to Environmental Destruction* with guest speakers: The Honourable Rob Oliphant and the Rev. Eleanor Scarlett. Presentations, music and personal stories.
- Approval of budget request for Harm Reduction conversations, interviews and podcasts to be organized by Jeffrey Dale, in preparation for General Council 44.
- Continuing dialogue with partner networks: PalNet and Living into Right Relations Circle.
- Endorsement of United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI) gathering in London, Ontario in May, 2022, and appointment of two representatives to attend on behalf of Shining Waters Regional Council, with basic expenses paid.
- Continuing work with national church network and other regions to develop Guaranteed Livable Income strategy and resources. Procurement of lawn signs to be available (on request) to communities of faith in lead-up to provincial election.
- Endorsement of Guaranteed Livable Income petition from Prince Edward Island and direction to circulate to communities of faith.
- Continuing dialogue with communities of faith and community networks and coalitions such as Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) and KAIROS to share information and awareness of emerging issues.
- Being responsive to requests for information about, or follow-up action on, issues referred to the commission by communities of faith.
- Preparation of proposal for regional council May meeting calling on provincial government to raise social assistance rates, collapse basic and shelter allowance into a standard flat rate benefit and index Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program rates to inflation.

Pandemic restrictions and lack of a full complement of commission members, especially in the area of environmental justice, provided a challenge for the commission to be able to address all aspects of its mandate.

We are grateful to staff, Jeffrey Dale, Kim Uyede-Kai and Rachael Howes for resource leadership and administrative support. We could not do our work without the strong support of the staff team.

We are also grateful to the Nominations Committee for fast-tracking some additional new members for the commission.

We continue to use the named regional council priorities of racial justice and ecological justice as the lenses through which all justice work is approached, as we address issues of homelessness/need for affordable housing, income security and environmental challenges.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Eagle, Chair

on behalf of Commission members:

Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Moon-Ja Park, Cameron Watts