

The United Church of Canada
Shining Waters Regional Council

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Social and Ecological Justice Commission
Wednesday, June 29, 2022**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on June 29, 2022 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

Members Present

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown Esther Collier, Tina Conlon, Don Ford, Jennifer Gordon, Irene Green, Brian McIntosh, Bruce Sweet

Staff: Jeffrey Dale

Regrets: Won Hur

Welcome, check in and prayer

The chairperson opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and introductions were made.

Brian McIntosh offered an opening prayer. He 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.

Agenda

MOTION by Tina Conlon / Esther Collier that the agenda be approved as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

Minutes

MOTION by Irene Green / Esther Collier that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held May 17, 2022 be adopted as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

Review of Environmental Issues – *Esther Collier and Don Ford*

Esther Collier and Don Ford made a presentation to the commission on the climate crisis including recommendations for the United Church community. The Commission members agreed to take some time over the summer to read through and review the material presented to see what potential there is for preparing something that might be shared with the region's communities of faith in the Fall. There was a suggestion to host a workshop on climate change for communities of faith. It was also suggested to have a joint meeting with the Communities of Faith Commission on this subject.

June 29, 2022

Business Arising

- Annual meeting follow-up
 - A letter to the province was sent as a follow-up from the proposal on social assistance rates passed at the regional council meeting.
 - Media release – no update on this right now.
 - Letter to communities of faith and request for poverty advocates was sent out and responses are being received.
- Ontario Election follow-up
 - Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) Signs – we do have some signs still available. This item will be deferred to the Fall to decide on action.
- UCW request – Susan Eagle will follow-up on this for the Fall meeting.
- General Council 44 – Two proposals, climate change and harm reduction, are part of this Commission’s work for the Fall.

Staff Report - Jeffrey Dale

The podcast for harm reduction for the General Council meeting has had about 75 downloads which include people across North America and somebody in Europe and Australia. So, we’re starting to see that this is a way to get the word out across the church and across boundaries. We spent \$500 out of the \$2,000 budget on the podcast. Perhaps for the balance of those funds we could work with one or two people to help develop naloxone training.

Jeffrey suggested we do podcasts on other subjects. Topics suggested were environment, social justice, poverty reduction, anti-racism, homelessness/affordable housing, ‘how to’ pieces, what it means to be a poverty advocate for a congregation. An idea was to start with a series interviewing Commission members on where everyone is working, where they’re going, and what they’ve done.

Summer students: three are working on guaranteed liveable income with Lois Wilson; two are working on anti-racism and affirming pieces and are interested in creating a resource booklet for communities of faith around those two topics. The vacation Bible camp this summer is around bees and we are working with Bees for Peace, an organization out of Toronto. They have two summer students as well, and have created a curriculum that it is hoped can be used in the future around the importance of bees in our world. The other students are working on a variety of different topics, often localized.

MOTION by Irene Green / Don Ford that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council approve the expenditure of the remaining \$1,500 from the podcast budget to develop naloxone training.

MOTION

CARRIED

Commission Work through sub-committees

The Chair invited commission members to consider working on a sub-committee.

- Homelessness (Susan)
- Poverty/Income Inequality (Susan, Tina, Brian, Irene)
 - GLI National Group
- Anti-Racism (Lois)
- Right Relations (Lois, Tina, Brian)
- Environment (Esther, Don, Bruce, Jen)
 - North Toronto Churches Cluster Green Team
- Israel/Palestine (Tina, Lois, Brian)

Mid-Winter Social Justice Event

Feedback from our first event was positive and it has been decided to do another with a new topic perhaps in the Spring.

Report from UNJPPI event – Tina Conlon had shared with the Commission the report that Robin Wardlaw prepared. This item will come to the next Commission meeting.

Future Agenda Items

- Connect with Toronto United Church Council (TUCC) around property management and greening our churches.

Next Meeting

The September 20th meeting will be in-person, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Grace United in Barrie with lunch provided. Subsequent meetings will follow the schedule of the third Tuesday of the month via Zoom.

Closing

Susan Eagle offered a closing prayer and the meeting ended at 3:10 p.m.

