

The United Church of Canada  
Shining Waters Regional Council

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Communities of Faith Commission  
Wednesday, November 16, 2022**

The Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on Wednesday, November 16, 2022 via Zoom. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

**Present:**

Chris Bennett, Carolyn Harding, Calin Lau, Amy Lee, Kevin Logie, Tom MacNeil, Sandra Nottegar, Eric Nyarko, Harry Ramsaran, Patti Rodgers, Gloria Tozek

Staff: Susie Henderson, Jody Maltby, Diane Matheson-Jimenez, Rachael Howes

Regrets: Kim Uyede-Kai

**Welcome, check in and prayer**

Gloria Tozek acted as Chair for the start of the meeting and welcomed everyone. Patti Rodgers provided an opening worship, 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**

The Agenda was accepted as presented by consensus.

**Minutes**

Amend October 25, 2022 Minutes to add, at *Workplan for further discussion and to schedule*, under *Living Faith Stories – Fall of 2023*: “with a caution not to presume to read the living faith story from another's point of view.”

**MOTION** by Eric Nyarko / Sandra Nottegar that the Minutes of the meetings of the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council dated October 25, 2022 be approved as amended.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

**Governance Task Group**

- Queensville Holland Landing  
Approved the revised Constitution of Queensville Holland Landing.
- Reflection on the year of the task group  
The task group met recently to review their work and Susie Henderson reported on what the task group has seen in their work over the past year.

- Communities of faith are streamlining positions, combining committees
  - Structures were built for a time when volunteers were plentiful –volunteer workforce is now depleted
  - In small places the congregation is the council (and everything else)
  - Wonder about how accountability is maintained when processes are less formal?
  - Recruiting new people is a challenge
  - Roles are just swapped between the same people
  - Scarcity of volunteers in the charity sector as a whole
  - Feels like online meetings could be a positive change if they are well done
  - There are many, many avenues of communication these days – how does a congregation decide which to use?
- Governance in a Nutshell: This is a PowerPoint that is a compilation around the questions of governance; it could take the form of a workshop; or we could create a resource page on our website.
  - Future Governance Task Group Meetings:  
The group will meet the second Wednesday of the month at 1:30 p.m.; February 8, April 12, September 13, November 8, 2023.

The Commission was invited to comment and give feedback. Gloria acknowledged and thanked the task group for their work.

#### **SPHAERA Research - update (Susie)**

At the October meeting the Commission heard about the proposal from SPHAERA RESEARCH | HALO CANADA PROJECT on Early Warning Indicators of Congregational Financial Instability. Halo is a data collection project and reached out to us about doing a study around early warning signs, financial indicators, of congregations that are closing.

As a follow-up to the discussion and questions at last month's meeting, Susie got further information. One of the Commission's questions was, *what is required from us for this research and what is required from congregations*. SPHAERA would require a list of regional congregations, their addresses (including postal code), and ideally their CRA business number if available. SPHAERA would then request T3010 information directly from CRA for the congregations listed.

They have done this work for the Anglicans and when asked, indicated they will reach out to their contacts in the Anglican church to see if they are comfortable sharing with us. Susie reached out as well to her contacts in the Anglican church but they didn't have any information on the project.

The cost is \$3,000 and the question was posed, what will we do with the study? Is any of this work being done at the national church through statistics? There is some analysis of data that can be done on an individual basis, from statistics and Church Hub.

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Congregations are engaging with Kindred Works, and Shining Waters gets asked by congregations as to what they do in the meantime until they see some income on their development. It is a big conversation.

**MOTION** by Patti Rodgers / Calin Lau that the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council not pursue the SAEPHRA proposal at this time and thank them for their interest.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

### **New Business**

#### **Regional Meeting Planning Team** (*Jody*)

The Executive is inviting the four commissions to name someone to assist the team in planning the annual regional council meeting, particularly around educational and community-building pieces. It is not a hands-on team, just planning, and would be three to four online meetings over the next few months. Eric Nyarko agreed to be part of that planning team.

The meeting took an all-purpose break.

Chris Bennett joined the meeting and resumed the Chair.

### **Communities of Faith Updates:**

- **North York Korean** (*Diane*)  
We will be getting a report from Rev. Richard Choe; it will likely ask this Commission to reconsider a motion made that indicated that North York Korean could not enter into a search process until they have completed a significant amount of work. Richard feels a lot of work has been done and his report may be asking for a motion giving permission for North York Korean to enter into a search for a six-month supply position in order to give them some stability to help them look forward but also to not give them too much leeway. The report will be circulated to the Commission when received and the request may come to the Commission as an email vote.
- **St. Paul's Brampton** (*Diane*)  
Jody and Diane will be meeting with this congregation on November 21st to bring the decisions of the Review Committee; this commission granted an extension to 2023 for a final report.
- **Keswick** (*Jody*)  
Jody is meeting with the Keswick Board November 17<sup>th</sup>. Diane and Jody have had conversations with them over the past few months; they are exploring their options for the future.
- **Countryside** (*Jody*)  
Next week Jody is meeting with the Countryside Board; they have been reaching out and exploring options.

We are probably going to be having more and more of these type of conversations with congregations over the next year or two. It speaks to prior conversations around how we use resources to support congregations as they are making these decisions, as they are exploring new ways to be viable, etc.

- Bala-Port Carling (Diane)

This pastoral charge had been under review and received the Review Committee's decisions in September and work has begun to move forward.

Port Carling United Church is having to work harder to work through the governance work that needs to happen, and the need to have a solid communication plan, so the Review Committee decided to call on Credence & Co. to do some restorative work. Credence has submitted a proposal outlining the work they could do and the fees. Diane reviewed the proposal with the Commission and noted that the fees do not come out of this Commission's budget. She also talked about the possible good outcome of the work, and the potential consequences.

The Commission had questions and discussions on the proposal and the work.

**MOTION** by Gloria Tozek / Carolyn Harding that the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council approve the expenditure of funds, to a maximum of \$17 000, from the appropriate line of the regional council budget as directed by the Finance Administrator Janet MacDonald, for the proposal from Credence and Co. on Port Carling United Church.

**MOTION**

**CARRIED**

### **Looking towards 2023**

How do we proactively support ministries throughout our region? How do we try to create sustainable ministries in every way?

What are the resources that we have available to us? How do we help congregations make some of the necessary choices; what tools and supports can we give from this Commission? How do we try to support what we know are conversations coming up with congregations?

### Theology of property

How do we create a conversation that is supportive and positive but also recognizes some of the truths about what the property represents, that the property is something that is held in trust for the larger church and is intended for the broader intentions of ministry throughout the region, and how does that knowledge get brought into the conversations more clearly across the region?

Last Spring out of this conversation, Jody was tasked with broadening this to include the wider church because it is not just our region that is wrestling with these property conversations. She reported that they approached General Council in the Fall to see

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whether we could partner on a conversation and Jody is meeting next week with Sarah Charters, Executive Minister for philanthropy, and Jennifer Janzen-Ball, Executive Minister around theology and faith, to talk about whether there is a possibility of partnership that would also include the National Indigenous Church, Kindred Works, and opening it to the other regions, and including our folks.

Jody mentioned that what seems key is that first we have to understand the theology that informed the policy as it currently is, which really does give that ownership role to individual congregations in partnership with the regional council, and we need to name that, and then we need to name what is our theology of property, and we need to formalize that nationally, and then regions can use that to inform their decision-making.

### Policy

Can we consider looking at our policy on the disposition of sale of funds to include a fund for our community ministries? One of the things named currently in the policy is that surplus from amalgamations, and funds recognized when a congregation sells their property but are continuing, are funds that are available to be granted by the Grants and Mission Support Committee. If we get too explicit in a policy, we would be doing that Committee's work.

### **Next Meeting**

The Commission decided not to meet in December so the next meeting will be January 18, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

### **Closing**

Chris thanked everyone for their participation, and wished everyone a wonderful Advent season and the meeting closed at 12:10 p.m.

