

INTERCULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMISSION

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 Commission has been meeting since September 2021.

The elected members are made up of seven people who speak from a diversity of experiences, ethno/cultural backgrounds and languages. At each meeting, members share what is happening in their local contexts as well as significant moments in their cultural history so that their Commission work stays grounded in ethno-cultural and church experiences. The Commission continues to discern and explore how Shining Waters Regional Council is called to live into becoming an intercultural and anti-racist region in the denomination.

Relationship is foundational to intercultural ministry in Shining Waters. When there is deep sharing and trust built over time, differences are validated and dignity is honoured. After a year and a half of Zoom meetings, which included hard conversations, the commission held its first in-person gathering over a shared meal to plan its regional meeting presentation. Eating, laughing together, and sharing ideas and difficult stories was a demonstration of interculturality as a participatory and embodied ministry of intentional mutuality.

In addition to discussing correspondence received and requests for regional communities of faith to participate in initiatives in different regions, the Commission receives requests for resource development and/or specific gatherings. Two areas were the focus for 2022-2023:

Korean language translations were requested from some Korean language United Church communities of faith in Shining Waters region so that they can better educate their governance and groups on United Church policies and procedures. Two handbooks were prioritized and have been translated as regional resources for five regional United Church communities of faith that use Korean language:

- Pastoral Relations Guidelines for Search and Selection,
- Ministry and Personnel Committee: Policy, Procedures, Practices Handbook, and
- A Korean language glossary of terms will accompany the handbooks.

Additional resources will be translated into Korean in 2023-2024.

One of the gifts of the Commission is its regional commitment to global relations from diverse Canadian perspectives. An exchange with PROK (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea) Seoul Presbytery (south) was a relationship commitment when Toronto Conference was in existence, and resulted in a group from the Conference visiting Seoul Presbytery and a group from Seoul Presbytery visiting the Conference. Since then, Shining Waters Regional Council was formed, Seoul Presbytery staff and leaders changed, and the global pandemic put a pause on a renewal of the relationship. As a commission that did not exist in Toronto Conference, the Intercultural Diversity Commission is now in the process of re-establishing relationship with Seoul

Presbytery and discussing what a relationship might look like going forward. John Egger, United Church global “co-worker” who recently returned from his work with the PROK office in Seoul, has helped advise the commission on this partnership work.

The Commission is grateful for the administrative work of Rachael Howes and Celio de Andrades Santos who turn recorded meetings into wonderful minutes.

Respectfully submitted by
Amy Yea Kyong Lee (Chair)

On behalf of Commission members
Hedy Baker-Graf, Joel Aguirre, Innocent Karuhanga, John Joseph Mastandrea, Néstor Medina,
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