

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 ten times a year since September 2021.

The Commission's seven elected members speak from a diversity of experiences, ethno/cultural backgrounds and languages. Relationship continues to be foundational to intercultural ministry in Shining Waters. At the start of 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 and members learn from one another.

Membership

The Commission was blessed to be joined by new member, Amber Lee Rowe, but saw the departure of original member, Moon Ja Park, due to her move to Alberta. The Commission gave thanks for Moon Ja's faithful service and dedication to intercultural diversity and wished her well.

The Commission meets at least once a year in person to deepen their connections and share their stories in less formal ways.

Resource Development

Language translations of important United Church resources continue to be a priority of the Commission. Two new relevant resources were translated into Korean in 2024: Interim United Church of Canada Process for Mutual Recognition of Ministries between the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) and The United Church of Canada; and Diaconal Supply/Ordained Supply Policy and Process: Exception for Ethnocultural or Linguistic Specific Congregation. More Korean language translations are being developed in 2024. Other ethno-language requests will be considered depending on translator availability.

Relationship with Seoul Presbytery, the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK)

A sub-committee was formed to discern the request by Seoul Presbytery, PROK for a Memorandum of Understanding with Shining Waters Regional Council. Given the structural and staffing changes within both denominations and the global effects of the pandemic, renewed relationship building seemed a better place to start. An online meeting is being planned, taking into account the 13-hour time difference.

Gatherings

A January 2024 gathering of ministry personnel and lay leaders of ethnocultural/ethnolinguistic communities of faith was organized by Pastoral Relations Minister, Dale Hildebrand and Kim Uyede-Kai, new Pastoral Relations Minister for ethnocultural/ethnolinguistic communities of faith. It was an information session, time for worship together, as well as an opportunity for ministry personnel and lay leaders to say farewell and thank you to Dale as he prepared to retire. North York Korean graciously offered their church for the gathering and arranged for lunch.

The Commission was pleased join the other Shining Waters Regional Council Commissions in supporting the 2024 Black Clergy Network Gathering held at Emmanuel College this year.

Disability Justice

A series of three webinars on disability justice was co-sponsored by the Commission and Canadian Shield Regional Council. The first two webinars led by Kathleen James Cavan introduced legislation, definitions, stigma, ableism, scripture and hymn analysis. The third webinar was a culturally diverse panel of speakers offering their experiences and suggestions for the Church to move forward. The Commission plans to offer more learning opportunities on disability justice in the future.

The Commission is thankful for the administrative work of Celio De Andrade who turns recorded meetings into minutes.

Respectfully submitted by
Amy Yea Kyong Lee (Chair)

On behalf of Commission members
Joel Aguirre, Hedy Baker-Graf, Innocent Karuhanga, John Joseph Mastandrea, Néstor Medina,
Amber Lee Rowe.
Staff Support: Kim Uyede-Kai, Celio De Andrade