

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Pastoral Relations Commission and Communities of Faith Commission
Tuesday, September 23, 2025**

The Pastoral Relations Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met for a hybrid (in-person and online) joint meeting with the Communities of Faith Commission, on **Tuesday, September 23rd, 2025** at Bond Head United Church, 4221 Simcoe County Rd 88, Bond Head The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Present In person: Lorraine Diaz, Richard Gardner, Carolyn Harding, William Haughton, Isaac Kamta, Calin Lau (General Council Staff), Deirdre (Dee) Lawrence, Lawrence Nyarko, Robin Pilkey, Patti Rodgers

Present Online: Andrea Allan (Regional Staff), Chris Bennett, Cameron Fraser (General Council Staff), Diane Matheson-Jimenez (Regional Staff), Beth Moore, Sandra Nottegar, Rob Smith (Regional Staff), Kim Uyede-Kai (Regional Staff)

Staff: Celio de Andrade Santos Jr, Kathleen Jones, Jody Maltby, Eun-Joo Park, Donna Rutz

Regrets: Barbara Hendren, Sung Ran Kim, Amy Lee, Tom MacNeil, Adèle Mayer, Krista Moore, Shawn Redden (Regional Staff), Mastard Sakala (Regional Staff)

Welcome, Constituting the Meeting and Worship

Chris Bennett welcomed everyone to the meeting, gave an acknowledgement of the land and led a time of worship.

Joint Commission Conversation - *Lawrence Nyarko*

Lawrence provided an overview of the meeting agenda, highlighting the key topics to be addressed and the intended flow of the discussion. The agenda included updates from various subcommittees, policy reviews and ongoing initiatives Lawrence noted the importance of staying on track to ensure all items could be addressed within the allotted time.

Report from Admissions Task Group - *Eun-Joo Park and Lawrence Nyarko*

Eun-Joo and Lawrence presented the document Pastoral Relations Commission: Best Practices in Welcoming Admission Ministers. This policy outlines recommended guidelines for congregations engaging in an admission appointment, with a focus on key areas such as preparing the community of faith, housing, and hospitality. The document was reviewed, and several suggestions for revisions were made. It was proposed that the title be updated to: Pastoral Relations Commission and Communities of Faith Commission: Best Practices in Welcoming Admission Ministers, to reflect the shared responsibilities of both commissions. The finalized document will be made available on both the PRC and CFC webpages. Each commission will review and approve the document separately.

Rob Smith left the meeting

Equity Update / Negotiation Handbook - *Eun-Joo Park and Lawrence Nyarko*

A document titled "A Guide to Compensation and Negotiation for Ministry Personnel within Shining Waters Regional Council", prepared by a subgroup of the Pastoral Relations Commission (William Haughton, Robin Pilkey, and Liz MacKenzie), was shared and discussed. The guide outlines a step-by-step process for ministry personnel to follow when negotiating compensation with a community of faith—starting from the moment they are offered a call or appointment and have discerned a sense of call to that ministry. It was noted that this document will be forwarded to the Office of Vocation for potential distribution to other Regional Councils.

Cameron Fraser joined the meeting online

Cam Fraser joined the meeting online

Rob Smith joined the meeting online

Towards 2035 Discussion - *Calin Lau and Cameron Fraser / Jody Maltby and Chris Bennett*

Cam Fraser, Director of Growth and Ministry Development, presented data on national and regional demographic trends, with a focus on the Shining Waters region. He highlighted significant declines in church membership and worship attendance from 1992 through projected figures for 2035, including a 90% decrease in Sunday school participation. While these figures are not meant to serve as exact predictions, Cam emphasized their value in illustrating long-term trends and informing strategic decision-making. He encouraged a shift away from maintaining structures built for a larger church, urging leaders to focus instead on the core mission and values of the United Church. Calin Lau, Growth Animator, shared updates on several ongoing initiatives designed to support and renew communities of faith, including the 100 Tables Campaign and the Strengthening Invitation Grant. These initiatives use data-informed tools to help congregations become more inviting and engaged, with particular attention to emerging communities of faith, both online and in-person. Calin also noted ongoing collaborations with ethnocultural networks as part of broader efforts to foster inclusion and diversity. Cam further explained the structure and goals of the Growth and Ministry Development team, highlighting key success indicators such as increased member engagement, collaborative ministry models, and growing diversity within the church. During the discussion, concerns were raised about the disconnect between national-level strategies and the practical needs of local congregations. Some commission members expressed frustration over the lack of useful, applicable resources from the national church. Cam acknowledged this feedback, affirmed the importance of understanding local successes, and committed to improving alignment between national efforts and regional realities.

Blessing - *Lawrence Nyarko*

The meeting concluded with a moment of reflection and a blessing, offered in a spirit of gratitude and community. Participants took a moment to acknowledge the meaningful discussions and collaborative efforts shared throughout the session. Following the blessing, arrangements were confirmed for lunch. Attendees were invited to continue their conversations informally over the meal, fostering further connection and fellowship.

Lunch Break

The joint commission gathering broke for lunch at 12:00 p.m. and then reconvened separately.