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

Gathering of Ethno-cultural Congregations
Building intercultural communities is ongoing work that requires intentional relationships, mutual learning, and shared leadership. The Commission helped create spaces where people from different backgrounds could encounter one another with respect and openness. Under the theme of "Building Intercultural Communities; Our Stories, Our Futures", the Ethno-cultural Communities of Faith ministry personnel and lay leaders in Shining Waters Regional Council gathered at the Uganda Martyrs United Church, Toronto, on June 20, 2026. Almost 70 attendees were graciously hosted and fed by Uganda Martyrs United Church friends. The community worshiped, sang, danced, and prayed together; told their stories; learned about stewardship through an intercultural lens; broke into spontaneous song; and blessed one another on their journeys.

Intercultural Diversity Micro-Grants
Recognizing the need for communities to develop interculturality with a vision to enhance understanding of intercultural diversity and justice in their own contexts, IDC established microgrants to offer financial assistance of up to $1,000 to help them realize their vision. The Micro Grant program demonstrated that small investments can generate meaningful community impact. These grants empowered local ministries to respond creatively to their own intercultural realities, fostering grassroots leadership and innovation.

Resource Development
By translating various resources into Korean, the language most used in the region next to English, language appropriate access to policies and handbooks begin to address inequities. Translation work has been more than converting words; it has been an act of hospitality that removes barriers and enables fuller participation in the life of churches. Making resources accessible in Korean and other ethnic groups have affirmed the importance of language in expressing faith and community.

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

The United Church of Canada and PROK have a long and valued relationship. As an extension of that relationship, Toronto Conference and Seoul Presbytery participated in mutual exchange visits before the pandemic. After a long gap and structural reorganizations, Shining Waters IDC re-established the relationship and had an online meeting with Seoul Presbytery leaders. We hope to meet twice a year to deepen the relationship.

As we reflected on the past year, we were strengthened, challenged, comforted, and encouraged by sharing God's love and the spirit of interculturality through the work of our IDC ministries. We give thanks to the God of Solidarity for bringing us together as one in the Intercultural Diversity Commission, walking hand in hand with one another. Intercultural diversity commission is not a destination but a continual journey of listening, learning, and walking together. As we move into 2027, may the Commission's diverse voices become an even stronger collective witness—building bridges across cultures, opening doors through accessible communication, and nurturing communities where everyone is seen, heard, and valued. Thanks be to God.

Respectfully submitted by

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