

Mission and Discipleship Commission
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
Connecting, Supporting, Transforming
(Wednesday, June 5, 2019)

The Mission and Discipleship Commission of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council met at Silver Lake Camp at Kinloss on Wednesday, June 5, 2019.

Present: Rosemary Benbow, Deanne Dickson, Bruce Dickson, Rodger Filsinger, Mary Hawthorne, Pat McDonough, Joyce Osborne

Staff Support: Ruthanna Mack, administrative staff support; Kathy Douglas Faith Formation staff; Kim Uyede-Kai, Right Relations and Indigenous Justice staff; Dave Jagger, Stewardship and Gifts Officer, General Council staff

Regrets: Mary Jeanne Carmichael, Lyle Haney

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions were made around the table and how each person came to the commission.

Agenda Check

The agenda was reviewed. Kathy Douglas informed the group that a Chairperson needed to be elected by the end of the meeting. A member of the Commission needs to serve on the Regional Council Executive but did not necessarily have to be the Chairperson.

Mandate and Handbook Review

The Mission and Discipleship binder contents were reviewed, noting:

- the Mandate and responsibilities of the Commission found on page 14 of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Governance Handbook
- resource handouts included in Handbook binder

Meeting Schedule

It was suggested that early on we have face to face meetings so that the group can get to know one another, preferably in a central location to commission members' locations. Winter meetings could be via Zoom, i.e. video or telephone conference call.

Areas of Focus

Issues that are on the radar for commissioners and their communities include: mental health, climate change, grief support, loneliness of seniors, children and youth, UCW, rural-small town contexts, stewardship and finance, social justice and outreach, support for caregivers, UN Decade of Family Farming.

Issues that are not on commissioners' communities' radar include: Affirming ministry, Indigenous issues. Both are key elements of the Mission and Discipleship Commission's work.

Composition of Commission Membership

It was noted that a few groups were missing from the commission membership: Indigenous member, more order of ministry members, young adult or youth members.

Commission members agreed to do some connecting around new members.

Overview by Kathy Douglas, Faith Formation Staff

Kathy reviewed her handout that outlined the areas of focus for her work as Faith Formation staff.

She asked, "How can we foster a sense of belonging and belovedness in the work that we do?"

Kathy would like to do a menu of areas/ideas that she would be able to offer congregations so that folks would know what is available to them.

UCW and the Commission

Discussion took place about the fact that the UCW were not offered a seat at the table of the WOW executive. Joyce Osborne shared that a letter from the UCW had been drafted and sent to the WOW Executive regarding this issue.

For the time being, the UCW can be connected to the Mission and Discipleship Commission.

Overview by Kim Uyede-Kai, Right Relations and Indigenous Justice Staff

Kim reviewed several of the handouts that were in the binder relating to: Indigenous ministries, the 1986 United Church of Canada Apology to Indigenous People, the 1998 Apology to Former Students of Residential Schools and their families and communities, the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle – Calls to the Church, plus links to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Since The United Church of Canada has made official commitments to these statements, follow through is part of mission and discipleship of all regions.

Two Indigenous United Church communities of faith are geographically in Western Ontario Waterways.

Cape Croker has decided to become part of WOW Regional Council

Saugeen has not yet decided how they will be a part of the United Church going forward

Folks reiterated that Indigenous issues are not on (their) people's radar. Kim was asked for a website map of indigenous communities in Canada, treaties, languages. She recommended: www.native-land.ca

Dave Jagger asked: "What are our basic faith tools? And how do we apply them so that folks are equipped to do the work of living into Right Relations with Indigenous communities?" and be faithful disciples. We need to remember our "WHY" – good relationships are key (including with God).

Ruthanna will send and email the group the items that were missing from the Commission binders.

Priorities

Do commissioners do the work or do we empower congregations to do the work until the resource pools equip communities of faith with engagement with issues and their faith?

Pat McDonough suggested how we might arrive at a plan:

What Is: Essential

What Is: Desirable

What is: Nice to have

Pat also suggested time lines: Long term, Medium term and short term.

Summary

Folks shared what bubbled up for them throughout the meeting. Some priorities for our context emerged:

- Deepening good relationships (with Spirit, communities of faith, wider community, global)
- How to be faithful disciples?
- Mental health across all age groups
- Education tools

Election of a Chairperson

Bruce Dickson suggested Deanne Dickson as a possible chair person

Deanne said that she would help the group get to their next meeting while discerning whether or not she would be prepared to be Chair. She prefers a consensus model of decision-making.

Pat McDonough offered to be co-chair with Deanne.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for: Wednesday September 18th 10am to Noon

Possible locations: Mount Forest or Harriston. Deanne will explore.

Meeting adjourned: 2:40pm