

Executive
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
Connecting, Supporting, Transforming
Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Roster: Andrea Allan, Gary Clark (President), Rod Coates (Secretary), Brent Caslick (Treasurer), Heather Leffler, Jessica Cottrell, Heather Davies, Joyce Johnston, Mark Laird (President-Elect), Tim Reaburn, Terry Smith, Micol Cottrell (Human Resources Commission), Bruce Dickson (Mission & Discipleship Commission), Norm Eygenraam (Covenant Commission)

Staff Support: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa (Executive Minister), Sue Duliban (Executive Assistant)

Present: Andrea Allan, Brent Caslick, Gary Clark, Rod Coates, Jessica Cottrell, Micol Cottrell, Heather Davies, Bruce Dickson, Norm Eygenraam, Mark Laird, Heather Leffler, Terry Smith, Sue Duliban, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa

The Executive of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council was called to meet via Zoom teleconference on Wednesday, February 17, 2021.

Welcome and Constitution of the Meeting

Gary Clark welcomed Executive members present and called the meeting to order at 9:35 AM. He declared the meeting constituted in the name of Jesus Christ, the one true head of the Church and by the authority invested in him by the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council for whatever business may properly come before it.

Acknowledging the Land

Gary Clark stated:

May the words of our land acknowledgement be truthful and hopeful.

Lent is a season of reflection and commitment to discipleship. As a people of faith we require both to let the words of our acknowledgement help us to grow in our relationships with God and all our brothers and sisters. We acknowledge that we live, work and worship God on the historic traditional territory of many first peoples. For me it is the Haudenosaunee, Anishnabe, the Neutral Nation and the Mississaugas of New Credit. By force these people were robbed of their land and denied their culture. Our prayer is that with the power of love we find ways to share the land and celebrate all cultures who call this land home. May our acknowledgement of this truth be but the first step toward reconciliation between the 1st peoples of the land and all who have come later.

Opening Worship

Mark Laird read a meditation from the book *Taking Flight*, by Anthony De Mello. Mark commented that it was during Lent last year that the COVID-19 pandemic started, and the last time church services were held was during Lent. Mark then asked the question, "*Either during*

the pandemic or in general is there something you have noticed that you are holding on to and don't want to jettison?"

A summary of comments follows:

- Unnecessarily holding on to fear & self-doubt.
- Loss/despair of not being ever going back to normal, but now more optimistic.
- Feeling the need to be the one sorting things out yet needing to trust others to do it and that it's not all on me.
- Can't do everything I used to. Need to let go of fear of not doing enough.
- Fear of not doing enough to support my child – both now and beyond this pandemic.
- Feeling a sense of impatience. Can I be how I would like to be treated?

[Gary Clark left the meeting briefly, turning the chair over to Mark Laird during his absence.]

Consent Docket

A. Enabling Actions

1. That the Agenda be adopted as circulated.
2. That the minutes of the January 20, 2021 meeting be approved as distributed.
3. That motions and proposals be written and given to the Secretary.

B. Correspondence received

1. Camp Menesetung UCC Camp Capital Assistance Grant Application (for approval)
2. Equity Monitor update (for information)
3. Thank you card received from Tanya Cameron for the Christmas gift sent by the Staff Committee

Mark Laird declared the consent docket approved by consensus.

Business Arising

1. Commission Reports

a. Covenant

Norm Eygenraam said the Covenant Commission met last week and were pleased to see John Neff in attendance. Norm said the Commission held more discussion on the pastoral supervision topic; this began as a discussion about compensation, but the Commission is looking at the broader issues and will report more fully next time. Cheryl-Ann noted the amount of extra work done by Ann Harbridge and Lynne Allin during John Neff's absence and suggested that a note of appreciation for their efforts would be appropriate.

b. Human Resources

Micol Cottrell provided the following updates on the Human Resources Commission:

- **Regular work:** We continue to review and approve position descriptions from communities of faith/pastoral charges (six this month), calls and appointments, requests for change in pastoral relationship (we now also offer exit interviews upon request), and Congregational Designated Ministry position descriptions.

We also receive requests for sabbatical leave (and currently receiving revised sabbatical requests due to the pandemic) and appoint liaisons.

- **LLWL:** At our February meeting we licensed another person to be a licensed lay worship leader (LLWL). The LLWL resource team interviews individuals and makes recommendations to the HR Commission. For training people continue to be directed to the training taking place through United in Learning.
- **Liaisons:** Liaison training for people to assist congregation during times of transition (ex. the search process, changes in the terms of call or appointment) is ongoing. Diane Blanchard, Pastoral Relations Minister, oversees the training and work of the liaisons. Diane has been offering regular training sessions for search commissions.
- **United Fresh Start:** The United Fresh Start modules for congregations and ministry personnel began in January and the four modules are being offered monthly with each module being offered twice each month. There has been a very good response from congregations and people are finding these modules very informative and helpful. The registration for these modules is now online. The facilitators for the United Fresh Start ministry personnel small groups have reported that these groups are going well.
- **Terms:** those whose terms this year have been notified and commission members informed that when their term is ending they will need to fill out a new expression of interest form.

c. **Mission & Discipleship**

Bruce Dickson said the Mission & Discipleship Commission met in January and it was a good opportunity to catch up. He said he was looking forward to Thérèse Samuel joining the Commission in March. The Commission is looking at better ways to communicate, trying to facilitate and share stories, and not to do all the work of the region. Bruce said that the use of stories and posting videos on website are good ways of sharing; he said that the Commission would like to do some sharing via the April regional council newsletter. Bruce said that he appreciated the work done to prepare the regional council website to receive grant applications.

As many are wrestling with issues of stewardship during a pandemic, Bruce cited Dave Jagger's new resource, *Called to be the Church*, which should be coming to churches soon via mail. Bruce noted that Dave Jagger, as Stewardship & Gifts Officer, now has responsibility for five regions, not just three.

Cheryl-Ann said racial justice training has been arranged by Antler River Watershed region and can accommodate 50 people at a time. Four evening sessions (7-9:30) are available. Bruce said there is likely money in M&D Commission budget if required to facilitate this training, and Cheryl-Ann said there is also available funding in the Executive budget for this.

2. **Financial Update**

Brent Caslick said that he had requested General Council (Bob Savaria) for updated financial statements, noting that the last one received reported to the end of December. Brent said that he had met with BMO Nesbitt Burns with respect to moving funds from bank accounts to investments & this work is in progress. In response to a question from Heather Leffler, both Brent & Cheryl-Ann provide some comments about this investment firm & how very satisfied they were with the service provided.

3. **Proposal 1 WDVH-WOW2021-01 (Executive Minister)**

Cheryl-Ann said that that a complaint had been received regarding workplace harassment. In accordance with the Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and Violence Prevention and Response Policy of The United Church of Canada, if follow-up determines that there is a finding there may be actions arising for which the Executive may assign recommendations.

In response to a question from Rod Coates, Cheryl-Ann said that Communities of Faith are required to have a harassment policy and recommended that they follow the General Council policy as it is broader and relieves a Community of Faith of that responsibility.

Moved by: Brent Caslick

Seconded by: Heather Davies

That the regional council Executive:

Confirm the action of the Executive Minister in securing trained investigator, Linda Foy, to investigate WDVH-WOW2021-01 and authorize any costs incurred to do this to be attributed to the Section J section of Emerging Expenses on the budget on the understanding that they will be covered from the unrestricted reserve.

Gary Clark declared this motion **CARRIED**

New Business

1. Camp Menesetung UCC Camp Capital Assistance Grant Application
Note: This grant application was approved with the Consent Docket.

Continuing Priorities & Future Discussion Items

1. *Handbook Community of Faith Reviews* – Education
(Cheryl-Ann) stepped the Executive through a PowerPoint presentation summarizing key points of the Handbook Community of Faith Reviews. The following questions were raised by the Executive, with answers provided by Cheryl-Ann:
Q: Who is present at the time of decision-making?
A: Just the Executive.
Q: Is the community of faith present from the beginning of the meeting?
A: Yes, from the beginning, but not to speak. 30 minutes is allowed for that. It is best if the community of faith speaks to the review recommendations, but not necessary.

Q: If someone is named in the report, is this their time to talk?

A: The time to provide information was to the reviewer, not to the Executive, so this is not a time to receive new information. Rather, it is the time to speak to the practicality of recommendations, not provide new information.

Q: What about accepting the recommendations of the reviewer?

A: The reviewer is very experienced and well acquainted in these reviews and we have paid for this advice, so why not accept it?

Q: Who pays for this review?

A: It comes from the unrestricted reserve fund.

Q: When should we see the report?

A: Likely by end of this week, after which the report will be distributed. It will reach as many of the people as possible for whom contact information is available. David Shearman, pastoral charge supervisor, will arrange a congregational meeting to elect representatives to speak with the Executive collectively. A copy of the review will be provided to the community of faith's legal counsel with a request that they be involved.

Cheryl-Ann said that in the future more & more small congregations will continue to meet without ministry personnel and yet perform outreach, and this situation is not part of our current United Church polity.

It was agreed to meet on Tuesday, March 23rd, at 9:30 AM for the review, and to allow all day for the meeting.

2. Regional Council Meetings in 2021

a. General Council Commissioner engagement – update/review videos

Gary Clark introduced two videos which are to be used to assist with engagement of General Council commissioners. The first video was prepared by Cheryl-Ann and introduced the General Council and other structure & governance aspects of the United Church. The second video, coordinated by Mark Laird, featured interviews with first-time General Council attendees. Gary Clark said that these were good videos to share with our congregations. Discussion followed about details of processing & making these videos available for distribution via website posting. It was agreed that a 3rd video needs to be added describing what it means to be a General Council commissioner – Tim Reaburn will be asked to contribute to this.

b. Spring dates: May 13, 14, 15? (Thurs., Fri., Saturday)

A brief discussion was held concerning the planning of the spring Regional council meeting, including finalizing dates, a Saturday evening Celebration of Ministries service and installation of the new president. Details were left to the planning group to finalize.

3. Equity Monitor update (for information)

An update concerning a position description for an Equity Monitor was received as part of the consent docket correspondence.

Gary Clark said that we had come to end of business and thanked all for spending the morning with him. Gary closed the meeting with prayer at 12:35 PM

Next Meeting: March 17, 9:30 am, via zoom

Worship: TBD