**Discipleship and Justice Commission**

**Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council**

**of The United Church of Canada**

*Connecting, Supporting, Transforming*

**APPROVED MINUTES**

***January 18, 2023 at 1pm via Zoom***

**Roster:** Jenn Hind-Urquhart (Chair); Gail Fricker (Co-Chair); Edith Coyle, Mary Hawthorne, Cathy Hird, Andrew Hyde, Joyce Osborne, Thom McDonough.

**On Leave**: Rodger Filsinger

**Staff Support:** Kathy Douglas - Minister, Faith Formation

Thérèse Samuel – Minister for Right Relations and Social Justice

Brenna Baker – Community of Faith Stewardship Support

Michele Petick-Administration

Ruthanna Mack-Administration

Position Vacant - Minister, Social Justice

**Present**: Jenn Hind-Urquhart (Chair); Gail Fricker (Co-Chair); Edith Coyle, Mary Hawthorne, Cathy Hird, Andrew Hyde, Joyce Osborne, Thom McDonough, Thérèse Samuel, Kathy Douglas, Michele Petick

**Regrets:** Joyce Osborne, Brenna Baker, Ruthanna Mack

1. **Acknowledgement of the Land/Territory**

*(Thérèse suggests this statement be reconsidered and revised)*

Let us be reminded that we live, work, and have our being on the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples.

The lands where we live, learn and work hold the ancestral connections and stories of Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.  However, colonization has orchestrated the displacement of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples from their ancestral lands and hindered their ability to be good relations with the land.  Indigenous peoples are actively maintaining and strengthening their relationships with the land which are grounded in respect, reciprocity, and resiliency. (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/land-acknowledgement>)

The original peoples have sought to walk gently on this land, and we endeavor to follow their example. We seek a new relationship with First Nation peoples through Truth and Reconciliation and we actively seek Right Relations based in honour and with deep respect.

1. **Opening Prayer/Worship - *Rev. Gail* Fricker**
2. **Establishing/reminder of Equity Monitor and Pastoral Presence for our meeting(s) *- Cathy Hird***
3. **Approval of Agenda for January 18, 2023**
4. MOTION by Gail / Mary that the Discipleship and Justice Commission of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council as amended.

MOTION CARRIED

1. **Approval of Minutes from November 30, 2022**
2. MOTION by Cathy H. / Thom that the Discipleship and Justice Commission of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council as amended.

MOTION CARRIED

1. **Funds available** *(As recorded in Events and Meetings Funds Tracking sheet in Dropbox)*
   1. **Events fund balance 2023 available as of the last meeting: $ 10,000**
   2. **Meeting Fund balance available as of the last meeting: $ 5,000**
2. **Record of Email Votes since the last meeting:**

MOTION Moved by: Andrew / Joyce: that the Mission & Discipleship/ Discipleship & Justice Commission of Western Ontario Waterways Region provide financial support for the February and March Lenten studies “Jesus’s Encounters with the Powerful and Powerless” and “Cycle of Gospel Living” to be hosted on CHURCHx, understanding that the cost would be about $1 per registrant, split among the participating M&D/D&J Commissions of the tri-regions.

**CARRIED**

**December 29, 2022**

MOTION by Cathy H. / Mary that the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Discipleship and Justice Commission approve the record of these email vote as circulated.

CARRIED

1. **Business Arising:**
   1. (Thérèse suggests this statement be reconsidered and revised)

* This is a process. The current territorial acknowledgment for this commission is written from a settler perspective. Be aware there can be Indigenous people part of a meeting. What wording and perspective can we have that will broaden our understanding. Moving towards justice means continuous movement. Make room for who the acknowledgement is made for to provide a personal statement of what actions we are willing to take to live into the commitment of truth and reconciliation. Perhaps a place of personal confession. It is a little different today on why we do territorial acknowledgement in comparison to a year ago. **Gail Fricker will prepare a personal territorial acknowledgement for the next meeting.**  
  1. Affirming priorities for discipleship and justice commission (noted below)

– Speaking out about current events

– Discern new voices

* Seeking out diverse voices
* Encourage and lift up Community of Faiths doing Affirming work ie creating safer spaces, cluster groups
* Possibly include these commitments as an Affirming acknowledgement at each meeting
  1. Adam Creswell and the hub - Tuesday, January 24 at 1pm Via Zoom
* All welcome to join the meeting and it will be recorded.  
  1. Update Commission of the Name Change to: **Discipleship and Justice Commission**

1. **New Business:**

**Representative to the Executive:**

* Exploring looking at having a commission member represent the commission at the Executive level.
* Are you called to do this work?
* For discussion at the February meeting to decide who will attend the March Executive meeting as the D&J Commission representative.
* Also to prepare a report to bring back to the Commission of key issues discussed by the Executive that pertain to this Commissions work.

**Evening Meetings:**

* Exploring if the commission can work forward to evening meetings?
* These will be virtual meetings.
* Evening meetings accommodate people working during the day time.
* Set up a Doodle poll to see when an evening to meet might work (Kathy / Thérèse).
* Starting in March 2023 meetings.

**Regional Council Evaluation:**

Jenny Stephens and Bill Allen have been contracted to do the evaluation of our regional structure. They have informed us that they would like to meet with each of the Commissions during a regular Commission meeting. Below is some information. This is all new to us, too. Please let Kathy or me know if you have any questions, and we will do our best to find the answers.

**MEETINGS WITH D&J (M&D) COMMISSIONS  
Dates** they are able to meet with the D&J (M&D) Commissions are:

ARW – March 9th 10 AM

WOW—Feb 15th  1 PM

HF—TBA  (Diane, this is the meeting that Kathy has been working with you to schedule)

Evening meetings

**Purpose and plan:**The purpose of attending Commission meetings is two-fold –

* to observe how the commissions approach their work and
* to have *time on the agenda*to ask questions or clarify things coming from the questionnaires. The latter part *wouldn’t exceed 45 minutes*and may well be less

***OVERALL PROCESS***

Here is a bit of what Jenny and Bill have said about the overall process, and a brief bio of each:

Our approach is multi-faceted –  
Step 1 questionnaires to staff, regional council members and communities of faith. We will have our part done by mid-January.

Step 2 attending meetings to understand how the work is done and receive amplification on data arising from returned questionnaires (February to mid-March).

Step 3 one on ones with staff as necessary or communities of faith or commissions.

We have already begun reviewing documents on the websites including minutes. We want to move to analysis later March and write in April.

Thank you everyone for your support during this process of evaluating how effective the three regional councils are meeting their stated purposes through governance, staffing and engagement.

***BIOS***

Here’s a bit about us.

**Bill** had a thirty-year career with the Ontario government with the Ministries of Agriculture & Food, Natural Resources, Citizenship and Immigration and finally as Deputy Minister of Tourism and Sports. Following retirement from the government, he has spent the past fifteen years consulting on board governance primarily with not-for-profit organizations. Consulting projects ranged from strategic planning, governance reviews, board governance training and board performance evaluation. Bill currently volunteers on a number of charity boards. He resides in the rural community of Rockwood and is a member of the Stone United Church. In his spare time, Bill is an avid road cyclist and cross-country skier.

**Jenny** is United Church clergy and a member of WOW as she lives with Mocha, her 13-year-old Wheaten Terrier in Cambridge. She retired at the end of April 2022 from the Office of Vocation (OV) at the General Council Office where she facilitated drawing the learning from previous projects to design the Office of Vocation as part of the largest denominational transition since union in 1925. OV has specific responsibility and collaborates with regional councils around ministry formation, admission and oversight and discipline of ministry personnel. Hiring staff, training volunteers and getting the OV up and running was fun! 16 years as CPM in Hamilton Conference informed the design and approach. Ministry in Neepawa and Area larger Parish in Manitoba for 4 years provided opportunity to test the call to ordination and lots of learning about team ministry and rural life. Settled in Underwood-Wesley pastoral charge (former Bruce presbytery) and serving for 7 years allowed more engagement in rural life along with presbytery and Conference Ministry Personnel and Education type work. Then the move to the Hamilton Conference Office and another great team. Because of these experiences Jenny is being careful around ‘perception of bias’ doing this evaluation, so Bill will take the lead with the HR Commissions and the deep dive into communities of faith which have needed extra support through troubled times.

**Affirming priorities for Discipleship and Justice commission (noted below)**

| *Post-It-Notes items from Affirming Action Plan that participants wanted* **Mission and Discipleship Commission***to address* | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ARW | WOW | HF |
| Practices: Guest speakers – diversity, exposure | A: Education around inclusion (defining inclusion) | A: remove barriers in life and work  Provide orientation |
| Practices: work toward accessible properties | (B) Acknowledging risk to trans folk and advocating for safety | A: Affirming education for interested lay people |
| B: Outreach to local Pride organizations | B: Advocate for municipal, provincial, federal government policies and laws that reflect a diverse and inclusive society | B: Speak out on current events that demean, stigmatize or incite violence against others (3x) |
| B: 1st Point: Advocate for municipal, provincial and federal government policies and laws reflect diverse and inclusive society (3x) | C: Committing to be open to the spirit | B- Advocate for governments to create policies and laws that reflect a diverse and inclusive society (3x) |
| B: speak out on current events that…(2x) | E: Provide support for the Affirm Network (E, last point) | B: Continuing to remove barriers to participation in society (2x) |
| C: Continue to be open to the Spirit | E: Provide support for Affirm Network | B: Actively advocate for justice for all who are oppressed and who face discrimination within our region |
| C: Listen together for God’s ongoing revelation | E:, especially 1, 2, 3 | B: Create physical and emotional spaces |
| D: Be mindful of the disgraceful relationship of the church with 2S-LGBTQIA+ | E:- Welcome, celebrate | B: Encourage ecumenical interfaith conversations |
| D: resisting oppression | E: Education for communities of faith- some still don’t understand even biblically | C: Committing to be open to the Spirit  1. Listen together for God’s ongoing revelation  2. Discern new voices and seek them out (2x) |
| D: Education and info re: gender identifying language | E: Encourage communities of faith to engage in conversations about making safer spaces within the church and community for people of any sexual orientation or gender identity | D: Seek to provide accompaniment to those travelling a difficult path (2x) |
| E: Providing support for individuals- individual community of faith/individuals | E) Welcoming and celebrating people… | E: Tell Stories (by actual people & from their mouths) about queer experience in the church - challenge & hope stories |
| (E) Camps- nongendered facilities | E: Discipleship commission needs to connect with communities of faith to make people open to the spirit and where it will take them | (E) Work with camps to be come affirming especially Cove Springs, and partner with Queer Kid Bible Camp, St. Catharines |
| E: Welcoming and celebrating people of any orientation |  | E – Welcoming and celebrating, provide education and information |
| E: Visibly support 2SLGBTQIA+ activities |  | E – Provide opportunities for the celebration of our diversity |
| E: Educate re: evolving gender identity, diversity of identity and pronouns |  | E: Encourage communities of faith to engage in conversation |
| E: Addressing gendered language  Make it more expansive and inclusive in worship and meetings |  | E: Education for communities of faith |
| (?) Advocacy re 2S-LGBTQ+ safety |  |  |

1. **Reports:**

* **Executive -** None
* **Kathy**
* Working with folks around **Refugee Advisory Groups**. For people hoping or currently doing refugee work. Gathered a think tank from all three regions to create a strategy for folks looking for support.
* **Camps** in hearts and minds and they are communities of faiths and we need to encourage them to come to Regional gatherings to raise up their voices for support not just financially.
* **Tia Kennedy** follow up of COP27, hoping to prepare a debrief session to share her learnings and experiences with all three regions.
* Working with **For the Love of Creation** there is a campaign to highlight small and large efforts folks and CoF’s are making to combat Climate Change.  These efforts will be collated during the week of Earth Week (April 16-23) I will send the link for how that can happen here.  In the end, we are hoping that the various faith leaders, for us Carmen Lansdowne will be noting these efforts publicly.   <https://fortheloveofcreation.ca/earth-week/>
* Asked to do a confirmation class or retreat. Why do we do it? How do we do it? For younger folks. And looking at supporting new members of all ages to churches.
* **Duty of Care** practices. Working with Amy Crawford from GCO. These guidelines have not been updated in some time. Some programs and resourcing we are hoping will be available through ChurchX.
* **Worshiplude** - Feb 3-5   Horseshoe Falls RC D&J Commission and Niagara Youth Festival are splitting the cost (total $6000) for the bus.  A free coach bus, sleeping on Parkdale UC church floor, taking part in Worshiplude service and Winterlude in down town Ottawa (skating on the canal)  Love to fill from HF but open to filling from any region.  Stratford church is interested from our region. For Grades 7 and up accompanied by a leader or adult.
* **Thérèse**

**Upcoming Events**

* Registration for **Antiracism series** 10 AM Tuesdays with Selam Debs Feb 7 and Alcris Limongi March 7   
  <https://catalog.churchx.ca/product?catalog=UILX1150>
* Registration platform is being prepared for the **Lenten Study** Tuesdays Feb 28 and March 28:  
  save the date, and refer to the CHURCHx basic catalog; when the course is available it will be found here:  
  [https://catalog.churchx.ca/catalog?pagename=UILx](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcatalog.churchx.ca%2Fcatalog%3Fpagename%3DUILx&data=05%7C01%7CTSamuel%40united-church.ca%7Cf540631f7aa6420e0aac08daef78021d%7Ccf18b5a826784011931215f0f7157574%7C0%7C0%7C638085595954295600%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=my8adqCWHb4n4kHmfkj55DIW67X4eNylP6%2B3bKtZAvw%3D&reserved=0)

**CHURCHx platform**

* CHURCHx was built from the ground-up as a non-profit social enterprise to resource diverse church institutions. It will be used for all programs provided by the national church, and can be used by regions for educational programs and for connecting committees/commissions/networks. It includes a secure place to share documents for programs. Once you register with CHURCHx, you will be able to access the documents and information for any programs/committees that you are a registered in on CHURCHx.
* CHURCHx cost is about $1 per registrant for courses where no registration fee is charged, and 20% of registrations for one where a fee is charged. When there is a registration fee, they do all the administration of registration fees.
* For the upcoming Antiracism and The UCC workshops with Selam Debs on Feb 7 and Alcris Limongi on March 7 will be switching over to CHURCHx (still using Zoom).

**Online Lenten Study (via Zoom):**

**Registration link:** [**https://catalog.churchx.ca/product?catalog=UILX6000&utm\_source=United-in-Learning&utm\_campaign=02503fa7d4-UiL\_230116&utm\_medium=email&utm\_term=0\_b151b1ffa7-02503fa7d4-189464643&goal=0\_b151b1ffa7-02503fa7d4-189464643&mc\_cid=02503fa7d4&mc\_eid=133b2def54**](https://catalog.churchx.ca/product?catalog=UILX6000&utm_source=United-in-Learning&utm_campaign=02503fa7d4-UiL_230116&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b151b1ffa7-02503fa7d4-189464643&goal=0_b151b1ffa7-02503fa7d4-189464643&mc_cid=02503fa7d4&mc_eid=133b2def54)

* Tues Feb 28th **Jesus’s Encounters with the Powerful and Powerless-** Engage participants to reflect on biblical stories of Jesus’s encounter with the powerful and powerless people of his time. In the process, they explore what the Gospel calls them to do about the power difference in their own contexts.
* Tues March 28th – **Cycle of Gospel Living**: A presentation to help participants understand where they are in the Cycle of Gospel Living and what they are called to do to create a justice community. Connecting the themes of cross and resurrection to our lives and justice-seeking.
* ***An Observation:*** In email correspondence it was noted that decisions seem to be about money. I noticed that as well. I am curious about how that fits with the Commission’s expectations/sense of its role
* **Brenna -** None
* **Ruthanna/Michele**
* Ruthanna Mack returning from LOA as admin support for the next meeting of this commission.
* **Other**

1. **Summary of Fund Expenses or Adjustments made at this meeting or email votes:***(To be recorded in Events and Meetings Tracking form in Dropbox)*

EVENTS FUND:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **2023 Events Budget** | |
| **Description of Expense or Adjustment** | **$** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **2023 Meetings Budget** | |
| **Description of Expense or Adjustment** | **$** |
|  |  |

1. **Next Meetings:**

January 24th - 1pm to Hear from Adam Creswell and The Hub Zoom Meeting

February 15th - 1pm (Jenny Stephens and Bill Allen will be attending)

March 15th – TBA Evening Meeting

1. **Closing Words, Equity Monitor**
2. **Adjournment**
3. **Territorial Acknowledgement Next Meeting: Gail Fricker**

**WOW** **M&D Priorities:   
Right Relations,   
Camps/Youth/Faith Formation,   
Chaplaincy**

**Items tabled for Future Meetings**

**Examples of Motions**

***For Money***

Moved by (mover/seconder) that the Western Ontario Waterways Discipleship and Justice Commission approve the allocation of $\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the Events (or Meetings) Budget for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

***Email voting Template***

You are being asked to vote on the following motion;**MOTION**: Moved by (mover/seconder) that the Western Ontario Waterways Discipleship and Justice Commission approve the allocation of $\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the Events (or Meetings) Budget for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. *(or wording appropriate to the context)*

**VOTING WILL CLOSE** at *time and date (allowing at least 48 hours).* Please vote by replying to *the Chair*. You can vote at any time before the closing date and time, and are free to change your vote at any time until the voting closes.

**QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS** are welcomed, and must be visible to all voting members.

**CANCELLING EMAIL VOTE**: If two voting members object to making this decision by email, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss it.

**QUORUM:** We require a quorum from the Commission to respond by the closing time for the vote to be valid.

*Please let me know if you have any questions and thanks for your participation.*