**Discipleship and Justice Commission**

**Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council**

**of The United Church of Canada**

*Connecting, Supporting, Transforming*

**DRAFT MINUTES**

***2023/11/28 at 7pm
via Zoom***

**Roster:** Andrew Hyde (Chair) Cathy Hird (Acting Chair); Edith Coyle, Mary Hawthorne, Joyce Osborne, Linda Peacock,

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

 Thérèse Samuel – Minister for Right Relations and Social Justice

John Egger - Minister, Social Justice

Brenna Baker–Community of Faith Stewardship Support

 Elizabeth Marshall - Administration

**Present**: Cathy Hird (Acting Chair); Edith Coyle, Mary Hawthorne, Joyce Osborne, Linda Peacock.

**Staff:** Thérèse Samuel, John Egger, Brenna Baker, Krista Ford

**Recused from this meeting:** Andrew Hyde

**Establishment of Quorum:** Quorum at this meeting was not met. The decisions will be recommended to the WOWRC Executive for approval.

**Agenda**

1. **Acknowledgement of the Land/Territory - Linda**
2. **Opening Prayer/Worship - Cathy**
3. **Establishing/reminder of Equity Monitor and Pastoral Presence for our meeting:** Linda
4. **Agreement to the Agenda for 2023/11/28**

Show of hands.

1. **Review of Minutes from 2023/10/24**

TABLED

Any adjustments will be noted and voted on at our next meeting.

1. **Review of Mission Support Grant Applications and proposal for allocating funds to be sent to the WOWRC Executive**

Explanation was provided regarding the recommendation of the WOWRC Discipleship and Mission

of grant applications to the WOWRC Executive. This set of minutes only provides the recommendation of the WOWRC Discipleship & Justice Commission.

The remaining members of the commission met on November 28th via zoom to discuss the Mission Support Grant applications. This provides the rationale for our recommendations. Andrew Hyde recused himself, and Cathy Hird chaired the meeting. We are actively recruiting new members to replace the two who resigned in October and any help you can offer would be appreciated.

Our decision was based on the applications and the guidance of our priorities: Right Relations, Camps/Youth/Faith Formation, Chaplaincy. Just to note, we believe that the commission and executive should review these priorities. In part, we think we should add “support for the regional council’s commitment to becoming an affirming regional council.”

**Camps**

Camps Bimini and Menesetung. The commission recommends that both camps receive the amount requested, $15,000. Both camps fit with the priority of “camps/youth/faith formation.” Both camps indicate that they have multiple sources of income—this is important and a strength given that the amount available to the region is expected to go down next year.

Camp Bimini shows a strong awareness of post pandemic stress in particular in residential settings. They worked hard last summer to support staff and campers working through this stress. They recognize that they will have to add staff to fill in when people need extra time off.

Camp Menesetung provides a safe and affirming space. A large portion of theirs staff last summer identified as queer. They try to pay a living wage. Their annual report shows that they have done significant analysis of their strengths and weaknesses with a detailed section on areas where they need to take action to “stop/start/continue.” We do have questions about their income statement. They registered a profit in 2021 and 2022, but we understand that this is being allocated to significant capital needs. We would like them to explain this better in next years application. They have money set aside to repay their CEBA grant on time, something no other group indicated.

**Resource Centres**

Last year we indicated to both the Christian Resource Centre (Mitchell and London) and the Grand River Resource Centre that they did not fit well with the priorities of the commission and that they needed to look for other funding. In both cases, we recommend lowering their grant by $1,000 to make this point clear. (This lowering gives $2,000 to allocate, and we provide two options for that allocation.)

The Christian Resource Centre shared that they serve people who are not comfortable with online ordering. This is a real service. They indicated that they will look for alternatives in 2025. They did request less for 2024 than for 2023 though more than we allocated for 2023. We recommend that we allot $11,000 to this centre.

The Grand River Resource Centre indicated that they would explore other sources of funding but gave no specifics. They ran a small surplus in 2021 and 2022, but seem to be heading for a deficit in 2023. We recommend $4,000.

**Five Oaks**

Five Oaks fits our priority for faith formation and for youth. They also do programming that fits with our priority to work toward Right Relations. They have substantial revenue from other sources which we view as a strength. They ran a $25,000 deficit in 2022. They indicated a williingness to work with us to explore alternate funding sources. They made the same request to the three regions and we recommend they receive their request of $10,000.

**Westminster**

This work fits with our commitment to working toward Right Relations. They have strong partnership relationships. They are working toward sustainability, but ran a substantial deficit in 2022 and project another in 2023. We recommend they receive their request of $2,500.

**Grey Bruce Spiritual Care Council**

This program fits our chaplaincy priority, and they do work with indigenous communities and individuals. They serve a large area in the north of WOWRC. They have an extensive funding network, again a strength in our view. They ran a $5,000 deficit in 2022. We recommend we grant their request of 30,000 or add to that and grant $31,000.

**Guelph University Ecumenical Campus Ministry**

This ministry fits both with our commitment to chaplaincy and to youth and faith formation. There is a recognition of work toward right relations as they work with indigenous students. They have a good donation network including other denominations. They have a partnership with a congregation that looks after their salary with ADP. They have been drawing on an endowment to continue with a full-time chaplain and are exploring sustainability options. We recommend allocating their request of $27,000 or adding to it and granting $28,000.

**The Hub**

This ministry works with youth and is engaged in faith formation. It is innovative in its use of online options though most of its outreach is based in WOWRC. They have a partnership with Trinity United, Kitchener. They are clear in their work to becoming affirming. They have a plan for sustainability in the near future.

This is a new ministry. Last year was their first request. At that time there were issues with the definition of the staff person’s position and questions about duty of care and how much support Trinity was providing. These issues were resolved in part through a meeting with representatives of the three regional councils.

Funding a new ministry is complex in our system where there is no mechanism for different regions to work together and where there are historic funding patterns (ie. the same groups ask for money every year). Funding a new style of ministry is hard because we don’t have the experience to see inside their work. We recommend a grant of either $17,500 or $19,500 (if the larger amount is granted the two chaplaincies would receive only the amount requested).

**OPTION 1 :**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organization** | **Program/ Purpose** | **Amount Requested** | **Amount Allocated to be granted** | **Comments** |
| 5 Oaks | Indigenous, intercultural and interfaith programming  |  $10,000 | $10,000 |  |
| Camp Bimini | General program *(they mention loan debt repayment)* |  $15,000 | $15,000 |  |
| Camp Menesetung | Programming and operating costs for summer camp |  $15,000 | $15,000 |  |
| Christian Resource Centre Mitchell | To fund operations |  $15,000 | $11,000 |  |
| Grand River Spiritual and Educational Resources | General operations |  $7,500 | $4,000 |  |
| Grey Bruce Spiritual Care council | Staffing: Spiritual Care Providers, Manager and Secretary, and educational program |  $30,000 | $30,000 |  |
| Guelph University Ecumenical Campus Ministry | Basic costs, especially salary and benefits |  $28,000 | $28,000 |  |
| Trinity United Church Kitchener | The Hub |  $40,000 | $19,500 |  |
| Westminster United Church Waterloo | Dare to Dream (Equity and Inclusion Team? Staffing?) |  $2,500 | $2,500 |  |
| Silver Lake United Church Camp |   |  $25,000 | $-- | Capital projects are not eligible for MS Grants. |
| **Total:** |  |  **$188,000.00** | **$135,000** |  |
| **Funds Available** | $135,000.00 |  |

**OPTION 2 :**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organization** | **Program/ Purpose** | **Amount Requested** | **Amount Allocated to be granted** | **Comments** |
| 5 Oaks | Indigenous, intercultural and interfaith programming  |  $10,000 | $10,000 |  |
| Camp Bimini | General program *(they mention loan debt repayment)* |  $15,000 | $15,000 |  |
| Camp Menesetung | Programming and operating costs for summer camp |  $15,000 | $15,000 |  |
| Christian Resource Centre Mitchell | To fund operations |  $15,000 | $11,000 |  |
| Grand River Spiritual and Educational Resources | General operations |  $7,500 | $4,000 |  |
| Grey Bruce Spiritual Care Council | Staffing: Spiritual Care Providers, Manager and Secretary, and educational program |  $30,000 | $31,000 |  |
| Guelph University Ecumenical Campus Ministry | Basic costs, especially salary and benefits |  $28,000 | $29,000 |  |
| Trinity United Church Kitchener | The Hub |  $40,000 | $17,500 |  |
| Westminster United Church Waterloo | Dare to Dream (Equity and Inclusion Team? Staffing?) |  $2,500 | $2,500 |  |
| Silver Lake United Church Camp |   |  $25,000 | $-- | Capital projects are not eligible for MS Grants. |
| **Total:** |  |  **$188,000.00** | **$135,000** |  |
| **Funds Available** | $135,000.00 |  |

It was reminded that next year there will likely be less funds to allocate and to keep that in mind with discerning the allocation amounts.

Stewardship Support Staff, Brenna Baker, shared that the funding available for Mission Support Grants start at the congregational level. The decline doesn’t have to be inevitable, and there is opportunity to share the work of these ministries and encourage congregations to be donating towards M&S. There is more and more disconnect between local congregations, and not being aware of the impact that does impact local communities. We can encourage one another to tell stories and talk more about it, rather than thinking cuts are coming from the General Council. It is important to look at it on the positive side where we can do better together to show the work of these important ministries. Brenna is available as a support person to help with this, and regularly works with M&S who creates those stories.

One of the things to include at the end of the letter to each recipient is to invite them to share their mission story, as well as some support to be able to do that. If you know of a measurable way to share a story from these recipients, it can be included in the letter as well to help them to know why we see value in their work, and how it should be shared to further the giving towards similar ministries. Inviting, encouraging and supporting in telling those good stories. The commission is working towards building those bridges to create more engagement and connection between local congregations and these ministries.

It was decided that the explanations of the recommendation should be provided to the Executive. Members grappled two different options, suggesting to present both to the Executive since not having reached quorum for this recommendation.

Cathy Hird will write a report of tonight’s meeting, including a chart of each option, to share the reasoning behind the recommendations for Mission Support Grants. Cathy will also draft letters for the recipients which includes a encourage of M&S, recipient details, and invitation to share their story.

1. **Next Meetings:** April 30
 7pm Zoom
2. **Closing Words**
3. **Adjournment**

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

**Items tabled for Future Meetings**

* Minutes of November 24, 2023