**Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council**

**Spring 2023 Hybrid Meeting Minutes**

**“Dreaming Dreams”**

The Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council was called to meet on Friday, May 26 and Saturday, May 27, 2023 via zoom and in person at the Unifor Family Education Centre, Port Elgin. Approximately 78 participants joined online each day and 115 were present in person at Unifor.

***Meeting Session: Friday May 26, 2023***

**1:30 PM – 5:30 PM**

**Welcome & Constitute Meeting, Lighting of Christ Candle**

President Mark Laird welcomed those gathered in person and online to the meeting, noting it is his last meeting as president, but his first one in person.

President Mark then constituted the meeting in the name of Jesus Christ, the one true head of the Church and by the authority vested in him by the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council for whatever business may properly come before it.

**Greetings**

Janice Mason brought greetings from Saugeen, Saugeen Wesley UC., and spoke movingly about rebuilding after a fire, and managing during covid. She shared that on April 3, 2023, after nearly 170 years of hard work, Saugeen First Nation achieved a land claim victory; with a ruling that the entirety of Sauble Beach has always belonged to Saugeen First Nation. Janice closed by offering a prayer to the Christ Candle.

**Housekeeping**

President Mark noted that Gord Dunbar would be taking photographs during the meeting; if you do not want to be in a photograph let him know. Dave Jagger volunteered to lead folks to where the front desk is to check-in and lead folks to supper. Heather Leffler is the meeting’s designated friend of the court, available to answer any questions or if you need a companion at mealtimes.

**Opening & Procedural Motion (Proposal #1)**

Terry Smith, Chair Agenda & Business Committee, provided an overview of Proposal #1 – Opening & Procedural Motion.

**MOTION:** Terry Smith / Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa

That the Regional Council adopt the following as a consent docket:

1. Adopt the agenda as circulated and authorize the Agenda and Business Committee to make any changes as necessary: start at 9 am tomorrow, not 9:30 as noted in agenda;
2. Approve the minutes of the meeting of 2022-11-18-19;
3. Receive the following minutes of the following meetings of the
4. Executive

2023-02-15

2023-01-25

2023-01-18

2022-11-26

2022-10-19

1. Congregational Support Commission

2023-04-13

2023-03-09

2023-02-09

2023-01-12

Covenant Commission

2022-11-10

2022-10-13

1. Human Resources Commission

2023-03-28

2023-02-01

2023-01-17

2022-11-22

2022-10-18

1. Discipleship and Justice Commission

2023-03-16

2023-02-15

2023-01-18

Mission and Discipleship Commission

2022-11-30

2022-10-20

2022-09-21

2022-06-30

2022-05-12

for information.

*Note:  Minutes are posted on the website* [*www.wowrcucc.ca*](http://www.wowrcucc.ca)*“About” page*

1. Confirm the appointment of Roz Vincent-Haven to the Congregational Support Commission;
2. Appoint Fred Monteith as Parliamentarian;
3. Appoint Terry Smith as Chair, Agenda and Business Committee;
4. Name Michiko Bown-Kai to serve as Equity Support Team Member;
5. Name President Mark Laird, Chair Agenda and Business Committee Terry Smith, Executive Minister Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, and Executive Assistant Sue Duliban, as the Agenda and Business Committee;
6. Name regional council staff members as scrutineers;
7. Set the bounds of the meeting as the zoom call and the Unifor Family Education Centre, Port Elgin, Ontario;
8. Make the designated representative from any United Church ministry, other than a congregation, which has been invited to become a community of faith by entering into a covenant with the regional council, a member of the regional council for this meeting (Section C.1.2 c);
9. Make all guests corresponding members;
10. Set the deadline for new business to be submitted to the Agenda and Business Committee as 9:00 a.m., Saturday, May 27, 2023;
11. Receive all written reports in the workbook;
12. Adopt the following method for dealing with proposals for action by the regional council

Step One:

The Presenter will outline:

1. What is the issue? and
2. The suggested way in which the regional council might respond to the issue.

Step Two:

The President will inquire if there are questions for clarification. Please note this is for clarification only.

Step Three:

The President will then ask if there are changes or additions being suggested for the proposal. Using warm and cool signals, the regional council will seek to come closer to agreement on how to respond to the issue.

Step Four:

Once there is significant agreement, the President will invite the Presenter to move the motion at which point the regional council enters the formal debate process.

**CARRIED**

**BRAVE/Affirming Statement & Leadership Team Introductions**

Equity Support Team Member Michiko Bown-Kai introduced their role and raised up BRAVE: Commitments to Community Safety and the tri-region Affirming Statement.

**Opening Worship: President Elect Jennifer Irving and the Worship Team**

Worship focused on the theme of the meeting, Dreaming Dreams. The gathering was invited to write their dreams, fold the paper into Dream Stars (instructions in the workbook) and bring them forward throughout the time of the meeting to create a “dreamorama”. The team sharing a retelling of the children’s storybook, *Dream* by Susan Bozak.

Andrew Hyde, Chair of the Discipleship and Justice Commission, then presented PRIDE Flags to Communities of Faith who have become Affirming Communities, celebrating the following:

Westminster United Church, Waterloo (September 1999)

Wesley United Church, Cambridge (February 2002)

Harcourt Memorial United Church, Guelph (April 2005)

Parkminster United Church, Waterloo (November 2007)

Emmanuel United Church, Waterloo (March 2014)

Huron Shores United Church, Grand Bend (September 2017)

Avondale United Church, Stratford (June 2018)

First United Church, Waterloo (2019)

Pine River United Church, Ripley (September 2020)

Dublin Street United Church, Guelph (September 2022)

Georgian Shores United Church, Owen Sound (September 2022)

Wasaga Beach United Church, Wasaga Beach

Andrew closed with prayer.

**Welcome to WOWRC**

President Mark invited those attending their first Regional Council meeting, as willing, to introduce themselves (both in person and on zoom). The following introduced themselves to the gathering: Cheryl Oliva (Wesley, Cambridge), Carolyn Davidson (Harcourt Memorial, Guelph), Ann-Marie Collins, John Adeyemi (Arkell UC), Jacob Shaw (Villages), Linda Peacock (New Lowell UC), Angie Lannin (Atwood UC), Coral Prebble, Lori Ann Livingston (PR/Press Lead at UCC and Trinity UC, Kitchener), Jean Bennett (St. Andrew’s, Bayfield), Martha Pedonoquotte (Community Capacity), Whitton Daley (Cedar Hill, Cambridge), Aleeya Graaf (Avondale, Stratford), Marlene Britton (Team Lead, Office of Vocation, UCC, living in Stratford), Wonder Chimvinga (Pine River UC).

**“Dreaming Dreams in WOWRC”**

President Mark invited those gathered to discuss and share, in zoom breakout rooms and at their table groups, the following question: what is your favourite natural spot in WOWRC to dream.

**Remit Foundations**

Thérèse Samuel, Minister, Social Justice referred to the Remit resources in the meeting workbook and shared three videos. First a portion of a video conversation with Cathy Hird and Maggie Dieter, a non-linear way of learning through dialogue and story. The second video, a more linear learning format, was a powerpoint presenting background on the Remit. The final video was from Martha Pedoniquotte sharing a bit about herself and her role at GCO and what the Remit maybe means to Indigenous people in the United Church. Thérèse noted that the whole video presentation will be available to congregations by mid June.

Following the video was a time for questions; many of the questions focused on the process, the sharing of resources/education and specifics such as dates for votes. Resources will be shared throughout the regional council and with congregations. The fall 2023 meeting is when regional council will vote. Pastoral charges have up until March 31, 2024.

**Break: 20 minutes**

**A Story of Bold Discipleship**:

Jacob Shaw, minister for Villages United Shared Rural Cluster and Ministries, shared his experience supporting a 5-6 point ministry cluster, its history, nuances, some of pros and cons. Among the highlights Jacob noted that it has been a wonderful gift for communities, some were told would be closed in months, and are still serving after 15 years. Programming, outreach and more: each church can run their own programming or invite wider cluster; for example coffee hours to which all in the cluster are invited. Youth, confirmation classes. Beer and Bible for young adults from all the churches – getting together for a meal, drink and discuss theology around the table. Cluster is a mission in itself, making room for churches to find stability and hope.

**Proposal #2: Volunteer Recruitment**

Heather Leffler, Executive Member at Large, introduced the proposal. The proposal notes that to give people as long as possible to consider completing an Expression of Interest, the deadline has been set for during the regional council meeting. The result is that there is no time for a review of the membership of the Executive or Commission as a whole relative to geography, balance or diversity.

As the Regional Council has had a challenge finding enough volunteers, it is not helpful to turn people down through election where multiple volunteers have offered for the same position. The Recruitment Committee was able to review all expression of interest and vacancies and discern where to place volunteers for diversity and best use of skills and experience.

There was some discussion about the difficulties in getting people to serve. Equity Team Support member Michiko Bown-Kai, noted they appreciate the work being done here about diversity.

**MOTION:**  Terry Smith / Heather Leffler

That the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees to:

1. Endorse the WOWRC Executive’s action in naming a recruitment committee to bring a slate for election at the May 2023 meeting of the Regional Council; and
2. Authorize the Executive to
3. Establish a mandate for a volunteer recruitment team and add this to the Governance Handbook.
4. Appoint members to this team.
5. Establish the practice of bringing a diverse slate of members for election to the Executive and Commissions at the spring meeting of the Regional Council.

**CARRIED**

**“Dreaming Dreams for WOWRC”**

President Mark invited those gathered to discuss and share, in zoom breakout rooms and at their table groups, the following question: what are your dreams for our regional council and how can you help to make it happen.

**Reminder:** Terry Smith noted the deadline for new business as 9 AM, Saturday, May 27, 2023.

Sung Grace “For All Your Goodness God”, sung in a round and led by President-Elect Jennifer Irving and Jenny

The meeting broker for supper.

Following supper, those at Unifor were invited to join a Meet & Greet of WOWRC’s President, President-Elect and Commission Chairs.

The evening session closed with Vespers, led by Rev. Gary Clark, followed by a bonfire.

***Meeting Session: Saturday May 27***

**9:30 AM – 3:15 PM**

**Welcome Back**

President Mark welcomed back all those gathered, on zoom and in person.

**Land Acknowledgement and Lighting of the Christ Candle:** President Mark, referencing Pentecost, shared a Land Acknowledgement recognizing that the Regional Council is gathering on unceded territory of Saugeen Nation.

**Moderator’s Message**

A video message to Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council from Moderator Carmen Lansdowne was presented.

Gathering music and an Opening Prayer was shared by President-Elect Jennifer, Rebekah Duncan and Jenny Kers.

**A Story of Daring Justice**

HUB Executive Director, Adam Creswell spoke about the HUB Ministry, a Youth and Young Adult Community Network, and their mission “to connect young people with “the liberating love of Christ. Adam highlighted a few of the Hub’s ministry branches include digital ministry, innovative church partnerships and their work in informing and advancing the cause of housing justice.

**UCC Foundation**

Sarah Charters, Foundation President, and Rev. Tim Reaburn, Foundation Chair, shared a powerpoint presentation on the UCC Foundation which provides services to United Church members and all courts of the church. The Foundation’s purpose is to foster deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice by attracting and deploying financial resources. Seeds of Hope grants disbursed to various WOWRC ministries over the last few years were highlighted (4,000 to First UC, Waterloo for online ministries, First UC, Waterloo, 2,550 to Grace UC, Hanover for hand chimes music program, and 1,000 for evangelistic CE program at St. Mary’s UC).

**Proposal #3: Executive and Commissions Slate**

**MOTION:** Terry Smith / Heather Leffler

The regional council agrees to:

Approve the slate prepared by the Recruitment Committee as presented:

**WOWRC May 2023**

**Executive and Commissions Slate**

(Terms are 3 years, renewable once)

**Executive**

Beth Kerr DM (First term to 2026)

**Congregational Support Commission**

Rebekah Duncan OM (First term to 2026)

Lesley Fox OM (First term to 2026)

Peter Kudelka (First term 2026)

**Human Resources Commission**

Harry Disher OM (First term to 2026)

Carol Stephenson (First term to 2026)

**Discipleship and Justice Commission**

Chris Panylo (First term to 2026)   
Linda Peacock (First term to 2026)

**CARRIED**

Retired ministry personnel were invited to sit together at lunch, hosted by John Lougheed and Jenny Stephens.

**Break: 20 minutes**

After a brief power outage, the meeting continued.

**Introduction of Candidates**

Tanya Cameron, Vocational Minister for WOWRC, introduced in turn WOWRC candidates, Craig Bartlett and Wonder Chimvinga, with a biography of their experience, learning & beliefs.

Caroline Penhale, Vocational Minister, Candidacy Pathway for East Central Ontario, Eastern Ontario Outaouais and Nakonha:ka Regional Councils, introduced Stacey Mortson, with a biography of Stacey’s experience and gifts.

**Candidates address the Court**

Craig Bartlett, Wonder Chimvinga, Stacey Mortson individually shared their answer to the question asked of them by President Mark, “What are your dreams for your future ministries?” in inspiring, engaging and for Craig, musical, videos.

Wonder will be serving at Pine River UC. Stacey will be serving at Rosemont Trinity Centennial and Craig will be serving at Tara-Centenary Pastoral Charge.

**Staff Anniversary and Introduction**

Keith Reynolds, one of WOWRC’s two members on the Staff Support Team, recognized John Neff’s 10th Anniversary of ministry in the UCC, adding to a much larger life of ministry.

President Mark introduced John Egger, new Minister Social Justice (1/2 time and halftime position with 5 Oaks), who started on May 26.

**Board of Vocation**

Judy Zarubick, Board Member from Southwestern Ontario, presented an overview of the work and makeup of the Board of Vocation, Southwestern Ontario Candidacy Board, Admission Board and Response and Remedial Committees. Overall there is a need for volunteers from WOWRC, as there is a lack of representation from WOWRC. Judy noted that of the 16 members on the Board, she is the only one from WOWRC.

**A Story of Deep Spirituality: University of Guelph arboretum “Forest Church”**

Mary Savage spoke about the concept of forest church and shared a slide show of photos of those experiencing and participating in forest church. Table groups and breakout rooms were invited to have a conversation, based around the following questions:

Can you remember and share instances in your life when you have experienced or felt closer to God while you were outdoors in Creation?

In what ways is Forest Church an expression of deep spirituality that might be adapted, adopted or inspirational for you in your environment?

**In Memoriam**

A video presentation honoured “friends, colleagues & leaders” who guided & served the church with their living:

Rev. W. Dale Allison OM

Rev. Helen Hume OM

Rev. Valerie Joyce Reed OM

Rev. Jason Richards OM

Rev. Kenneth J. Welch OM

**Community of Faith Life Cycle Change**

A video presentation honour the amalgamation of Christ the King United Church and St. James- Rosemount United Church, Kitchener. Amalgamated as St. James-Rosemount United Church, Kitchener.

With blessings as these communities of faith continue their ministries together

**Celebrating Anniversaries and Jubilands**

The following anniversaries of Ordination, Admission, Commissioning, and Recognition were celebrated:

*5 Years*

Anita Rowland           DM

Kenneth Whiting      OM

*10 Years*

John Neff      OM

Margaret Ruggles DM

Nancy Knowles  OM

Sheryl Spencer   OM

*15 Years*

Marilyn Burnard DM

Kathy Douglas     DM

Elaine Strawbridge    OM

Valerie Vande Wiele OM

*20 Years*

Catherine Paul     OM

Janet Sinclair        OM

Kathryn Wreford OM

*25 Years*

Heather Davies  OM

Johanna VanderSpek OM

Keith Reynolds    OM

Susan Campbell  OM

*30 Years*

Jennifer Stephens  OM

*35 Years*

Bruce Dickson     OM

Gwen Nicol-Macdonald   OM

John Benham      OM

Cathy Larmond   OM

*40 Years*

Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa  OM

David Jones      OM

Neil Parker       OM

Randy Banks    OM

Sandra McLauchlan-Abuja OM

Thomas Bandy OM

William Bruce   OM

*45 Years*

Janet Bush     OM

Orville James OM

The following Jubilands were honoured and celebrated

*50 Years*

Marion Jackson Tyler OM

Doyle Prier OM

*60 Years*

Audrey Fisher OM

Donald Johns OM

William Lord OM

*60+ Years*

*63 Years*

Cecil Wittich OM

*64 Years*

Joan Gugeler DM

Morley Hammond OM

Paul Webb OM

*67* *Years*

Randolph Scott OM

Bruce Seebach OM

*68 Years*

Calvin Evans OM

George Moore OM

*70 Years*

Bruce McLeod OM

*72 Years*

R. Cerwyn Davies OM

President Mark offered a prayer of thanks for those named, celebrating their deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice.

Sung Grace “God Bless to Us Our Bread”: President-Elect Jennifer and Jenny

**Lunch Break**

**1:30 PM Meeting resumed**

President Mark welcomed all back to the meeting

**Commission Name Changes**:

President Mark highlighted why there have been commission name changes. Arising from last year’s spring meeting theme, Our Words Matter, and in response to last year's study on the impact of the word "Mission", the Executives of the three regional councils authorized the following name changes:

Mission and Discipleship Commission to Discipleship and Justice Commission.

Also another Commission asked for its name to be changed to reflect its work more accurately:

Covenant Commission to Congregational Support Commission.

**Stewardship Offerings**

Brenna Baker, Community of Faith Stewardship Support, spoke on getting started in Stewardship, prefacing her presentation by asking those gathered to think of a time when someone asked you to do something in a rather meaningful way and why you did it.

**“Sharing Dreams *with* WOWRC”**

President Mark invited those gathered to discuss and talk about, in zoom breakout rooms and at their table groups, what you have been doing and dreaming. What have you been inspired by in this meeting that might encourage you to take action. Any dreams?

**Proposal #4: DLMs as VAM**

Micol Cottrell provided some background information, including what a VAM (Voluntary Associate Minister) and the current regional council policy regarding VAMS. Ann Harbridge, the originator of the proposal, noted this proposal would provide clarity around ordered ministers and lay minister.

**MOTION:** Terry Smith / Ann Harbridge

The Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees to amend the Current Policy for Voluntary Associate Ministers [Current Definition of a Voluntary Associate Minister: A Voluntary Associate Minister (VAM) is a recognized ordered minister in The United Church of Canada who is retired or between appointments.]

to change the definition of a Voluntary Associate Minister as follows:

A Voluntary Associate Minister (VAM) is

a recognized ordered minister in The United Church of Canada who is retired or between appointments or

a designated lay minister who retired while serving a community of faith in the Regional Council, who is a member of a community of faith in the Regional Council and therefore a member of the Regional Council.

or

a designated lay minister who is between appointments but is actively searching for a new call or appointment.

**CARRIED**

**New Business**

**Proposal #6: Extending Registration**

Originators: Sue Campbell and John Lougheed

Sue Campbell presented proposal #6. The issue, as outlined in the proposal, some people were turned away from the attending the WOW meeting because they either forgot to register or registered late. The action suggested that could be taken by the regional council:

1.reserve five additional spaces for late registrants; and

2. cover any registration fees for the same.

The court was invited to ask questions of clarification; these included queries about the number of spaces to be held and how that was determined, and the logistics involved in assigning those spaces. It was noted that people could be accommodated on zoom, if they had not registered in time to attend in person. How registration information was circulated and the requirements of Unifor were also noted. Some supported the motion in spirit, but in terms of management of resources/stewardship had trouble with it. Some agreed with the proposal originators and felt it was a way to create a culture of welcome and grace. Others felt that the onus on registering is on those who wish to attend – if the registration is missed it is their mistake

Michiko Bown-Kai noted that they trust the executive does their best to balance requirements for these meetings and asked if the court could entrust this to the executive to review.

Parliamentarian Fred Monteith said that as there was no formal motion yet on the proposal, a motion could be entertained on entrusting the work to the executive.

**MOTION:** Michiko Bown-Kai / Audrey Brown

That the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council refer Proposal #6 to the Executive, entrusting the work of reviewing the proposal to the Executive.

**CARRIED.**

Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, on behalf of the executive, added that if anyone would like to email comments on the proposal, they should send to President-Elect Jennifer Irving.

Maggie Dieter commented on the process of proposals, saying she was troubled that proposals are used to do changed and saddened to move towards new ways of doing things, hope would be to work around these problems and come to new ways of doing things that is more inclusive.

President Mark thanked Commission members whose terms are ended for their time and service given to WOWRC.

Marg Bakker, Matthew Lindsay, Arthur Hills – Congregation Support Commission

Gail Fricker, Jenn Hind, Roger Filsinger – Discipleship and Justice Commission

Tom Slumski, Mel Spencer, Gwen Good – Human Resources Commission

**Covenanting with Newly Elected Executive/Commission Members**

President Mark led a covenanting service with newly elected and continuing Executive & Commission members.

**Save the Dates**

President-Elect Jennifer Irving shared the following dates

Fall 2023 Regional Council Meeting ONLINE ONLY:

Thursday September 28th: 6:30-8:30 PM

Budget / Commission Reports

Friday September 29th p.m. 6:30-8:30 PM

Congregational Support Commission: Property Review

Other Business

Saturday 9:00 AM to noon

Observe National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Remit Education

Remit Vote

Sunday October 1st 10:30 AM

World Wide Communion

Spring 2024: Tri-Regional Meeting, May 24, 25, 26, 2024 at Unifor, Port Elgin

Closing Housekeeping Announcements: Last minute update from Unifor, need to be out of the building by 6 PM. Bagged lunches available following the Celebration of Ministries Service.

**Courtesies**

President Mark thanked the planning team for organizing an educational, spirit filled event, allowing for opportunities for growth. President Mark thanked all presenters, worship team and offered preemptive thanks for those who planned the celebration of ministries service, and the music leadership. Thank you to all of the staff, all those who filled different roles for us as well. Not limited to equity support, parliamentarian, Chair A&B, chaplains, zoom community host. Thank you to Unifor staff. All of you who have been here making this work possible, engaging in conversations, doing the work of the regional council. Thanks to the tech team for keeping some humour as well.The children’s program, really great seeing young people here. Absolutely wonderful, next time hopefully with 3 regions together can be even greater.

**Thanking President**:

Heather Leffler thanked President Mark, saying we always get the right person for the right time, you were that. In executive meetings, President Mark helped the executive learn to grow into consensus in a wonderful way. Thankful for his playfulness, inclusion of everyone, sense of tech, graciousness and patience.

**Proposal #5: Closing Motion**

**MOTION:** Terry Smith / Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa

The Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees to:

1. Entrust any unfinished business from its May 26-27, 2023 meeting to the Executive;
2. Authorize the Executive to fill any vacancies on the understanding that appointments will be confirmed at the next regional council meeting;
3. Direct the Executive to plan to convene a meeting of the regional council in the fall of 2023; and
4. Entrust the Executive and Commissions with the responsibilities and authority of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council in accordance with *The Manual* of The United Church of Canada and the Governance Handbook of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council.
5. Close the May 26-27, 2023 meeting of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council at the close of the Celebration of Ministries Service on Saturday, May 27, 2023.

**CARRIED**

**Closing Blessing**

President-Elect Jennifer Irving closed the meeting with a blessing.

**Adjournment**

Following the meeting the Celebration of Ministries Service and Installation of the new President was held at Unifor Family Education Centre, Port Elgin.