

**Minutes of Prairie to Pine Regional Council
2nd Annual Regional Meeting via Zoom
September 30, 2020 & October 7, 2020**

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

Session 1 – LISTEN / DISCUSS / DISCERN

Gathering of Regional Council The 2020 Regional Meeting of Prairie to Pine Regional Council of the United Church of Canada met for two sessions on Wednesday, September 30, 2020 and Wednesday, October 7, 2020 via Zoom.

The first session was a learning opportunity and a time to “Listen, Discern, and Discuss” with (up to) 205 participants present. The second session was the formal business session and was focused on “Deciding.” There were (up to) 205 participants to the formal business session for the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council.

Kwang Beom Cho and Lori Stewart, Co-Chairpersons of Prairie to Pine Regional Council Executive, presided during both sessions.

Introductions Kwang Beom Cho and Lori Stewart introduced themselves as Co-Chairpersons of Prairie to Pine Regional Council and introduced Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister.

Meeting Process Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, explained the process that would be used for the two Zoom sessions that will constitute the 2020 Prairie to Pine Regional Gathering. Tonight’s meeting is an educational opportunity to learn about the proposal (regional) and remit (denominational) that are to be considered.

Opening Worship The Equity and Diversity Committee led the gathering through the opening worship.

Treaty Land Acknowledgement Ken DeLisle made the following treaty territory acknowledgement:

“We acknowledge with gratitude, the traditional territories of our Indigenous and Metis neighbors and their hospitality. We offer our respect and commitment to living into right relationship with all our relations, part of that is to acknowledge hurt. Today is Orange Shirt Day, a day to recognize the history of residential school. Let us join together in a prayer for Orange Shirt Day.”

Orange Shirt Day A rainbow candle was lit to remind us that Christ is present in the diversity that we are and bring to this gathering.

We listened to scripture (Psalm 139).

We heard reflections for Jamie Miller and Liz Carter-Morgan.

We listened to a recording of singing accompaniment from members of Knox United Church in Kenora, ON.

Ken DeLisle closed worship with a prayer.

Affirming Recommendations

The Equity and Diversity Committee introduced their proposal.

As most of the founding courts were affirming before the change to our governance structure, Affirm United/S' affirmer Ensemble recognized our histories and offered the regional council the option of a simplified process to be declared an Affirming Ministry. The simplified process was accepted and assigned to the Equity and Diversity Committee.

Ken DeLisle, Co-Chairperson of the Equity and Diversity Committee, explained that this vision statement, needed for the Affirming process, needs to be approved by 75% of the court. The voting will take place next week during Session Two.

The vision statement, as presented, was as follows:

DRAFT AFFIRMING VISION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE LGBTQIA2S+ COMMUNITY:

Prairie to Pine, a Regional Council of The United Church of Canada, is called to offer an open door, an open heart, an open mind and an open hand.

An open door is evidence of the belief that all people are created in God's image and are unconditionally loved by the Creator.

An open heart follows Jesus' teachings to love one another. We extend that love to all, inclusive of their ability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or any other human division.

An open mind calls us to continue working for justice, dignity, and the full inclusion of everyone in all aspects of the church community and society.

An open hand is a symbol of our work towards reconciliation as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and our call to live into the intercultural global community.

We recognize the unique and diverse Communities of Faith and recognize we are at varying levels of development and capacities.

Breakout Groups

Regional Council members were to be broken up into smaller groups to discuss the question:

- Is there something in this vision statement that will prevent you from voting in favour of this motion?

Due to technical difficulties, the discussion continued in the large group.

Reporting back

Members of the Regional Council expressed great appreciation for the work done by the Equity and Diversity Committee in preparing this Vision Statement.

Some of the suggestions made were:

- Addition of open table as a connection to the sacraments,
- Referencing open baptism,
- Replace the word 'race' with 'ethnicity.'

The Equity and Diversity Committee closed the conversation with a reminder that other comments could be sent on to the committee by emailing them to affirmp2p@gmail.com.

Remit Introduction

Shannon McCarthy explained the Category 1 remit. The remit question is:

- Does the Regional Council agree that:
 - a) The Order of Ministry be open to persons of all gender identities; and
 - b) The Basis of Union be amended to reflect this change as follows:
 - ◇ 10.0 The Order of Ministry shall be open to persons of all gender identities.
 - The current wording is: *The Order of Ministry shall be open to both men and women.*

Gender Unicorn

Liz Carter-Morgan gave a reflection and presented a video called "Gender Unicorn" to explain what gender identities are.

Non-binary

We watched a video featuring fifteen-year-old Micah Cottingham, who provided their perspective on what it means to be non-binary.

Closing Worship

The closing worship was led by the Equity and Diversity Committee.

We sang *It only takes a Spark* (VU 289).

Cathey day led the Prayers of the People.

We heard a version of the Lord's Prayer, sang by the Right Rev. Richard Bott.

Ken DeLisle gave a Traditional Celtic Blessing.

We sang *You Call us Out* (VU 569).

Adjournment (Session One)

Kwang Beom Cho and Lori Stewart close the meeting at 8:36 PM.

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Session 2 - DECIDE

- Welcome** Lori Stewart welcomed the regional council to the first session of the 2nd annual Prairie to Pine Regional Council 2020 Regional Meeting. The 2020 regional meeting is the first meeting held entirely online or by phone.
- Opening** Lori Stewart declared the opening of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council Meeting 2020 to be open at 7:00 PM with the following statement:
- “Welcome one and all. In the name of Jesus Christ, the only head of the church, and by the authority vested in me by this regional council, I declare the 2nd Annual Meeting of Prairie to Pine Regional Council of the United Church of Canada open for worship, study, companionship, and such business as shall properly come before us.”*
- Treaty Land Acknowledgement** Kwang Beom Cho made the following treaty territory acknowledgement:
- “As we gather to share the work that rightly comes before this court, let us acknowledge Treaty No. 1. We acknowledge the ongoing relationship to the land which Indigenous people have had for generation upon generation. We acknowledge those traditional territories that fall both within and outside the treaty lands that we are on. We also recognize our mutual obligation to care for and respect the land and its people; and to be open to the Creator's teaching and wisdom which the land offers.”*
- Introductions** Kwang Beom Cho and Lori Stewart introduced themselves as Co-Chairpersons of Prairie to Regional Council and introduced Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister.
- Introduction to Voting Process** Lori Stewart explained the voting process for those in attendance by phone and by Zoom.
- Procedural / Enabling Motions** Shannon McCarthy read the procedural and enabling motions.
- ENABLING MOTIONS PPRC 001-2020** Shannon McCarthy / Betty Kelly
That Prairie to Pine Regional Council accepts the following Enabling Motions #1 – 10 for this Regional Council meeting:
1. **Roll of Regional Council:**
That the Roll of the Regional Council for the purposes of the 2nd Annual Regional Council meeting be:
 - i. The members of the Order of Ministry within the bounds served by the regional council; and
 - ii. Other ministry personnel in a covenantal relationship with a community of faith within the bounds of the regional council;

- iii. **Lay members of the regional council are members of the United Church who are not ministry personnel and who are elected by communities of faith. (Manual 2019, C.1.1 & C.1.2);**
 - iv. **Members-at-large, lay members within the Regional Council who have been appointed members as necessary for the work of the Regional Council by the Regional Council Executive and who have not been elected by their community of faith.**
2. **Corresponding Members:**
That all invited guests, registered visitors, and staff be corresponding members of this regional council meeting, with voice but not vote.
3. **The Bounds of the Council:**
That the Bounds of the Regional Council meeting be the virtual meeting room and the telephone connections to that meeting space.
4. **Minimum Number of Members at Meetings:**
That the regional council may meet only if a minimum number of members is present. If there are 60 or more members, at least 20 members must be present; and there must be at least one ministry personnel and one lay member who is not ministry personnel present. Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose (Manual 2019; C.4.3).
5. **Limits to Debate:**
That without the permission of the Council, no member shall speak more than once on any proposal or amendment; and that speeches be limited to two minutes per person on each proposal, except at the discretion of the President.
6. **Agenda Committee:**
That the Agenda Committee for this Regional Council meeting be the members of the Regional Council Meeting Planning Committee, plus one person designated as Parliamentarian.
7. **Rules of Debate and Order:**
That the rules of debate and order for Parliamentary debate be those spelled out in Appendix of The Manual 2019 (pages 187-191); and that any point not covered in such Appendix, the parliamentary rules accepted in Canada (Bourinot) shall be followed.
8. **Unfinished Business:**
That unfinished business be referred to the Prairie to Pine Regional Council Executive.
9. **Minutes:**
That the Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of Prairie to Pine Regional Council (June 13-16, 2019) be approved as distributed.

10. Celebration of Ministry:

That Prairie to Pine Regional Council, having received confirmation of readiness of the following candidates from the Office of Vocation and confirmed through Prairie to Pine Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission that a covenantal relationship is in place with a community of faith, will hold a Celebration of Ministries service on a date and time to be determined by the Regional Council Executive to recognise Sam Ross, and ordain Elenor Thompson. (The Manual H.4.8).

CARRIED

REPORTS

Co-Chairpersons

We heard reports from Lori Stewart and Kwang Beom Cho, Co-Chairperson of Prairie to Pine Regional Council.

Lori Stewart, Co-Chairperson

Lori Stewart reflected on her experiences as co-chairperson of Prairie to Pine Regional Council.

One of the priorities the co-chairs had was to seek ways to become more intercultural church. Lori observed that it takes a lot of time to honour intercultural ministry. It takes time to listen, to give space for people to speak, and to get into new habits and customs. It is a journey that is both ongoing and personal.

Lori praised and thanked the Executive for doing a great job. The year 2020 was turned upside down but we managed to come together, while staying far apart, to chart new territory.

Lori said thanks to the Prairie to Pine staff, Shannon McCarthy, Judy Hare, Twila MacNair, Cherry Abad, Jamie Mckay, and Erin Acland.

Kwang Beom Cho, Co-Chairperson

Kwang Beom Cho reflected on his experiences as co-chairperson of Prairie to Pine Regional Council.

A year ago, Kwang Beom didn't know much about how to be a co-chair of an executive council, but he knew he wanted to be involved and to be useful. He was happy to hear the meetings were expected to be held quarterly, or once every two or three months. However, 2020 was an interesting and challenging year and the meetings increased to once a month. He found the Zoom meetings to be challenging and found it difficult to communicate through monitors and speakers.

Kwang Beom got to know a lot of good people over the last year. He has witnessed and felt the passion of those in the regional council, as well as their efforts for the United Church and their own communities of faith.

Kwang Beom thanked the members of the Executive. He gave thanks for all the staff serving the regional council. He gave special thanks Lori Stewart for her role as co-chairperson, whom he now considers a friend.

Executive Minister

Shannon McCarthy thanked the Executive for all their hard work since the inaugural meeting. Shannon also thanked Kwang Beom Cho and Lori Stewart for their leadership and diligent work on behalf of the regional council.

Shannon gave special thanks to the regional staff, tri-regional staff, and the regional staff from the other regions, Living Skies and Prairie to Pine. Cherry Abad is joined by Bev Diebert and Kent Mohn from Living Skies, and Kathy Jackson from Northern Spirit as they work behind the scenes to keep these meetings running smoothly.

Regional staff present at this meeting are Judy Hare, Pastoral Relations Minister; Twila MacNair, Young Adult and Youth Minister; Erin Acland, Keep of the Archives; and Cherry Abad, Administrative Support. Not present at this meeting is the caretaker of 1622 St. Mary's Road, Dave Turchyn.

Tri-Regional staff present at this meeting are Julie Graham, Communications and Justice Minister; Heather Dootoff, Financial Administrator; and Jamie Mckay, Executive Assistant and Recording Secretary.

Julie Graham began as Justice and Communications Minister at the start of January 2020. Shannon was on sabbatical at the time, so Julie did a fantastic job of navigating her new position.

Judy Hare took on the role of Acting Executive Minister while Shannon was away on sabbatical. We thank Judy for her leadership during the beginning of a stressful and unknown time.

Shannon acknowledged Heather Dootoff, Financial Administrator for Prairie to Pine, Living Skies, and Northern Spirit Regional Councils. Heather works closely with each of the treasurers in each of the three regional councils and responds to a large number of financial questions. She has also helped facilitate funding in a variety of ways.

Until spring of 2020, most of the meetings held by the executive were held by Zoom. In some ways, this helped us make the move into a digital meeting space.

The long-anticipated website was up and running at the beginning of March 2020. Thank you to Julie Graham, Cherry Abad and Jamie Mckay for populating the website with material and handling the technical aspects. The website was up and running just in time as the COVID-19 pandemic started and we collectively entered into lockdown.

Finance

Valerie Beckingham reported.

Valerie was honoured to be Treasurer for the 2019/2020 year, and she looks forward to next year. Valerie found working with the staff to be good and very positive. She gives special thanks to Heather Dootoff, Financial Administrator.

The 2019 audited financial statements are included in the Workbook. Valerie noted that although it seems late to be sharing the 2019 results, the results were delayed

due to the annual meeting being pushed from its usually scheduled time in Spring to Fall.

**MOTION
PPRC 002-2020**

**Joan Jarvis / Ken DeLisle
That Prairie to Pine Regional Council receives the verbal and written reports.**

CARRIED

**Affirming Vision
Statement**

Ken DeLisle reported from the Equity and Diversity Committee.

The committee met by email to discuss the feedback received after Session 1.

There was suggested re-wording and a desire to expand on the topics of justice and community. Since our virtual regional meeting limits the time we have for discussion, and many people indicated they could live with the wording, the committee is not making changes on those topics. Suggested changes can be sent in for next year's annual meeting.

On the topic of open baptism, we had a serious discussion, before we were reminded that this statement is how the regional council will carry out its work, not congregations. The committee is not making changes on the topic of open baptism. Suggested changes can be sent in for next year's annual meeting.

At the request of those who identify as racial minorities, the committee decided to keep the word 'race' in the statement, and if possible, race be a topic of discussion at next year's meeting.

Many people were in favour of adding an open table and the committee suggests the following paragraph be added:

- "An open table recognizes that Jesus Christ is our host and that we are all welcomed guests. All who seek to follow Jesus are invited to share in this significant and sacred meal."

Discussion

Ken DeLisle asked the following question for discussion:

- Is there anything in this draft statement to prevent you from voting in favour?

We made a small grammar edit. We displayed the added paragraph on the meeting screen. Some expressed their appreciation of the statement. There were no other comments or suggestions.

**MOTION
PPRC 003-2020**

**Jamie Miller / Ken DeLisle
That the Prairie to Pine Regional Council approves the following AFFIRMING VISION STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE LGBTQIA2S+ COMMUNITY:**

Prairie to Pine, a Regional Council of The United Church of Canada, is called to offer an open door, an open heart, an open mind, an open hand, and an

open table.

An open door is evidence of the belief that all people are created in God's image and are unconditionally loved by the Creator.

An open heart follows Jesus' teachings to love one another. We extend that love to all, inclusive of their ability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or any other human division.

An open mind calls us to continue working for justice, dignity, and the full inclusion of everyone in all aspects of the church, community and society.

An open hand is a symbol of our work towards reconciliation as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and our call to live into the intercultural global community.

An open table recognizes that Jesus Christ is our host and that we are all welcomed guests. All who seek to follow Jesus are invited to share in this significant and sacred meal.

We recognize the unique and diverse Communities of Faith and recognize we are at varying levels of development and capacities.

CARRIED

Remit 1

Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, reviewed Remit 1, amending Basis of Union Article 10.0. She reminded the court that this is a Category One Remit and no changes can be made to the wording of the Remit, and that the Regional Council could only respond yes or no to the proposed change.

The question was called:

"Does the Regional Council agree that:

- c) The Order of Ministry be open to persons of all gender identities; and
- d) The Basis of Union be amended to reflect this change as follows:
 - ◇ 10.0 The Order of Ministry shall be open to persons of all gender identities."

The Remit was unanimously carried.

BREAK

Kwang Beom Cho asked the court to take a 10-minute break. He reminded people to bring juice and bread for the upcoming communion worship.

Call to Worship

Kristin Woodburke thanked Alex Milevic and Paul Hagerman of Knox United Church in Winnipeg, and Stephen Cocks of Oakbank United Church for the preparing the music today.

Kristin then gave the Call to Worship.

The service began by singing *You Are Holy* (Hamba Nathi) (MV 45).

Hyerim Park and Michelle Owens read scripture from Psalm 105:1-6, 37-43.

Chad McCarles said an opening prayer.

In Memoriam

We took time to remember those whose journeys have come to an end since we last gathered, people with whom we have travelled, figuratively and sometimes literally.

Maureen McCartney read the names:

- Jesmond Thompson
- Rev. Larry Edwards
- Charles Keep
- Ruth Keep
- Rev. Bill Hickerson
- Jean Dickson
- Rev. Sanadius Fiddler
- Rev. Don Robertson
- Ivy Campbell
- Jim MacNair
- Rev. Marietta Marshall
- Margaret Downie
- Ronald Kahlberg
- Bill Fulford

As we remember, we turn to God for comfort in our loss, we praise God for the blessing of their lives among us, and we express our trust in God's faithfulness to us all, in life, in death, and in life beyond death.

Those gathered sang *I Am Walking a Path of Peace* (MV 221).

Acknowledging Retirees

We took time to honour retirees, with gratitude for their service, with praise for how we've seen God at work in their lives so far, and with blessings for where their journeys will take them next.

We were encouraged to read their full biographies in the Workbook and to connect directly with them to wish them well.

Hope Mattus read the names of the retirees:

- Brenda Gibson
- Charles (Chuck) Ross
- Gordon Taylor
- Ken Thomas
- Cathie Waldie

- Janet Walker

Thank you for your ministry.

Those gathered then sang a Japanese Blessing: *KiRiSuToNo – May the Peace of Christ Be With You.*

Celebrating New Ministers - Sam Ross and Elenor Thompson

Susie McPherson Derendy offered a Cree prayer and then introduced the new ministers to the Prairie to Pine Regional Council – Samuel (Sam) Ross, a Designated Lay Minister and Rev. Elenor Thompson, an ordinand.

Susan McPherson said a prayer in the Cree language. She brought greetings from Treaty 7 and gave thanks for our ancestors and those who made it possible for us to be here today.

Susie gave a reflection on behalf of Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre (SSSC), where she has been Keeper of the Learning Circle since July 2019.

Susie noted that the context and process to which Sam Ross and Elenor Thompson have made their way through their studies, life, and work, is very different than what most experience. This was made clear upon reviewing an updated policy handbook and discovering much of it did not apply to their contexts, Cross Lake and Oxford House. When it comes to challenges of life, deaths, and intergenerational trauma, Sam and Elenor are the ones whom communities of faith turn to. With this in mind, Susie commends both Sam and Elenor.

Elenor and Sam are both fluent Cree speakers. This is a gift that will be missed at SSSC. Through students like Sam Ross and Elenor Thompson, we learn through their lives, experiences, strength, and hope. Susie thanked Sam and Elenor for the leadership they provided to students and staff at Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre.

Susie shared thoughts about Sam and Elenor submitted by Deanna Zantingh, former Keeper of the Learning Circle at SSSC.

Susan sang a song in Cree. Congratulations were offered to the new ministry personnel and Susie was thanked for her beautiful tribute to these people.

Covenanting with Communities of Faith

The covenanting with the Communities of Faith began with *Bless Now O God, the Journey (VU633)*.

Lynne Sanderson, and Christopher Davis from Deloraine-Melita-Tilston Pastoral Charge, Jennifer Pakula from Snow Lake Anglican–United Community of Faith, Ted Barnett from Winnipeg: Westminster United Church, and Randy DeGagne from Fort Frances: Knox United Church led the Call to Covenant of Mutual Commitment, Accountability and Support with over 90 Communities of Faith, who had completed their covenants and had been received and accepted by the regional council executive.

The covenanting promises were offered by Lori Stewart and Kwang Beom Cho with the presentative delegates responding.

Lynne Sanderson offered the Prayer of Affirmation.

The covenanting closed with the singing of *One More Step Along the World I Go* (VU 639).

Reflection Kwang Beom Cho gave a short reflection of the challenges of meeting God in the wilderness and what that wilderness looks like today.

Sacrament of Communion Kwang Beom Cho and Shannon McCarthy led the court in a communion liturgy.
Communion was closed with the hymn Santos, Santo, Santo (MV 45).

Installation of the Co-Chairpersons Outgoing Co-Chairperson Lori Stewart led the installation of the new Co-Chairpersons for the 2020/2021 year – Kwang Beom Cho and Diane Dwarka.
Those gathered sang *You Are Holy* (MV 45).

Closing Prayer Newly installed Co-Chairperson Diane Dwarka led a closing blessing.

Adjournments Lori Stewart thanked those gathered for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8:29 PM.

Kwang Beom Cho, Co-Chair

Diane Dwarka, Co-Chair

Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

