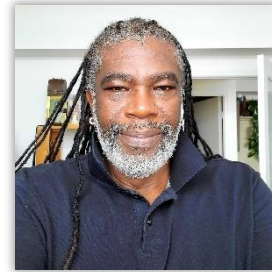


REPORT of THE MODERATOR and GENERAL SECRETARY



The Right Reverend Dr. Richard Bott
Moderator, The United Church of Canada



Rev. Michael Blair
General Secretary, The United Church of Canada

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To: Report to Prairie and Pine Regional Council

From: The Moderator and the General Secretary

Dear Friends:

Summing up the year since your last regional council meeting is both simple and weighted with detail. Suffice to say, it has been quite a year. We have all had the experience of sitting in a car, bus, train or plane and seeing the vehicle next to us moving, but for a few moments, we cannot tell if it is they or we. When we finally see either the front or back move by us, we know, it is they, yet we had all the sensation of being in a moving object. As we look back, we have come so far, done so many things differently and yet have the strange sensation of standing still.

The Moderator and I are immersed in many things but three main areas come to mind. The Anti-Racism and Equity work that is crucial to transforming the denomination in the 21st century, the Strategic Planning process that will set the direction of the General Council Office work for the next three years and where we will live after 2023. Our lease at our west-end Toronto offices is up that year and we have several options: to extend the lease and then move into the new offices that are part of the Bloor Street United development closer to downtown Toronto on Bloor Street, or make an intermediate move. In any event, when our move to that location is complete, we will be sharing the space with the denominational offices of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. We are very excited to be able to live into an ecumenical experience, daily.

From the end of the 43rd General Council meeting in Oshawa until now, the work on Anti-Racism and Equity has evolved from several smaller and it seemed overlapping working groups, into a single common table that is developing the Anti-Racism action plan. Adele Halliday, a General Council Office staff person and educator is now the Anti-Racism and Equity Lead. She will work on the plan's implementation after the Executive has approved it or a version of it in the fall of 2021. The position

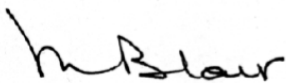
of Equity Monitor, suggested by the 43rd General Council is still under consideration. The role of Equity monitors is now part of the regular General Council Executive meetings, the annual General Council commissioners' meetings and in many regional councils. A research project with people serving as equity monitors, has led to the development of a series of best practices to share across the church. It is a developing field, and we learn more and more from each person and after every meeting.

In living into the commitment to be an anti-racist denomination, all General Council and Regional Council staff, are taking training in the areas of anti-racism and equity. The education sessions will take place between 2021-2023. In April, staff started engaging with anti-racism education. Other modules will include racial harassment and violence prevention (2021), Calls to the Church; sexual orientation and gender identity (2022), disabilities and accessibility; mental health (2023).


The Strategic Planning process is a high-intensity effort by a few people in a short timeline. Jennifer Henry, the former Executive Director at Kairos, is the project manager and the pace of consultations and surveying is fast, but thorough. Beyond the small group input from the March 6, 2021 General Council Executive/National Indigenous Council session, consultation to date has included an in-depth survey and focus groups with staff leadership, and a survey of the full staff (GCO/RCO). In April, May and June, five Moderator's Town Halls, four Indigenous Church Circles, a series of surveys and focus groups with smaller groupings in the church (related to either function or identity), and conversations with ecumenical and global partners are underway. Work is also being done on the financial framework, expected to dovetail with other elements (mission, vision, strategic objectives) in June, so that the work of drafting of the plan can be initiated. In addition, we are beginning to create templates for yearly operational planning which will ultimately link up with the strategic plan in the implementation phase. The draft report will go to the General Council Executive in September 2021 and the 43rd General Council Commissioners will vote on it at their October meeting.

All the church's governance documents and reports are housed in the United Church Commons, and if you wish more details on any of the church's business, we encourage you to go there. It may not be the most exciting presentation, but once inside, you will find a richness of thought and theological rationales for the work we all undertake together. The Moderator is also sending to the Regional Council annual general meetings his own video greeting, but joins me in this short report.

Blessings on this meeting and all the work you do to further God's mission in the world.



Michael Blair
General Secretary, General Council



Richard Bott (The Right Reverend)
Moderator



REPORT – REGION COUNCIL EXECUTIVE CO-CHAIRS



Diane Dwarka
Chair



Kwang Beom Cho
Chair

The Executive of the Prairie to Pine Region is responsible for enabling the work of the region and to act for the region between its annual meetings. It exercises oversight of its committees and Task Groups.

Because of COVID 19, the province was in lock down in March 2020 so the three-day 2020 Annual Meeting which is usually held in May was postponed and held virtually on two evenings on September 30 and October 7. from 7:00 – 9:00 pm each evening.

Meetings

The current Executive meets regularly on the first Thursday of the month. Seven meetings were held during this year with the first on November 5th and the last one on May 6, 2021. All meetings run from 3:30 – 5:00 pm

Membership: a huge shout out to the Nominating Committee which ensured that the membership is comprised of a wide range of members and reflects the diversity of the members of the region.

We continue the journey of becoming an intercultural community as we embrace intercultural values and norms in our work. We value all voices. We are patient as we allow each other time to express themselves. We use a consensus decision-making model. We try to engage all our members and strive to foster open communication and interaction.

Finance and Accountability: we are extremely fortunate to have Valerie Beckingham as our treasurer. She takes care of our finances and presents reports in a clear concise manner.

Pastoral Relations: Judy Hare, Pastoral Relations Minister is terribly busy with the committees that fall within her portfolio, Committee on Ministry Personnel Support, Community of Faith Support, Lay Ministry Support, Pastoral Relations Support.

Committee on Community of Faith Support: Lynne Sanderson and this committee held a very amazing service on Ash Wednesday celebrating new covenants of a few Communities of Faith.

Mission and Support Grants: Pat Bird and Anna Stewart graciously agreed look after this.

YOUNG ADULTS AND YOUTH COMMITTEE (YAAH) has been well represented by Marissa Smirl. Marissa and William Miller are also taking on leadership roles at the Annual Meeting.

Equity and Diversity Committee will lead the region in a celebratory service at the Annual Meeting on the region becoming an affirming ministry. Thanks for all the work you've and continue to do as you live into this role.

Annual Meeting Planning Committee will be virtual using rotating chairs to plan the 3-day meeting which will cover business, retirees, anniversaries, etc. and will conclude with a service of celebration of becoming affirming with communion.

The Nominating Committee under the leadership of Betty Kelly continues to recruit the best volunteers to fill the numerous positions within the region's structure.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS: thanks to all those who serve on a variety of boards within the region.

Moving towards **becoming an anti-racist** church Shannon has met with Adelle Halliday, UCC's Anti-racism officer to discuss how we, as a region might move to become a less-racist church, how we might continue to work, and how we to receive information about being anti-racist. Adelle suggested anti-oppression training for church leaders followed by discussion on what they learned. A job description and best practices is being developed for Equity Monitors.

Regional Representation for ecumenical/interfaith matters. This is still under consideration and it was agreed that the Co-Chairs, Diane Dwarka and Kwang Beom Cho, will represent the regional council until we come up with a final solution. A group was formed to further discuss this matter, which includes:

Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd, Noel Suministrado, Diane Dwarka, Kwang Beom Cho and Shannon McCarthy.

Grant Queskekapow has resigned as a member of the Executive due to a heavy workload and various commitments. Thank you, Grant for being with us.

A huge "thank you" to all who have served on the Executive for the past year. Best wishes to those who have completed their terms of service and a warm welcome to the new members who will be joining the Executive.

It has been a pleasure to serve as your Co-Chairs.

Diane Dwarka and Kwang Beom Cho

Co-chairs

Prairie to Pine Regional Council Executive



REPORT of the OFFICE OF VOCATION MINISTER



Karen Medland
Office of Vocation Minister
Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and
Prairie to Pine Regions

Well another year has passed in the life of the church; and what a year it has been for us all. Lent has felt like it has lasted a life time and yet I continue to see signs of hope all around me. The adaptability of my colleagues who are in pastoral ministry has been inspiring. Being able to join worship across the country and even the world in ways that we might have done before has been wonderful. I'd also like to thank Northern Spirit and Prairie to Pine Regions for inviting me to preach at regional worship events, it was a great honour to join with you in praise of God.

The work of the Office of Vocation has also continued through this past year in new ways. No longer does my suitcase sit permanently half-packed ready to go to the airport for my next flight. Rather I have been engaging my work, as so many of you have done, online. The new routine has given me more time to chat on the phone or via email exchanges with the ministry personnel in the three regions I work in, which has been a real blessing.

God is continuing to call forth new leaders for the church as the candidacy board continues to interview with inquirers and candidates via zoom. I would like to thank all of the members of the board for their willingness to adjust to this new way of working, although I think we have all agreed that we cannot wait to have an in person meeting again. What we have been missing, is the palpable joy we experience when someone is approved after an interview, and sharing a cup of coffee or meal with these future leaders in the church.

Completed Promise interviews: 9

Completed Suitability for Candidacy: 5

Readiness for SME: 8

The Office of Vocation continues to work in the areas of credentialing and mandatory training to ensure we have excellent qualified clergy for a long time to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dr Karen Medland

Office of Vocation Minister for Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regions

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