

Living Skies Commission Minutes March 21, 2019

- Present** Annette Taylor, Tricia Gerhard, Barb MacNaughton, Susan Reed, David Whalley, Brian Maitland, Neil Gilbert.
- A quorum was present.
- Staff Present** Tracy Murton, Pastoral Relations Ministry; Julie Graham, Regional Minister, Transition and Education; Jamie Mckay (Recording Secretary).
- Regrets** Bev Kostichuk, Bonnie Morton, Bernice Saulteaux.
- Call to Order/
Check in** Annette called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.
- We checked in and Annette led an opening prayer.
- Agenda** We reviewed the agenda and agreed that it would be our agenda for this meeting.
- Minutes
056-2018/2019** **It was agreed by consensus:**
That we approve the following Living Skies Regional Council Commission minutes:
- **November 15, 2018**
 - **January 31, 2019**
 - **February 8, 2019**
 - **February 21, 2019**
- Eastside Review
Commission Report** Tracy gave a report from the Eastside Review Commission which was following by a long discussion. See Appendix A.
- 057-2018/2019** **It was agreed by consensus:**
That Living Skies Regional receive the recommendation from the Eastside Commission and that they thank the reviewer John Burton and release him from his duties.
- In their report the Eastside Review Commission made the following recommendation:
- “Therefore, the Commission recommends that the Leadership Team explore learning opportunities through United Fresh Start and the trained facilitators available throughout Living Skies Region. Consideration should be given by the Regional Commission to contributing to travel expenditures for this facilitator.”
- 058-2018/2019** **It was agreed by consensus:**
That we approve of 50% of the travel expenditures for the facilitator up to \$500.
- Policy Documents –
Conflict of Interest
& Conflict
Resolution** The conflict resolution document might need some more information at the beginning of the document to see what the process is, not just information about the funding. Tracy will add more about what the process is and how it happens.

Tracy will continue to work on the wording of the conflict of interest document.

**Correspondence –
Ruling from the
General Secretary**

See Executive Minister’s report, Appendix B.

**Executive
Minister’s Report**

See Appendix B.

**Youth Contract
Staff**

See Executive Minister’s report, Appendix B.

Action item: Barb will email Kent Mohn with questions about youth involvement at the regional gathering.

**Use of Technology
– Website/Zoom**

See Executive Minister’s report, Appendix B.

**Ruling from the
General Secretary**

We discussed the ruling from the General Secretary on membership in regional councils.

Action item: Annette will email the other chairs to ask for a copy of the letters that are being sent to the General Secretary.

Transition Expenses

See Executive Minister’s report, Appendix B.

**Motions to be
ratified**

We still need a list of motions to be ratified so we will wait until Shannon gets back.

**Naming Process –
Indigenous names**

Dave gave an update on the translation of the regional name to four indigenous languages of Cree, Dene, Dakota, and Saulteaux. The indigenous congregations he spoke with seemed very enthusiastic and appreciative of the name “Living Skies” and asked that the regional crest incorporate a theme of living skies in circle form in the centre, with the four indigenous translations around it. Dave currently has the Cree and Dene translations and will to work with Darcy on remaining translations.

**Ministries
Gathering**

Brian gave a report of the ministries gathering. Things are on track. The gathering is taking place March 22nd with 25 expected to attend. They will spend the day looking at broadening each ministry’s funding base into community funding in various ways so they can become less dependent on UC direct funding.

**Regional Gathering
Theme - Logo**

Work is continuing on the logo for the regional gathering and is currently in the rough draft stage.

New website

There is nothing new to update. Also see Executive Minister’s report, Appendix B.

**Regional Gathering
Planning
Committee**

Barb gave a report on the regional gathering planning committee. She sent out letters for jobs that still need to be done but hasn’t heard anything back yet. Darrell Reine is planning the Service of Praise and Bonnie Morton is planning the Retirees’ Banquet.

Registrations are opening up on Monday, March 25, 2019.

- 059-2018/2019** **It was agreed by consensus:**
That we give the Regional Gathering Planning Committee authority to make decisions around who needs to be at the regional gathering and whose expenses will be covered.
- Theme letter to the Moderator** Barb has sent a theme letter to Shannon to send to the Moderator and will also send one to the Moderator herself.
- Delegates from Indigenous Church 060-2018/2019** **It was agreed by consensus:**

That the Regional Council chair and the Regional Gathering convener send a letter expressing our commitment to renewing the relationship with the SK Indigenous Communities of Faith in a good way as we together move into new ways of being; and request their leadership in ceremony, worship, daily prayer, and possible workshops at annual meeting, as they see fit;

That Living Skies Regional Council welcomes all Saskatchewan Indigenous Communities of Faith to attend the inaugural annual meeting as voting delegates and/ or guests if they wish, using the same formula for voting delegates as is used in the wider church;

That Living Skies Regional Council offer to pay the 2019 registration, accommodation and carpool mileage costs for up to two people (guests and/ or voting delegates) from each Indigenous Community of Faith as a gesture of hospitality and good relationship for the inaugural regional meeting as we get to know each other;

And that funds will come from other governance funds outside of the existing regional gathering budget.
- Letter for past Lay presidents** The ruling of General Secretary means we don't have the authority to invite past lay presidents to come as delegates to the regional gathering.
- Visit with Bernice Saulteaux** Annette and Jordan Cantwell will have further discussion with Bernice.
- Nominations Committee** See Appendix C.
- 061-2018/2019** **It was agreed by consensus:**
That Elaine Little, Karen Mitchell and Vicki Nelson be appointed to the Cluster Task Group effective immediately with the term ending July, 2020.
- Property** The Property Handbook should be ready to present on April 4th.

Dave and Annette gave an update regarding current property issues. St. Thomas Wesley in Saskatoon are in a situation where they were going to go to membership to accept an offer on their building and they have been asked to postpone. Climax Pastoral Charge is planning to sell their manse. Grace United Church in Val Marie is looking to sell their church building.

**Archives
consultation
062-2018/2019**

**It was agreed by consensus:
That Tricia Gerhard or an alternate attend the archives consultation in London,
Ontario on June 15-18, 2019 with her expenses paid for through governance funds.**

**Memberships
063-2018/2019**

**It was agreed by consensus:
That we will continue to pay memberships in the same organizations with Heather
Dootoff appropriately assigning the cost to either network or governance expenses.**

Affirming Status

Julie will send proposals coming from networks to Barb who will pass along as soon as the proposal committee is formed.

**Financial
Statements**

We will speak with Heather Dootoff at the next meeting.

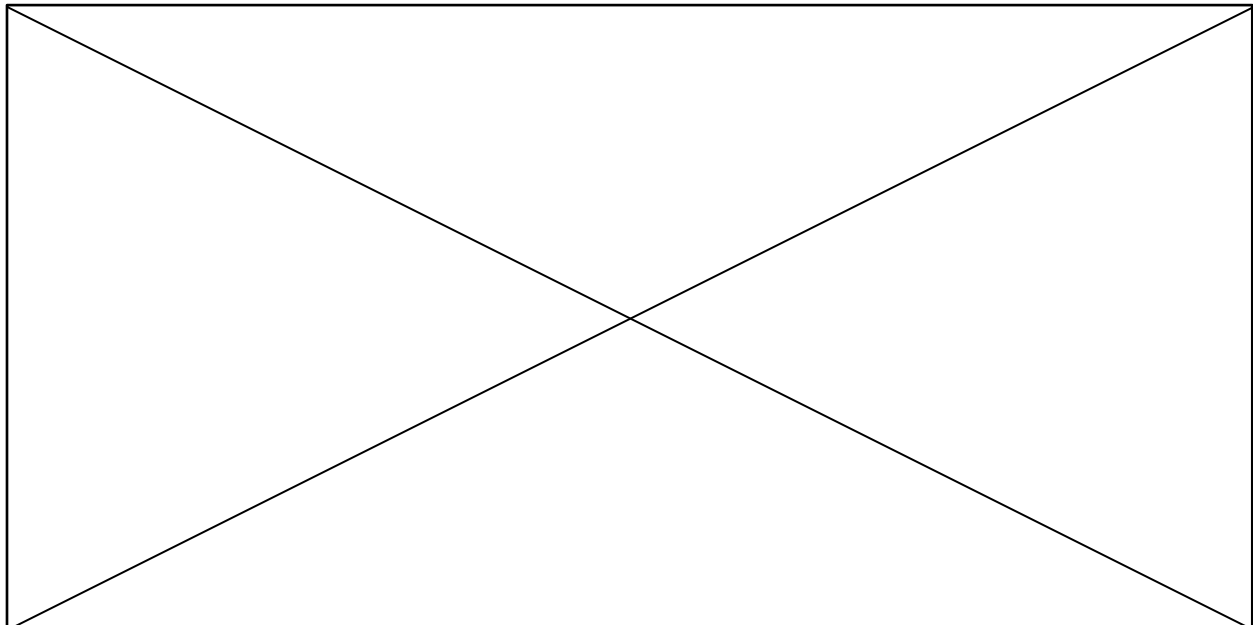
Next meeting

April 4th at 9:00 AM (Saskatchewan), 10:00 AM (Manitoba).

Annette closed the meeting at 11:05 AM.

Annette Taylor, Chair

Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister



Motion of the Commission in relation to the section J4 Review of the Ministry of Eastside United Church in Regina

March 30, 2019

Whereas Living Skies Region (formerly Region 4) of The United Church of Canada has ordered a Review of the state of Eastside United Church pursuant to section J4 of the Manual 2019;

And whereas Living Skies Region appointed John Burton to conduct the Review;

And whereas by Proposal dated February 21, 2019, the Living Skies Regional Commission established a Commission consisting of Tricia Gerhard, Linda Gunningham, and Donna Rumpel, with Tracy Murton (Pastoral Relations Minister) as corresponding member, to receive the report of the Reviewer, make such decisions as appropriate, and report such decisions to the Regional Commission for information and implementation as necessary;

And whereas the Commission has received and considered the report of John Burton as Reviewer;

And whereas a copy of the report has been provided to the Leadership Team of Eastside United Church, and was made available to members of the Community of Faith;

And whereas the Commission has heard from representatives of the Leadership Team of Eastside United Church and Rev. Russell Mitchell-Walker;

The Commission agreed to the following by consensus:

1. The Commission finds that Eastside United Church in Regina is in an unsatisfactory state. Acknowledging the good work that the Leadership Team has undertaken since the Review occurred, the following recommendations will assist the Community of Faith to move toward health, joy and excellence in the practice of ministry.
2. The Commission agrees in principle with Recommendation No. 1 (point 104) of the Reviewer and amends the recommendation to read as follows:
“The Leadership Team **must** develop a clear plan for the collection and remittance of money designated for the Mission and Service fund that should be approved at the annual congregational meeting in June 2019. This plan needs to be communicated to the Committee on Community of Faith Support of Living Skies Region for accountability and viability **prior** to the congregational meeting. This includes assessing any implications that the amount of Mission and Service givings collected for 2019 has on the Denominational assessment allocated to Eastside United Church for 2020. Failure to produce this plan may result in further action from the Regional Commission.”
3. The Commission agrees in principle with Recommendation No. 2 (point 105) of the Reviewer and amends the recommendation to read as follows:
“The Leadership Team should continue to participate in conversations with the Regina and Area Cluster about collaborative ministries. “

4. The Commission believes Recommendation No. 3 (point 106) of the Reviewer will be addressed in Recommendation No.5 below.
5. The Commission agrees in principle with Recommendation No. 4 (point 107) of the Reviewer and amends the recommendation to read as follows:

“The Leadership Team should continue to engage in conversations with the Living Spirit Centre partners regarding ongoing collaboration, allocations in assessments, and plans for surplus monies available.”
6. The Commission disagrees with Recommendation No. 5 (point 108) of the Reviewer and instead recommends the following:

“The Joint Needs Assessment Committee be advised to re-engage its work in developing the Ministry Profile, including the Financial Viability Assessment for Eastside United Church using the new national guidelines. This work should begin as soon as possible, and be completed by the annual congregational meeting in June, 2019. In order for the Ministry Profile to be completed, the Pastoral Relations Commission of the Living Skies Region needs to receive it prior to the congregational meeting.”
7. The Commission agrees in principle with Recommendation No. 6 (point 109) of the Reviewer and amends the recommendation to read as follows:

“The Leadership Team should increase the frequency and content of congregational communication. Information regarding the longer-term plan for vision and mission, as well as financial viability and worship leadership will need to be available in as many forums as possible (Sunday updates, weekly emails, etc.). Opportunities for feedback and questions should also be made available as requested, acknowledging the survey fatigue that is present at Eastside United Church at this time.”
8. The Commission agrees that the benefits outlined in Recommendation No. 7 (point 110) regarding using the EDGE Network would be helpful. However, given the financial resources available to Eastside United Church at this time, this is not a feasible recommendation. Therefore, the Commission recommends that the Leadership Team explore learning opportunities through United Fresh Start and the trained facilitators available throughout Living Skies Region. Consideration should be given by the Regional Commission to contributing to travel expenditures for this facilitator.
9. The Commission agrees with the Reviewer in the acknowledgment of the burden placed on Eastside United Church during this time of transition and encourages members of the Community of Faith to seek the support from the appointed pastoral caregiver. The Commission also acknowledges the burden placed on Russell Mitchell-Walker and encourages him to seek the support from the appointed pastoral caregiver.
10. The Commission recommends that the functioning of the Leadership Team be adjusted to include more frequent meetings, regular and transparent communication of decisions made to

the Community of Faith, and that minutes be made available to the Community of Faith as soon as possible following the meeting.

11. The Commission recommends that, in reference to the concerns named in the report regarding preaching and worship leadership, a worship feedback and reflection team be established within Eastside United Church to support Russell Mitchell-Walker, and that a mentor from outside of the Community of Faith be sought to regularly reflect on progress.
12. The Commission recommends that, in reference to the concerns named in the report regarding programs focused on outreach and evangelism, an informal review of any external initiatives be included in the process of updating the Ministry Profile (see Recommendation No. 5).
13. The Commission **requires** that, in accordance with s. G.4.2.4 of the Manual 2019, the order of priority for the disbursement of funds be followed. This means that the arrears owing to the former Wascana Presbytery **must** be paid prior to the disbursement of funds for “other capital and current expenses of the congregation.” The Leadership Team **must** develop a clear plan for the collection and remittance of money owed to Living Skies Region from 2018, as well as the current assessment for 2019. This plan should be approved at the annual congregational meeting in June, 2019 and needs to be communicated to the Committee on Community of Faith Support of Living Skies Region **prior** to the meeting for accountability and viability. Failure to produce this plan may result in further action from the Regional Council.
14. The Commission **requires** that, in accordance with s. B.7.8.5 of the Manual 2019, the responsibilities of the Ministry and Personnel Committee be adhered to. This includes regularly reviewing the responsibilities and position descriptions of all staff at Eastside United Church, and conducting annual performance reviews of each. Consideration should also be given to assigning an individual on the Committee to function as a liaison between the Community of Faith and each staff person. Resources and support for the work of the Ministry and Personnel Committee may be solicited from the Pastoral Relations Minister. An update regarding the functioning of the Ministry and Personnel Committee needs to be communicated to the Committee on Community of Faith Support of Living Skies Region by the end of June, 2019.
15. The Commission **requires** that the annual report of the Community of Faith include a proposed budget (including the requirements to meet financial obligations listed above), and that this report and the minutes from the annual meeting in June, 2019 be submitted to the Committee on Community of Faith Support of Living Skies Region for accountability.

The Commission believes that many of the challenges expressed in the report of the Reviewer have at their root a lack of communication regarding the ministry, mission and vision of Eastside United Church and its financial situation. This lack of communication is shared between the Leadership Team, the various committees of the church, and the ministry personnel. The precarious financial circumstances of the congregation will need to be taken into consideration as they move forward with their vision for the future.

The road ahead for this community of faith, as for the wider church, will be difficult and filled with uncertainty, as we all seek new ways to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. Know that you have our love and support as you continue your journey. This is a time to come together to do hard work and in that work may you be reminded of what brought you all here in the first place – a sense of something new and different, a desire to grow in faith within these walls and in the surrounding community. May the Holy Spirit, the “Unknowable Mystery”, guide you as your journey to wholeness and health continues.

Executive Minister's Report – Living Skies

Youth Ministry Staff Position:

I have created a draft job description for the Youth and Young Adult contract position. I have contacted Kent Mohn and he has agreed that it would begin April 1st for one year, up to half time; due to school and work commitments he won't be able to be fully half-time for a few months. We agreed that was fine and he would submit his hours monthly and the yearly total wouldn't exceed 17.5 hours per week for 52 weeks.

Kent's priorities to begin will be to consult with existing networks and those doing youth ministry to discern needs and how best to connect to the structure. Kent doesn't think it is realistic to have a youth event at the regional gathering; however, he is looking at trying to bring people together at that gathering to consult on the Regional Council's youth and young adult ministry needs.

Website:

Jamie is working with the three regional councils to get content for the websites. I have asked her to reach out to staff and chairs of committees/commissions to get some content and ideas for what the pages should look like.

Zoom:

We are fully transitioning to Zoom for meetings, people seem to find it easier to use. We will work with three accounts, one for each regional council and one for me that is shared across all three for Executive and Property commissions to use. We haven't set up one for Living Skies yet but will connect with Julie and Tracy to figure out the best way to manage it.

Ruling from the General Secretary:

The ruling affects the decisions we had made about Members-at-Large. I think we are okay for this meeting because we don't know our full 'roster' yet, but those who we have named can only be members-at-large until the rise of the Regional Meeting not for the full year. Then moving forward if we want people who are serving on commissions and committees to be members of the regional council then we need to select from the members roster. There is no rule that says members of committees and commissions have to be members of the regional council; however, Pastoral Charge Supervisors and Liaison Officers do.

Transition Expenses:

All transition expenses need to be into the General Council by March 31, 2019.

Affirming Process:

I had a conversation with Julie Graham and it is her understanding that there will be a proposal coming to the Regional Gathering with a way forward for Living Skies Regional Council to become Affirming. The one request now is that we pay the \$100 fee to Affirm United for being affirming in 2019. I can't remember if we already agreed to this or not.

Nominations report to Commission March 21, 2019

Tracy Murton advised that the region requires people to interview the Licensed lay worship leaders and Sacrament elders for licensing. This is under the Committee for Lay Leadership Support. We have done up a call for these interviewers which has been posted on Facebook and will be in the Rambler on March 20. These interviewers and Liaison officers seem to be a continuous need with continuous intake. Do the Executive need to be involved in these appointments or can the Pastoral Relations Commission look after the Liaison Officers appointments and the Committee look after the interviewer's appointments. The Manual Indicates that one of the duties of the Commission is: Appointing RC Liaison Officers to attend meetings called for pastoral relations matters in B.5.4.2 but does that mean that the Region Council still needs to name them as they are RC Liaison officers?

A call for Expressions of Interest for the current vacancies has gone out. It will be posted on Facebook and in the March 20th Rambler. We have called for the Expressions of Interest to be sent to the committee by April 17th as that will give us time to do a more urgent call if necessary, by the end of April. Nominations will be meeting 2 or 3 times by Zoom during early May to prepare a list of nominees for the Annual meeting.

We now have 4 people who have agreed to be on the Cluster Task Group. The four are Kevin Sprong (OM) (we approved him at our last meeting), Elaine Little (lay), Karen Mitchell (OM) and Vicki Nelson (lay). Margaret McCallum (OM) is considering membership on the task group.

Please consider the members in your congregations and approach these members about positions for which you think they have the skills and interest. Without presbyteries we need everyone across the region to help with this process.

Nominations propose that Elaine Little, Karen Mitchell and Vicki Nelson be appointed to the Cluster Task group effective immediately with the term ending July, 2020.

Bev Kostichuk

nominations committee