

**Minutes of Living Skies Regional Council  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Regional Meeting via Zoom  
October 28, 2020 & November 4, 2020**

**Wednesday, October 28, 2020**

**Session 1 – LISTEN / DISCUSS / DISCERN**

- Gathering of Regional Council** The 2020 Regional Meeting of Living Skies Regional Council of the United Church of Canada met for two sessions on Wednesday, October 28, 2020 and Wednesday, November 4, 2020 via Zoom.
- The first session was a learning opportunity and a time to “Listen, Discern, and Discuss” with (up to) 70 participants present. The second session was the formal business session and was focused on “Deciding.” There were (up to) 70 participants to the formal business session for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Living Skies Regional Council with 180 eligible voters.
- Rob Reed, Convenor of the 2020 Living Skies Regional Meeting presided during both sessions.
- Introductions** Rob Reed introduced Tricia Gerhard, Chairperson of the Regional Council Executive; and 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 Living Skies Regional Meeting.
- Opening Worship** Rob Reed led the opening worship and lit the Christ candle as a symbol of Christian community and to remind us that whomever we gather with, we are united in the body of Christ.
- Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories and Treaties** Darrell Reine made the following treaty territory acknowledgement:
- “We come together this evening from many places across Living Skies Regional Council, places that are on the traditional territories and treaty lands of strong and diverse First Nations and the homeland of the Metis peoples. As we gather, let us respect and honor these traditional lands. Let us pray that as we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, we will be motivated to faithfully move forward in partnerships with our Indigenous siblings and the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. We are all Treaty People.”
- Those gathered were invited to use the chat function to identify the Indigenous peoples and Treaty designation upon whose land they live, work, and minister.
- Deb Anderson-Pratt lit a smudge to bless our time together, acknowledge our Peoples, and show respect for the Earth.

We listened to scripture (Luke 17:20-21) in three different languages. Susan Reed read in English, Rev. SunDo Hyun read in Korean, and Salesi Takau read in Tongan.

Rob Reed gave a reflection and shared an experience that profoundly impacted his faith journey.

Rev. Hoem Lee closed the worship with a prayer, one minute spoken in Korean, and one minute spoken in English. We said the Lord's Prayer.

## **LISTEN / DISCERN / DISCUSS**

### **Proposal #1**

#### **Banning Conversion Therapy in Saskatchewan**

Grosvenor Park United Church introduced their proposal.

#### *Background*

Charlie Klassen provided background to the proposal. Conversion therapy is a form of treatment that attempts to actively change someone's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. At best, it's ineffective, and at its worst, it is destructive and deadly.

The proposal is presented to Living Skies Regional Council asking for support in the banning of conversion therapy in Saskatchewan.

#### **Discussion & Questions of Clarification**

The floor was opened to clarifying questions, asking:

- Is there anything in this proposal that I would to change so that I would be able to support it?

Voting on all three proposals will take place Wednesday, November 4, during Session 2.

### **Proposal #2**

#### **Remit 1 - Amendment to the Basis of Union**

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.*

#### *Background*

Charlie Klassen provided background to the remit. Charlie shared their experience as an non-binary person.

The changes proposed constitute changing five words. Words are powerful. In a lot of narratives, they do not exist. It is traditionally religion and religious groups that have perpetuated and forced upon people the idea that there are only two genders: woman and man.

Acknowledgement, especially from a faith group, is extremely powerful. We would like to recognize that our Creator made this diverse group of humans, not just men, not just women.

### **Discussion & Questions of Clarification**

The floor was opened to clarifying questions:

- Is there anything in this proposal that I would to change so that I would be able to support it?

A few of the comments made were:

- The need for this essentially political statement has nothing to do with unity and inclusion. Specifying individual groups becomes redundant. It mentions only a small group and confers singling this group out is more important in our institution where all are to be treated as important. Dividing people into smaller factions pulls individuals away from the idea that we are all part of a greater community.
- The current wording is exclusive of some gender identities. Using the new wording does not single any group out, it includes everyone.
- It's enjoyable to see language changes that include everybody.
- Why not include other issues and identities that are also barriers to inclusivity? Culture, having a disability, were mentioned as additional barriers.
- The current wording in question is related to gender and so we want to be explicit in our language, as it relates to gender.
- Wording matters. The language we choose to use is essentially telling those who read it to whom we are extending an invitation and welcome.

### **Proposal #3**

#### **Removing or reducing the 20% extra regional assessment for 2021.**

Tricia Gerhard introduced the proposal submitted by the Living Skies Regional Council Executive.

### *Background*

It was decided by Living Skies Regional Council that in addition to the regular assessment, a 20% regional assessment would be collected in 2020 and 2021, with the funds dedicated to supporting community ministries.

Over the last year, the Executive has received several letters from communities of faith indicating that the additional regional assessment was creating financial strain. Concerns were also raised around how the additional assessment was going to be used within the regional council.

Hearing these concerns, and recognizing the current global pandemic is causing unforeseen financial strain within communities of faith, the Living Skies Regional Council Executive makes the following proposals:

The proposals, as presented, was as follows:

That Living Skies Regional Council (LSRC) reduce the special regional assessment for 2021 to 0% and that instead, funding that is available from the 2020 assessment be directed to assisting community ministries within the regional council to explore and develop diverse ways of becoming more financially sustainable.

That LSRC encourage communities of faith to support at least one community ministry.

That the Executive and the Regional Assessment Task Group set up at least one meeting with the mission-grant supported ministries, and at least one meeting between them and the EDGE Network.

#### **Discussion / Questions for Clarification**

Some of the discussion points, comments, and questions made were:

- How many letters were received expressing financial strain due to the regional assessment?
- If the goal is for congregations to become financially sustainable, going from 20% to 0% is a drastic step.
- What were some of the concerns raised about how the funds were going to be used by the regional council?
- Can we rescind the original decision regarding the additional regional council assessment?
- Perhaps we could leave the 20% assessment in place for those who can afford to pay it and forgive those who cannot.
- Where does Indigenous Ministry fit?

There were around ten letters along with some comments.

The letters were not questions the use of money by ministries and congregations, but rather asking how the money would be used by the regional council.

Since we have already acted on the original decision regarding the additional regional council assessment, we are unable to go back and rescind. We are able to bring forward this proposal based on the how the world has changed and new information we have.

Funding for Indigenous Ministries across the United Church is overseen and funded by the National Indigenous Ministries and Justice Council.

Those gathered were invited to take the proposal to their ministries and congregations for discussion before Session 2.

**Closing Prayer**

Rob Reed closed Session 1 with a prayer.

**Adjournment  
(Session 1)**

Rob Reed adjourned Session 1 at 9:15 PM.

**Wednesday, November 4, 2020**

Session 2 – DECIDE

**Welcome**

Rob Reed, Convenor of the 2020 Living Skies Regional Council Regional Meeting, welcomed the regional council to the first session of the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Living Skies Regional Council 2020 Regional Meeting. The 2020 regional meeting is the first meeting held entirely online or by phone.

**Opening**

Rob Reed lit a candle declared the opening of the Living Skies 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of Living Skies 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**

Barb MacNaughton made the following treaty territory acknowledgement:

*“We come together this evening from many places across Living Skies Regional Council, places that are on the traditional territories and treaty lands of strong and diverse First Nations and the homeland of the Metis peoples. As we gather, let us show respect and honour these traditional lands and let us pray that as we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, that we will be motivated to faithfully move forward in partnership with our Indigenous siblings in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. We are all Treaty people.”*

We each used the chat box as we were able to type the treaty territory in which we were in during the meeting.

**Introduction to Voting  
Process**

Rob Reed reminded us of the voting process that would be used. Those gathered did a test vote.

**Procedural / Enabling  
Motions**

Shannon McCarthy read the procedural and enabling motions.

**ENABLING MOTIONS  
LSRC 001-2020**

**Shannon McCarthy / Darrell Reine**

**That Living Skies Regional Council accepts the following Enabling Motions #1 – 11 for this Regional 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 Living Skies Regional Council Executive.**

**9. Minutes:**

**That the Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Living Skies Regional Council be approved as distributed.**

**10. Celebration of Ministry:**

**That Living Skies Regional Council, having received confirmation of the readiness of the following candidates and admissionands from the Office of Vocation and confirmed through the Living Skies Pastoral Relations Commission that a covenantal relationship is in place with a community of faith or offer of employment to a paid accountable/recognized ministry, held Celebration of Ministries services on September 25th in Tisdale, SK to admit Hoeun Lee, September 26th in Grenfell, SK to admit Hyun Heo, and September 27th in Regina, SK to ordain Deb Anderson-Pratt and Bruce Kakakaway (The Manual H.4.8).**

**11. Reports:**

**That the verbal and written reports be accepted as presented.**

**CARRIED**

**REPORTS**

**Chairperson**

Tricia Gerhard reflected on the last year serving as Chairperson of the Living Skies Regional Council Executive.

A year ago, Tricia had no idea she would be chairing an Executive in the midst of a global pandemic. She thanked the regional and tri-regional staff as well as the 2020 Convenor, Rob Reed, for their leadership, support, and dedication as they all treaded through the unknown.

**Executive Minister Report**

Shannon McCarthy thanked the Executive for all their hard work since the inaugural meeting. Shannon also thanked Tricia Gerhard and Rob Reed 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. Bev Diebert is joined by Cherry Abad from Prairie to Pine, Julie Graham 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 Tracy Murton, Pastoral Relations Minister; Kent Mohn, Young Adult and Youth Minister; and Madeleine Mcluhan-Myers, Archivist.

Tri-Regional staff present at this meeting are Julie Graham, Justice and Communications 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.

Tracy Murton took on the role of Acting Executive Minister while Shannon was away on sabbatical. We thank Tracy 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**

Donna Brown gave a financial report. The audited financial statements are included in the Work Book.

Donna thanked Heather Dootoff, Financial Administrator. It is a tremendous amount of work to bring everything together.

Annette Taylor asked that the name of the fund mentioned in the Extraordinary 2019 Income report called 'Bull Dozer Fund' be changed to its correct name of 'Property Fund' and to discontinue the use of the name Bull Dozer Fund.

Tricia Gerhard assumed the chair.

## **Regional Meeting Convenor**

Rob Reed reflected on his role as Convenor during the last year.



Rob noted how blessed we are to have the staff that we have. He gave great thanks to all the staff for their hard work and the many extra hours they have put in for the benefit of the regional council.

Rob acknowledged the many people around the regional council who go above and beyond, whether they are ministry personnel volunteering to walk with other pastoral charges or whether they are folk who work out of the church and volunteer their afternoons, evenings, and weekends for the church. The amount of work we are all doing is phenomenal.

Shannon McCarthy brought forward a motion.

**MOTION  
LSRC 002-2020**

**Shannon McCarthy / Darrell Reine  
That Living Skies Regional Council will extend the term of Rob Reed as Convenor for Living Skies Regional Council to the next regional council meeting.**

**CARRIED**

Rob Reed assumed the chair.

**Proposal #2**

**REMIT 1 – AMENDMENT TO THE BASIS OF UNION**

**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:*

- 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 person of all gender identities.”*

The remit was carried with 163 in favour of the remit and 3 against.

**Proposal #1**

**BANNING CONVERSION THERAPY IN SASKATCHEWAN**

**MOTION  
LSRC 003-2020**

**Dawn Weber / Nobuko Iwai  
That Living Skies Regional Council agrees to the following:**

- To submit a formal request to our provincial governments to ban conversion therapies within Saskatchewan; and**
- That individual Communities of Faith:**

- i. **Are encouraged to understand why conversion therapies are so detrimental to the health and well-being of so many of lesbian, gay, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual our young folks; and**
  - ii. **Are encouraged to write to the Province of Saskatchewan stating opposition to conversion therapies; and**
- **That Living Skies Regional council encourage all Affirming and 2SGBTQIA+ supportive Communities of Faith to investigate local bylaws related to conversion therapy, and to become aware of the forms conversion therapy may take in their own communities.**

**CARRIED**

The motion was carried with 169 in favour of the motion and 2 against.

### **Proposal #3**

### **REMOVING OR REDUCING THE 20% EXTRA REGIONAL ASSESSMENT FOR 2021**

#### **MOTION**

Tricia Gerhard / Deborah Smith

That Living Skies Regional Council (LSRC) approves the following:

- Reduce the special regional assessment for 2021 to 0%, and;
- That instead, funding that is available from the 2020 assessment be directed to assisting community ministries within the regional council to explore and develop diverse ways of becoming more financially sustainable, and;
- That LSRC encourage communities of faith to support at least one community ministry, and;
- That the Executive and the Regional Assessment Task Group set up at least one meeting with the mission-grant supported ministries, and at least one meeting between them and the EDGE Network.

#### **AMENDMENT**

An amendment was proposed to change the 0% assessment amount to 10%.

There was a long discussion about the percentage amount the assessment should be reduced to.

Doug Haroldson / Cindy Bourgeoisun

That Living Skies Regional Council (LSRC) approves the following:

- Reduce the special regional assessment for 2021 to 10%, and;
- That instead, funding that is available from the 2020 assessment be directed to assisting community ministries within the regional council to explore and develop diverse ways of becoming more financially sustainable, and;
- That LSRC encourage communities of faith to support at least one community ministry, and;
- That the Executive and the Regional Assessment Task Group set up at least one meeting with the mission-grant supported ministries, and at least one meeting between them and the EDGE Network.

**AMENDMENT DEFEATED**

The amendment was defeated with 53 in favour of the amendment and 118 against.

**MOTION**  
**LSRC 004-2020**

**Tricia Gerhard / Deborah Smith**

**That Living Skies Regional Council (LSRC) approves the following:**

- **Reduce the special regional assessment for 2021 to 0%, and;**
- **That instead, funding that is available from the 2020 assessment be directed to assisting community ministries within the regional council to explore and develop diverse ways of becoming more financially sustainable, and;**
- **That LSRC encourage communities of faith to support at least one community ministry, and;**
- **That the Executive and the Regional Assessment Task Group set up at least one meeting with the mission-grant supported ministries, and at least one meeting between them and the EDGE Network.**

**CARRIED**

The motion was carried with 135 in favour and 38 against.

**Closing Worship**

Tricia Gerhard invited those gathered to enter into a time of worship.

The worship was led by Rev. Deb Anderson-Pratt, Rev. Hyun Heo, Rev. Hoeun Lee, Rev. Donna Rumpel, Rev. Rob Reed, and members of the Committee of Community of Faith Support: Sheila DeForest, Bill Pollock, and Rev. Deborah Smith.

*Welcome*

The service began with a music, *To Open Our Hearts* (video – The Strathdees).

**In Memorial**

Tracy Murton, Pastoral Relations Minister, introduced our time to spend in celebration and remembering.

*Ordinations*

We celebrate the ordinations of Deb Anderson-Pratt and Bruce Kakakaway.

*Admissions*

We celebrate the admissions of Hoeun Lee and Hyun Heo.

*Communities of Faith*

Hoeun Lee and Deb Anderson-Pratt read the names of Communities of Faith who are ceasing worship:

- Springside
- Livelong
- Milestone/Lang
- Rouleau
- Ruthida
- Kelfield
- Clavet
- Birch Hills
- Earl Grey
- Edgeley

- Lashburn
- Loverna
- Mortlach
- Mossbank

### *In Memoriam*

We continued our remembering by listening to music, *Spirit of Gentleness*, played by Lee Stubbe of Wesley United Church, and as we read the names of those whose journeys have come to an end since the last time we gathered:

- Ray William George Griffin
- Elaine La Marche
- Marguerite Alice Dougherty
- Irene Gibson
- Lawrence (Larry) Manley John Edwards
- William (Bill) Gilmer
- Robert (Bob) Armstrong
- Ronald (Ron) Harvey Sutton
- Colin (Dale) Wiggins
- Brian Ast
- Sharon Margaret Jeeves
- Dorothy Myrtle Morrow
- Jennifer Hope Sigurdson
- Alice Ruth McFarlane
- John Yeo
- Mildred Anne Morrison
- Roselis (Rose) Elisabeth Ward
- Roger Argue
- James Frederic (Eric) Ingham
- William (Bill) Robert Adamson

### *Retirements*

We also read the names of those who are or have retired. We celebrate and honour with gratitude for their service, and praise for how we have seen God at work in their lives.

- Darilyn Grigg
- Cathy Coates
- Wendy Gibson
- Elizabeth Goodson

### **Reflection**

Donna Rumpel read scripture (Isaiah 43) and gave a reflection.

### **Covenanting Service**

The covenanting with the Communities of Faith began with prayer.

We made a Covenant of Mutual Commitment, Accountability and Support with Communities of Faith whose completed covenants had been received and accepted

by the Living Skies Regional Council Executive on October 22, 2020 and November 3, 2020.

**Sacrament of Communion**

Those gathered were led in a communion liturgy.

Communion was closed with a prayer. We watched a video, *One More Step Along the Road*, and we joined in singing.

**Blessing**

Tricia Gerhard said a blessing.

**Adjournment**

Tricia Gerhard thanked those gathered for their attendance and at 8:33 PM, declared the second meeting of Living Skies Regional Council to be adjourned.

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Tricia Gerhard, Chairperson

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Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

