

Beacons of Hope

Friday, May 28, 2021

Registration

REGISTRATION

Members of Regional Council 15 registered online for the May 28-29, 2021 Annual Meeting of the Regional Council. In preparation for the annual meeting, the Executive offered three webinars so that members were able to ask questions for clarification about matters that will require decision making at the annual meeting.

Attendance

ATTENDANCE – Appendix A

Regional Council members in attendance at the meeting are included in Appendix A.

Regrets

REGRETS – Appendix B

Appendix B lists regrets received by members of the region.

Gathering

GATHERING

The annual meeting, held by zoom video conferencing, opened at 5:30pm for members to gather and to test connections.

Call to Order

CALL TO ORDER

The President, Janet Sollows, welcomed everyone to the third annual meeting of Regional Council 15, and called the meeting to order. The President welcomed everyone to this virtual space and lit the Christ Candle.

Acknowledging
the Land

ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND

Janet Sollows, President, acknowledged the land on which we gather. We strive to live in right relations, live out the apology, and move toward becoming the community that God calls us to be together. We are all treaty people.

Quorum and
Constitution of
the Council

QUORUM AND CONSTITUTION OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL

The President noted that there was a quorum present, and constituted the council in the name of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, for all the business that shall properly come before it.

Opening
Worship

OPENING WORSHIP

Opening worship was led by Jane McDonald, President-Elect. Prayer, song and scripture were offered to help animate the theme *Beacons of Hope*. The region joined in the reading of the Prayer of Covenant and singing the theme hymn, *God of the Bible*. Scripture readings were from Lamentations 3:19-24 and Matthew 5:13-16. Music leadership was offered by Trinity-St. Stephen's United Church.

Service of
Remembrance

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

As part of the opening worship, the President led the in-memoriam prayer and video presentation.

Procedural
Motion

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Jane McDonald presented the opening procedural motion.

MOTION: (Faith March-MacCuish/Jane McDonald)

That the Roll of Regional Council 15 be (Manual 2021 C1.1 and C.1.2):

The members of the Order of Ministry and other Ministry Personnel who are:

- a) Members of the order of ministry within the bounds served by the regional council; and
- b) Other ministry personnel in a covenantal relationship with a community of faith within the bounds of the regional council; and
- c) The lay members who are members of the United Church who are not ministry personnel and who are elected by their Communities of Faith.
- d) Appointed members, lay members of the Regional Council Executive who have not been elected by their Community of Faith.

That the quorum be as indicated in Section C.4.3 of the Manual 2021;

“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 that there be at least one ministry personnel and one lay member who is not ministry personnel present. Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose.”

“That the Bounds of the Regional Council meeting be the virtual meeting room and the telephone connections to that meeting space.”

“That representatives of General Council; representatives of United Church organizations; ministry students not serving a pastoral charge; the active and retired Lay Overseas Personnel; ecumenical delegates and observers; the President of the Atlantic School of Theology (or their designate); and any other registered visitors to the Regional Council meetings be Corresponding Members of this Council.”

“That the agenda as printed and distributed be adopted as the agenda for this meeting of Regional Council 15, subject to such changes as may be adopted and such Orders of the Day as may be determined, by the Council.”

That the business table be Jane McDonald, Heather Manuel, and Fay Smith.

That the minute secretary for the Third (3rd) Annual Regional Council meeting be Jennifer Taylor.

The President will chair the meeting, making any rulings necessary. The Regional Council will work together using the Whole People Covenant and Holy Manners as its guide. The President will apply the Manual 2021 Appendix: Procedures for Holding a Meeting and Decision-Making. Bourinot's Rules of Order will be used as the authority should a question arise which is not answered by the Appendix.

Guidelines for discussion the speaker will:

- Start by identifying them self (name, Pastoral Charge or Community of Faith)
- All discussion should be directed to the President.
- Each person may address the President only once about a motion, except the mover, who may speak both first and last.
- That the initial time allocated for the mover to address the motion be limited to three minutes.
- That all subsequent speakers limit their time to two minutes, including any reply by the mover of the motion.
- All discussion should be clear and concise and deal only with the motion.

CARRIED

Consent Motion**CONSENT MOTION****MOTION:** (Faith March-MacCuish/Jane McDonald)

That Regional Council 15:

1. Approves the Minutes of the Regional Council Meeting, June 10, 2020 (RC91-RC100) and Re-Call meeting, November 5, 2020 (RC28-RC51) as circulated.
2. Receives and accepts the following accountability reports:
 - a. President
 - b. Regional Executive Minister
 - c. Division of Finance and Administration
 - d. Division of Regional Services and Support
 - e. Division of Ministry Resources
 - f. Nominations
 - g. Tri-Regional Staff Support Committee
3. Receives for information the following reports:
 - a. Atlantic School of Theology
 - b. Atlantic School of Theology Senate
 - c. Centre for Christian Studies
 - d. Emmanuel College
 - e. Hunter United Church Building Fund
 - f. Office of Vocation
 - g. United Church Women
4. Receives for information the following ecumenical greetings:
 - a. The Rev. Dr. Marion Barclay MacKay, Moderator, Synod of the Atlantic Provinces, The Presbyterian Church in Canada
 - b. The Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse, Bishop, Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
 - c. The Rev. Jonna Jensen, Transitional Conference Minister, Maine Conference of United Church of Christ
 - d. The Rev. Dr. Darlene Brewer, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

CARRIEDIntroduction of Students**INTRODUCTION OF STUDENTS**

Andrew Richardson, Office of Vocation Minister, welcomed the students and candidates for ministry to the council. Introduced to the regional members were candidates for ordered Ministry; Heidi Cleary, Angela Clifton, Shane Doucette, Rick Gunn, Holly Hagerman, April Hart, Katie Logan, Max Martin, Selina Mullin, Dana Pardy, Ron Shaw, Catlin Smithers and Linton Worrell, and Designated Lay Ministry Candidates; Sandi Irving, and Brent Walker.

Break**BREAK**Welcome**WELCOME**

The President introduced Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu, Executive Minister for the Church in Mission Unit, and Rev. Alan Hall, Officer of Ministry and Employment, joining the meeting as representatives of the General Council Office.

Moderator**MODERATOR**

The Moderator, the Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, shared opening remarks via video message. He spoke of the challenges of this pandemic year, but thanked those gathered for finding ways to ensure that we continued to reach out and support one another through it all. It will be a different year ahead, and a different General Council 44 (GC44) gathering, but there will also be opportunities in connection, learning and worship. The Moderator invites everyone to take the time and energy to make GC44 the best experience it can be. He asks also that we continue to gather and celebrate one another.



GENERAL SECRETARY

General Secretary

The General Secretary, Rev. Michael Blair, shared opening remarks via video message. He thanked the region for its mission and ministry in the past year. In particular, the General Secretary offered prayer for the residents of Nova Scotia, as they still grapple with this pandemic and the tragedies which occurred over the past year. The General Secretary expressed thanks and gratitude for the work of the church in this difficult time, but also expressed excitement for what lies ahead.

ECUMENICAL GREETINGS

Ecumenical Greetings

The Executive Minister introduced Rev. Jonna Jensen, of The United Church of Christ, who was in attendance to bring greetings.

MILESTONES IN MINISTRY

Milestones in Ministry

Janet Sollows, Regional Council President, hosted the Milestones in Ministry event, celebrating significant milestones in the lives of some of our ministry personnel. A slideshow and music highlighted the years of service of those who have offered their gifts and talents to The United Church of Canada and are celebrating milestone events.

Retirements

Retirements

2020 Rev. Florence A. Antle-Brison, Rev. David J.H. Hart, Ms. Norma Manship Mills, Ms. Nancy Whitney-Latham, Rev. Dr. Linda M.B. Yates.
2021 Rev. L. Vivian Moores, Rev. Sandra L. Morrison and Rev. Lesley J. Simpson.

Anniversaries

Anniversaries

2020	Rev. Robert E. Chapman	50 years	Rev. Elizabeth J. Davies	50 years
	Rev. William M. Gillis	50 years	Rev. Russell L. Harding	50 years
	Rev. John E. Hennigar-Shuh	50 years	Rev. A. Ross MacDonald	55 years
	Rev. Dr. J. Allan McIntosh	55 years	Rev. Thomas G. Whent	55 years
	Rev. Morley P. Bentley	60 years	Rev. Heber G. Colbourne	60 years
	Rev. J. Raymond H. Corbett	60 years	Rev. Eric W. Pace	60 years
	Rev. Herbert W. Reid	70 years		
2021	Rev. R. Diane I. MacVicar	55 years	Rev. Dr. Norman C. Marple	55 years
	Rev. Duncan E. Roach	55 years	Rev. Neil F. MacDonald	60 years
	Rev. S. Elroy McKillop	60 years	Rev. Waldo G.C. Elliott	65 years
	Rev. Donald F. Murray	65 years	Rev. Lester M. Settle	65 years
	Rev. Edward P. Thompson	70 years		

Welcome

Welcome

Tom Woods, Pastoral Relations Chair welcomed new ministers to the region and wished farewell to ministers leaving the region, with thanks for their ministry.

Farewell

Farewell

A video farewell presentation was offered to Laura Hunter, Minister for Justice, Mission and Outreach for the eastern regions, as she follows a call to her new ministry as Executive Director with Open Sky.

CLOSING PRAYER

Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was offered by Teresa McDonell from the Annual Meeting Planning Committee.

Saturday, May 29, 2021

GATHERING

Gathering

The meeting opened at 9:30am for members to gather and to test connections.

OPENING WORSHIP

Opening Worship

The President lit the Christ Candle and welcomed those who were gathered. The President shared a message from Murray Pruden, Indigenous Relations Officer, and offered prayer to all those who grieve, and for guidance and love as we hear the news today of a great tragedy on indigenous land. We offer prayer for the lives lost.

The President introduced candidates for ordination, Rick Gunn and April Hart, to lead the opening worship. Scripture, song and prayer were offered based on the theme readings from Psalm 119 and the book of Acts.

Executive
Minister

EXECUTIVE MINISTER

Faith March-MacCuish, Executive Minister, offered her remarks to the members gathered. The Executive Minister expressed gratitude for everyone who has given so much of themselves to the living out of the Gospel in this time and place in our history; to members of the region, ministry personnel, communities of faith, staff, and executive. The Executive Minister also shared a poem from Julia Esquivel, which illustrates how the difficulties we have faced were hardships, and we can stay stuck in that place, but those hardships have also given us new possibilities. We have what it takes within us to be the church; to answer the Spirit's nudging to be transformed, to take risks and dream, and to not be afraid to try. If we all work together, the best might be yet to come. We may live in resurrection hope.

(Jane McDonald assumed the chair)

President

PRESIDENT

The President, Janet Sollows, addressed the council. She took the opportunity to thank the members for the privilege of serving for two years, amid a global pandemic and tragedy. The President especially thanked the staff and executive for their support, and invited members to read her full report, included in the reports to the region.

(Janet Sollows reassumed the chair)

Budget 2022

BUDGET 2022

The Regional Council budget for 2022 was presented by Jane McDonald. An information webinar for the 2022 budget took place on May 20, 2021. It was noted that, since entering the new structure in the church, there has been no "normal" fiscal year to gauge regular operating expenses. The budget for 2022 therefore shows very few changes from 2021, given that we are still operating in these pandemic times, and have not had the opportunity to gauge regular operating expenses. The changes noted in the budget are mainly due to cost of living increases.

MOTION: (Jane McDonald/Margaret MacIntyre)

That the 2022 budget for Regional Council 15 be approved as presented.

CARRIED

Audited
Financial
Statements
2020

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2020

Jane McDonald, chair of the Division of Finance and Administration, presented the 2020 audited financial statements to the Regional Council. A detailed account of the region's finances was presented during a webinar on May 20, 2021. The auditor, MNP, reported that the statements *present fairly the financial position of the regional council*.

MOTION: (Jane McDonald/Shelley Melanson)

That the 2020 audited financial statements for Regional Council 15 be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

Proposals

PROPOSALS

Proposal 1

Proposal 1

Jane McDonald introduced the proposal *Climate Crisis: A Call to the Faithful to Work Towards Climate Justice*, received from the Ecological Justice Working Group of the Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee. The proposal asks that Regional Council 15 call upon Communities of Faith to prioritize the urgent need to work towards climate justice in 2021-22 through prayer, liturgy, education and action.

Emma Seamone of the Ecological Justice Working Group, provided background for the motion, and members were invited to ask any questions for clarification.

MOTION: (Jane McDonald/Kathryn Anderson)

That Regional Council 15 supports the proposal *Climate Crisis: A Call to the Faithful to Work Towards Climate Justice* and asks that Communities of Faith share responses with the Ecological Justice Working Group, so that stories and actions may be communicated at the next Annual Meeting in order to inspire and encourage others.

CARRIED

Proposal 2

Proposal 2

Jane McDonald introduced the proposal *Support for Ministry Personnel Taking Maternity and/or Parental Leave*, received from the Division of Ministry Resources. The proposal asks that the General Council respond to this issue, so that funds may be directed for funding top up, and a best practices document be prepared, for supporting ministry personnel regarding leave. Heather Ferrier and Anne Cameron spoke to the background of the proposal and members were invited to ask any questions for clarification.

POINT OF ORDER

Point of Order

Ross Bartlett raised a Point of Order to have the originators of the proposal to speak to the proposal document.

MOTION TO AMEND

Motion to Amend

MOTION: (Sharon Lohnes/Patricia Betts)

That the proposal wording How Might the General Council Respond, section 3 (three) be amended to "...*help prevent discrimination in the hiring process by those who might take parental/maternity leave, especially young women*".

DEFEATED

MOTION TO AMEND

MOTION: (Sandra Nimmo/Terry Skidgmore)

That the proposal wording, How Might the General Council Respond, section 3 (three) be amended to "...*help prevent discrimination in the hiring process*".

DEFEATED

After further discussion, the following motion was brought forward.

MOTION: (Jane McDonald/Audrey Matheson)

That Regional Council 15 passes on the proposal to the 44th General Council *Support for Ministry Personnel Taking Maternity and/or Parental Leave*, with concurrence.

CARRIED

BREAK

Break

GURANTEED LIVABLE INCOME

Guaranteed Livable Income

During the break, a video presentation on the advocacy work towards Guaranteed Livable Income was shown.

Ukulele Church**UKULELE CHURCH**

Catherine Stuart, Children, Youth and Young Adult Minister, and Linnea Good, biblical storyteller and musician, introduced the council to Ukulele Church, a new ministry for children ages 5-12 in the regions, which offers bible stories, crafts and music each Sunday afternoon. This initiative was developed as a response to the question of "how to be the church with children during these pandemic times?" It is growing into a musical and spirit-filled way of being church together. More details are available on the regional website, through the minister of Children, Youth and Young Adults. The ministry has also received a grant through *Embracing the Spirit*, and encourages members to invite youth in the region to join.

Nominations**NOMINATIONS**

Alicia Cox, Chair of Nominations, presented the report of the committee. One addition is requested to be made to the Nominations report.

MOTION: (Alicia Cox/Teresa McDonell)

That April Hart be named Chair of the Division of Finance and Administration.

CARRIED

President-Elect**President-Elect**

Alicia Cox introduced the matter of the election of President-Elect. The nominee for President-Elect attended a webinar on May 26, 2021, and was given five minutes to speak to introduce herself to the members gathered.

MOTION: (Alicia Cox/Angela MacLean)

That Sandra Tomsons be acclaimed as President-Elect of Regional Council 15.

CARRIED

General Council
Commissioners**General Council Commissioners**

Alicia Cox, Chair of Nominations, introduced the council to the matter of General Council Commissioners to General Council 44 (GC44). Those nominated for General Council Commissioners attended a webinar on May 26, 2021, and were each given two minutes to speak to introduce themselves. It was noted that Regional Council 15 is eligible to have 15 (fifteen) Commissioners to GC44. One position is held for the youth pilgrim, nine (9) commissioners were elected in June, 2020, leaving five (5) commissioners to be elected today.

MOTION: (Alicia Cox/Angela MacLean)

That Kathleen Anderson, Daniel MacDonald, Max Martin, Kevin Parks, and Sheila Van Schaick be acclaimed as the 2021 Elected Commissioners to the 44th General Council.

CARRIED

The chair thanked all those who put their names forward, and requested that any youth who are interested in becoming the youth pilgrim to General Council 44 to please be in touch with the Children, Youth and Young Adult Minister. The President thanked the Nominations Committee for their work.

Grace and
Lunch**GRACE AND LUNCH**

Heather Manuel, from the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, offered grace.



GATHERING

Gathering

WORSHIP

Worship

The Children, Youth and Young Adult Committee led the afternoon worship. Although the intermediates and youth are not meeting as part of this regional council gathering, the committee and youth led the regional council in prayer, scripture readings, and song through a video presentation, as illustration of the theme.

THEME

Theme

The President welcomed Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu as the theme presenter. Rev. Dr. Ndhlovu is the Executive Minister of the Church in Mission Unit. He spoke to the council about lighthouses and their role throughout history to navigate ships safely. He spoke of the world today as a raging sea, and the need for people of faith to have hope. Declining resources and environmental degradation have led to conflict, discrimination and poverty. With so many challenges around us, including war, crime and the recent coronavirus pandemic, there has been immense loss and tragedy. What is hope in this context? Video messages from some of our global partners in India, Philippines and Zimbabwe, offered that faith is the assurance of things not seen. We can continue in the struggle, knowing that there is reason to hope and to keep moving forward. Hope comes from within, and is what allows us to stay ahead of defeat and see the dawn in the darkness. The word hope appears 167 times in the NIV translation of the bible. Through Jeremiah, God revealed a great plan for hope and future. Hope is indeed the birthplace of Christian love, allowing us to keep focusing on the larger vision and take small steps towards that future, even in difficult times. As we share love, we share hope, and speak out, breaking systems of injustice and work to make the world a better place. The theme presentation ended with the song *Go Make a Difference!*

ECUMENICAL GREETINGS

Ecumenical Greetings

Greetings from ecumenical guests were shared in the reports to the region, and also through video messages. Video messages from Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and Rev. Dr. Darlene Brewer, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) were shared.

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE WORKING GROUP

Ecological Justice Working Group

The President introduced Emma Seamone from the joint Ecological Justice Group of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Water and Regional Council 15. A video presentation was shared, highlighting congregational projects that are working towards climate justice through education and example, as well as the *For the Love of Creation* faith and action campaign. Faithful Footprints is a program of the United Church, focusing on reducing the carbon footprint of our buildings. Members are invited to share their stories and to be in touch with the Ecological Justice Working Group for any support.

PRAYER FOR PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

Prayer for Peace and Friendship

Laura Hunter, Minister for Justice and Mission offered information on prayers for non-violence and respect for fishing and treaty rights. More information will be coming in the weekly announcements.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan

The President welcomed Jeff Chant to the meeting to present the strategic plan. The plan was also presented at a webinar on May 26, 2021. The Strategic Planning Committee has worked on the plan, in keeping with the mission, vision and values of Regional Council 15. The document outlines the purpose of supporting congregations and ministries so that they may develop sustainable ministries. The three pillars of this plan are discipleship, mission, and leadership. The President thanked Jeff Chant and the Strategic Planning Committee, for the presentation, as the region now looks towards implementation.

MOTION: (Jeff Chant/Tony Orlando)

That Regional Council 15 approves the strategic plan for the Region as presented, and forwards it to the Executive for its discernment on the implementation.

CARRIEDBreak**BREAK**Bermuda Task Group**BERMUDA TASK GROUP**

The Executive Minister updated the regional council on the work of the Bermuda Task Group. A brief history highlighted the changes in the United Church structure, which resulted in the Bermuda Synod no longer operating as a presbytery. Over the past two years, the task group has been working on inclusion and representation, and assessing the desire to be in relationship. A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for an Associate Relationship between The United Church of Canada and The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda has now been prepared, outlining the associate relationship, terms, roles and responsibilities. Under the agreement, those in the associate relationship share spiritual and cultural ties and will work to support and nurture God's mission. The MOU will be in place for 5 (five) years. Congregations in Bermuda can opt in or out of the MOU if they do not wish to take part. Parties in the agreement would pay assessments, be able to access grants and loans of the United Church, serve on committees and be elected to leadership in the Region. In Bermuda, the process will involve each congregation voting, with a majority required, before it can be accepted by the synod, and then come back to the United Church with any further recommendations or changes.

Sing 2025**SING 2025**

The President introduced Kevin Parks, a member of Sing 2025, the development team working on the church's new digital hymn and worship resources. Kevin presented a background of the future forward plan for Worship United; the umbrella for *Gathering* online and the *Let Us Sing* portal for online resources that are easy to access, simplify copyright issues, and are readily searchable. These resources are planned to be available for the church's 100th anniversary. Church music leaders are invited to connect through Music United for mutual support and encouragement.

Mission and Service**MISSION AND SERVICE**

The President welcomed Roger Janes, Stewardship and Gifts Officer for the eastern regions of the United Church. Roger shared a presentation asking members to imagine what we would do if money was not an issue? If money is getting in the way of your congregation's dreams, then there are resources available for your ministry and mission through stewardship. *Called to be the Church: The Journey* is a new program that is finding a way to help pastoral charges to focus on their ministry. This program includes detailed analysis, individualized coaching, and staff support. We are all invited to consider making Mission & Service a part of our givings. Donations are used to help make a huge difference in living out our faith in the world. A video presentation thanked everyone for their gifts and for helping the United Church change lives through donations.

Living Faith Stories**LIVING FAITH STORIES**

Heather Fraser, Chair of the Faith Stories and Community Covenants Committee, was welcomed to the council. In this pandemic year, the committee has been focusing on an act of covenant; a covenantal prayer between communities of faith and Regional Council 15. The chair also outlined the guiding principles for the annual self-assessment form.

Introduction of President-Elect**INTRODUCTION OF PRESIDENT-ELECT**

The President invited the new President-Elect, Sandra Tomsons, to address the Regional Council.

COURTESIES

Courtesies

The President thanked the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, the staff, those who provided presentations, representatives of the General Council, ecumenical guests, those who provided leadership during the meeting, and all Regional Council members for their work and dedication to the region.

CLOSING MOTION

Closing Motion

MOTION: (Faith March-MacCuish/Audrey Matheson)

That Regional Council 15 designate to the Executive the power to act for the Region in all matters except those excluded by the Manual 2021; and

That the third annual meeting of Regional Council 15 be closed after the closing worship; and

That the fourth annual meeting of Regional Council 15 be held in the spring of 2022, at a date and place to be determined.

CARRIED

INSTALLATION OF THE PRESIDENT

Installation of the President

The President, Janet Sollows, installed the new President of Regional Council 15, Jane McDonald. Jane McDonald made the promises of the office of the President and accepted the stole and symbols of the office. The newly installed President, Jane McDonald addressed the council and offered thanks and gratitude to Janet Sollows for her service to the region as President.

CLOSING WORSHIP

Closing Worship

Closing worship was offered by the youth of Regional Council 15. The meeting closed with prayer, music and scripture, and the blessing that the beacon of light go with you from this meeting.

Janet Sollows
President

Faith March-MacCuish
Executive Minister