

ATTENDANCE

Present

Ordered	Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Jeffrey Crittenden, Elaine Graham, Judith Fayter, Cathy Larmond, Curtis Marwood
Lay	Bill Butt, Connie Ellis, Joyce Payne, Chuck Scott, Bev Slater, Mary Anne Silverthorn, Sandra Stock
Regrets	Eun-Joo Park, Paul Rodey, Philip Newman, Ken Hunking, Clare Walker, Mark Marshall
Corresponding	Elaine Graham, Tanya Cameron
Guests	Geraldine Robertson, Rev. Val Pitt, Janice Rising, George Pitfield

OPENING – Jeffrey Crittenden

*In the name of Jesus Christ, the one true head of the church, and by the authority given to me by the 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of London Conference, I declare this meeting of the Executive of London Conference duly constituted for any business that may properly come before it. The bounds of the meeting shall be this room.*

WORSHIP

Geraldine Robertson, Janice Rising and George Pitfield all shared their personal stories of their First Nations heritage and involvement with St. Clair United Church, Sarnia Ontario. George named that he remained unaware of his Aboriginal heritage until he was 59 years of age. Geraldine shared her intimate history as a survivor of the residential school system, and the devastating effect on First Nation families mourning the loss of generations of children to the residential schools. Janice explained how her work within the Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aid Society has evolved over decades to a position of hope for the future but that there is still work to be done. When asked what The United Church of Canada can do to right the wrongs, both Geraldine and Janice offered examples of the financial support that is currently offered and appreciated while also noting that further involvement in outreach programs would demonstrate that we are able to "walk the walk" with our Aboriginal sisters and brothers.

George closed in prayer.

President Jeff led the check-in for the meeting, asking us to reflect and respond to the following question: "As we think about the colours of the four directions, the foundation on which our crest rests, what is your prominent memory of a First Nations experience?" There were honest, meaningful stories shared with the common element being recognition of the continuing efforts required to improve relations.

CONSENT DOCKET

**Motion**      **It was moved, seconded, and carried that the Executive of London Conference approve that:**

1. the minutes of the November 26, 2014 Executive and the February 3, 2015 Sub Executive be adopted as printed and correct the spelling of Beverley Slater's name in the November 26, 2014 minutes;
2. any business arising from the minutes be dealt with at the appropriate spot on the agenda.
3. the agenda as distributed be adopted;
4. the following items of correspondence be received:
  - i) Rev. Mark Marshall – on behalf of Oxford Presbytery: Election of General Council Commissioners (Appendix 1)
  - ii) Rev. Paul Rodey – on behalf of Essex Presbytery: Comprehensive Review Task Group Events (Appendix 2)
5. Rev. Val Pitt, Minister, and Geraldine Robertson, Janice Rising and George Pitfield, members of St. Clair United Church be made corresponding members for this meeting;
6. regrets be noted for: Rev. John Brown, Rev. Mark Marshall, Rev. Eun-Joo Park, Rev. Paul Rodey U.C.W. President Clare Walker, Rev. David Williamson, Rev. Doug Wright;
7. the U.C.W. Report be received for information (Appendix 3);
8. the Five Oaks update be received for information (Appendix 4);
9. the following be approved as Directors of the Algoma Presbytery Church Extension Council: Kimberlee Evoy, Rev. Laurie Milito, Thomas McDonough and Rev. David Zub (Appendices 5 – 8);
10. Rev. Curtis Marwood (Social Justice) and Sandra Stock (UCW) receive a vote to represent their office

**AFFIRMING CONVERSATION** (Appendices 9 – 10)

Elaine Graham, Conference Pastoral Support Minister provided a brief history of her Settlement experience in The United Church, and her work with Hamilton Conference as part of its Affirming Committee. From the Affirming Ministries program “Open Hearts: Resources for Affirming Ministries in The United Church of Canada” in the General Council Office, the following statements highlight the core belief of what it means to be affirming:

*“Each United Church organization that is an Affirming Ministry declares itself to be fully inclusive of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities—and they back up their words with action. All United Church ministries—congregations, pastoral charges, presbyteries, Conference offices, the General Council Office, education centres, camps, community and social justice ministries, campus ministries, and seniors facilities—are invited to become an Affirming Ministry by going through the Affirming Ministries Program.*

*The Affirming Ministries Program encourages study of what it means to be publicly welcoming and inclusive. The program also provides support for sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and encourages the study of other United Church resources that promote the inclusion of other marginalized groups.”*

Elaine encouraged people around table to share their experiences; once shared, the

conversation moved to understanding how we can translate these into a positive change on the ground. Opening the door to dialogue to explore an affirming status may temper the perception that London Conference is super-conservative, as might taking advantage of the opportunity to raise intentional questions and identify challenges with the intent to change people's understanding.

Questions for further investigation include:

1. Where are the young people in this conversation, and what stage are they with this?
2. When it is your intention to be a place that is aware of inclusiveness, lifting it up and speaking of it as the call of the gospel, how do you want to put wheels under that?
  - a) Education
  - b) Want to hear people's stories
  - c) Willing to listen

#### INCORPORATED MINISTRIES

Wesview Apartments, an Incorporated Ministry of non-profit housing associated with Amherstburg Pastoral Charge, intends to move to legacy status and requested confirmation from London Conference that they are in accord with the procedure to move to legacy status.

**Motion**      **It was moved, seconded and carried that London Conference authorize the movement of Amherstburg Non-Profit Seniors Housing Corporation (Wesview Apartment) to legacy status in accord with United Church requirements.**

Iona College submitted documents as requested at the November 26, 2014 London Conference Executive meeting. The submissions do not meet both the criteria and content of by-laws so they will be returned to Iona College with the instruction that they engage the services of David Martin, London Conference's consultant for Incorporated Ministries.

**Motion**      **It was moved, seconded and carried to extend the period in which Iona College brings their by-laws into compliance prior to the April 15, 2015 meeting of London Conference.**

#### ANNUAL MEETING

Cheryl-Ann provided an update on the annual meeting on-line registration process via londonconference.ca. She explained the process by which lay delegates are to be named at presbytery prior to registering as a delegate. Not all presbyteries are following proper procedure, found in The Manual 2013 D 1.2 (d).

There have been concerns expressed by some presbyteries about the perceived overweighting of General Council Commissioners from a few concentrated presbyteries rather than equal representation across all eight presbyteries. Cheryl-Ann explained carefully and repeatedly that General Council Commissioners represent the conference, not the presbytery where they are from; they are not bound by presbytery membership. This will be considered when planning

for the election of commissioners to General Council 43.

Rev. Dr. Campbell Lovett from the United Church of Christ has agreed to be the guest preacher at the Celebration of Ministry service. Rev. Bronwyn Corlett from the General Council Office will be the Theological Reflector and General Secretary Nora Sanders will be in attendance.

Wisdom was requested from the court regarding the commitment made at the November 26, 2014 Conference Executive meeting to make Mozambique our mission focus. It was agreed that those people involved in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the Sand Dams projects be invited to present at the Annual Meeting on Friday evening, June 5, 2015.

The Conference Office will coordinate a special presentation to recognize the departing Foodgrains Regional Coordinators for Ontario, David and Kathryn Mayberry.

London Conference has been invited on a mission trip to Mozambique by our partner, Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM) (Appendix 11). Participants will be introduced to the projects that London Conference has designated as its international mission focus for 2015-2016. Bill Butt noted the CCM trip is a communications/public relations effort. He identified the presbyteries with confirmed representatives attending and named Lambton, Elgin and Essex as having no one identified to participate.

**Motion**        **It was moved, seconded and carried to pay President-Elect Cathy Larmond's expenses related to visiting Mozambique using reserves of up to \$5000.** Cathy Larmond and Bill Butt abstained.

#### DIVISION AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### **Nominations**

Chuck Scott explained all work related to the Comprehensive Review discussion at General Council 42 will be referred to a Sessional Committee that will meet immediately prior to General Council – the recommendations from this committee will be presented to the full court for decision. London Conference is to submit one Order of Ministry/Designated Lay Minister representative and one Lay representative to serve on this committee. Carey Wagner, Lambton Presbytery has been nominated to be the Order of Ministry representative while the Lay Representative remains vacant. General Council will then select one of the two names forwarded to be London's member of the Sessional Committee.

**Motion**        **It was moved, seconded and carried to forward Carey Wagner's name as the Order of Ministry/Designated Lay Minister representative.**

There was a request for clarification on Committee membership when a member's term expires per the mandate of the particular committee. The Nominations committee will investigate and report back at the April, 2015 meeting of the London Conference Executive.

Chuck identified the current vacancies of both the Chair of Ministry Personnel and Education and the Pensions Convenor and requested the Executive to share this information at their presbytery meetings with the expectation that suitable candidates could be identified.

The Division of Faith Formation and Congregational Life mandate is still to be developed by Priorities Working Group.

### **Finance and Administration**

Budget Forum is scheduled for Friday, March 27 2015 at Calvary United Church in London. Invitations have been sent out to the membership of the committee; work has started on the 2016 budget. The January 2016 Conference financial statements will be sent out following the meeting as the ones brought to the meeting have incorrect data.

### **Settlement Committee**

Joyce Payne reported various Settlement concerns and that the committee is exploring further testing ideas, helping Ministry and Personnel committees clarify their role, and working to make things simpler.

### **Education and Students**

Education and Students held their final interviews in January, 2015. Five candidates have been recommended for Ordination and Commissioning at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

### **Social Justice**

Curtis Marwood reported on current efforts occurring within London Conference:

- a) mission focus of Mozambique
- b) East London United Church Outreach is investigating the provision of food vouchers
- c) Palestine/Israel Unsettling Goods program with 150 Advent Peace boxes distributed across the country. There is a new program for Easter called "Let's Keep Talking" on the United Church of Canada website
- d) Jeff Halper, noted peace activist, is part of a speaking tour hosted by United Network for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel which is making stops at several United Churches across Canada during January and February 2015.

Curtis shared that there is difficulty in maintaining the division's activities when members do not attend meetings and when the chair is often absent. The Nominations Committee will liaise with Social Justice regarding the fulfillment of the chairperson's role. He requested that Executive members share interested people's names with the Social Justice committee if they have an interest in the type of work that the committee does; there is no requirement to have a specific presbytery representative but an active committee does require a concerted effort to maintain membership. The initial eight interest groups created upon the activation of the Social Justice Committee have since been whittled down to four but there is very little action within those remaining groups. Social Justice has no official representation on any General Council Office committee.

Rob and Keiko Witmer, Overseas Personnel to Japan are to be honoured at the 2015 Annual Meeting of London Conference for their 40 years of overseas ministry. There are very few overseas mission personnel left in The United Church of Canada.

**Annual Meeting 2016**

The 2016 Annual Meeting is scheduled to be hosted by Elgin Presbytery. They have declined to host; Essex Presbytery is next in the rotation schedule and the Conference Executive endorsed Cheryl-Ann asking Essex to host the 2016 meeting.

The Executive Secretary's Accountability Report (Appendix 12) was provided for information.

Next Meeting: Uncle Tom's Cabin – 9:30 April 15<sup>th</sup>

Meeting adjourned.

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Jeffrey Crittenden, President

Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Executive Secretary