

ATTENDANCE

Present

Ministry

Personnel: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Philip Newman, Paul Rodey, Doug Wright, John Brown, Connie Ellis, Judith Fayter, Jeff Crittenden, David Williamson, Cathy Larmond, Tyler Powell, Mark Marshall

Lay: Bev Slater, Mary Anne Silverthorn, Glenda McMillan, Joyce Payne, Charles McMillan, Bill Butt, Ken Hunking, Tanya Cameron

Regrets Clare Walker, Chuck Scott, Eun-Joo Park

WORSHIP

Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa introduced Joe Richards, director of Pearce Williams Christian Centre, one of London Conference's Incorporated Ministries and also profiled in the General Council Gifts with Vision catalogue. Joe welcomed us to the camp and spoke of the visioning the camp board had done in order to fund and expand the Centre's facilities.

President Jeff Crittenden iterated that the London Conference theme of 2014-2015 is "At the Crossroads" which lends itself to dialogue about the complexities of decision-making and making choices with the expectation of mistakes. Placed on a table in the center were the five symbols introduced as Jeff's theme at the 2014 London Conference Annual Meeting: brass cross, anointing oil, chalice, bible, basin and towel. Jeff asked the group to share the joys and lows of your Presbytery's ministry and to select which of the symbols represented your presbytery best. Responses trended towards personal stories, church stories, themes of continuity and personal significance.

Bill Butt noted that the London Conference delegates who recently returned from a mission trip to Japan would be happy to visit your presbytery to give a presentation – please contact Bill Butt.

Jeff closed by noting the towel and basin is the recognition that you are set apart, have been sent here. The crossroads is a gathering place but you can't stay there; best to share stories, hang out for a while and go on your way sharing what you've learned.

On behalf of London Conference he presented a certificate and corsage to Connie Ellis for recognition of her retirement.

OPENING – President Jeff Crittenden

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

ORIENTATION TO WORK OF LONDON CONFERENCE

Cheryl-Ann affirmed that the role of the executive is to be the dreamer and visionary; hold to principle of being church (peace and justice); and transforming lives we encounter outside and in. It is too easy to get caught up on the details of decision making which is secondary to the overall purpose. For future consideration, the executive will ponder how they and presbyteries are “more than nominally” involved in work of incorporations and there is a need for us to begin considering an affirming conference.

Motion **It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the Consent Docket after Tanya Cameron noted the addition of 2 more names for the Board of Directors of East London United Church Community Outreach (ELUCO).**

CONSENT DOCKET

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion **To accept the minutes from April 23, May 7 and May 15**

INCORPORATED MINISTRIES (Appendix 1)

Motion **To approve board membership of East London United Church Community Outreach:**

- 1. Carol Langford**
- 2. Sharon Ashton**
- 3. Judy White**

There was a request to find out about duration of board membership re: ELUCO and other Incorporated Ministries that have had long-serving members. How do we infuse fresh blood into ministries, or monitor the control and oversight of Incorporated Ministries? With the direction from the Conference Priorities Working Group, it was noted that someone will be looking at our camps but this still leaves several ministries without a direct link to Conference. Cheryl-Ann issued the challenge to be engaged with corporations within your presbyteries by encouraging others or volunteering yourself to be on their board.

PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVE JOB DESCRIPTION (Appendix 2)

Cheryl-Ann gave overview of the role and requested that the Presbytery Representative be the vital link between Conference and presbytery. It raises the profile and work of the Conference. It was also confirmed that all presbytery representatives are part of the London Conference Sub-Executive.

Charles McMillan stated that there used to be a handbook of Presbytery Chairs’ roles and responsibilities, and Tanya Cameron agreed to seek it out and adapt it for Presbytery Representative use.

Motion It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the role description for Presbytery Representatives.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

We are waiting on our auditor, Slavomira Bulla from PricewaterhouseCoopers to present her opinion regarding the way in which our financial statements are represented using brackets to represent a surplus. We will report back at the September Executive meeting.

At the May 7, 2014 Executive meeting there was a group assigned to create a proposal about the status of those ministry personnel facing criminal charges. This group will meet in the fall of 2014 and report back in spring, 2015.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE 2014 ANNUAL MEETING

Conference Annual Meeting

At the 2014 Annual Meeting of London Conference, the following proposal was approved:

“That without prejudice London Conference provide compensation to Reverend David Woodall up to \$100,000 to recover actual legal costs incurred in defending himself against criminal charges for which he was acquitted that were laid while he was an employee of The United Church of Canada, this motion to be vetted by legal counsel for London Conference.”

As required by the motion, Cheryl-Ann presented this motion to the General Council legal counsel. When there is an expectation of facing litigation, London Conference retains independent legal advice but in this instance the Executive confirmed that is appropriate to use the General Council Office in-house legal team.

Motion It was moved and seconded that having consulted with legal/judicial counsel for The United Church of Canada, and on the basis that the criminal charges were laid while Rev. David Woodall was the Executive Secretary of London Conference, were connected with his service as a minister within the Conference, and predated any insurance coverage that would have assisted with criminal defence costs, London Conference provide compensation to Rev. David Woodall up to \$100,000 towards actual legal defence costs he incurred in obtaining an acquittal of all such charges.

There was a concern expressed about the lack of a statement related to the ending of David Woodall’s employment, therefore:

Amendment It was moved and seconded to amend the original motion so that it now reads: That having consulted with legal/judicial counsel for The United Church of Canada, and on the basis that the criminal charges were laid while Rev. David Woodall was the Executive Secretary of London Conference, *leading the*

London Conference Executive to request the termination of his employment without cause before the charges were resolved and that same charges were connected with his service as a minister within the Conference, and predated any insurance coverage that would have assisted with criminal defence costs, London Conference provide compensation to Rev. David Woodall up to \$100,000 towards actual legal defence costs he incurred in obtaining an acquittal of all such charges.

There was significant discussion around the clarification of what the outcome of adding the amendment could mean to the interpretation of the original motion.

Amendment defeated.

Motion carried. Tyler Powell abstained.

It was wondered if it was possible to allow the London Conference Executive to use discretion about what proposals come to the floor of the Annual Meeting as this particular situation (criminal charges) has happened to other ministry personnel so perhaps the Annual Meeting is not the best place for this proposal to be debated. At the 2014 Annual Meeting, a current minister in London Conference recused himself from the court during Proposal 5 as the same situation occurred to him.

Cheryl-Ann identified that London Conference is bound to accept motions and proposals from a lower court (Presbytery) to higher court (Executive or Annual Meeting). We are obligated to deal with it unless the conference directs us otherwise. It is rare that the Executive receives proposals coming from the presbyteries prior to an Annual Meeting.

What options are available to be respectful of both the requirement to present the proposal, and sometimes uncomfortable topics that they discuss?

- Committee designed to vet proposals prior to annual meeting before it gets to presbytery floor for cleaner wording and meaning
- Instruction on Holy Manners including but not limited to instant tweeting of decisions; immediate Facebook status updates; personal notification to those named in proposals minutes after ballot results
- Personnel issues should be in-camera discussions

With respect to the handling of proposals on the floor or the Annual Meeting, there is evidence of the struggle and passion surrounding the debate so it is crucial to not lose that piece of humanity. Part of the problem of debating the proposals effectively resides in the different levels of education (of the process, of the polity, of the subject matter etc.) of the delegates at the table. There appears a general lack of preparedness for delegates attending the meeting which does impact solid decision-making.

Shannon Glanville, the Office Coordinator of Pearce Williams arrived to take us on a tour of the facilities and to demonstrate the growth and visioning of the camp. President-Elect Cathy Larmond led the court in grace prior to leaving on the tour immediately preceding lunch.

LUNCH

UCC Foundation – Proposal 3: Property Sales

Joyce Payne shared that the Middlesex Extension Council passed a motion that ALL property sales (not just those resulting from disbanding a congregation) will remit 10% to the New Ministries Fund. Tanya Cameron handed out a remitting form to satisfy our auditor's requirements to properly identify the source of the funds (Appendix 3).

Environment Proposal – Appendix 4

It was wondered if the General Council could also issue a letter help to lend support and credence to the work that we are trying to accomplish. Charles McMillan stated that the General Council Executive has not found it as helpful to have the General Secretary on a letter writing campaign, and wonders if there might be better uses of her office.

Motion **It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the proposal, "Phase 2 Environmental Study for Rezoning Church Property."**

Israel Palestine Proposal – Appendix 5

Motion **It was moved, seconded and carried to accept this proposal.**

There was some concern expressed about our ability to gather relevant information on this issue as we are so far physically removed from the location. David Williamson confirmed that there is a core group of members from the Social Justice Committee committed to gathering information on issues such as these.

NEW BUSINESS

Voluntary Associate Ministry – Appendix 6

There was much discussion about the content of the form, and who ultimately receives the completed form. This form is for use only by those ministry personnel engaged in a voluntary/unpaid relationship with a local ministry unit. Specifically it is for use by retired and retained ministry personnel.

London Conference's current practice of legitimizing these arrangements is to confirm eligibility and accept a letter from the governing body containing the motion made to enter into this relationship. This form replaces those letters going forward.

"Sacraments" was added as an area of responsibility; clarification of what is considered a current Police Records Check (answer is one dated within 6 months of approval of this VAM);

the requirement to have completed both Racial Justice and Boundaries/Sexual Abuse Prevention Training (not eligible for VAM if do not have this training); and clearly noting that the maximum duration for this VAM is not to exceed 5 years were all changes made to the form.

It is assumed that ministry personnel can have one VAM relationship at a time.

Motion **It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the Voluntary Associate Minister form for use within London Conference, with changes previously identified.**

There was a brief discussion about the maintenance and proper use of marriage license. The Conference Office has been requested by Service Ontario to complete a verification check to properly identify all ministry personnel in London Conference eligible to hold a marriage license. Cheryl-Ann noted that there is internal discipline in place if someone uses their United Church marriage license to perform civil marriages.

Mennonite Proposal – Appendix 7

Bev Slater was prompted to submit this proposal as a result of the London Free Press article that had the headline: “Mennonite cell linked to cocaine smuggling”. Use of the term “Mennonite Cell” rather than “residents of Norfolk” is offensive; the Mennonite church pastor has responded to the article in a Letter to the Editor identifying that there are many types of Mennonites and it is unfair to lump all types together. In solidarity, we feel the pain of our Mennonite friends and therefore it is requested to send our letter of regret over the inappropriate use of the term “Mennonite cell” to the London Free Press and send a copy of the letter to the Mennonite church.

Motion **It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the proposal “Sharing the concern of our Mennonite brothers and sisters.”**

It was suggested that as well, include in the letter a suggestion to the London Free Press that they research and profile the Mennonite Community Church.

A copy of the letter will also be placed on the London Conference website.

Finance and Administration

Motion It was moved, seconded and carried that London Conference authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 to support the participation of Malawian youth to attend the International Rural Church Association event in their homeland.

London Conference has been involved in Rural Life ministry for a very long time. The Rural Life and Small Member Church committee exists within the Division of Mission in Canada budget, and they have historically used their \$1,200 budget for various event registrations.

Motion It was moved, seconded and carried to receive the May, 2014 Financial Statements for information. (Appendix 8)

Motion It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the Conference Executive Secretary's Accountability Report for information. (Appendix 9)

NEXT MEETING - FIVE OAKS

The plan is to arrive at noon on September 10, look at plans with the 4 other Conferences, and enjoy a shared dinner followed by building partnerships. London Conference will have our own executive meeting the morning of the 11th. Tanya and CASS will send out accommodation information. In the spirit of extending hospitality to those Conferences that have yet to experience Five Oaks, London Conference has agreed to the *more rustic* accommodation.

OTHER BUSINESS

Middlesex Presbytery would like the consent of the Executive to have a presence at the pride parade for London to set up a display space in that park. Will London Conference endorse their presence? The Executive agreed to endorse their presence. There are currently two affirming congregations in London Conference: Victoria Ave. in Chatham (Kent Presbytery) and First-St. Andrew's in London (Middlesex Presbytery). These two congregations have organized a bus to attend the World Pride Parade in Toronto and if you want to join then let them know.

Motion It was moved, seconded and carried to endorse the Sub-Executive of London Conference to do its work.

Meeting adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: September 10 – 11, 2014 at Five Oaks Retreat Centre, Paris Ontario