

ATTENDANCE

Present

Ordered Cathy Larmond, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Mark Marshall, Doug Wright, Mark Ferrier, Sheila MacGregor, Jeff Crittenden, Kenji Marui, Carey Wagner, Curtis Marwood, John Brown, Eun Joo Park

Lay Wendy Brown, Glenda McMillan, Ken Hunking, Chuck Scott, Bill Butt, Tanya Cameron, Bev Slater, Mary Anne Silverthorn, Betsy Exley

OPENING – Cathy Larmond

*In the name of Jesus Christ, the one true head of the church, and by the authority given to me by the 91st 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.*

MINUTES

**Motion** It was moved, seconded and carried to accept the minutes from June 16, 2015, June 24, 2015 and July 16, 2015.

FAIRFIELD MUSEUM UPDATE

Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa provided an update on the Fairfield Museum discussion initiated at the June 16, 2015 meeting of the London Executive with regards to return of land. She confirmed the provenance of London Conference's ownership for both the land across the road from the museum and Fairfield Museum itself.

There was general discussion of the possibility of covenants/restrictions/conditions that could be placed on the transfer of the land to the Delaware Nation of Moraviantown; for example, the transfer of land could be conditional upon building an interpretive centre. There was additional conversation on the concept that "a gift is a gift" and it is not possible to control what happens to a gift after it is given. So should we put restrictions on land use at transfer? Cheryl-Ann requested the wisdom of Conference Executive to advise on the real estate transaction. Jeff Crittenden shared Chief Peters' vision for the use of the land under discussion.

Currently the real estate agreement includes the transfer of vacant land for interpretive centre at a nominal cost and that Chief Peters allows the Canada Foodgrains Growing Project to continue until construction of the interpretive centre is started. Cheryl-Ann received affirmation from the Executive that she is to continue drafting the real estate transaction in consultation with legal advice.

Jeff Crittenden provided grace for lunch.

OPENING WORSHIP

President Cathy Larmond opened with her Conference theme of “Travelling Along With You” and introduced new symbol of the compass as a way to help us find our way; however, the compass only provides the direction and what we really want is a Global Positioning System device (GPS) to provide all the details and the exact route. But life doesn’t give us turn by turn directions.

The Executive was asked to talk about their own division or presbytery and reason why you are here as a member of the Executive. We were asked to expound on the how our role is “in the process of recalculating as a result of decisions made in Cornerbrook, NL at General Council 42”.

#### AFFIRMING UPDATE

Chuck Scott, Nominations confirmed there were expressions of interest for being part of the Affirming process of London Conference. He will report back at the next Executive meeting in November, 2015.

#### MOZAMBIQUE

Several members from London Conference, including President Cathy Larmond visited Mozambique as a project to open the door to global concerns. The Executive was asked how to continue the discussion of this project beyond promoting fundraising for particular projects and instead leverage this trip into bringing attention to global concerns. Currently there are a few members of the Mozambique trip that are doing presentations in their presbyteries; how can this be a teaching moment to the wider church?

Cheryl-Ann noted that by November, 2015 London Conference will need to reconsider our relationship with PEDRA Girls Bursary commitment to the Christian Council of Mozambique as a result of the requirement to enter into new partnership agreement (the current relationship with CCM and the General Council Office will end before 2016). Do we start a new relationship between PEDRA and London Conference? Investigating a new relationship involves thoughtful consideration of the following: Careful articulation of the principle of where do we get involved and why? Does this mission project align with our style of ministry? If not, we must trust that others pick up the work and instead we turn our attention to that which aligns with our ethos within The United Church of Canada. There is a lot of program choice for people to support and have continued engagement. Expand into broader questions of girl’s education; food distribution; and so on. How is this different from the Ethiopian project?

The Executive decided to defer a decision on this until the November, 2015 meeting of the Executive at which time more information will be provided: Associated costs, partnering with other groups that already do this.

#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE LONDON CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING?

Executive members contributed several reasons for the purpose of the London Conference Annual Meeting: Celebration of Ministry, priority setting, passing the budget, collegial networking, education, inspire church for coming year, give congregations a voice.

#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE?

Executive members noted that the purpose for a Children's Conference included nurture and care for spiritual direction, building relationships, experiences and connections, and help children understand why they are church.

Betsy Exley, Minister of Faith Formation presented five years' worth of attendance data of the Children at Conference program (Appendix 1). Included was a request to the Conference Executive to approve moving the Children at Conference weekend away from its traditional dates of the same weekend as the Annual Meeting. This different date would allow increased participation in each of Annual Meeting and Children at Conference of Conference delegates that currently have to choose between events.

Eun-Joo Park expressed concern that this movement towards an alternate weekend limits and marginalizes Algoma's participation. Eun-Joo confirmed the hardship of travelling from Algoma to London two weekends apart yet also stated not sure of the best solution of how to include Algoma on a separate weekend. Do we work out a van to drive a group of children down from Algoma?

The Executive was warm to the idea of NOT having children present in the court on Sunday morning of the Annual Meeting. Could the experiment for 2016 be that Children at Conference is held the same weekend as the Annual Meeting but not have the children attend on Sunday? Could group transport be organized for Algoma children?

It was suggested that a better experiment would be to hold Children at Conference on a different weekend while addressing concerns about Algoma:

1. Make commitment of financial support to transport children and youth (Duty of Care) to attend Youth Forum and Children at Conference

Eun-Joo provided clarification that money is not the issue but instead is the issue of the dates and timing of the events.

2. Continue to provide a measure of financial support
3. Authorize the Executive Secretary and Minister of Faith Formation to have a conversation with Manitou Conference to work in partnership to resource, as works for them, a partnership with Algoma youth

There was discussion concerning how best to enable Algoma to feel like a full participant in London Conference.

Cheryl-Ann confirmed that every Presbytery in London Conference has a representative present at this meeting; a Presbytery's choice is to either send the representative or allow someone else to come via motion at the presbytery should the named representative not be able to attend. Travel will be paid for Algoma's representative.

The conversation moved back to the original discussion of moving the date of Children at Conference to a separate weekend from the Annual Meeting. It was discussed that it is unfair to ask individuals to choose (leadership) between two events so the Executive was supportive of moving the date.

**Motion**        **It was moved, seconded and carried that Children at Conference to move to a separate weekend from the Annual Meeting for 2016.**

The Executive is called to be proactive in addressing northern isolation. Algoma will be encouraged to offer suggestions.

#### IONA COLLEGE

Awaiting notice of their September Annual Meeting.

#### STAFF SUPPORT COMMITTEE

No report.

#### NOMINATIONS

No report.

#### COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

No report.

#### FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Bev Slater and Mary Anne Silverthorn presented the financial statements at August 31, 2015 (Appendix 2). Overall the Conference is in a reasonable financial position.

#### MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL AND EDUCATION

Mark Ferrier reported that there had been no division meeting since this time last year; one will be organized shortly.

**Motion**        **It was moved and seconded that Rev. David Woodall, having fulfilled the conditions established in the July 3, 2014 agreement, be reinstated as an Ordained Minister in good standing in London Conference.**

Cheryl-Ann provided clarification of the process and efforts made by all parties to ensure David met the requirements to return to good standing. (Appendix 3).

Motion carried.

#### SOCIAL JUSTICE DIVISION

Social Justice will be convening a meeting of the division in the fall of 2015. Curtis Marwood described efforts to revive the Social Justice committee and initiate projects with the plan to become a focussed group with a target project.

There was general discussion of the various refugee sponsorship initiatives occurring throughout the various Presbyteries, at both a congregational and presbytery level. Curtis requested that anyone who is involved with the Syrian appeal to put names forward to him to build a network. The Syrian refugees are impetus for renewed interest in supporting refugees from all parts of the world. The Executive was counselled to contact the General Council Office representative for details on refugee sponsorship. (Appendix 4)

Curtis also wondered if the effects of the wind turbines could be considered a justice issue and if there is a role for the church to play; this will be discussed with the Social Justice committee.

#### EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT (Appendix 5)

Cheryl-Ann asked the Executive to consider adding young people to the table. There was general discussion including evaluation of the capacity for the executive to add members (corresponding member, member-at-large) And various options to accommodate youth.

**Motion**        **It was moved, seconded and carried to create a position for a youth and young adult under the age of 30 to be a corresponding member of London Conference Executive until the rise of Conference 2016.**

**Motion**        **It was moved, seconded and carried to receive all reports for information.**

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#### END OF DAY ONE

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#### **SEPTEMBER 17, 2015**

President Cathy Larmond opened the morning with worship with request to travel always in the way that God calls us.

#### GENERAL COUNCIL 42 DECISIONS

Cheryl-Ann reported on the outcome of some of the decisions made at General Council 42, including entering into full communion with the United Church of Christ. Celebration of that relationship is October 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:00pm at St. Andrew's United Church in Niagara Falls. As a Conference we would consider mileage paid to those bringing a carload from our Conference to participate in this celebration.

It was confirmed that a full communion agreement involves members as well as ministry personnel. How do we learn to partner within the agreement? What are similar structures we might twin with in Michigan? It means we no longer have to go through the Admissions process for those that are in full communion. Where does the diaconal community fall into this paradigm? Partnership of agreements is "Order of Ministry" so applies to diaconal and ordained; Designated Lay Ministry personnel are not eligible.

One of the areas that will be investigated is the applicability and logistics of cross border job posting between us and others in partnership agreement. Cheryl-Ann asked the group to consider the possibility of a United Church of Christ member Michigan being a corresponding member and theological reflector for the London Conference Executive.

Cheryl-Ann explained the differences and process between full communion and mutual recognition of ministers with The United Church of Christ USA, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), and United Church of Christ in the Philippines. The theory is in place; the mechanisms will be finalized within the year.

#### ONE ORDER OF MINISTRY

With the move towards One Order of Ministry, it is crucial to understand our current educational process in order to appreciate what is required in training for our different streams of ministry. This proposal requires a Level 3 Remit. There is a period of two years to study the document and potential process prior to sessions voting on this proposal.

#### DIVESTMENT OF FOSSIL FUELS

The decision to divest from fossil fuel created havoc in Alberta Northwest Conference, and the United Church Foundation is conflicted about how to divest as the proposal to divest is not referencing Conferences, congregations or presbyteries specifically. There was discussion and concern expressed about what the implications mean for our members.

**Motion**        **It was moved and seconded that London Conference Executive express care and concern to all presbyteries and their members as we explore the effect of divestment decisions made at General Council 42.**

There was a concern noted with how this message can be expressed as both appreciating how difficult this is for members but also upholding General Council 42 decisions. What is our statement to them? Could we add "as we explore the significance of decisions made at gc42?"

**Motion** regarding sending a letter of concern carried.

Prior to breaking for lunch, Cheryl-Ann invited the Executive to gather into three groups and outlined the agenda for the rest of meeting:

1. One group explores “covenant” and how do congregations self-assess? Explores congregations/communities of faith and region?
2. One group explores what does a region need to give? How does a region support? What would be support needed from region and how would that happen? How are we equipping congregations to be faithful?
3. One group would looks like a healthy region to feel for us like it would work and encourage that group to make that definition without specific geography? What can we let go of?

The group gathered for lunch.

The Executive then spent some time in their groups discussing the items above. A summary of the noted items is presented here:

- support systems of communication in all forms between communities of faith, clusters and the denominational level
- contact point between clusters and communities of faith– enable networking, promote programs, interest groups, gathering around common interest
- annual gathering to promote community, enhance relationships, share information
- support communities of faith in pastoral relationship – search
- enable communities of faith to self-sustain
- leadership development, workshops – administrative requirements
- equip and train supervisors
- the region would be constantly aware of our relationship with the denomination – connect with the communities around that identity
- camping ministry
- managing lists of opportunities, organizations
- UCWs, Youth and Young Adults
- how do we work together as clusters?
- how do we consolidate efforts?
- does the region have an opportunity on teaching us how to work as a cluster?
- clustering if it is to be effective will be done around common interest
- we’ve enabled the silo because we’ve given the autonomy
- how do we give the freedom and at the same time provide the support?
- “within the denominational guidelines”
- what does this mean for us? – communities of faith are asking this question
- Exodus imagery – we’ve been given freedom – we may have to live in the wilderness for 40 years before we realize what that mean
- resourcing professionals
- lighthouse model
- give funding to successful communities of faith who do things well to share their information

- what are the implications of the freedom I'm given and what are the restrictions which will be imposed to stay within the denominational guidelines

Cheryl-Ann questioned the "How" of all of these important things happening? Who initiates – grassroots? Formalized structure? The invitation was extended to interested members of the Executive to develop the "How" and present their findings at the November meeting. Cheryl-Ann demonstrated that preparations for self-sufficiency in regions have already begun in the form of workshops – (Trustees, Ministry and Personnel, Interview Team Training). The "How" seeks to identify implications of the new freedom a pastoral charge is being given to exist within new denominational guidelines.

With regards to the Covenant Relationship- is self-assessment the acknowledgement that they are doing "ok"? Where is the value in where we ask for assessments from? What is the purpose of assessment? How do we define a congregation – do we even define congregation?

Mentioned as evidence of values:

- Connections and their importance. In terms of regions that allow connections to happen, it is manifested through workshops and relationships with others. That we understand the between-courts relationship as one of connection.
- Personal connection to be known and to know, and is supportive that uses evaluations in a way that nurtures congregations and does not undercut them

Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: November 18th – at the conference office. Future meetings: February 17th, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016.