

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**  
**MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES**  
**Saturday, January 26, 2019**

The Executive of the General Council of The United Church of Canada met electronically on Saturday, January 26, 2019 from 11:00 am until 4:12 pm (EST). The Moderator, Richard Bott, presided.

**Attendance**

Mitchell Anderson, Sharon Aylsworth, Richard Bott, Kathy Brett, Teresa Burnett-Cole, Jordan Cantwell, Katie Curtis, Samuel Vauvert Dansokho, Paul Douglas Walfall, Larry Doyle, Deb Hinksman, Jane McDonald, Ha Na Park, Tim Reaburn, Deborah Richards, Nora Sanders, Arlyce Schiebout, Janet Sigurdson

**Staff**

Diane Bosman, Kate Rodd, Stefanie Uyesugi-Cooper, Mary Worrall

**Welcome**

The Moderator welcomed the Executive and constituted the meeting in English and French. He then invited those present to acknowledge the land and First Nations territory where they were situated.

**Worship**

Worship was led by Teresa Burnett-Cole who read from Romans 12:3-8 (the body has many parts) and Matthew 5:15 (do not hide your light under a bushel). Each member was invited to share a story of an item that represents a gift they bring to the Executive.

**Agenda**

Larry Doyle gave a brief overview of the agenda and introduced the staff supporting the meeting. He also brought the consent agenda to the attention of the Executive.

**Equity Monitors**

Ha Na Park and Jordan Cantwell agreed to be the equity monitors for this meeting. Jordan outlined where the materials (Holy Manners, Intercultural Lens, etc.) could be found on the [Commons](#).

**Community Building**

Arlyce led a community-building exercise to help the group see all the diverse possibilities available. The Executive was asked to work in groups for 10 minutes and discuss what could be done with:

- two dozen fresh cut flowers every week
- 5,000 litres of indoor/outdoor white paint

- 100 new dinner place settings, including flatware

The table groups shared their thoughts.

### **GS 01 Consent Motion**

The Moderator invited the General Secretary, Nora Sanders, to introduce the consent motion. Nora explained that items of a straightforward nature were included in a consent docket, but that items could be pulled and dealt with in plenary, if requested. The reports and proposals making up the consent docket are found at Appendix I.

### **Motion: Nora Sanders/Kathy Brett**

**2019-01-26-001**

The General Secretary proposes that:

The Executive of the General Council:

1. Approve the minutes of the Executive of the General Council meeting held on November 17, 2018.
2. Receive for information, the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Executive of the General Council held on December 13, 2018.
3. Adopt the agenda for this meeting as circulated, with any changes which may be necessary as the meeting evolves, to be made on the recommendation of the Business Committee.
4. Receive for information the following:
  - Moderator's Accountability Report
  - General Secretary's Accountability Report
  - National Indigenous Council Report
  - Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee Accountability Report
5. Approve the following proposals:
  - GCE 01 - Appointment to the Executive of the General Council
  - GS 02 - Signing Authority for The United Church of Canada
  - GS 03 - United Church Archives Policy on Access to Baptism/Marriage/Burial Registers
  - GS 04 - Task Group on a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel
6. Take no action on the following proposal:
  - GC43 07 - The Social Gospel in Global Ecumenical Conversation.

**Carried**

### **Working Together**

The Executive broke into table groups to discuss how to build relationships between the Executive and committees.

The responses will be shared with the Business Planning Committee. (See Appendix II.)

## **GCE 02 Appointments to Committees**

The Moderator invited discussion about this proposal, particularly about whether a chairperson had to serve for the whole triennium. Nora explained that there would be flexibility to change the chairperson part way through the triennium if the need arises. It might be preferable that the chair be a member of the Executive for ease of communication. Committees are supported by staff members, including help with report-writing and gathering the needed research.

### **Motion: Samuel Dansokho/Arlyce Schiebout**

**2019-01-26-002**

That the Executive of General Council Executive appoint the following people to serve on the committees listed until the 44th General Council (2021), and designate chairs where needed:

#### *Sub-Executive of the General Council*

- Jordan Cantwell
- Deb Hinksman
- Teresa Burnett-Cole

#### *Business Planning Committee*

- Deborah Richards
- Arlyce Schiebout
- Larry Doyle

with Deborah Richards to serve as chair

#### *General Secretary Supervision Committee*

- Deborah Richards
- Sharon Aylsworth
- Ha Na Park
- Katie Curtis

with Sharon Aylsworth to serve as chair

#### *Finance Committee*

- Tim Reaburn
- Jane McDonald
- Hugh Creighton (former member of Permanent Committee on Finance)
- Randy Manikel (former member of Permanent Committee on Finance)

with Jane McDonald to serve as chair

#### *Pension Board, GCE representatives*

- Mitchell Anderson
- Sharon Aylsworth

#### *Foundation Board, GCE representatives*

- Tim Reaburn

- Paul Douglas Walfall

#### *Joint Grants Committee*

- Donna Ruple (former member of the Executive)
- Jane McDonald
- Janet Sigurdson

#### **Carried**

After a half hour break, the group reconvened.

#### **Scheduling the Work and Decision-Making**

Deborah Richards reported that the meeting schedule has been set for four times a year. Between scheduled meetings, there will be monthly webinars for education, information sharing and discussion. These webinars will be limited to an hour in length and scheduled on a recurring basis. If it is determined that there is nothing to share for a scheduled time it will be cancelled/skipped.

There was general agreement for this plan if they are scheduled when most people can participate. The webinars will be recorded and questions or comments can be forwarded by those who may not be able to be present. Executive members will be alerted to existing webinars (aside from those set up specifically for GCE) by staff.

#### **Connecting to Regional Council Meetings**

Nora shared a list of meeting dates. There was discussion about communicating with the Regional Councils. Nora will write to the chairs indicating that the Executive members would like to connect with Regions at the upcoming meetings.

There was also a question about what the role would be of the Executive member(s) at the regional council meeting. Some clarity around that will help to ensure they participate appropriately.

Senior staff joined the meeting to be able to answer questions that may arise during the General Secretary and Moderator updates.

#### **General Secretary's Update**

In addition to her written report, Nora offered the following updates.

- Samples of the types of letter (received and sent) regarding the settlement between Toronto Conference and Gretta Vosper have been shared with the Executive. Most of the letters received at Church House have expressed concern about the settlement. Nora thanked Alan Hall for his work in this area.
- The Executive/staff leaders retreat at the end of April will be held at the Ivey Spencer Leadership Centre in London, Ontario. More information will be shared in the coming weeks.

- A recommendation regarding the location of GC44 will be finalized in the next few weeks and brought to the sub-executive for approval. The meeting will be in southern Alberta, and will be held at a convention centre/hotel complex. We have identified clearly the technical and cultural requirements for the meeting and hope that these will be met.
- In response to a question received before the meeting, Nora noted that Miriam Spies is the United Church representative to the World Council of Churches and she will be invited to send reports at any time there are updates to be shared about the work of the WCC. Recommendations about the Partner Council are being developed and will come to the Executive later this spring. As well, there may be opportunities for some Executive members and other leaders, for travel to meet different partners and develop an understanding of the work of the United Church in conjunction with partners.
- The Pension Board chair, Marcus Robertson, would like to follow up with the Executive about issues raised at GC43 and about other issues before the Pension Board and a webinar will be scheduled.

### **Moderator's Update**

In addition to his written report the Moderator noted that in the last week he had taken a media training course and found it helpful. He also met with the Affirm United / S'affirmer Ensemble leadership team. He was buoyed by their optimism and hopefulness. This coming week, he is going to Ottawa for several events connected to his priorities.

Following the two verbal updates there was an opportunity for questions and comments.

The Moderator and General Secretary thanked the senior staff who had joined the meeting for the updates portion of the meeting.

### **Insights from Around the Church**

What is the excitement and what is the concern? The Moderator invited each member of the Executive to offer their observations on what they see as excitement or concern in the church at present.

The Moderator thanked everyone for their participation and asked that there be a moment of silent reflection on what had been shared.

### **April Meeting Planning**

The April meeting of the Executive will be a planning retreat, with members of the Staff Leaders Group also invited to participate. The Moderator invited Nora to outline the focus for this portion of the meeting. How will the April meeting be structured? What are the important questions that need to be tackled? As the outline for the meeting takes shape, it will be shared with the Executive.

The Executive broke into table groups to discuss ideas and hoped-for outcomes for the April meeting. The responses will be shared with the Business Planning group.

### **Regional Council Meetings**

When the group reconvened after the break out time Jordan asked about attendance at the regional meetings. Nora will circulate the list.

There was a question about whether the National Indigenous Council like to have other representatives present (other than Teresa, Nora and Richard). Nora will inquire.

### **Commitment Check**

The Executive took time to reflect on how they did at this meeting with regard to hearing different voices and being respectful. There had been some sound issues and problems with phones, which was problematic in ensuring everyone could hear and was heard, but these were resolved. Including French, as possible, was noted as being important for our community.

### **Closing Worship**

Samuel and Jane led closing worship. Samuel asked the group to reflect on the pictures of the Executive and the staff “tech” team. How do we accept gifts – accepting gifts is an act of generosity and what do we do when we deny gifts? Samuel offered a closing prayer and Jane read in English and Samuel in French from 1 Corinthians 12:26-27 – when one member suffers, all suffer, we are all part of the body of Christ. Jane offered a reflection.

### **Closing Procedural Motion**

#### **Authorizing the Sub-Executive of the General Council**

**Motion: Nora Sanders/Deborah Richards**

**2019-01-26-003**

That the Executive of the General Council authorize its Sub-Executive to deal with the business placed before it by this meeting of the Executive and any emergent business that may arise prior to the next meeting of the Executive of the General Council.

**Carried**

The Moderator thanked the Executive and looks forward to the next meeting and lots of communications in between.

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Moderator, Richard Bott

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General Secretary, Nora Sanders