

## **THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

### **MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

#### **Draft MINUTES**

**September 21, 2019**

The Executive of the General Council of The United Church of Canada met by web conference on Saturday, September 21, 2019 from 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. 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, Alan Hall, Erik Mathiesen, Kate Rodd, Shirley Welch

#### **Constituting the Meeting**

The Moderator began with prayer and constituted the meeting in French and English.

"Au nom de Notre Seigneur, Jésus-Christ, seul chef souverain de l'Église, et par l'autorité qui m'a été conférée par le quarante-troisième Conseil général, I hereby declare this meeting of the Executive of the General Council to be in session for the work that may properly be brought before it to the glory of God."

#### **Welcome**

The Moderator asked that we remember the peoples who were on these lands for centuries before us. Also that when we recognize the land we recognize the brokenness caused by colonization and that we are recommitting to reconciliation. He then invited those present to indicate the land from which they were speaking. The Moderator noted that the bundle presented to former Moderator, Jordan Cantwell, was present with him on camera.

#### **Opening Worship**

Janet Sigurdson offered an opening prayer and a reflection on one of the seven sacred teachings - love. She referenced 1 John 18-21, "there is no room for fear in love." Janet spoke of recent events in the country relating to racism.

#### **Equity Monitors**

The Moderator invited Ha Na Park and Jordan Cantwell to remind the members of the Executive of the ways of working together with equity, allowing all voices to be heard and encouraging a culture of safety and grace.

**GS 23 Procedural and Consent (Appendix I, II)**

The General Secretary, Nora Sanders, provided background on the consent motion and allowed time for any questions.

**Motion: Nora Sanders/Deborah Richards****2019-09-21-028**

The General Secretary proposes that

The General Council Executive:

1. Approve the minutes of the General Council Executive meeting held on June 10, 2019.
2. 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.
3. Receive and accept the following:
  - Moderator's Accountability Report
  - General Secretary's Accountability Report
  - White Privilege Working Group Report
4. Approve the following proposals:
  - BP 02 Meeting Dates for the Remainder of the Triennium (updated)
  - GS 24 Delegation of Signing Authority
  - GS 25 Partner Council Recommendation
  - GS 26 Pacific Mountain Borrowing Resolution re: First Metropolitan UC, Victoria #2

**Carried**

**Agenda Overview**

Deborah Richards went over the remainder of the agenda for this meeting.

**Update from the Moderator**

The Moderator gave an overview of his report. Additionally, he spoke of his impressions of the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering in August, and his time in the Philippines earlier this month. He also noted that the first meeting of the GC44 Planning Committee had taken place in Calgary just after his return from the Philippines.

**Update from the General Secretary**

The General Secretary provided several updates to the work she reported on in her written report. Nora reported on National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering and the formation of the new National Indigenous Council. This group has not yet had a chance to meet since their formation, so we do not know yet if there will be a proposal related to the National Indigenous Council for the October recall of the 43rd General Council. She reported that the outcome of a survey with youth in the church will soon be shared broadly. Nora spoke of the early work that is underway to develop an online, ecumenical hymnbook. She also noted updates on the 100th anniversary

of the United Church; the White Privilege Task Group; the United Church Property Development Corporation; the external review on efficiencies being conducted with advice coming back to this group in the new year; the complexities of accessibility; and the planning for General Council 44.

Nora then shared with the group that she had let her supervisory committee know that she will retire next year.

The Moderator and the Executive expressed their thanks to Nora for her leadership.

Sharon Aylsworth, chair of the General Secretary Supervision Committee noted that the Committee is thankful that there is plenty of time to do a good search for a new General Secretary. She explained that a search committee will be formed for appointment at the November, 2019 GCE meeting, and will work with an outside consultant in the search. She is hoping for a recommendation for the spring of 2020, with the individual to start in September 2020.

#### **GSSC 01 General Secretary Search**

**Motion: Sharon Aylsworth/Deborah Richards**

**2019-09-21-029**

That the GCE receive with regret the General Secretary's notice of intention to retire September 2020; direct the Nominations Committee to bring to the November 2019 meeting three nominations from the Executive and three nominations at large, in addition to the Moderator and the Chair of the General Secretary's Supervision Committee, to create a search committee; and direct the Executive Minister, Ministry and Employment, to engage an executive search firm to support the committee.

**Carried**

#### **Comments on the General Secretary's Report**

Paul Douglas Walfall raised a question about the Admissions Handbook, which is out of date with references to presbyteries and Conferences. Alan Hall responded with the information that the updated handbook is almost ready.

Mitchell Anderson thanked Nora for her presence at the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering; for her grace and leadership at that meeting.

#### **GCE Travel**

The Moderator invited Jordan and Kathy Brett to share their impressions and experiences while in El Salvador with staff person Jim Hodgson. They travelled there in June to receive an honour from Emmanuel Baptist Church which was made in recognition of decades of United Church of Canada solidarity and accompaniment with the people of El Salvador and Emmanuel Baptist Church in particular.

Jordan and Kathy spoke of the reclaiming of Indigenous heritage which is beginning, and the need to strengthen and hold the relationships we have with Christians around the world.

**Discussion Time**

The Moderator invited the members of the Executive to share their thoughts and feelings with regard to Paul's letter concerning racism in the United Church that received earlier in the week, and how the church should take action. The group shared at length and a transcript is appended.

Nora noted that she would like to share the comments and ideas suggested with the senior leadership who would be meeting in the next week.

The Moderator highlighted the following items from the discussion:

- we need to take a look at all of our policies, and specifically the pastoral relations policies were mentioned
- education, not only at a congregational circle, but the regional circles and the staffing circles and the General Council circles.
- questions around whether there were tools that we already have, taking a look at both the affirming process and taking a look at the prevention policies that we have

At the end of the discussion time, the Moderator suggested that a task group be created with this as their guiding question:

What are the concrete steps that the Executive needs to be taking to lead the church in becoming anti-racist?

Janet Sigurdson, Paul Douglas Walfall, Larry Doyle, Jordan Cantwell and Ha Na Park agreed to be members of this group, with all members of the Executive being encouraged to submit thoughts and ideas to any member of the group. Nora suggested that staff assistance might be needed and offered to attend herself or have another member of staff attend meetings. Sharon wondered if this would be the time to also consider accessibility.

Paul agreed to convene the first meeting via Zoom. Deborah Richards volunteered to coordinate with them, as a member of the Business Planning Committee, as this matter will likely form a key part of the in-person meeting in November.

**Closing Worship**

Janet offered the closing prayer and blessing, centred again on love.

The Moderator took a moment to thank the members of the Executive for their grace and honesty, and the ministry that is offered by all.

**Closing Procedural Motion****Authorizing the Sub-Executive of the General Council**

**Motion: Nora Sanders/Deborah Richards**

**2019-09-21-030**

That the General Council Executive 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 General Council Executive.

**Carried**

**Closing**

There was a short discussion about the logistics of the meeting, particularly around voting, as feedback for the upcoming online General Council meeting.

---

Moderator, Richard Bott

---

General Secretary, Nora Sanders