

## CSRC Executive Report to the Regional Council

### **Regional Meeting Report:**

Our regional meeting theme this year is *The Stones Will Shout!* We look forward to gathering with folks together online this year and we are grateful for the time to gather together to Celebrate our Ministry together as Church.

### **Connecting within our Regional Council**

Although 2022/23 has been a struggle for many of our communities of faith, outreach ministries, and camps, we can celebrate returning in-person to a new normal! During 2020-2022, folks have used their phones, mail, video (Zoom/YouTube) for church and in 2022/23 we returned to a new normal, with most communities of faith returning to regular in-person worship. A number of communities of faith continue to offer online worship as an option. As a Regional Council, we continue a ministry of caring and support, having continued in new and creative ways. Volunteers, music leaders, ministry personnel, camp staff, outreach staff, and congregational support staff have all worked tirelessly within our Regional Council and are deeply appreciated.

As a Regional Council, the region has hosted zoom gatherings for both Lay and Ministry Personnel and for support, updates and education. Our website/newsletter continues to be a key tool for communication within our Regional Council. Many local and a few regional networks and local groups have also met to connect, learn, challenge, listen, and work together. The Executive also celebrates the significant work of the Regional Council Commissions, networks/clusters, and information gatherings.

Through both Commissions, the Executive and various groups, we have hosted a number of Town Hall meetings, network gatherings (MILC for example in Sudbury among many), local gatherings organized by neighbouring communities of faith across the Regional Council. We have also partnered with Shining Waters Regional Council around a number of events, including inviting Shining Waters Regional Council folks to gather with the Canadian Shield Regional Council at the Festival of Faith in North Bay this past June. It was a delight to gather with folks from both Regional Councils and the Executive is so very grateful for the 2023 Festival of Faith Planning Team. We are planning a more formal joint Festival of Faith in 2025 in Sudbury, hosted by both the Canadian Shield Regional Council and Shining Waters Regional Council.

### **Work of the Regional Executive**

Our Executive meets monthly (with the exception of the summer) and does the work of the Regional Council when our region is not meeting (C.3.1.1). Often the Executive has a very full agenda which includes oversight of the regional commissions, regional finances, regional policy, regional meeting, emerging work, and the Executive Minister and staff.

The draft 2024 budget will be presented at our regional council meeting. This past year's spending reflects an unusual year returning to a new normal following Covid 19 shift.

### **Monthly Work of the Regional Council Executive**

If you are interested in a detailed account and overview of the work of the regional council Executive, please see the Digest of Actions, which will be received for information at our Regional Council Meeting. The digest offers an itemized account of the Regional Council Executive since

our last Regional Council Meeting. It also gives you an idea of the monthly variety and work of our Executive. Please see the [Executive page](#) on our website to view all Minutes. We have also added a new link to our webpage which offers a close look at our finances, including audited statements as they are completed by the auditors:

<https://canadianshielddrc.ca/about/regional-finances/>

### **Working towards Right Relations, Anti-Racism and Equity**

The Regional Council also lifts up our commitment to equity across our work and living into Right Relations. The Right Relations Resource Team provide key leadership within the Regional Council and have an updated information section on our regional website.

<https://canadianshielddrc.ca/justice-issues/right-relations/>

The United Church of Canada is working towards becoming an anti-racist institution. For the United Church, it means encouraging the General Council Office, Regional Council Offices, communities of faith, and even Canadian society, to pause and reflect. The United Church has allocated staffing and resources for both General Council staff, regional staff and Ministry Personnel. The United Church is offering training, learning opportunities and discussion groups as part of a strategy of becoming an anti-racist Church. Practically, the Canadian Shield Regional Council and Shining Waters Regional Council staff have joined together on a one-year journey of reflecting, learning, re-learning history, theological reflection, and discussion on how to become an anti-racist Church and work towards right relationship. Staff from both regions met together bi-weekly to talk, learn, challenge, pray, reflect, and discuss on a path toward becoming an anti-racist church.

Both Regional Councils have encouraged equity conversations at the Executive level, as well as commission and committee levels of the church.

As part of our work around living into Right Relations as the United Church of Canada the United Church of Canada is asking Regional Councils and Pastoral Charge boards to vote on Remit 1 by March 31, 2024 and return the voting results to General Council by March 31.

### **Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization (Deadline March 31, 2023).**

This is a Category 3 Remit, and so requires a vote by every regional council and each pastoral charge's governing body. If a regional council or a pastoral charge does not register a vote, that is considered a vote against the proposal (A no vote, so please vote).

There is one question to be voted on, as follows:

**Does the regional council/pastoral charge agree to amend the Basis of Union to reflect:**

**That The United Church of Canada will be organized as follows: (1) a three-council structure, consisting of communities of faith, regional councils and a Denominational Council\*; and (2) an autonomous National Indigenous Organization; and**

**That once the new autonomous National Indigenous Organization is established within The United Church of Canada, it will have its own mechanisms to make any future changes to its**

**structure and processes, and, therefore will not be subject to the remit process under section 7.4.1 of the Basis of Union\*\*;** and  
**The changes required for the establishment of the autonomous National Indigenous Organization.**

Please see the following link for further information and voting material at the bottom of the website:

<https://generalcouncil44.ca/council/remit-1-establishing-autonomous-national-indigenous-organization>

Please see this link for review of the video of the Canadian Shield Regional Council Town Hall meeting focusing on Remit #1: <https://canadianshieldrc.ca/remit/>

### **Staffing**

One area of increased partnership between the Canadian Shield Regional Council and Shining Waters Regional Council is staffing. In 2022-2023, we saw transition of staff in our Regional Councils. Susie Henderson decided to retire from Shining Waters Regional Council in December of 2022. Susie attended the Canadian Shield Regional Council meeting in 2022 and we give thanks for Susie. Rachael Howes, administrator for both Regional Councils, transitioned into retirement at the end of May 2023. We are grateful for her many years of service. As a result of Rachael's retirement, Susan Whitehead transitioned to primary administrative support to Peter Hartmans for both Regional Councils in the spring of 2023. Donna Rutz transitioned to communication support for both Regional Councils, including website management in 2023. We added Celio de Andrade Santos Jr., to increase our administrative support to program staff in CSRC and in 2023, in anticipation of Rachael's retirement, we hired Kathleen Wolfe for administrative support. Celio and Kathleen both provide administrative support for both Regional Councils.

Dale Hildebrand, SWRC pastoral Relations minister, transitions to retirement in early 2024. He works for Shining Waters Regional Council but has supported the Canadian Shield Regional Council on various occasions in Rob's absence.

Jeffery Dale, who supported Justice/Youth Ministry and formation for ministry for both CSRC and SWRC, transitioned to parish ministry in the fall of 2023. Jeffery was called to Port Elgin United Church in the fall of 2023. Currently we are working quickly to find a replacement for Jeffery's position and we will be providing updates in the near future.

I have deeply appreciated the work of Jeffery Dale, Susie and Rachael within the Regional Council and they will be missed.

### **Strategic Plan:**

2023 marks the start of the implementation of The United Church of Canada Strategic Plan (2023-2025). Sharing the introduction of the strategic plan it states:

*"In partnership with regions and the Indigenous Church, the national ministry will dedicate focus, energy, and resources*

*to revitalizing the church towards a vibrant future. We will renew by strengthening existing communities of faith towards transformation. We will create by encouraging the development and sustainability of 100 new communities of faith, with a particular focus on churches that serve migrant communities. And we will invite by investing in sharing our unique witness with neighbours across the country and encouraging participation in our ministries, communities, and campaigns. This passion for growth will be enabled by leadership development, supported by denomination wide strengths, fostered by justice campaigns and climate initiatives, and realized alongside Indigenous pathways.*

*Our priority plan pulls key activities in each of these strategic objectives into service towards dynamic growth.*

*Daring Justice. This is our Call, grounded in our statements of faith, right relations commitment, and core values, but articulated anew for this time. Along with our Call is a Vision to become “a bold, connected, and evolving church” as disciples of Jesus in this place.” (The United Church of Canada Strategic plan 2023-2025 document, post on the UCC website)*

Recently, the General Council office, in consultation with the Regional Council, will hire 6 Growth Animators, which are full time positions, to support the work of growth and renewal for the UCC. Rev Calin Lau was hired by General Council to serve as Growth Animator for the Canadian Shield Regional Council and Shining Waters Regional Council starting January 1, 2024!

See the [United Church of Canada website](#) for the most up to date details.

I continue to deeply appreciate working with Rob, Susan, Melody, Celio, Diane, Donna, and Kathleen. We are blessed with incredible staff who have worked tirelessly over the past year. Thank you!!!! I am also grateful for Chair Barb Nott who has provided incredible, attentive leadership throughout this year. Thank you!!! I am also deeply grateful for the incredible and experienced leadership the CSRC Executive provide through the year.

As we look forward, I give thanks for the support of my family this past year. I give thanks to God for the grace of community, the love of and support of the Spirit and the message of God’s love and grace through Jesus Christ, which has provided incredible hope during a very challenging year.

Peter Hartmans (Rev.), Executive Minister  
Canadian Shield and Shining Waters Regional Councils