

Toronto Southeast Presbytery
Justice Global Issues Team

MINUTES

Meeting of October 25, 2017
Bloor Street United – 300 Bloor Street West

Present: Jean Lee, Robin Wardlaw (Chair), John Ryerson, Ren Ito and George Bartlett (Note-taker)

Opening Reading:

Robin opened by reading Matthew 25: 31-40, followed by a reflection based on the reading and an experience in a food bank.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as circulated.

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the June 15, 2017 meeting of the Justice and Global Issues Team were approved by consensus.

The Minutes of the September 21, 2017 Joint Meeting with the Social Justice and World Affairs Committee of South West Presbytery were received for information.

Business Arising

It was agreed that Ren should contact Wendy Miller at the Presbytery office to find out if it would be possible for her Congregation Outreach Contacts list to be used to develop sublists of contacts for congregations active on various outreach activities, such as indigenous issues.

George reported that the joint letter requested at the joint meeting with the Social Justice and World Affairs Committee of South West Presbytery was prepared and forwarded to Wendy for distribution to presbyters, congregations and outreach contacts.

West Hill received a reply from local forestry authorities in northwestern Ontario (Treaty 3 & Treaty 9 territories) defending their use of herbicides and saying that their use is safe.

George will contact Hyuk Cho, for a copy of the sermon he delivered after his return from the April 2017 Come and See Tour to Israel and Palestine.

2017 Budget and Possible Expenditures

MOTION: George Bartlett / John Ryerson that

The JGI Team authorize and direct payment of \$750 from the Educational Events and Leadership Events line of its budget for the establishment of the Greenest Church Awards in cooperation with the Social Justice and World Affairs Committee of South West Presbytery..

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION: Jean Lee / George Bartlett that

The JGI Team authorize and direct payment of \$300 from the Unsettling Goods (UNJPPI Toronto) line of its budget to NECEF Sabeel Canada [7565 Newman Blvd. P.O. Box 3067. Montreal, QC H8N 3H2] to help support the James Graff Memorial Lecture scheduled for Victoria College of the University of Toronto on November 29, 2017.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

George was asked to bring to our next meeting information on the Bursary Fund established by BC Conference to assist people participating in Come and See Tours to Israel and Palestine.

2018 Budget

We discussed some items to be included in our 2018 Budget, which we will soon be asked to submit.

It was noted that the budget would include the second \$750 for the Greenest Church Award. There was also support for including \$1500 to assist someone to participate in a Canadian Foodgrains Bank Study Tour.in addition to the \$1500 for a Come and See Tour to Palestine.

Poverty Reduction/Basic Income/C2C

(a) Pray-In at Toronto City Hall

John reported on the Pray-In at City Hall, noting that approximately 50 people participated. It opened with 7 or 8 faith leaders representing different faiths doing prayers in their own tradition. A number of faith groups – Jewish, Muslim, Anglican and United – took responsibility for blocks of time. Some congregations took responsibility for part of the time.

John noted that City TV was present, but did not broadcast any part of the event. He noted that a podcast is being generated.

(b) Parliament of World Religions

John noted that the Parliament of World Religions will be an opportunity for people to coalesce and become a stronger voice. He is exploring this with John Joseph Mastandrea. Gail Allan and John Joseph are the United Church of Canada contacts.

Indigenous

(a) Georgina Island

Ren reported that Georgina Island is being threatened by sewage plants dumping sewage into the local watershed. Many news services are reporting that the community has been under a boil water advisory for 2 years, but residents of the island say that they have been boiling water for decades. The Georgina Island First Nation is calling for more consultations on new sewage plants, as well as cleanup and new infrastructure to address the existing water problems. There is a Change.org petition that has a good summary of the issue. <https://www.change.org/p/stand-with-gifnlakeguardians-and-urge-the-ontario-ministry-of-the-environment-and-climate-change-to-reject-the-upper-york-sewage-solutions-project>

Betty Lou McNabb is the diaconal minister at Georgina Island, and Ren suggests that this may provide an opportunity for us to connect to the Indigenous community.

(b) Toronto Urban Native Ministry ('TUNM')

Ren reported on a conversation he had with Evan Smith, seeking input on how we might support TUNM and how presbytery can engage with Indigenous communities in non-token ways, i.e. not just during Aboriginal Month and not just about TRC, but in other ways.

In the discussion that ensued, it was suggested that we should explore how our Team can support TUNM, including beyond 2018.

Israel-Palestine

George informed the Team of a Come and See Tour to Israel and Palestine being planned for April 2018. It was agreed that George should send a communication to Emmanuel College concerning the Come and See Tour and financial assistance available, similar to the communication given earlier this year, noting the financial assistance is subject to budget approval.

Team Membership and Leadership

Robin will contact Randy Naylor, Nominations Chair, seeking new members for our Team.

Next Meetings: Thursday November 23, 2017 – Joint Meeting with South West Presbytery SJWA Committee at 1:00 p.m. in the Upper Club Room of Bloor Street United Church (starting with lunch at noon)

Wednesday December 13, 2017 – at 1 p.m. in Staff Lounge of Bloor Street United Church

Chair: Robin Wardlaw

Note-taker: George Bartlett