

Toronto Conference Living Into Right Relations Circle
Notes of March 20th, 2018
Midhurst United Church, Midhurst, ON - 10:00 am – 2:30 pm

Present: Bea Arnill, Maya Brathwaite, Wendy Brown, Debbie Cauch-McIntosh, Delores Charles, Bonnie Collacutt, Dave Collacutt, Jeffrey Dale, Ren Ito, Lynn Lawrence, Gloria McCavery, Brian McIntosh, Elizabeth McLean, John McLean, Betty Lou McNabb, Bob Marshall, Lois Marshall, Barbara Martin, Wayne Monague, Linda Parsons, Judith Ramsay, Bryan Ransom, James Ravenscroft, Dorothy Sjöholm

Regrets: Dave Gordon, Robert Hockley, Jody Maltby, Sara Stratton

Gathering

We gathered and settled in with conversation, starting about 10:10 am

Linda welcomed us, and the opening ceremony / prayer / circle smudge was done by Delores. We then took time to go around the circle, using a special coin which Delores brought, and did our extended check-in.

November Notes

We reviewed the Notes of November 21, 2017 and by consensus agreed that they be accepted as written.

Issues Arising from the Minutes

1) Educational Events Planned for 2018

a) Georgina Island Water Notice

- Betty Lou shared a poster from the community of Georgina Island
- “Stand With US! Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nations’ Opposition to the Upper York Sewage
- Solutions”#GIFNLakeGuardians
- For More Information and to sign our petition online:

<http://chn.ge/2i5FUUU>

b) Land Acknowledgement Workshops

i) After some discussion, the following emerged as clearly agreed upon.

A workshop on Georgina Island is in the works for May. Betty Lou will be working with Andy Big Canoe and Shelley Charles for the May event, with a focus on the Wampum Belt Teachings. Cost and date are to be determined.

ii) James and Robert will continue to plan for a workshop on Christian Island, to happen this fall. This workshop would include learnings about Christian Island’s history.

c) Jim Dumont Workshop

Wayne reported back about the possibility of engaging Jim Dumont for a workshop about the Seven Grandfather’s Teachings. After some discussion it was agreed to hold off before asking Jim Dumont to lead a

workshop, so the circle can focus on the other events that are already in the works for 2018.

d) Video: Gibimishkaadimin 2017: A Reconciliation Journey

Jody reported in correspondence about Gibimishkaadimin, "I also want to draw your attention to a video on the Conference website called Gibimishkaadimin 2017: A Reconciliation Journey. This is a project that we have supported through the Right Relations Fund. It is a five-year pilot project engaging Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in collaborative and experiential learning through an Indigenous lens over a seven day canoe trip.

<https://torontoconference.ca/2017/11/gibimishkaadimin-2017-reconciliation-journey/>

2) Co-Convenors of Circle

Delores will continue until the end of December. Linda and Brian will continue as Co-Convenors until the end of December as well.

We broke for lunch at 12:30, and Betty Lou provided grace.

Continuing / New Business

3) Restoration of Identity Working Group

Our partnership with Council Fire Native Cultural Centre in Toronto is an ecumenical circle that has gone through many incarnations and is currently titled the 'Restoration of Identity Circle'.

Currently working on the TRC Call to Action 82, the instillation of monument or legacy symbolic piece in each provincial capital, for victims and survivors of residential schools.

Solomon King, has created a rendering of a turtle which includes: the four directions teachings, acknowledgement, and the names of victims and survivors. The monument will be housed in Nathan Phillips Square's Southwest Corner. The Province of Ontario's Government will be supporting, but there is an interfaith fundraising team working towards raising one million dollars, which will not only assist with the creation and placement of the statue but also the caring of the grounds after the instillation. The fundraising team will be reaching out in the fall of 2018. Brian will continue to keep the Circle informed about the developments on this project, as well as the Toronto Urban Native Ministries.

4) Conference Right Relations Fund for 2017/18

Through Jody's report we learned of a Toronto Conference Executive decision to support the Anishnawbe Health Centre with \$100,000.

Discussion was shared as follows: Leadership of the regional body is to be encouraged to consult the body that represents the specific area (i.e. Toronto Conference consulting with the Toronto Conference Living Into Right Relations Circle), as there is more than one project that would be requesting funds in 2018. Communication is key to ensure that all people engaged in Right Relations are working together so that all projects are supported.

5) Boundaries Commission Report and its Implications

Boundaries Report was provided by Jody Maltby by correspondence.

Four Indigenous congregations will be within the geographic boundaries of Region 10: Georgina Island United Church, Christian Island United Church, Rama United Church, and Wasauksing-Shawanaga Pastoral Charge, along with the Toronto Urban Native Ministry. The report of the Caretakers has indicated that each of these ministries can belong both to the region and to the National Aboriginal Ministries Circle. It will be important as we set up the new region that we engage in dialogue with each of these ministries about what that relationship will look like. To that end, Jody has recommended to the President that ANCC and each of these ministries be invited to send representatives to the Annual Meeting of Toronto Conference.

Funding for Indigenous ministries will go through the National Aboriginal Church and funds are being set aside to ensure that Indigenous ministries will be funded, but there may also be costs associated with being in relationship with the region and we will want to advocate that these are included in regional budgeting.

- It was acknowledged that a funding base will be needed for the continuation of the LIRR Circle into the new regional structure.
- It was agreed by consensus that Brian McIntosh and Bryan Ransom be the Circle's liaisons with the Regional Council Transition Team to ensure that the Circle is a priority in the new region, and that they be empowered to communicate with the Transition team. Points to raise include:
 - representation on the Regional Executive or Coordinating Group;
 - the new name of the Regional body be chosen in consultation with the Indigenous of the new region, as a means of even further engagement.

6) Social Justice Animator Report

Ren is the Social Justice Animator for Living Waters and Toronto Southeast Presbyteries, and he reported the following:

TRC Call 60 / Kairos Blanket Exercise Proposal

Already approved by Living Waters Presbytery upon the recommendation of the Community Connection and Right Relations group, this Proposal (attached to these Notes) would be strengthened by our support also. Ren and Betty Lou shared that currently it is mandatory for ministry personnel to complete two certificate programs (Racial Justice Workshop and Personal and Professional Boundaries for Church Leaders Workshop). What the proposal is suggesting is that ministry personnel and church leaders complete an immersive training like the Kairos Blanket Exercise to understand the effects of colonialism in relation to First Nations communities.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

Indigenous leadership needs to understand and be aware of the training that is being done within the rest of the church about settler colonialism.

Would this be the church dictating what learning looks like for Indigenous people?

Ensure that there is a culturally sensitive learning style, like the blanket exercise, but not only the blanket exercise.

Decision: We agreed by consensus to support the 'TRC Call 60 / Kairos Blanket Exercise Proposal', and Ren will forward the motion to Jeffrey to ensure it is attached to the minutes, and that it is sent to Jody for discussion at the AGM.

7) Kairos Blanket Exercise Past or Planned

Upcoming Kairos Blanket Exercises we know about:

- Lansing, April 21st
- Caledon East, May 12th
- The staff of the Attorney General of Ontario on March 23rd.
- Minesing United Church, April 28th at the Living into Right Relations Youth Event
- It is now mandatory that the students of the Medical School at the University of Toronto complete the blanket exercise. The Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic School Board is also completing the blanket exercise.

8) Proposal to General Council re: Support and Funding for LIRR Network

Brian brought forward this Proposal (see attached)

Decision: After brief discussion, we agreed by consensus to forward the Proposal to Toronto Conference annual meeting with a recommendation for approval.

9) Annual Report for Toronto Conference

Brian drafted the annual report for Toronto Conference for the Circle, and people are encouraged to provide editing feedback to Brian asap.

10) Further Conversations About the Future of Living into Right Relations in the Region

a) Wayne spoke of 'Circle in a Box' which he participated in when working for Corrections Canada. He found 'Circle in a Box' to be impactful and interactive. There is an understanding that teaching people is one thing, but making people feel about what they are being taught is of the utmost importance.

b) There was a recognition that we as a circle can work towards the healing process for communities, asking ourselves, "What's next after the blanket exercise?"

c) Further conversation occurred around the 60's Scoop, the Indian Act, the Indian Day School, and Bill C262, all topics worthy of discussion at a future meeting.

d) It was shared with the Circle that some communities are taught about having to think seven generations in advance. The question was then posed, “How do we look beyond into the next generations and forward?”

Courtesies, Closing Circle Prayer

As a closing, Delores was encouraged to read the prayer on the coin that was used. After some heartfelt words, the prayer was read by another, as follows:

Prayer: Great spirit whose voice I hear in the wind, whose breath gives life to the world, hear me, I come to you as one of your many children, I am small and weak, I need your strength and wisdom may I walk in Beauty.

We closed the meeting and departed at approx. 2:30 pm.

Next Meeting: **Tuesday, May 15th** meeting at Georgina Island. At 10:00 am – 2:00 pm Ferry leaves Sutton at 9:30 am. The ferry leaves Georgina Island at 2:15 pm.

Recommended to be at the docks by 9:00 am so we can carpool.

Betty Lou will confirm that this date works for Georgina Island, and then lunch will be confirmed.