

Toronto Conference Affirming Ministry Task Group

Notes March 27, 2018, 1-3 PM

Burton Avenue United Church

Present: Anne Hepburn, Thérèse Samuel, Andrea Wheaton, Susie Henderson (notes) Regrets: Hannah Lee, Cynthia O'Connell, Warren MacDougall

1. Introduction.

Anne updated the group on the Toronto Conference Affirming process.

2. Review of the Action Plan and Reporting

Susie reviewed an overview of the action plan including a progress report to this date. (Attached.) The plan has been modified in light of the regional restructuring and because of transitions within the task group and the staffing. We agreed it would be helpful to include a reflective introduction that speaks to our experience of moving on multiple aspects of inclusion at the same time – LGBTQ, accessibility and intercultural dimension. How do we move beyond the 'check list' approach and have courageous conversations? How do we avoid conflating particular issues, erasing difference? Susie will prepare a draft report for Toronto Conference and Affirm and circulate for feedback by April 3, 2018.

3. Display Space at Annual Meeting

Susie will submit the request for display space for the annual meeting. Both Anne and Thérèse are available to staff the table and have ideas about what to include. Ideas included an interactive game, pronouns for nametags, a button-maker. We will discuss further by e-mail and Susie will help assemble materials.

4. New Regions and Affirming Status

Susie shared the correspondence with Staff Leaders and Affirm United about the Affirming status of regions. (Attached)

5. Affirming Congregations in Toronto Conference

Susie shared the current list of Affirming Congregations which needs updating to include Port Carling and to identify congregations in the process, including Burton Avenue, Cummer and Islington. Susie will update. We agreed it would be useful to have a grant similar to the Blanket Exercise in support of communities of faith on the Affirming journey (before and after making the commitment). Susie will follow up with Jody if such funds are available and if not Anne will prepare a motion for Executive.

6. Newsletter and Resources

We agreed it would be helpful to have a newsletter that includes an update on the congregational directory, the resource page on the TC website, the AUSE Conference, updates from each Presbytery, potential resource people, and links to Affirm, IRIDESCE and further resources. Susie will prepare it to be distributed after Easter.

7. AUSE Conference

Susie and Anne shared an update about the Affirm United Conference 2018 July 13-15th, 2018, Royal York Road. Toronto Conference has contracted with Warren MacDougall to coordinate and he is doing a great job! At the next meeting (tomorrow) Anne will suggest that Thérèse might be available as a Friday night speaker on the themes of working across difference, within particular struggles and in the intersections. Another issue that we surfaced during the meeting was the possibility of a workshop

focused on the rural church, drawing on the resources and experience of Living and Northern Waters presbyteries. Susie will suggest adding it to the workshop list and follow up with resource people.

Upcoming Planning Team meetings

- March 28, 2018 Royal York Road United Church
- April 26, 2018, 1 PM, Royal York Road United Church

8. Anti-black racism event

Thérèse raised the possibility of the task group's support for an event drawn from the work on #makeitawkward, a strategy to intervene on racism. We discussed the challenge we face with timing given the current restructuring and whether or not the fall is a good option for new programming. Susie agreed to follow up with Jody about a signal for how staff are to plan for the fall and Thérèse may take the conversation to Executive for further conversation.

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