

TORONTO CONFERENCE, THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

**MINUTES
OF THE 93rd ANNUAL MEETING
May 26-27, 2017**

The 93rd annual meeting of Toronto Conference took place on May 26-27, 2017 at the North Simcoe Sports & Recreation Centre and St. Paul's United Church, Midland. The theme was "Here I Am" from 1 Samuel 3:1-18.

FRIDAY, May 26, 2017

MORNING SESSION

Gathering music

Gathering music was led by Andrew Donaldson and Wendy Wyatt Donaldson.

Welcome, honouring the land and constituting the Court

President Audrey Brown welcomed people to the 93rd annual meeting of the Conference. The court acknowledged the Indigenous peoples on whose land the meeting was being held. The President constituted the meeting in the name of Jesus Christ to conduct business properly brought before it. The President made a number of introductions.

Worship and theme

The President led the meeting in worship and community building, assisted by Emily Gordon and Patty Evans. Rev. Emily C. Heath, a minister in The United Church of Christ, provided theological reflection on the theme and the meetings emphasis on deciding whether to become an Affirming Ministry.

Quorum

The Executive Secretary explained the process for determining quorum. Quorum requirements were met.

Opening motions

1. MOTION by David Allen/Bryan Ransom that...

a) Bounds of the Court

the bounds of the court for this meeting of Toronto Conference be the North

Simcoe Sports & Recreation Centre, Midland, Ontario and St. Paul's United Church, Midland, Ontario;

b) Roll of Conference

the roll of Toronto Conference for the 2016-2017 church year include:

- i) members of the order of ministry who are on the rolls of the presbyteries within the jurisdiction of Toronto Conference;
- ii) lay members of the United Church appointed by a presbytery as designated lay ministers to serve a pastoral charge or other presbytery recognized ministry within the jurisdiction of Toronto Conference; Candidates appointed to serve a pastoral charge, mission or outreach ministry;
- iii) lay members of the United Church elected by presbyteries;
- iv) chairpersons of Conference committees, and the president of the Conference United Church Women.

c) Corresponding Members

corresponding members for this 93rd annual meeting be a) those persons who are not members of the court but who have been invited to be resource persons to the annual meeting; b) Conference/presbytery staff; c) corresponding members of presbyteries within the jurisdiction of the Conference as defined in Section D.1.4 of *The Manual*. d) visitors and resource people related to the exchange visit with The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

d) Business Committee

the business committee for this 93rd annual meeting be:

David Allen, Executive Secretary
Audrey Brown, President
Bryan Ransom, Past-President

e) Parliamentarian

Beth Moore be appointed as parliamentarian.

f) Deadlines

that 9:00 p.m. on Friday be the deadline for new business, for written questions on the accountability reports and the budget, for nominees for President-Elect, and

for written comments on the Affirming Ministry vision statement and plan of action

g) Scrutineers

the head scrutineer for this 93rd annual meeting be Rose Cambourne, and that scrutineers be the Conference/presbytery staff.

h) Minutes

the minutes of the 92nd annual meeting of Toronto Conference be approved as printed in the *Record of Proceedings* with the following correction: page 15/16 – 258, David Shearman’s status should be recorded as OM Retired.

i) Method of voting

unless the court decides otherwise, voting be done by show of voting cards except for a secret ballot on decisions regarding those being ordained and admitted and whether to become an Affirming Ministry

and that all votes be approved by simple majority with the exception of the vote on becoming an Affirming Ministry where the threshold for approval will be 75%.

j) travel reimbursement

travel allowance to the 93rd annual meeting be paid only to those not receiving a travel allowance, and that the travel rate be 41 cents per kilometre.

k) receive the following proposals

Proposals to Toronto Conference:

PTC #1 – Extension of terms of office

PTC #2 – 2018-2020 Conference Budgets and Assessment

PTC #3 – Becoming an Affirming Ministry

l) new business

new business proposals will be considered in the order they are received.

m) sexual misconduct prevention consultants

that Diane Bennett-Jones, Cathy Hird, and Robin Wardlaw be the assigned consultants if any concerns are raised that would be covered by the church’s policy on sexual misconduct.

n) acting for President

that the Past-President act as meeting chair if the President is unavailable or is making reports.

o) reports

that all reports printed in the annual meeting resource book be received for information.

p) offerings

that only one financial offering be received at this meeting at the Celebration of Ministries Service, and that it be given to Mission & Service.

q) chaplains

that Linda Butler, Dennis Posno and Bright Yun be the chaplains for this annual meeting.

r) distributing materials

that material may be distributed only with the permission of the business committee.

s) speakers' limits

speakers on motions be limited to 90 seconds each, with the understanding that the President may show discretion to those for whom English is not their first language and/or those with communicative disabilities, disorders or difficulties (not limited to verbal speech impediments), or for those wishing to use a self-chosen interpreter.

t) agenda

that the agenda for this 93rd annual meeting of Toronto Conference be adopted as printed.

MOTION

CARRIED.

2. MOTION by Bryan Ransom/Martha Wood that...

a) Editing of Record of Proceedings

the power to edit the *Record of Proceedings* of this 93rd annual meeting of Toronto Conference be given to the Executive Secretary.

b) Authority to the Conference Executive

the Executive of Toronto Conference be empowered to transact any unfinished business of this 93rd annual meeting of Toronto Conference and to transact any business that the Conference has the power to transact, subject to the limitations of Section D.3.1.4 of *The Manual*.

MOTION

CARRIED.

Regrets

The Executive Secretary noted that a number of people had sent regrets for the meeting. Their names will appear in the minutes of this meeting.

Living Waters

Mary Belyea	Lay
Cora Brodie	Lay
Pearce Fisker	Lay
Carol Hancock	OM Retired
Catherine Hawkins	Lay
Barb Hendren	Lay
Bev Kell	Lay
Betty-Lou McNabb	DM
Maria Mindszenty	OM
Lorraine Newton-Comar	OM
Kathi Phillips	OM
Joanne Purchase	Lay
Linda Wheler	OM
Doug Whidden	OM Retired
Stephen Willey	OM Retired

Northern Waters

Christina Beirnes	Lay
David Burns	OM Retired
Beverly DelGuidice	Lay
Violet Hill	Lay
Marg Krauter	Lay
Elizabeth McKinlay	OM Retired
Sandra McLauchlan-Abuja	OM
Heather Power	OM
David Shearman	OM Retired
Penny Squirrell	Lay
Kathy Underwood	OM
Adriaan van der Zee	Lay

South West

Mark Aitchison	OM Retired
Carol Baggett-McKinley	OM
Dale Burkart	OM
Sheila Campbell	OM Retired
Tina Conlon	Lay
Sue Cowan DLM	
Connie denBok	OM
Victoria Dickson	Lay
Norm Hennig-Pereira	OM
Eiko Hosaka	OM
Debbie Johnson	OM
Darren Liepold-Nicholson	OM
Margaret MacDonald	OM
Sheila Mascoll	Lay
Doug McLeod	OM
Lang Moffat	Lay
Sylvia Powers	Lay

Toronto Southeast

Dorothy Amos	Lay
Fred Angus	Lay
Eric Bacon	OM Retired
Allan Baker	OM Retired
Barry Brooks	OM Retired
June Cavers	Lay
Marc Doucet	OM
Douglas duCharme	OM
Sandra Evan-Jones	OM Retired
Malcolm Finlay	OM Retired
Don Francis	Lay
Alan Hall	OM

Deborah Hart	OM	Don Nicol	OM Retired
Anne Hepburn	OM	Jennifer Palin	OM
Lauren Hodgson	OM	Linda Petrides	OM Retired
Nettie Hoffman	OM Retired	Marion Pope	DM Retired
Roger Hutchinson	Lay	Malcolm Sinclair	OM
John Klassen	OM Retired	Andrew Stirling	OM
Linda Kuschnik	OM	John Taylor	OM Retired
Pam Lock	Lay	Martha ter Kuile	OM
John Mathew	OM Retired	Peter Thompson	OM Retired
Joan McCalmont	OM Retired	Rose Ann Vita	OM
Chris Miller	OM Retired	Ralph Carl Wushke	OM
Kathryn Moase	Lay		

Greetings, announcements and grace

Marlis Dupuis of the St. Paul's United Church, Midland local arrangements committee brought greetings from the congregation.

The President made a number of introductions and announcements, noting newcomers and visitors, along with those who had been at 20 or more annual meetings.

Andrew Donaldson and Wendy Wyatt Donaldson led the court in a singing grace.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Gathering music

Gathering music was led by Andrew Donaldson and Wendy Wyatt Donaldson.

Affirming Ministry discussion

Patty Evans led a presentation and discussion about aspects of becoming an Affirming Ministry. Speakers included Basil Coward, Ann Harbridge, Dennis Posno and Sarah Jane Wetelainen.

Break

The court took an all-purpose break.

Gathering music

Gathering music was led by Andrew Donaldson and Wendy Wyatt Donaldson.

Introduction of ordinands and admittands

The President invited Kirsty Hunter, chair of the Interview Committee to present the candidates for ordination and admission. Kirsty made some brief introductory remarks.

Before each candidate addressed the court, all assembled sang one verse of a hymn significant to the candidate.

Voting on candidates

The President asked Kirsty Hunter, chair of the Interview Committee, to move the motions on those recommended for ordination and admission. Ballots were distributed. Members of the court marked their printed ballots as each motion was presented.

Ordination:

MOTION by Kirsty Hunter/Paul Stott that Brigid (Maya) Brathwaite be ordained by Toronto Conference on May 27, 2017 at this 93rd annual meeting.

MOTION by Kirsty Hunter/Mary McKeen that Janet Lee Jones be ordained by Toronto Conference on May 27, 2017 at this 93rd annual meeting.

MOTION by Kirsty Hunter/Norm Seli that Chun Hong (Calin) Lau be ordained by Toronto Conference on May 27, 2017 at this 93rd annual meeting.

MOTION by Kirsty Hunter/Linda Butler that Alcris Limongi Ortiz be ordained by Toronto Conference on May 27, 2017 at this 93rd annual meeting.

MOTION by Kirsty Hunter/Diane Bennett-Jones that Janet Smith Zenwirt be ordained by Toronto Conference on May 27, 2017 at this 93rd annual meeting.

Admission:

MOTION by Kirsty Hunter/Hae-Bin Jung that Yong Shik Kim be admitted by Toronto Conference to the order of ministry of The United Church of Canada on May 27, 2017 at this 93rd annual meeting.

MOTION by Kirsty Hunter/Norm Greene that Ricardo Teixeira Silva be admitted by Toronto Conference to the order of ministry of The United Church of Canada on May 27, 2017 at this 93rd annual meeting.

MOTION by Kirsty Hunter/Cindy Cooper that David Cameron (Cam) Watts be admitted by Toronto Conference to the order of ministry of The United Church of Canada on May 27, 2017 at this 93rd annual meeting.

The scrutineers gathered the ballots.

Announcements and music

While waiting for the ballot results, a number of announcements were made and a couple of songs were sung.

Ballot results

The Executive Secretary reported that the votes had all been positive regarding the candidates for ordination and admission. The court responded with applause.

MOTION by David Allen/Bryan Ransom that the ballots be destroyed.

MOTION

CARRIED.

Announcements and Grace

President Audrey Brown made a number of announcements. Andrew Donaldson and Wendy Wyatt Donaldson led the court in a singing grace.

EVENING SESSIONGathering music

Gathering music was led by Andrew Donaldson and Wendy Wyatt Donaldson.

Affirming Ministry discussion

Patty Evans led a presentation and discussion about aspects of becoming an Affirming Ministry. A welcoming video from Whitehorse United Church was shown. Speakers included Sharon Aylsworth, Michael Blair, and Neil Parker.

Service of Remembering

The evening concluded with a time of worship led by the chaplains, including a remembrance of congregations which had closed or amalgamated, those who had died in the last year, and the negative impacts on Indigenous peoples.

SATURDAY, May 27, 2017**MORNING SESSION**Gathering music

Gathering music was led by Andrew Donaldson and Wendy Wyatt Donaldson.

Morning worship

Emily Gordon led the opening worship.

Quorum

A count of Conference members indicated that quorum was not met. The meeting proceeded to hear the initial part of the presentation on nominations, following which a further count indicated that quorum had been achieved.

Nominations

Past-President Bryan Ransom, chair of the Nominations Committee, brought a number of items to the meeting for consideration. He began by acknowledging the members of the Nominations Committee.

Proposal #1: Extension of Terms of Office

On behalf of the Nominations Committee, Past-President Bryan Ransom introduced a motion to extend the terms of office of Conference officers.

MOTION by Martha Wood/Ross Leckie that this 93rd annual meeting of Toronto Conference take the following actions:

1. if the three-council remit passes: extend the term of the current Conference President and Past-President to the 2018 annual meeting of Toronto Conference; and authorize the President, Past-President, Executive Secretary and Executive to adopt measures to lighten the load of these office holders in the coming year.
2. if the three-council remit fails: approve the following process for electing a new President:
 - The Nominations Committee will solicit nominations for the position of President-Elect;
 - All potential nominees identified by December 31, 2017 will be requested to attend the February and April meetings of the Conference Executive to learn more about its functioning;
 - the 2018 annual meeting of Conference will elect a President-Elect who will be installed as President at the same meeting;
 - Nominations from the floor will be permitted.

MOTION

CARRIED.

Conference Executive diversity representative

Martha Wood has stepped down as a diversity representative on the Conference

Executive.

MOTION by Bryan Ransom/Janet Jones that Jessica Stevenson be elected as a diversity representative on the Conference Executive.

MOTION

CARRIED.

General Council Commissioners

Bryan Ransom outlined the process adopted by the Executive for electing the 30 commissioners who will attend the General Council meeting in 2018. Toronto Southeast Presbytery will submit their nominations at a later time; these names will be presented for election at the 2018 annual meeting.

MOTION by Bryan Ransom/Karen Seunarine that this 93rd annual meeting of Toronto Conference agree that 18 commissioners to the 43rd General Council be elected at this 2017 annual meeting, with the remaining 12 commissioners to be elected at the 94th annual meeting based on a slate of nominees to be presented by Toronto Southeast Presbytery and the Conference's Nominations Committee and/or nominees from the floor.

MOTION

CARRIED.

MOTION by Bryan Ransom/Gay Van Caeyzeele ...

a) Nominated through presbyteries:

...that this 93rd annual meeting of Toronto Conference (2017) elect as Commissioners to the 43rd meeting of the General Council (2018) the following persons as nominated by the presbyteries within Toronto Conference...

Living Waters

Terry Davies (L)
Angus MacLennan (L)
Martha Wood (L)

Susan Eagle (M)
Kirsty Hunter (M)
James Ravenscroft (M)

Northern Waters

Ed Elliotson (L)
Marg Krauter (L)
Cassie Vermeer-Korittko (L)

Janet Jones (M)
Neil Parker (M)
Patti Rodgers (M)

South West

Jingle Ayupan (L)
Carole Bennett (L)
Charles Donley (L)

Dong-Chun Seo (M)
Barry Rieder (M)
Richard Choe (M)

b) Alternates for those nominated through presbyteries:

...that this 93rd annual meeting of Toronto Conference (2017) approve that vacancies in the presbytery-nominated list of elected Commissioners to the 43rd meeting of the General Council (2018) be filled by referring to the following list of persons nominated as alternates by the presbyteries...

Living Waters

David Leyton-Brown (L)
Bri-anne Swan (L)
Linda Parsons (L)

Elizabeth Cunningham (M)
Thelma Arnott (M)

Northern Waters

Mary Ellen Parsons (L)
Robert Tite (L)

Kristal McGee (M)
Karen Ptolemy-Stam (M)

South West

Karen Kowal (L)
Paul Rose (L)
Doug Smith (L)

Lori Hill (M)
Lawrence Nyarko (M)
Sarah Yoon (M)

MOTION

CARRIED.

Questions on accountability reports

Members of the court had an opportunity to submit questions about items in the various accountability reports. No questions had been submitted.

Proposal #2 – 2018 to 2020 Conference budgets and assessment

The Executive Secretary gave a brief presentation on the budget proposal, indicating that if the Conference continues to exist past 2018, it would be prudent to re-examine the practice of using property sales to lower the assessment to pastoral charges.

MOTION by Clyde Harris/Marg Walker that this 93rd Annual meeting of Toronto Conference approve the 2018 budget and receive for information the projected budgets for 2019 and 2020.

MOTION

CARRIED.

Settlement and Pastoral Relations Committee Report

Andy Comar, chair of the Conference's Settlement and Pastoral Relations Committee, presented the committee's report and offered thanks to those who have helped out on pastoral relations work in the last year.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The General Council has produced a workshop to assist people in understanding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the context of The United Church of Canada. Right Relations staff Jody Maltby, led the court through an abbreviated version of the workshop.

Stewardship & Gifts Officer

Karen Seunerine, General Council Stewardship & Gifts Officer, made brief comments and introduced Carole Bennett who had recently participated in a Mission & Service trip to Kenya.

Partnership presentation

The President led a presentation on a partnership exchange between Toronto Conference and Seoul Presbytery of The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. Participants included a Korean drumming group, Sarah Jane Wetelainen, Lawrence Nyarko, Martha Wood and Rev. Ik Pyo Jo, Moderator of Seoul Presbytery. The Moderator presented a gift from Seoul Presbytery, and the President presented a gift to Seoul Presbytery.

Honouring of retirees

Past-President Bryan Ransom introduced ministers who are retiring. Those retiring were Sandra Evan-Jones, Ann Howes, Nancy Knox (present), Wim Kreeft (present), Elaine Lush, Jo Ann Marriott, Evelyn McLachlan (present), Bruce Roffey (present), Janet Sinclair, John Taylor, Peter Thompson, and Molly Thomson. The court sang a verse of a hymn that is meaningful to the retiree, and each retiree addressed the court.

Jubilands and those leaving the Conference

The President acknowledged the jubilands who were present in the court, and gave thanks for the ministries of those who will be leaving the Conference.

Announcements and grace

President Audrey Brown made a number of announcements. Andrew Donaldson and Wendy Wyatt Donaldson led the court in a singing grace.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Gathering music

Gathering music was led by Andrew Donaldson and Wendy Wyatt Donaldson.

Proposal #3: Becoming an Affirming Ministry

The President and Executive Secretary gave a summary of the written comments that had been made regarding the Affirming Ministry vision statement and action plan. There was discussion about the use of the word “marginalized”.

MOTION by Cynthia/O’Connell/Martha Wood that Toronto Conference...

1. become an Affirming Ministry within The United Church of Canada;
2. approve the vision statement found in PTC #3; and
3. receive for information the plan of action found in PTC #3.

The scrutineers distributed ballots. Members of the court marked their ballots, and the ballots were gathered.

New Business #1 – Review of The Rev. Gretta Vosper and dialogue within the church

One piece of new business had been received.

MOTION by Robin Wardlaw/Louise Mahood that Toronto Conference...

1. thank General Council staff and the Judicial Committee for their response to the earlier request by Toronto Conference to rule on Rev. Gretta Vosper’s fitness for ministry in The United Church of Canada;
2. ask the Judicial Committee to suspend its review of Rev. Gretta Vosper until further notice;

3. endorse the decision of Toronto Southeast Presbytery to convene colloquies to discuss what is essential to faith and ministry in order to explore and discover through dialogue what the Church considers authentic and integral ministry.

Before Robin Wardlaw presented the proposal, the President ruled that item #2 was out of order. There was discussion about the rationale for this action, and the President's ruling was challenged.

The Executive Secretary invited the President to offer a further explanation as to why she made her ruling. He then asked for a show of voting of cards as to whether the President's ruling was sustained. The ruling was sustained.

The mover and seconder subsequently removed item #1 from the proposal. The proposal now read:

MOTION by Robin Wardlaw/Louise Mahood that Toronto Conference...

endorse the decision of Toronto Southeast Presbytery to convene colloquies to discuss what is essential to faith and ministry in order to explore and discover through dialogue what the Church considers authentic and integral ministry.

Following discussion, the following motion was made:

MOTION by Ella Taylor-Walsh/Carol Bennett that the motion be tabled.

MOTION

CARRIED.

Ballot results

The Executive Secretary reported that the vote on becoming an Affirming Ministry had achieved the 75% approval threshold. There were 181 votes cast with 168 being in favour, i.e. 93 percent. The court received the news with applause.

Presentation of certificate

The President welcomed Judy Amsbury from Affirm United. Judy presented the official certificate indicating that Toronto Conference was recognised as an Affirming Ministry.

Ballots

MOTION by David Allen/Bryan Ransom that the ballots be destroyed.

MOTION

CARRIED.

Communion

Emily Gordon led the court in a service of communion.

Appreciations and benediction

President Audrey Brown thanked a number of people. She pronounced a benediction.

EVENING SESSION

Celebration of Ministries service

The 93rd annual meeting of Toronto Conference concluded with the Celebration of Ministries service at St. Paul's United Church, Midland. President Audrey Brown presided, assisted by Executive Secretary David Allen, Past-President Bryan Ransom, and Emily Gordon. Emily C. Heath delivered the message. Five people were ordained – Maya Brathwaite, Janet Jones, Calin Lau, Alcris Limongi Ortiz, and Janet Zenwirt. Yong Shik Kim, Ricardo Silva and Cameron Watts were admitted to the order of ministry of The United Church of Canada.

John Lee and Emily Gordon read scripture; the texts were Ephesians 4:1-6 and 11-12. Musical leadership was provided by Andrew Donaldson, Wendy Wyatt Donaldson, Victoria Warwick and a choir made up of St. Paul's United Church, Midland and members of the Conference.

Audrey Brown
President

David W. Allen
Executive Secretary