

Paul Reed named the Formation, Nurture and Justice Team members:

Derek Marsellus, Helmut Enns, Marilyn Fortin, Marilyn Rodger, Adele Boy

Aruna Alexander, Isaac Mundy, Wendy Bulloch, Meggin King

Supported by the work of Forums and Staff members Sharon Hull and Rodney Smith-Merkley

Formation, Nurture, and Justice Team Report October 2021

Our team has been busy this year, overseeing the work of the Region's outreach forums. We have been focused on committed efforts towards the stated priorities of the ECO Regional Council, and a lot of good work has been done. To summarize, with thanks to all the Forums and Teams for submitting these details:

Indigenous Justice and Respectful Relationship Forum-- Rodney Smith-Merkley, Staff.

The Indigenous Justice and Respectful Relationship Forum has spent time accompanying communities and Communities of Faith in learning about the Truth and taking steps toward Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Since June, Canada has experienced an awakening around the impact and legacy of Residential Schools through the discovery of unmarked graves of children who died while attending these institutions. While shocking for many, the church has long recognized its part in this tragic story.

The forum continues its work in education, advocacy, and building relationships with Indigenous peoples. The Forum has recently completed a terms of reference, and now has co-chairs Marilyn Fortin and Elaine Kellogg to work alongside staff Rodney Smith-Merkley. The forum also welcomed new member Mary Anne McFarlane at a recent backyard retreat at the home of Shelley Knott Fife. Posting of past webinars on the youtube channel will be part of a work plan being developed. Also watch for news of a lending library, formerly located in the Conference Office, being administered through Bridgenorth United Church. We appreciate and support the efforts of many communities of faith around the recent National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and the daily work and witness this requires.

Thanks also to secretary Helmut Enns and Sharon Hull for being a part of the Forum along with the aforementioned folk.

Anti-Racism Forum – Aruna Alexander, Chair

The Anti-Racism Forum of FNJT is acutely aware that creating ECORC's Policy was only 10% of our work. Implementation processes and work will constitute the remaining 90%. Therefore, we continue to work on a foundation of Spiritual/moral, Theological and Ethical values, as Christians and concerned citizens in our various communities.

As was done for the creation of the our AR Policy, insights from research based data, scientific, historical and educational facts that support anti-racism work, and best practices, will inform our deliberations and recommendations. Thus far, support for highlighting ECORC'S commitment to "admit and address the lack of knowledge of Canadian and Newcomer religious and cultural diversity (see page two of AR-Policy) has been strong. This is seen as taking an appropriate first steps approach within the East Central Ontario context, coupled with personal intercultural /interfaith encounter and dialogue events.

Aruna Alexander was invited by UCC's National Committee, along with representatives across the nation to offer feedback on the National Anti-Racism Committee's goals. She participated in two groups: (1) Education, (2) Theology.

In order to begin our work of implementation, the AR Forum has had an in-person meeting, this Fall, and has made a fruitful start on this work.

We want to highlight the upcoming “Orange the World” event, sponsored by GRANQuinte (a branch of Grandmothers Advocacy Network) , in partnership with the United Nations Association, Quinte branch, and the Formation, Nurture and Justice team. “Orange the World” supports the UN 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls, which draws attention to sexual and gender-based violence. From November 25th to December 10th, what has become known as the Orange Campaign draws attention to this campaign. People and businesses are encouraged to light their homes and facilities with orange lights, and learn more about the issues of sexual and gender-based violence around the world, and locally. More information about this program is available through our ECORC website and in our newsletters.

Also a National event - 40 days of Anti-racism from Oct 12 to Nov 26 with zoom/you tube on Tuesdays – either at noon or 7pm, you will find more information on the United Church of Canada website.

As the next year unfolds, we will look forward to seeing how our Regional Council works to implement the Anti-Racism policy into its own operations.

(Rev. Dr. Aruna Alexander)

In addition, the Anti Racism Forum will put together practical AR best practices for congregations. These will relate to the Policy's commitment to "admit and address the lack of knowledge of Canadian and Newcomer cultural and religious diversity" in our Region. Since worship is where we gather once a week as Christians, Educational resources and methods will be recommended - this will include Sunday School material.

At the Spring AGM meeting, the Anti Racism Forum had announced that a survey questionnaire would be emailed to congregations. If you have not already received it, this will appear in your inbox later today.

The survey consists of three questions:

- (1) What training opportunities/education/events would help your congregation?
- (2) How many languages are spoken in your congregation other than English as a first language?
- (3) What other opportunities can help your congregation learn about anti-racism?

In order to expedite the first phase of our implementation plan, we have requested you to return the questionnaire by **November 5th**. This will allow us time to tabulate and analyze your responses -providing evidence based data for relevant anti-racism work in our Regional context.

For their commitment, time, and excellent team work - I acknowledge the contributions of Lionel Ketola, Meggin King, Marilyn Zehr, Wendy Bulloch, and Staff person Sharon Hull.

Thank you.

Aruna Alexander
Chair, Anti-Racism Forum ECORC

Sharon Hull- Staff.

The First Third's Ministry Forum (formerly called children, youth and young adult ministry)

This forum is in the beginning stages and we are still looking for members to join. It is a group of both youth, young adults and leaders who will meet together a couple times a year to dream and plan ECORC events.

It has been a challenging time to connect with children, youth and young adults online, since they have spent so much time online for school. We are looking forward to when we can safely gather together in person- perhaps in smaller groups and staying in geographical areas to reduce travel.

There was a zoom webinar in September to connect the first Third ministry leaders in our Regional Council, to share ideas of what has worked well online and to share challenges. If you know any leaders who are not already on our mailing list, please ask them to sign up using the form on the ECORC website- so we can get connected.

3 upcoming webinars/zoom gatherings (which are each held in two timeslots – day and evening) for First Third ministry leaders – the first one is Outdoor faith formation programs - Tuesday Oct 19th – in the evening or Wednesday Oct 20- in the morning.

We have an opportunity to have 5 youth ages 15 – 19 participate in the GC 44 youth forum. It will begin online with a gathering in February. The youth will apply to be hired as interns for the summer as part of a fulltime summer grant. More information and applications will be available soon. **Please spread the word to any youth who may be interested.**

Camp Quin Mo Lac

No campers for the 2021 season. A virtual counsellor in training program was created and offered to 2 years worth of youth. It was very well done and it is a great foundation for the leadership of camp. Projects and improvements are being done while there isn't as many people at camp. Some fall rentals have been able to go ahead with much planning for covid protocols. Fundraising is ongoing and they would appreciate any support that is available after 2 years of no camp.

VIBE

Which was previously an in person – roaming vacation bible camp in the Kawartha Highland cluster, did a large pivot this year to an online program. Camp this year was a combination of online zoom, camp in a bag and prepared content on you tube- to watch on your own time. We were blessed with the young adults who were hired to run the program (they previously participated in our youth forum). The camp format was changed to 2 sessions- of 2 weeks each. It was so great to spend time online with children from our RC. The Go Project curriculum was purchased and the theme was the promise of the rainbow which explored the 8 colours of the pride flag. Some of you may have seen the presentation at the service to celebrate the RC becoming an Affirming Regional Council.

UCW

A wonderful, well organized and spirit filled day event was held outside at Quin Mo Lac at the end of August - it was great to see everyone safely in person.

Outreach has been adapted for covid and many outreach projects are ongoing.

Ongoing sales of masks with UCW crests being made by Marilyn Rodger with the funds going towards the UCW 60th Anniversary project "Change for Women of Zambia" which ends in July 2022.

The Affirming Ministry Celebration for the Bay of Quinte ECOR UCW is on Oct 27th.

The ECORC newsletter and the website will have information on all of these things I have just mentioned. If you have any questions or want to get connected- please contact our staff person – Sharon Hull

shull@united-church.ca

Networks:

Some social justice issues are being supported by national networks and we have started some networks in our Regional Council- all at different stages of organization.

Guaranteed Living Income Network: Cathy Duggan, Isaac Mundy, Allan Smith-Reeve, Co-coordinators.

“We need to get our people off their butts to support this thing!” Such was The Very Rev. Lois Wilson’s prophetic call to United Church folks to join the movement for a Guaranteed Livable Income in Canada.

By way of a response, our network has:

- Sponsored online events with nationally recognized advocates including the Very Rev. Wilson, Health Economist and author Evelyn Forget and members of the Basic Income Canada Networks Youth Network.
- Held an online book study of Dr. Forget’s Basic Income for Canadians: From Pandemic Emergency to Financial Security for All,
- Sponsored online showings of a documentary film, The Manitoba Story: A Basic Income Film by Truth be Told Films.
- Hosted one of many nationwide candle light vigils for GLI ahead of Liberal Party’s spring policy convention
- Launched the GLI Club podcast available through podbean.com. Two episodes are currently available, with more on the way.
- Connected regularly with the National GLI network for the United Church of Canada, and Basic Income Canada

Although GLI was certainly in the news in 2020 with its adoption at the Liberal policy convention, a private member’s bill sponsored by Liberal MP Julie Dzerowicz and a motion from NDP MP Leah Gazan to convert the CERB into a Guaranteed Livable Income Program, it was disappointing that GLI, rising poverty and income inequality in general were little discussed during the recent federal election. However, to defer once again to The Very Rev. Wilson again This is a long term fight. Our network is now for the next stage of the movement for GLI, recognizing that this is a marathon and not a sprint.

Our next planning meeting will be mid November, and we welcome the support, prayers and “get-off-our-butts-involvement” of all those who want to see a social change that would transform overnight the lives of millions of Canadians who live in poverty right now, and provide a guaranteed floor of financial security to all in the future.

“and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry, and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.” Isaiah 58:10-12

Palestine/Israel Network-- Adele Boy

As a new network in this region, the past year, Pal Net / ECORC has seen a conducted book study of Jean Zara's book 'Occupied With Non Violence' A 'Virtual Tour of Palestine 'was offered in May and was so popular it is running again in October . This is a joint effort with Shining Waters Pal Net group whom we thank for their generosity.

Articles regarding everyday life in Palestine/Israel (written by Adele Boy, a former Ecumenical Accompanier) have been published in our newsletter to draw attention to life in the Occupied Territories.

Palestinian products are available through the Free trade marketplace operated by Marilyn Rodgers. Look for a webinar in November called A Taste of Palestine live from the West Bank in which an organic farmer and family will be sharing their story.

Speakers and resources are available for congregations looking to learn more of the UCC's partners in the region.

For both the Care of Creation and the Long Term Care Networks,

- we are connected to Nation events/webinars – any information will be in the newsletter
- have a mailing sign up list on the ECORC website
- looking for some co-ordinators from our RC to help keep them going

Rural Connect Network –

- starting up a network –
- sign up for mailing list on the ECORC website-
- contact Ryan McNally for more information

Are there other Networks out there or communities of faith doing great things who would like to connect as a network- we know there is community outreach in Oshawa, Peterborough and Belleville- what other network possibilities are there?

Connect with FNJ Team, staff Sharon Hull or Rodney Smith- Merkley, we would like to add stories to the ECORC website or the newsletter to let people know what great things are being done in the RC. There is staff support needed if we are going to get these networks up and running.

Representatives from our Team take part in the broader “Social Justice Network of Ontario” At their last meeting, Sharon and Meggin shared the news of the passing of an Anti-Racism Policy for our Regional Council, and the news that we are now an Affirming Regional Council. The SJNORC group is doing a lot of good work, highlighting injustices among those in the margins, acknowledging the harm being done to Indigenous peoples, the trauma of MMIWG, violence against people of colour and of different gender expressions and sexual orientations, as well as those in our communities who are materially impoverished.

We also have oversight of the 'Doing Mission Together' grant process. We have distributed quite a bit of funding this year to fund a number of good projects, helping communities of faith to expand existing programs, and initiate new ministry possibilities. We are in the process of reviewing the grants for the second half of 2021 and will have news to share soon.

We are really hoping to encourage more people in our Region to be a part of this important work. As the old saying goes, “Many hands make light work,” and we certainly have enough work to share.

Respectfully submitted,
Meggin King, chair, Formation, Nurture, and Justice Team.

Links for more information:

Indigenous Justice and Respectful Relationship mailing list (click on right side of the page)

<https://ecorcuccan.ca/resources/indigenous-ministries/>

40 days of anti-racism: <https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/anti-racism/40-days-engagement-anti-racism>

Anti-racism survey: <https://ecorcuccan.ca/ecorc-anti-racism-survey/>

First Thirds Ministry leader mailing list: [sign up](#)

Youth Intern GC 44: [Youth Forum Delegates](#)

GLI club podcast: <https://gliclub.podbean.com>

Guaranteed Livable Income Network mailing list: with this [link](#)

Long Term Care Crisis Network mailing list: with this [link](#)

Care of Creation Network mailing list: with this [link](#)

Rural Connect Network more information and mailing list: <https://ecorcuccan.ca/19538-2/>