

**ASSEMBLY COUNCIL**  
**November 26–28, 2023**

The Assembly Council met at Crieff Hills Community, Puslinch, Ontario from November 26–28, 2023. D. Cho led the Council in worship.

**LAND  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**  
31/23C

The convener acknowledged that Crieff Hills occupies the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron/Chonnonton, the Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant and offer our respect and gratitude to all of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island who have cared for and defended this land for centuries. The convener also expressed words of confession and our desire to see healing and reconciliation.

**PRESENT**  
32/23C

Assembly Appointees: the Rev. Daniel W. Cho, the Rev. Cherie Inksetter, Mr. John Keshwah, Mr. Peter Kinch, the Rev. Jeffrey M. Murray, Ms. Cindy Perks, the Rev. Shalini Rajack-Sankarlal, the Rev. Peter Rombeek.

Presbytery Representatives: the Rev. Bartholomew Alexander, the Rev. William J. Ball, the Rev. Martin Baxter, the Rev. John C. Borthwick, Ms. Brenda Butler, the Rev. Jennifer L. Cameron, Ms. Marth Fergusson, the Rev. Paul D. Johnston, Ms. Diane Reader Jones, Mr. Patrick O'Brien, Ms. Linda Shaw.

Ex-Officio – Voting: the Rev. Mary M. Fontaine, Ms. Donna McIlveen.

Ex-Officio – Non-Voting: the Rev. Victor Kim (secretary), the Rev. Dr. Ross A. Lockhart, the Rev. Ian Ross-McDonald, Mr. James Waddell.

Staff: Ms. Terrie-Lee Hamilton and the Rev. Donald Muir.

**REGRETS**  
33/23C

The Rev. Dawn B. Griffith, the Rev. Jinsook Khang, the Rev. Dr. Ross A. Lockhart (Tuesday), the Rev. Bethany McCaffery and Ms. Cathy Reid.

**AGENDA**  
34/23C

It was moved by J. Borthwick, duly seconded and

AGREED, that the agenda be approved.

**ORIENTATION TO THE  
COUNCIL**  
35/23C

The Management Team provided an orientation for the Council members.

**MINUTES  
Council**  
36/23C

It was moved by B. Butler, duly seconded and

AGREED, that the Assembly Council minutes of March 26–28, 2023 be adopted.

**Executive**  
37/23C

It was moved by J. Borthwick, duly seconded and

AGREED, that the Executive minutes of September 11, 2023 and November 6, 2023 be received for information.

**CORRESPONDENCE  
MacLean Estate re  
Funding**  
38/23C

A letter was received from the MacLean Estate Committee seeking funding of \$202,000 in 2024 for two projects: beds and lighting in St. Luke and a wi-fi system.

It was moved by B. Butler, duly seconded and

AGREED, that the above correspondence be referred to the Finance Committee.

**Demographic Study**  
39/23C

A letter was received from the Trustee Board requesting two representatives to be appointed by the Council to the demographic study working group.

It was moved by B. Butler, duly seconded and

AGREED, that the above correspondence be referred to the Nominating Committee.

**EVENING RECESS**

The Council recessed for the evening with prayer by C. Inksetter.

**MONDAY MORNING**

**MORNING PRAYER**

J. Borthwick opened the day with prayer.

**REPORTS**

**Received and Considered**  
40/23C

It was moved by B. Butler, duly seconded and

AGREED, that the reports be received and considered.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Report**  
41/23C

P. Kinch presented the report of the Executive Committee.

**Intercultural Liaison Search Committee**  
42/23C

**Recommendation No. 1**

It was moved by P. Kinch, duly seconded and

AGREED, that the Search Committee for the Intercultural Liaison position be comprised of the following: Dan Scott (convener), Bartholomew Alexander, Yvonne Bearbull, Cherie Inksetter, Stephen Kwon, Angie Song, Elizabeth Speers, Victor Kim (staff).

**Renewed Apology Working Group**  
43/23C

**Recommendation No. 2**

It was moved by P. Kinch, duly seconded and

AGREED, that William Ball and Martha Fergusson be named to the Renewed Apology re Colonization and Residential Schools Working Group.

**Translation at General Assembly**  
44/23C

**Recommendation No. 3**

It was moved by P. Kinch duly seconded and

AGREED, that the Assembly Council work with the General Assembly Office and the Communications Department of the Life and Mission Agency to coordinate translations of relevant documents prior to the meeting of the General Assembly, in languages officially used by the courts of the church, and that the Assembly Council with the General Assembly Office work to ensure that persons of linguistic ability be available for translation at table groups, as needed.

**Narratives re Hope and Possibility**  
45/23C

V. Kim provided background on the discussion on the Narratives re Hope and Possibility which is the focus for this Council meeting.

(cont'd on p. 1562)

**MENTORING FUND – CLERGY**  
46/23C

The terms of reference for the Mentoring Fund for Intercultural Clergy Contexts was presented.

**Mentoring Fund for Intercultural Clergy Contexts**

**Establishing Terms**

The terms to provide support from The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Emergency Benevolence Fund for mentoring of clergy serving in intercultural

ministry contexts are established by and amended as necessary by the Assembly Council.

#### **Available Funds**

Funding, up to \$20,000 annually for a five-year period, totalling \$100,000, drawn from the Emergency Benevolence Fund, will be provided in response to requests for support.

#### **Eligibility**

Ordained ministers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada on the constituent roll of a presbytery who are serving in intercultural ministry contexts are eligible for these mentoring support funds.

#### **Use of the funds**

Funds may be used to resource the mentoring arrangements between mentor and mentee once a detailed plan for mentorship has been approved by the appropriate presbytery. Funds may be used to provide an honorarium for the mentor of no more than \$1,000 and for other associated costs regarding the relationship; those costs to be invoiced through the submission of appropriate receipts. Some of these costs may include resources such as books or courses. Approval of all costs other than the honorarium for the mentor will be handled by the fund administrators.

#### **Consideration and Evaluation**

Requests will ultimately be considered and discerned on a case-by-case basis by the fund administrators. Until the Intercultural Liaison position has been appointed by the General Assembly, the fund will be administered by the Associate Secretary for Ministry and Church Vocations, the Principal Clerk of Assembly and the General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency.

All applications to the fund must be accompanied by a presbytery endorsement. That endorsement will be made by the presbytery of jurisdiction, meaning the presbytery in which the mentee is a member. The proposed mentorship program must state clear goals for the mentorship relationship and how an evaluation of those goals will be best realized.

Presbyteries are encouraged to take great care in approving mentors who possess substantial knowledge and insights about cultural sensitivity and the theological depth and width of the gospel. Giftedness in the ability to sense intuitively and unearth strategically the gifts of the mentees would be important.

#### **Confidentiality**

The presbytery of jurisdiction must endorse all requests for application to the fund. Since the presbytery will need to evaluate the results of the mentoring relationship, it is intended that the application and information contained therein would be public as part of the presbytery minutes. Any request for confidentiality regarding information must be submitted to the presbytery for their discernment.

#### **Administration of the funds**

The General Assembly Office, until such time as a staff person identified to animate the position of Intercultural Liaison is appointed, will be responsible for the pastoral administration and dispensation of the funds.

#### **Reporting**

Appropriate reports will be made to the General Assembly. While confidentiality around names of mentors and mentees will be honoured,

permission may be sought to share stories where the mentoring relationship has been perceived to have resulted in outcomes that should be acknowledged and celebrated. It is hoped that stories of successful mentoring relationships may encourage others to seek the same.

**Recommendation No. 1**

It was moved by Bartholomew duly seconded and

AGREED, that the above terms for the Mentoring Fund for Intercultural Clergy Contexts be approved.

**MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
47/23C

I. Ross-McDonald presented the report of the Management Team.

**Report**  
48/23C

AGREED, that the report be received for information.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
49/23C

The Finance Committee report was presented by P. Kinch, convener, and James Waddell, Interim CFO/Treasurer.

**2025 Budget Principles**  
50/23C

It was noted that the principles for 2025 were not being presented this meeting as the Finance Committee is still identifying aspects of the budget, such as results from the transition in the Finance department and preparations for the move to the new property in the coming years.

**Report**  
51/23C

It was moved P. Kinch, duly seconded and

AGREED, that the report be received for information.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
52/23C

P. Kinch noted that the Audit Committee recently met with Price Waterhouse Coopers, Auditors, regarding the 2023 audit process.

**COMMISSION ON ASSETS**  
53/23C

V. Kim provided information relating to the Commission on Assets of Dissolved and Amalgamated Congregations noting that there were a number of dissolutions and amalgamations this past year.

**PENSION ARREARS WORKING GROUP**  
54/23C

P. Kinch provided information relating to the Pension Arrears Working Group.

**SUPPORT SERVICES**  
55/23C

J. Waddell provided an update on the Support Services area since he commenced his work in July. He noted staff transitions and realignment of work responsibilities, learning about the various funds of the denomination and ensuring that policies are in place. He expressed appreciation for the work being done by staff.

**MODERATOR**  
56/23C

M. Fontaine, Moderator of the 2023 General Assembly, shared some highlights from her itinerary thus far this year. She has visited HUU-AY-AHT First Nation in Bamfield (Vancouver Island), Ochapowace and Chacachas First Nations in Saskatchewan, attended a press conference regarding missing women and the landfill in Winnipeg, Manitoba, congregations and events in Montreal, Quebec, London and St. Marys, Ontario. Unfortunately, the international trip to Israel Palestine was cancelled due to the current conflict. The Moderator expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet so many people and to represent the denomination as the first Indigenous Moderator of the General Assembly.

**Prayer**  
57/23C

Following her presentation, the Moderator led the Council in prayer.

**CRIEFF HILLS**  
58/23C Kristine O’Brien, the Executive Director, welcomed the Council to Crieff Hills and she shared some recent happenings on the property and about various programs.

**NOON RECESS**  
The hour having arrived for the noon meal, K. O’Brien offered grace.

**MONDAY AFTERNOON**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**Narratives of Hope and Possibilities**  
(cont’d from p. 1559)  
59/23C The early afternoon session focused on Narratives of Hope and Possibilities. V. Kim set the context of the discussion, noting that the church, and the Council, is at a place to look forward to what is before the denomination. The Council had an initial conversation based upon the presentation. (cont’d. on p. 1562)

**LMA COMMITTEE**  
60/23C D. McIlveen, convener, along with I. Ross McDonald, presented the report of the Life and Mission Agency Committee.

**Anti-Racism Covenant and Strategies**  
61/23C **Recommendation No. 1**  
It was moved D. McIlveen, duly seconded and  
that the Assembly Council allocate \$150,000 from the New and Renewing Ministry Fund to the work of preparing an anti-racism covenant and strategies to help make The Presbyterian Church an anti-racist church.

62/23C **Amendment**  
It was moved in amendment by L. Shaw, duly seconded  
DEFEATED, to replace “to help make The Presbyterian Church in Canada an anti-racist church” with “for The Presbyterian Church in Canada”.

63/23C **Amendment**  
It was moved in amendment by M. Fontaine, duly seconded and  
that the Assembly Council allocate \$150,000 from the New and Renewing Ministry Fund to the work of preparing an anti-racism covenant and strategies to improve their knowledge and understanding of racism and to inspire their commitment to anti-racism endeavours.

64/23C **Amendment Withdrawn**  
AGREED, that the above amendment be withdrawn.

65/23C **Amendment**  
It was moved in amendment by P. Johnston, duly seconded and  
DEFEATED, so that the Life and Mission Agency may prepare the anti-racism covenant and accompany strategies to respond to the General Assembly directive.

66/23C **Original Motion**  
The original motion being put to a vote, was carried.

67/23C **Dissent**  
P. Johnston and L. Shaw registered their dissent with the following reasons:  
We respectfully dissent from the vote of the Council on Life and Mission Agency Committee Recommendation No. 1. During the discussion of the recommendation, it became clear some of the terms in the recommendation were open to different

interpretations. The Assembly asked the Life and Mission Agency to “begin preparing an anti-racism covenant and accompanying strategies and report to the General Assembly.” I could have supported a recommendation which simply did that. But the recommendation as presented (and adopted) seems to me to go beyond what the General Assembly empowered the Life and Mission Agency to do. A formal declaration The Presbyterian Church is an “anti-racist church” should come from substantial church-wide discussion and prayer and be an expression of the whole church’s willingness to follow what that path means. That church-wide discussion has not taken place, making the commitment premature.

**Winnipeg Property –  
Funds to Indigenous  
Ministries**

68/23C

**Recommendation No. 2**

It was moved D. McIlveen, duly seconded and

AGREED, that 20 percent of the proceeds from the sale of the 2320 McGillivray Blvd., property in Winnipeg (\$707,672) be transferred to the Fund for Indigenous Ministry.

**LGBTQI+ Seeking Refuge**

69/23C

**Recommendation No. 3**

It was moved D. McIlveen, duly seconded and

AGREED, that \$45,000 from the New and Renewing Ministry Fund be used to support agencies that help to settle people who identify as LGBTQI+ and seek refuge in Canada.

**Report**

70/23C

It was moved D. McIlveen, duly seconded and

AGREED, that the report as a whole be adopted.

**AFTERNOON RECESS**

The hour having arrived for dinner, the Council recessed. M. Baxter offered grace.

**MONDAY NIGHT**

**EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE  
Narratives of Hope and  
Possibilities**

(cont’d from p. 1562)

71/23C

The Council continued the discussion of Narratives of Hope and Possibilities. The focus was on discussing possible pathways and ways for the Council to engage the church on this process.

**Working Group**

72/23C

**Recommendation No. 4**

It was moved by B. Butler, duly seconded and

AGREED, that power to issue be granted to the Assembly Council Executive to name the Working Group on Narratives of Hope and Possibility, consisting of between 15–20 people from across the church, including those from congregational ministries, non-congregational ministries, theological colleges and national staff, to refine the narratives and explore possible pathways for the denomination and to bring recommendations to a future meeting of the Assembly Council; noting this Working Group would report regularly to the Assembly Council with updates and to receive feedback from the Council on its work.

73/23C

**Additional Motion**

It was moved by J. Borthwick, duly seconded and

AGREED, that up to \$50,000 be allocated for the initial work on the Working Group re Narratives of Possibilities and Hope and the source to be

determined by the Executive in consultation with the Finance Committee.

**Report**  
74/23C

It was moved by P. Kinch, duly seconded and  
AGREED, that the report as a whole be adopted.

**Evening Recess**

The Council recessed for the evening. R. Lockhart closed the session with prayer.

**TUESDAY MORNING**

**WORSHIP**

Worship was led by Jeff Murray.

**EWART ENDOWMENT**  
75/23C

T. Hamilton provided an update on the one recommendation concerning the application from Knox College to the Ewart Endowment for Theological Education, noting that the committee met with college representatives and that new applications will be submitted in the new year.

**NOMINATING  
COMMITTEE**  
76/23C

J. Murray presented the report of the Nominating Committee.

**Demographic Working  
Group**  
77/23C

It was moved by J. Murray, duly seconded and  
AGREED, that Stuart McDonald be appointed to the Demographic Working Group.

78/23C

It was moved by J. Murray, duly seconded and  
AGREED, that the Nominating Committee be given power to issue in naming the second member to the Demographic Working Group.

**Report**  
79/23C

It was moved by J. Murray, duly seconded and  
AGREED, that the report as a whole be adopted.

**VOLUNTARY  
WITHDRAWAL  
PROCESS**  
80/23C

V. Kim provided an update on the voluntary withdrawal process.

**NEXT MEETINGS  
Council**  
81/23C

The Council will next meet April 8–10, 2024 and November 24–26, 2024.

**ADJOURNMENT**  
82/23C

It was moved by B. Alexander and  
AGREED, that the Council adjourn. M. Fontaine closed the meeting in prayer.

Cherie Inksetter  
Convener

Victor Kim  
Secretary