

**BMC Truth And Reconciliation Working Group**  
**Minutes: November 27, 2021**

**Present:** Mark Cressman, Eleanor Epp-Stobbe, Giselle Maerz, Philip Martin, Sharon Martin, Eleanor McKee, Carolyn Snider, Carolyn Strathdee, Maryanne Szuck

**1. Circle of Reflections**

People were asked to share some of their reflections on our last meeting, readings that we may have done since then (e.g., calls to action, introduction to the summary of the TRC Final Report, or other readings). There were a variety of responses, including:

- appreciation for the recent MCC conference, including one breakout group on Indigenous food issues called “A Plate of Equity”
- realities on different reserves are often quite different
- a map of reserves in Ontario is coming
- there are so many websites that highlight the truth and reconciliation work of Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations
- Jody Wilson Reybold’s book on being in cabinet is powerful and challenging
- Eleanor McKee shared some work that her daughter-in-law and other family members from Alberta are doing related to treaties
- story of the Haldimand Tract is interesting and complicated
- we may never have “justice”
- we view all of this through society’s lenses and it is confusing and challenging to have other perspectives
- the book Indigenous Writes (which many of us studied) has lots of good articles
- youth at BMC have chosen to learn about Indigenous spirituality and follow some pathways towards reconciliation this year in their Sunday School class
- our youth have almost no relationships with Indigenous people in their everyday life; this is true for many of us, and limits our ability to understand, grow and change
- many Indigenous people do not, for a variety of reasons, identify themselves publicly as being Indigenous
- the news is much more full of stories about Indigenous people in Canada
- in a course from CMU the prof read from an Indigenous Bible, which was a reading of the Bible through Indigenous eyes and very interesting
- I’m listening more to Indigenous music
- I want to learn about Indigenous spirituality

**2. Discussion of “Living Into Right Relations”, a monthly newsletter from Nancy Dykstra**

There was much affirmation for this newsletter. We decided to include this as part of a Truth and Reconciliation file on the church’s website. We should try to make this as accessible as possible, without hiding it behind too many links before you get to the newsletter. Phil Martin will make sure this happens.

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**3. Assessment of where we are at with church-related calls to action from the TRC**

Thanks to Linden for setting up the chart of church-related calls to action. Carolyn Snider will contact MC Canada and MCEC, on behalf of our group, to find out where they are at with calls to action 48, 59, 60 and 61. We wonder if MCC might be able to talk about their responses to Call To Action 61. Maybe Lily could check this out.

**4. Possible Uses of the Harvest Fund**

The date for applying through this fund has been extended to the end of January. We listed a number of organizations that might be worth supporting and want people to look at these more closely before our next meeting early in January. We do not need to limit our applications to one organization. Here is a list of organizations that were mentioned:

- Greenhouses Growing Hope (MCC) ~ *attached to email from December 3*
- Kiskisowin ~ The Remembering Space (MCC) ~ *attached to email from December 3*
- Watershed Moment (MCC) ~ *attached to email from December 3*
- [House of Friendship](#) (especially in providing shelter)
- [Crow Shield Lodge](#)
- [KW Urban Wigwam Project](#)
- [Anishnabeg Outreach Centre](#)
- [White Owl Native Ancestry Association](#)

NOTE: *Since our meeting I received a note from Carolyn Strathdee, saying that BMC can only donate funds to registered charities. From the list above, KW Urban Wigwam Project and White Owl Native Ancestry Association do not appear to have charitable status. Since some people were interested in groups that involved housing, Mike Strathdee talked to John Neufeld at House of Friendship. John stated that the House of Friendship is not directly involved with housing for Indigenous people, although Indigenous people may use the shelters.*

**5. Next Steps**

a. Possible Sessions at Crow Shield Lodge

Phil Martin had a meeting with Clarence Cachagee (Founder) and Bob Nally (Board Member) at Crow Shield Lodge. They offered to create a program at Crowshield Lodge that would address some of the needs of our congregation in understanding Indigenous spirituality and working towards truth and reconciliation. They

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indicated that this might involve 3 or 4 sessions, each at Crow Shield Lodge, with a variety of Indigenous people to lead us in these sessions. They can accommodate up to 20 people during a session, which would last for 2 or 3 hours. They encouraged us to consider blending youth and adults in these sessions, knowing that both groups at Breslau have considerable interest. They were thinking that these sessions might happen in the winter months, one session each month.

Phil Martin will talk with the youth on December 12, to see if this is something they are interested in doing. If you are interested in participating in something like this, or have other feedback, please pass your comments on to Phil Martin. We will discuss this possibility in more detail at our next meeting

<b>Summary Of Next Steps</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Create a site on the church website for the work of this committee.	Phil Martin, Church office
Provide link to Living Into Right Relations to members of the congregation	Phil Martin, Church office
Provide update to congregation about work of Truth and Reconciliation Working Group	Phil Martin
Find out from Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada and MCC where they are at with Calls To Action relating to churches.	Carolyn Snider
Review organizations to whom we might donate from the Harvest Fund, and be prepared to make some decisions about this at our next meeting.	All committee members
Talk to youth about possibility of program(s) at Crow Shield Lodge	Phil Martin
Share thoughts about possible sessions for BMC folks at Crow Shield Lodge.	Any committee members

**Next Meeting:**

Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 2:00 PM in Room 100 (without the candlestick)