

**REPORT OF THE PUBLIC WITNESS FOR SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COMMITTEE
TO GENERAL SYNOD 2023**

1. FOR ACTION OR CONSIDERATION

- Motion: Moving Toward Net Zero in the Anglican Church of Canada
- Motion: Addressing the Climate Emergency
- Motion: Water

2. FOR INFORMATION

Current priorities for the ministry of Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice (PWSEJ) reflect the Anglican Church of Canada's commitment to the 4th and 5th Marks of Mission.¹ These priorities include:

- Care for Creation
- Reconciliation and right relations with Indigenous Peoples
- Responsible resource extraction
- Homelessness and affordable housing
- Justice and corrections
- Peace, conflict and violence
- Human Trafficking

The current membership of the PWSEJ Coordinating Committee consists of:

- The Rev. Liz Hamel (Chair; Diocese of New Westminster)
- The Rev. Marnie Peterson (Diocese of New Westminster)
- The Ven. David Burrows (on leave; Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador)
- Judith Moses (ex-officio)

The Coordinating Committee met throughout the quadrennium, once in person (February 2020) and otherwise by video conference, to discuss the current status of priority issues, hear from key justice partners, and develop strategies for ongoing engagement of Anglicans with respect to the Church's social and ecological justice priorities. This included a joint meeting with the Creation Matters Working Group.

The Coordinating Committee experienced significant challenges in moving ahead with its work due to membership transitions and the limited availability of committee members to participate. In some cases this has been due to the resignation of committee members, while other members have not been available for various reasons. This issue was taken up with the Primate and Prolocutor and we are pleased that the Rev. Marnie Peterson agreed to join the Coordinating Committee for the remainder of the term. Marnie's participation allowed the committee to achieve an appropriate quorum and pursue the necessary work of this committee.

One issue raised during this process has been the lack of clarity in the PWSEJ Coordinating Committee terms of reference in their present form. When selecting a specific issue for our work, the very breadth of possible areas of focus in the terms of reference became a roadblock for engaging in meaningful work. Differing understandings of the limits of authority at the national level and of the specific implications of the terms of reference have left members frustrated and uncertain how best to proceed with our work.

¹ To transform unjust structures of society to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

It is unclear, at the moment, what General Synod and the Council of General Synod envision for the work of the committee, and this has resulted in confusion and frustration for committee members. We are left wondering whether other coordinating committees experience similar uncertainty and are interested in a process to review these terms together in order to develop a clear mission and focus for the work of the next iteration of the committee.

While the current members of the PWSEJ Coordinating Committee can certainly examine the existing terms within their experiences and contexts, it would be even more helpful for a holistic discussion with members of other committees and with members of the Council of General Synod on how we can build clear terms of reference that empower the work of our committee in the next triennium and avoid some of the frustrations experienced this time around. At our January 2023 meeting, one of the terms of reference that sparked interest and energy among PWSEJ members was this: “to help the Anglican Church of Canada understand and participate in God’s mission in the world by challenging attitudes and structures in church and society that cause injustice”. The committee was particularly interested in issues within the church. We encourage the PWSEJ committee elected at General Synod 2023 to make this a priority.

Below is a summary of some work in the ministry areas covered by Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice provided by staff.

Selected Updates on Programming and Priority Areas

A. Responding to the Pandemic

- The Anglican Church of Canada joined with civil society partners and other faith communities to endorse the Principles for a Just Recovery
- The Anglican Church of Canada joined the Recovery for All campaign led by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness
- The Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, along with the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund and other faith-based organizations, actively advocated for equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for communities in Canada and globally

B. Dismantling Racism

- The Council of General Synod passed a resolution put forth by the PWSEJ Coordinating Committee in June 2020 to establish a Dismantling Racism Task Force that will submit its own report to General Synod 2023
- The Anglican Church of Canada joined ecumenical partners in endorsing the International Decade for People of African Descent and Anglicans participated actively in ongoing work to lift up this commitment to churches

C. Care for Creation

- The Creation Matters Working Group continued to meet regularly, under the leadership of co-chairs Nancy Harvey (Diocese of Huron) and the Rev. Gerald Giles (Diocese of Central Newfoundland), including working steadily to prepare environmentally-focused motions for General Synod. The Working Group expanded membership to include 4 new dioceses previously unrepresented.
- Encouraged by Resolution A202 (General Synod 2019), dioceses and parishes were actively encouraged to participate in the global Season of Creation. The past quadrennium

saw a sizeable increase in Canadian Anglican participation in this movement, including many dioceses and parishes participating for the first time

- The Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples were founding members and active participants in the For the Love of Creation interfaith climate campaign. This network engaged a broad spectrum of ecumenical and interfaith partners, including several faith-based organizations, working in the area of Creation care, with a focus on (1) theological reflection, (2) congregational engagement, and (3) advocacy. A series of events and opportunities for action have been developed through this work.
- Annual Full Communion statements recognizing Earth Day were released from the Primate and the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

D. Homelessness and Affordable Housing

- The Anglican Church of Canada continued to work with the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and the Recovery for All campaign to actively work for solutions to the housing crisis facing communities across Canada
- The Anglican Church of Canada provided financial and promotional support to a 2021 series of webinars on the concept of “Homefulness” led by the Sorrento Centre and Empire Remixed. Anglicans across Canada participated in the series
- A total of 9 participants from the Diocese of Edmonton (2019) and the Diocese of Toronto (2022) were able to participate in the National Conference on Ending Homelessness when it was held in these respective cities with funding provided by the General Synod. These participants shared their experiences and learnings within their local parish and diocesan contexts, and are expected to draw on this experience to build their capacity as local leaders in this ministry area
- Annual Full Communion statements recognizing National Housing Day were prepared and disseminated every November in collaboration with leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

E. Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery

- A national reference group was brought together early in the quadrennium by video conference for 3 sessions of meetings to discern next steps in this important work of the whole church. This reference group included lay and clergy active in ministries related to this work from across the country, along with key staff whose areas of work and responsibilities connect to these issues
- PWSEJ and Global Relations staff have taken active leadership in developing a Canadian ecumenical and civil society network focused on the needs of communities of migrants in Canada and globally. This initiative has included extensive consultation with Canadian churches active in migration issues, migrant-led organizations, and international interfaith networks.
- Freedom Sunday has been observed annually in February since 2020, with many parishes and dioceses across the Anglican Church of Canada participating through prayer, education, or advocacy. Staff across departments collaborated in the creation and dissemination of resources focused on annual themes.
- The most recent National Youth Project focused on human trafficking, including developing new resources and activities for young people and their communities.
- The Anglican Church of Canada joined many other faith-based and civil society organizations including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Primate’s World

Relief and Development Fund, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, UNICEF, World Vision, Right to Play, and the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking to advocate for legislative initiatives to address issues of human trafficking, modern slavery, and exploitation in Canada and globally. Ongoing advocacy in this area continues

F. Government Relations

- Regular advocacy with the federal government continued in key areas of concern including
 - Modern slavery, migrant justice, and human trafficking
 - Vaccine equity
 - Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel
 - Environmental justice
 - Poverty and housing

G. Justice and Correction

- Pamela Dillon has continued to serve as the Anglican representative to the board of the Church Council on Justice and Corrections. Pamela currently serves as the President of the Board and is working actively with the Council during an important time of transition

H. Peace and Conflict

- Dwayne Hodgson completed his term as Anglican representative to the Project Ploughshares Governing Committee. We thank Dwayne for his service in this role over the last 2 years
- Simon Guthrie (Diocese of Huron) has been appointed to the Governing Committee as the new Anglican representative

Respectfully submitted by the Rev. Liz Hamel, Chair, Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice