

**TORONTO DIOCESAN ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN  
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT  
CHRIST CHURCH, STOUFFVILLE  
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2017**

## **REGISTRATION**

Approximately 160 attendees were welcomed as they arrived at Christ Church, Stouffville. Morning coffee and refreshments, provided by the members of Christ Church, were served during registration.

## **EUCCHARIST**

The Celebrant was the Rev. Joan Cavanaugh, assisted by the Rev. Jason Prisley and the Rev. Don Beyers. The organist was Cathy Tubb. The Old Testament Reading, Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16, was read by Valma Hay. The Gospel and Sermon were based on Luke 8:40-56, presented as Biblical story-telling by Rev. Joan Cavanaugh. For the first time at an ACW AGM service, lay anointing was offered during the Communion. The Lay Anointers were Anita Gittens and June Dyer.

The theme for our day together was "Moving Forward in Faith". The Offering, in the amount of \$937.30, was designated for Council of the North (\$637.30) and Special Projects (\$300) by Board motion.

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **GREETINGS AND OPENING REMARKS**

Following a short break, Anita Gittens called the Annual General Meeting to order.

### **GREETINGS**

#### **College of Bishops**

The Rt. Rev. George Elliott brought greetings on behalf of the College of Bishops. Archbishop Johnson and the Area Bishops were unable to attend as they are in Boston on retreat this weekend. Bishop Elliott said that he was delighted to be representing them, especially since this was our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. He reflected on what has transpired over the past 50 years, especially the events of 1967. It was a very interesting year – Canada's centennial year – and the times they were a-changing! He reminded us of the significant historical and cultural events of that era. Bishop Snell was the Diocesan Bishop at that time and he played a role in the four groups – Mother's Union, Church Year, Women's Auxiliary (W.A.), and Chancel Guild – coming together to be incorporated as Anglican Church Women in October 1967. It was a time of sexual revolution. A time when women were not ordained. However, all people have gifts to offer in whatever vocation they are called to and there have been many women who have served with distinction. As we continue our journey, Bishop Elliott encouraged us to seek the Holy Spirit in the weeks and years ahead. Maintain the eternal and change the things that keep us from God and each other. Congratulations!

#### **Catholic Women's League (CWL)**

Anne Souza was delighted to bring greetings on behalf of the 7,300 members of the Catholic Women's League. Anne became their President just eight days ago so this was her first official duty as President. She commented that fifty years is a milestone and that we should be proud of it. She congratulated the ACW for their commitment and good works accomplished. The CWL and ACW share many of the same objectives, so we do similar work in our communities. Anne commented that it was a pleasure to call us Sisters in God and extended best wishes for today, as well as Mother's Day tomorrow.

**Minutes – Page 2****BUSINESS METING**

Anita Gittens called the business meeting to order. She commented that the ACW experience parallels what is happening in the Church. When church attendance declines, due to aging and social changes, much the same is experienced by the ACW. This is not just happening in the Anglican Church, but in all denominations and in all organizations. It does not mean that we should accept this situation and do nothing. Every challenge is an opportunity to dream of the future being brighter than the present.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD MAY 14, 2016**

A **MOTION** was made by Dorothy MacLeod, seconded by Jean Glionna, that the Minutes be accepted as printed in the Annual Report. **CARRIED.**

**REBRANDING**

Anita Gittens offered an explanation regarding rebranding and the future of ACW. A Board retreat identified that change was necessary. Disbanding was considered - or was the need simply for change? The Board voted in favour of change. The hymn "The Love of Jesus Calls Us" includes the following lyrics ...

The love of Jesus calls us  
To go where he would go,  
To challenge all that limits,  
To change, to learn, to grow ...

Other Anglican Dioceses in Western Canada have faced the same situation. They have gone through a process of rebranding. They discovered that the challenges that they faced were common in various organizations. It has been suggested that the need to do something is bigger than us alone. It needs to be a National effort.

A rebranding committee was formed in the ACW Diocese of Toronto. Their initial mandate was to review everything pertaining to ACW – for example, the by-laws.

(To be continued ...)

**GUEST SPEAKER**

June Dyer was delighted to introduce our special guest, the Hon. Jane Philpott. MP. Prior to becoming the Federal Minister of Health, Dr. Philpott was a family doctor and the Chief of Family Medicine at the Markham-Stouffville Hospital. It was noted that economics and the environment are the key to health.

Minister Philpott expressed her thanks for the invitation to be with us today. She commented that it was wonderful to be back in Stouffville. Her roots are Presbyterian, she currently attends the Mennonite church, but she always enjoys attending Anglican services. She is very aware of the importance of women's work. She suggested that there are three reasons why women are good at their work –

- 1) Absolute commitment to compassion: Nothing makes women happier than responding to the needs of the vulnerable. Thank you for that compassion, because this what it means to be people of faith.

### Minutes – Page 3

- 2) Incredible creativity: Christ Church Stouffville is highly creative, being involved in the arts and community events. This represents new ways and new approaches to get things done.
- 3) Good old-fashioned elbow grease and getting things done: Early mornings, late nights. Every ounce of energy put into making someone's life better comes back to you through the joy of serving.

Minister Philpott extended congratulations on fifty long, strong, years and wished us many more to come. She read greetings from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and then presented his letter to Anita Gittens.

#### Questions and Answers:

**Q:** Elizabeth Loweth recalled ACW involvement in the Grassy Narrows Commission in years past and asked how ACW could help Dr. Philpott in her role as Minister of Health.

**A:** Dr. Philpott responded that these issues now fall under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Indigenous Affairs but she will gladly let her colleague know that Church communities might wish to be involved. She suggested that the ACW can be very helpful by raising issues within the larger Canadian community and by continuing to put pressure on the Government. Messages of support and endorsement are also important when action is being taken.

**Q.** Another woman in attendance questioned the legalization of marijuana and, in particular, why 18 was set as the age of consent. She noted that schizophrenia is not usually diagnosed until the late teens or early twenties, and the use of marijuana could be potentially dangerous for people who are predisposed to mental illness.

**A.** Dr. Philpott responded that the legislation is still working its way through the system. The Provinces will be given the option of raising the age. She cautioned that saying the product should be legally accessible is not an endorsement for use. For example, cigarettes are legal but nobody is saying that we should smoke – we all know the dangers of smoking tobacco. However, it should not be illegal. Instead, the public should be educated to minimize the harm. Studies have shown that 30% of college and university students have admitted to using marijuana. This needs to be regulated so that the product is not being purchased from criminals in dark alley ways – from criminals who are also selling other dangerous drugs. The public health message will be similar to smoking and the use of alcohol – a very clear message educating the public regarding the risks – while at the same time making communities safer.

Dr. Philpott remarked on these two very heavy topics ... and then, in good humour, she encouraged us to lighten up and celebrate! June Dyer presented Dr. Philpott with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Anita Gittens thanked Dr. Philpott, saying that she was delighted the Minister was able to take the time to join us today. Anita commented that, given her own background, she is very interested in how ACW can be involved in health care issues.

## BUSINESS MEETING RESUMES

### REBRANDING (Continued)

The Rebranding Committee reached a decision that the ACW purpose should remain the same – worship, learning, and service. As we look around the room today we realize that our purpose is being fulfilled - worship service, Special Project themes, fellowship in the greetings shared – this is what ACW is about and it is as relevant today as ever. Society has changed. Social media means that we are more connected than ever but also more disconnected than ever from each other. At our meetings we share worship, and discuss joys, sorrows, and issues. That bond is what holds us together.

## Minutes – Page 4

Anglican Church Women have long been identified as the bakers, fundraisers, caterers, organizers of bazaars – and that is fine – but those pieces do not define Anglican Church Women. The face of ACW was very different 50 years ago because it was perhaps the only social opportunity. That is no longer the case today. We need to step outside our comfort zone. We need to embrace change. God has a plan for us. We must discern what that plan is. Questionnaires were distributed and everyone in attendance was encouraged to share their opinions openly and honestly regarding the future vision for ACW.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Diocesan ACW Secretary-Treasurer, Enid Corbett, reviewed the highlights of the Review Engagement Report printed in the Annual Report for 2016.

#### **Review page 2 – Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)**

Total Assets and Total Liabilities & Equity have dropped from \$355,506 in 2015 to \$352,379 in 2016. Designated and Special Funds were explained. The auditor's fee is listed as a liability.

#### **Review page 3 – Statement of Operations & Changes in General Fund Balances – Receipts**

Total Receipts for the Year increased from \$42,866 in 2015 to \$46,096 in 2016. However, it was noted that Parish Commitments dropped approximately \$2,000. There are over 200 parishes in the Diocese but fewer than 50 are donating to Diocesan ACW. Needleworkers' receipts fluctuate from year to year. The "gain on redemption of investment" in the amount of \$2,000 was used to purchase a new computer for the Diocesan ACW office. This purchase was necessary as the previous computer was no longer supported by the Diocesan Centre.

#### **Review page 4 – Statement of Operations & Changes in General Fund Balances – Disbursements**

Total Disbursements for the Year increased from \$45,739 in 2015 to \$49,108 in 2016. Except for the purchase of the computer in 2016, the totals are very similar when comparing the two years. The cost of the AGM fluctuates from year to year depending on the attendance. Diocesan ACW is still trying to meet its \$10,000 annual commitment to the Council of the North.

#### **Review page 5 – Schedule of Receipts & Disbursements – Special Funds**

The Special Fund categories were explained. It was noted that seven names were inscribed in the Memorial Book this year. Two bursaries were awarded in 2016. It was noted that the Altar Guild is legally part of the incorporated Anglican Church Women. It was also noted that our last pensioner has passed away. Funds previously designated for pension assistance will now be applied to missionary appeals.

#### **Review page 6 – Schedule of Receipts & Disbursements – Designated Funds**

The Designated Fund categories were explained. The funds are invested in GIC's. Interest is disbursed according to the terms of the wills.

#### **Review page 9 – Notes to the Financial Statements – The Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Toronto Fund**

Funds on deposit in the Consolidated Trust fund earn 4.25% annual interest.

**Minutes – Page 5****Questions and Comments:**

Enid Corbett would be delighted to welcome new members to the Diocesan ACW Finance Committee.

Enid Corbett indicated that she would be very happy to answer any questions during the lunch break. She can also be reached through the Diocesan ACW office.

**A MOTION** was made by Enid Corbett, seconded by Angela Devonish, that the Review Engagement Report Financial Statements for 2016 be accepted as presented. **CARRIED.**

**AUDITOR**

**A MOTION** was made by Enid Corbett, seconded by Karen Bowman, that Gary Booth CA Professional Corp be appointed to provide a Review Engagement Report for the year 2017. **CARRIED.**

**BUDGET**

A copy of the 2017 Budget, approved by the Diocesan ACW Board, was included in the registration folders for information purposes.

**ACCEPTANCE OF ANNUAL REPORTS AS PRINTED**

**A MOTION** was made by Carolyn Atkinson, seconded by Joyce Ellman, that the Annual Reports be accepted as printed. **CARRIED.**

**NOMINATIONS REPORT**

The nominations report was presented by June Dyer, on behalf of Marion Saunders, who was chairing another conference today and also organizing the National Gathering of Anglican Church Women.

June Dyer reported that filling vacancies on the Board has been very challenging. The common reason given is "I'm too busy". June suggested that she does not accept this reason. Some people feel they are inadequate for the task. June suggested that she has also suffered from these same feelings. Some women have stepped forward. We would certainly welcome more!

York Credit Valley needs representatives to support Valma Hay as the Area Vice President.

There was no representation from York Scarborough until Mary Macnamara recently volunteered to join the Board. We would like more representatives for this large area.

We are welcoming two new representatives from the York Simcoe Area. Thank you to Karen Bowman and Bobbie Creber for volunteering to join the Board.

Trent Durham is a vast geographical area. Gerri Curric is the Area Vice President. Representatives from Trent Durham include Marion Saunders, Carolyn Atkinson, and Hilda Clark. We welcome Ruth Carey-Stouffer as a new Board member from this area.

We encourage ACW parish groups to provide two-way communication with the Diocesan Board. We need to share our vision for rebranding. We call for more volunteers to join us!

**Minutes – Page 6****LUNCH BREAK**

The Lunch Grace “Joyful, Joyful” was sung. Everyone was invited to enjoy a delicious lunch, participate in table discussions, and visit the Public Relations display during the break.

The lunch was catered by the Little Red Catering Company. The meal included roast chicken, baked potato, broccoli slaw, rolls, and birthday cake. Beverages were provided by Christ Church. Sincere thanks to the men of the parish for serving the meal and assisting with the clean-up.

**BUSINESS MEETING RESUMES**

As the meeting was called back to order, Rev. Joan Cavanaugh invited everyone to visit the Social Justice and Advocacy display before the end of the day. It was also mentioned that Rev. Joan would be conducting a Biblical Story-Telling workshop at the National Gathering in Ancaster mid-June.

**NOMINATIONS REPORT (Continued)**

June Dyer announced that Anita Gittens has indicated her willingness to continue as President for one more year to see her vision of Rebranding accomplished. Enid Corbett has also indicated her willingness to continue as Secretary-Treasurer. The list of Board members, continuing or newly recruited, were read.

The Nominations Report was accepted as presented, with applause.

**INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS**

The Rt. Rev. George Elliott asked the members of the Board and members of the Finance Committee to come forward for the Installation of Officers.

Diane Ferguson presented Anita Gittens with a lovely bouquet of flowers.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

Those in attendance were asked to cast their ballot for the selection of a Special Project theme for the years 2018-2019. The options were: Safe Houses for Women (Shelters for women and their children); Food Banks (Growing need); Refugees (Organizations who offer help to refugees). It was announced later in the day that Safe Houses for Women had been selected by a margin of 73% of votes cast. A Special Project appropriate to this theme is to be chosen in each of the four areas in the Diocese.

**EVALUATION FORMS**

Please remember to complete your evaluation forms and drop them into the boxes before leaving today. The forms may also be mailed to the Diocesan ACW office. They will be summarized for the Board's review.

**APPRECIATION**

Anita Gittens called forward selected members of the Board and AGM Committee to be honoured as follows: Rev. Joan Cavanaugh, Judy Beal (Office Assistant), June Dyer, Karen Bowman, Enid Corbett, and Diane Ferguson. Each of these ladies were presented with gift bags in recognition of the significant role they played in the success of today's AGM.

June Dyer presented Anita Gittens and Judy Beal with beautiful bouquets of flowers.

**Minutes – Page 7****ADJOURNMENT OF BUSINESS MEETING**

As the business meeting came to an end, Anita Gittens offered a final summation. Today is the combination of all that we have done over the past fifty years. It is now time to start molding the best possibilities for the future. Maybe the best is yet to come!

**PRESENTATION – INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

Karen Bowman was very pleased to introduce Deborah Waddington. Deborah is a member of Christ Church, Stouffville.

Deborah Waddington began by saying that she was very honoured to be with us today. When women gather, the infrastructure is rewoven. Kirsty Howie had unfortunately sent her regrets. Deborah expressed her disappointment, saying that she would have loved to share this time with Kirsty.

Deborah spoke about Treaty 5, north of Lake Superior. Numbering 3,000 in population, the Ojibway represent the largest number of first nation people who have retained their language.

Housing quality is poor. Services, including doctors, are largely non-existent. There is high unemployment. There is a lack of conditions that support health, resulting in despair, resulting in youth suicide.

In 2014, a coffee house was held to raise money to purchase clean water. Parishes have continued to raise money. Cisterns cost \$25,000 each.

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission published their report, there was one stunning report from the perspective of children. What was surprising about Residential Schools is that this happened in our lifetime, under our noses. To recap this part of our history, children were removed from their families and their heritage – clothing, hair, language – even love was taken away from them. Deborah encouraged everyone to look into the report suggesting that this was a genocide. Other sources of information, including TV reports, have caused people to cry tears of shame and sorrow.

This made Deborah ask a lot of questions. Dating back to the 1500s and 1600s, what would the initial encounters have looked like? We usually imagine this from the perspective of the colonizers, which was in fact what was taught in our schools.

In the First Nations culture, everyone had a role. The Chief was often a woman. The Elders were keepers of the knowledge. The Wampum were documentation of agreements. The beading created photographs, displaying the words of the agreement, creating oral history. There would have been a keeper of the wampum and they still exist today. There is one in particular – a two row wampum in English, dating back to the 1600s treaty with the Dutch. This is seen as our original living agreement.

This particular wampum has two blue lines representing a First Nations canoe, and a ship of the white people. The precise statement is friendship and love equaling peace. The creator bore witness to the agreement. It was a nation within Canada, based on the wording of the agreement: As long as sun, water, and grasses grow. The canoe and ship were on a parallel course. It was a very simple but very poignant contract. We have forgotten our part. To be good allies we must listen and learn. Deborah encouraged everyone to attend powwows – everyone is welcome.

Deborah invited everyone to contribute to an art project that she had set up in the hallway, expressing “What is respect?”

## Minutes – Page 8

Deborah reflected on a First Nations woman who gave her a loom and beads and showed her how to bead. She knew nothing of the history at the time. We are like children learning from one another. This is what Christ wants of our relationship with the First Nations.

### **Thank You**

Anita Gittens thanked Deborah Waddington for her informative and enlightening presentation. She mentioned the calls for action that were tabled at Vestry meetings across the Diocese earlier this year.

### **PRESENTATION – CREATION MATTERS**

Rev. Joan Cavanaugh was pleased to introduce Karen Turner, representing the Diocesan Social Justice and Advocacy Committee.

Karen Turner began by saying that she had a very wrong impression of what ACW was and that she had been blown away by what she has seen and heard today.

The newly appointed Social Justice and Advocacy Consult, Elin Goulden, sends her regrets. She is currently in Africa.

As part of the Diocesan environmental work “Creation Matters” a volunteer committee has been formed to educate the Diocese. The five marks of mission were reviewed. In particular, the fifth mark of mission is “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.”

The mandate in the Diocese of Toronto is to provide resources to live out this fifth mark of mission. It was noted that this mandate is also incorporated into the Baptismal covenant (BAS). Understanding of the mission has grown. There is a widening vision, seeking peace and justice in the world. In a climate of crisis, unprecedented change can be brought on by us. For future generations, those making decisions have to pay attention to the way we do things.

Creation Matters can offer parishes worship resources. Parishes were encouraged to celebrate Earth Day on the Sunday closest to April 22, which unfortunately was Easter Day this year. In this situation, an alternate day to celebrate would be St. Francis Day. Keepers of the Water Vigil was held in January. There was a strong environmental focus, recognizing that indigenous issues and environmental issues are closely related. Issues should be incorporated into the Prayers of the People to raise awareness. Everyone was encouraged to learn more through guest speakers, workshops, curriculum, and attendance at the Outreach Conference held annually in October.

Parishes are encouraged to be more eco-friendly and aware of their environmental footprint. Assessment is available on the Diocesan website. They are also encouraged to connect with others who are advocating for the same issues. Cards may be delivered to the Minister of the Environment. Invest to build sustainable energy. Harness our energy on this issue. Spread the word in our parishes. Volunteer to be a parish green spokesperson. Ask to be added to the Diocesan Social Justice and Advocacy e-mail list. Tell people what you are doing, to raise awareness, and offer assistance. Join the Diocesan Social Justice and Advocacy Committee. The Committee meets September to June. Tele-conferencing is possible. For more information about the Committee, please contact Elin Goulden, Diocesan Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant, or Diocesan ACW Chaplain Rev. Joan Cavanaugh who also serves on the Committee.

**Minutes – Page 9**

Karen Turner read the following excerpt from “The World is Our Host – A Call to Urgent Action for Climate Justice” written by Anglican Bishops at a Conference held in South Africa, February 2015:

*“At this time of unprecedented climate crisis, we call all our brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion to join us in prayer and in pastoral, priestly and prophetic action. We call with humility, but with urgent determination enlivened by our faith in God who is Creator and Redeemer and by the pain of our people’s experience in our dioceses and provinces, and their need for seeds of hope”.*

Karen closed with a prayer written by the Bishops: *“Almighty God, you created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. And you created humankind in your own image and it was very good; Grant us the courage to recognize our failure to maintain your creation. And by your grace help us to halt the degradation of our environment. Though Jesus Christ our Lord, Who came that we might have life in all its fullness. Amen.”*

**Thank You**

Anita Gittens drew attention to the Creation Matters poster. She hoped that we had taken the ideas presented to heart and commented that we need to start paying more attention to the fifth mark of mission.

**ENTERTAINMENT – SISTER ACT**

Rev. Joan Cavanaugh took the stage with thirteen choristers from Minden-Kinmount. The women were all dressed in nun’s habits. Rev. Joan suggested that they really need to find a new name before they get into trouble calling themselves “Sister Act”. She suggested that “Bad Habits” might be an option!

Rev. Joan shared the history of how Sister Act got started in her three-point parish. Their goal was to show that it can be fun to be a church – and fun to share it. Their pianist is Shawn Chamberlain. He is also the church organist. Shawn owns the local pub and says that it is like Coronation Street without the drama. His wife, Ellie, also travels with the group. Each of the Sisters introduced themselves, saying which church they belong to.

Later, Rev. Joan commented on how proud she is of these wonderful ladies. They are just women who love Jesus. She offered that if parishes were interested in doing a fundraiser, the group would consider performing as long it wasn’t too far to travel. She expressed special thanks to Shawn and Ellie. Shawn has commented that he enjoys being involved because the Parish of Minden-Kinmount does what churches are supposed to do. Amen!

Their song list included: The Rivers of Babylon, I Will Follow Him, My God (tune: My Guy), Now I’m A Believer, Amazing Grace, Going Up to the Spirit in the Sky, Put Your Hand in the Hand, Because He Lives, Let There Be Peace on Earth.

Moved by the performance, those in attendance joined hands, forming a human chain, and sang along.

**Thank You**

Anita Gittens summed it up in one word ... Wonderful! She asked those in attendance, “Aren’t you glad they came? Aren’t you glad YOU came? !!!”

**Minutes – Page 10**

**CLOSING**

Anita Gittens thanked everyone for being here today and for staying until the end. She wished everyone all the very best, including a Happy Mother's Day.

**BLESSING**

Bishop George Elliott sang the closing blessing.

Minutes taken by Judy Beal.