

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

March 2016

For the communications team at our national offices, the past three years have been a challenging time, a time filled with a great number of transitions and changes to its leadership. At the same time, the team has met those challenges with diligence and trust, all the while continuing to embrace its mandate to support the mission of the church through its communication, with confidence, integrity and skill.

Changes and challenges to personnel have occurred throughout the triennium. During the first year of this session we learned that the Director Sam Carriere was ill and our hearts broke when we learned of his death in August of 2014. He left behind a most capable team of department heads which carried on the work of the department for more than a year under the interim leadership of Michael Thompson, the General Secretary. Sam was well loved by all the members of the national office staff, and he continues to be greatly missed. It was May 2015 when, after a careful search, that Ms. Meghan Kilty, was hired as director. She comes to us with ten years of experience in the field of communications, including six years in university communications management and two years in the church. Her expertise is in communications strategy and management and brings to the job a quiet confidence that supports this very diverse team.

It was also during this triennium (August 2014) that a new editor for the Anglican Journal was appointed, Marites (Tess) Sison. Tess had joined the journal in 2003, and her appointment as editor came after many years of excellent service to the journal. It has been through her vision that many changes have come to the journal in the past two years, and we look with confidence to the future as this print/web newspaper continues to serve the Anglican community. We give thanks to Paul Feheley for his years of service as interim editor.

During this triennium the Communications and Information Resources began its meetings, as did all committees of synod, with a face to face meeting during the fall 2013 meetings of CoGS. Since then it has met faithfully, six times in telephone conference calls, and once more (anticipated at the time of writing) in a face to face meeting. In those meetings we were able to hear from the various heads of the departments reports about their various successes and some of their challenges. Throughout we were able to recognize the continual guidance of *Vision 2019* and the ongoing inspiration of the Anglican

Communion *Five Marks of Mission*. We particularly saw this as the team joined together to communicate the ongoing work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission throughout Canada. The synergy of the team was particularly notable during the run up to the final events in the spring of 2015, as the web team, led by Mr. Brian Bukowski and Mr. Jesse Dymond worked together with both Anglican Video and the Journal to promote #22days, working towards healing and reconciliation. It is difficult to underestimate the wealth of resources that the communications team are able to harness in its work together, supporting the work of the church in living into the Five Marks of Mission.

Early on in this triennium the Council of General Synod the council received a “Communications Review” led by the former chair Neil Elliot. This review was undertaken as requested by the report on structures *Embodying God’s Call*. I think it is safe to say that this review was difficult to receive, as it pointed to the many ways that changes could be conceived in this department. In some ways this is not too surprising; changes are a way of life in the field of communications. Some of the areas in particular need of consideration which it pointed to are (1) the relationship between the news delivered via the Journal, and the website, and the consideration of a single news platform, (2) the nature of the online community and its function, and (3) the large broader question of our mission as expressed by our communications, in other words: Are we spending most of our effort on communication inside the family of the church, and how can we turn that message outwards towards the world that God loves? As the team continues to consider and to adjust to the changes mentioned above, I believe that this review may be revisited, understanding that these questions remain on the table, and may help us to continue to meet the challenges that the future brings.

The communications team has found this past triennium a difficult one in which to operate, as it embraced the recommendations of *Embodying God’s Call*, while coping with the many transitions it faced. Often it felt like the committee was quite distant from the communication function of the department team. During its second year, our chair The Rev. Canon Neil Elliot resigned as chair, due to increased workload in his own diocese, and another member at large, Karen Egan was appointed chair. It was also quite evident that this often struggled to understand how to exercise its own mandate to support the director and the whole team in the national office. I think this committee needs to examine its role in the overall functioning of the communications team, and for that reason a face-to-face meeting has been called for mid-April 2016. In this meeting we will review the committee’s terms of reference, meet with the communication team as a whole and consult particularly with the director in order to make recommendations for the next triennium’s manifestation of this committee. I am

confident that the role of this committee can be conceived in such a way that it makes a genuine contribution to the whole team in the national office, as we continue to strive to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom to the world in such need of God's love.

Karen Egan

Chair

Committee Members

Sue Winn (Montreal)
Kyle Wagner (Nova Scotia & PEI)
Nissa Basbaum (Kootenay)
Aleshia Johnson (Niagara)
Sue Titterington (Rupert's Land)
Trina Gallop (ELCIC member)