

Proposal 1

Title: Reduction in Maritime Conference Budget for 2017

Originating Body: Valley Presbytery

Intended Court for Action: Maritime Conference

Financial Implications: Reduction in Allocations

Staffing Implications: Unknown

Source of Funding: Pastoral Charges

Presbytery: Valley Presbytery Executive - with Concurrence

The Valley Presbytery proposes that the Maritime Conference reduce the Maritime Conference's budget for 2017 by 25%.

Background:

Balancing our financial obligations with the fiscal changes inherent in the restructuring of The United Church of Canada is a challenge that many congregations will have to deal with in the near future. It is estimated that if the remits are passed and The United Church goes ahead with its plans for restructuring so that we as a national church can live within our means, we can anticipate a 25% increase in our allocations.

Many of the small rural congregations within Valley Presbytery are struggling to stay alive as communities of worship, carrying our Christ's work in our communities. Dwindling attendance and a marked decline in givings make this an ongoing challenge. Fund raisers are the norm as congregations attempt to find the monies needed to maintain buildings and pay duly called and appointed clergy. It is not unusual for congregations to adopt deficit budgets at their annual meetings. Some of us live "so close to the bone" that any increase in expenditures may force a discussion about closure.

The steady increase in allocations to Maritime Conference, without going into the reasons for these increases, has become an annual tax that many of us can ill afford to pay. The allocation is resented and is felt to be an imposition on folks who in no way caused these allocations to be increased. And so it is in this climate of a much resented and poorly understood "taxation" that we expect a large increase in our financial obligations to the greater church. This certainly will create a situation in which smaller congregations may be forced to close their doors.

Given that allocations continue to increase and given that many congregations in Valley Presbytery are currently unable or unwilling to pay the currently assessed allocations, Valley Presbytery is asking that Maritime Conference reduce its operating budget by 25%, thereby reducing its need to exact allocations and reducing the financial burden it places on struggling congregations. This will help all the congregations within Maritime Conference to live within their means.