

Fundy St Lawrence Dawning Waters and Region 15
Regional Meeting Planning Committees

Conversations on How We Meet

Background

With the rapid approach of the Inaugural meetings of our two regions, the two regional meeting planning committees, who have been acting as a single committee for this year's meeting, are faced with an important question... what about next year?

At the final meeting of Maritime Conference, the message that came from the gathered was clear – we want to meet together again next year. The commissions appointed to the two regions agreed and plans were put in place to meet at the usual time in the usual place allowing for individual Regional meetings to take place to deal with such issues as budget and polity and elections.

With 2019 planning accomplished, the committees need to consider two clear possibilities – meet together again in 2020 using the same format or say our farewell's this year and meet individually as separate regions.

Implications

The final decisions will be made by the individual gathered regions. In order to make informed decisions, it was agreed by the two committees that some information had to be shared to allow for joint and individual conversations.

Financial

A big consideration for the planning committees is financial. Each Region has budgeted \$65,000 dollars for the regional meeting. This budget includes but is not limited to rental, technical services, shuttle service, receptions, worship expenses, speakers and an estimated 10 cent per kilometer travel allowance for those attending. With each region working with a \$325,000 administrative budget, this means that 20% of that budget is being spent on the three day annual meeting. Here are some of the questions around finance...

Would it be more cost effective to meet separately?

With reduced numbers (2019 registration sits at 359 currently – both regions have churches that would accommodate 200), could the meeting be held in a church rather than renting space?

With reduced numbers, would the technical services required be greatly reduced and would a church already have the necessary sound and visual equipment that is currently rented?

Would having a meeting more central to a regional topography make attendance more attractive to delates from communities of faith who are more distant?

What are the spiritual and relationship costs of not meeting together?

Mission and Vision

As Maritime Conference, we shared a common mission and vision. As individual regions, that may not be the case. While we continue to have many things in common at this time, will that change over time? What are the implications for the executives of the individual regions as they move the church forward into the future?

Ordination

Regional Commissions are being asked to rethink how and when ordination takes place. The service of ordination has been an intricate part of the Conference but, if the request from the Office of Vocation is agreed to, this may no longer be the case. Does this change how you feel about meeting together?

Timing

Maritime Conference has continued to meet for three days while other Conferences have changed how, when and for how long they meet. For example, should each region only meet in person every three years in the year the Denominational Council meets? Should the region meet for only one day? Is one day adequate for the business that rightly comes before the delegates?

Youth

The strongest voices at Maritime Conference in 2018 asking that we continue to meet together were the voices of the youth. We have a wonderful tradition with IAC and Youth Forum at Maritime Conference and having the future leaders with the elders at these meetings has been a very strong and hopeful presence. Can this tradition continue in the smaller gathering? Will the youth still come and participate with a changed dynamic if the meetings are a different times and in different places? How does the change affect those who plan the activities with the youth? Will youth continue to meet in the larger group separate from regional meetings but without the free transportation that they currently count on (coming to and from the meeting with clergy and delegates)? If youth are meeting at other times, how do they learn about the work of the region and the responsibilities of the delegates?

Conclusion

These are just some of the questions that have come up with respect to the meetings and the planning of them. There are probably many, many more that we haven't considered. We will take some time to talk about this together on Friday and separately on Saturday to provide information to your planning committees on how to move forward.

Blessings!

Regional Meeting Planning Committees of Region 15 and Fundy St Lawrence Dawning Waters