

DIVISION OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Division Chair: Jane McDonald

Division Secretary: Fay Smith

The year 2020 was a year that none of us are likely to forget. The pandemic created such turmoil in the way we do church and the work we are called to do. For all of the downsides that we have seen over the last year we have also seen much innovation by many and new ways of doing business. The development of virtual meetings has often freed time to spend on other tasks or with family. Our ability to gather is an important part of who we are as an organization and to share faith and community. That is a big part of what we have missed. This step back has allowed other work to take place across our committees and yet has hampered some.

Division Committees

Property Committee:

Ron Patterson, Chair
Larry Evans, Vice Chair
Fay Smith, Secretary
Rev, David LeBlanc
Jack Logan
Bob McArel
Gary Wilkie
Grant MacKenzie

Our Property committee has continued to work hard over this past year. There was still significant work that the committee was called to do. Any work on renovations, repairs, grant applications for such things as Technology Grants, Hunter Fund, Faithful Footprints, Capital Assistance and others that have a connection to Region 15. All property related matters including new construction, rentals, amalgamations, closings and endings are part of the work of the diligent committee. They have done tremendous work on fine tuning the “Handbook for Communities of Faith Re: Property Matters”.

They have also worked on information related to Cemeteries for Communities of Faith as well. They have completed the inventory of all Nova Scotia UCC owned property and are collaborating with the Finance, Investment and Accountability Committee on a shared resource. There is over 250 such properties throughout our province. While able the committee met in person and then moved to virtual meetings monthly through the remainder of the year. I want to thank each individual on the Committee for a tremendous amount of work accomplished to help organize and set up processes for our property resources. Many thanks to each of you.

Finance, Investments & Accountability:

Allan Davis, Co-Chair
Mac MacLeod, Co-Chair
Michael Ball, Secretary
Geoff Lewis

We began 2020 believing that it was the year when we would learn what a normal full year would look like for the Region in the new church structure. Of course, that is not the way it was to be.

The committee held a total of seventeen ZOOM meetings during the 2020 fiscal year. Twelve of these were regularly scheduled monthly meetings. On March 30th we held our first special meeting in response to the COVID -19 pandemic to discern how we could help our Communities of Faiths through these unchartered waters. Another special meeting was held in April with the Church Extension Board where they offered to make funds available should that become necessary. Fortunately, with the assistance provided by the federal government and funds made available by General Council we have not had to take the CEB up on their offer yet.

In August we submitted our proposed “Investment Policy Guidelines” to the Division of Finance with a request that they be forwarded to Regional Council for approval. Work is ongoing on our new fund structures guidelines and we expect to be forwarding that work to the Division soon.

In October we approved \$160,500 in Mission Support Grants to a total of ten applicants. Although this exceeded the grant from General Council, we were able cushion the shortfall from funds carried over from previous years for such a contingency. We caution our Mission Units to expect grants to continue to decrease is coming years.

Other highlights of the year included \$15,000 in seed funding for the “Association of Ministers” from the New Ministries Fund. In May we held a special meeting with Mat Whynott and Christine Stuart from the Outdoor Recreational Ministries Network to hear their plans to stay connected with campers during the pandemic. As a result, it was agreed to provide \$15,000 in funding to their Camp in a Box project. This was matched by a similar grant from “Dawning Waters”.

We are ever grateful for the support of our committee members and especially want to thanks Geoff Lewis whose term is ending. Thank you Geoff!

Respectfully submitted by the Co-chairs, *Allan Davis and Mac MacLeod*

This committee has had the opportunity over the last year to support many groups through our Mission Support program. In some cases these group may not have been able to continue the work that they do for members of our communities without that additional financial support. They are also involved in grants and loans for Communities of Faith as well as dealing with the Investments held on behalf of the Region. The Policy will give guidelines on how our funds are managed and invested. The committee also prepares the annual budget for the Region and reviews the annual financial statements and can also be called upon for advice if a Community of Faith requires it. The Budget for 2021 did have some cuts necessary although with the cut back in activity of many of our committees and the work of the Region, we feel there is sufficient funds held by the Region if we are able to return to some of our programming during the year. Much of our reserve comes from not meeting in person for our Annual Meeting last year and even this year. We all hope and pray that we can return to some sense of normalcy with the advent of the vaccination programs available to us as we move into this year. The Committee has a very dedicated group working well together for the best interest of our Region. Thanks to all of you for the hours and dedication you give to this work.

Incorporated Ministries:

Rev. Christine Marie Gladu, Chair
Kevin Little, Secretary
Brenda Munro
Elaine Grey

I want to particularly thank Rev. Christine Marie Gladu for stepping up to be Chair of this important committee. The Incorporated Ministries Committee is responsible for ensuring oversight, leadership and guidance to organizations that are affiliated with the United Church but in themselves are incorporated organizations. For example, church camps, the Church Extension Board and community support organizations such as the Brunswick Street Mission. When Region 15 became a new entity each of these organizations were required to change their by laws and any memorandums of agreement necessary for the required relationship. Christine has set up the group so that each member does check ins with the organizations to get to know them and to raise any issues that they may be encountering and to offer any support they can. We thank those involved in this work as the arms of the United Church go farther into our communities than some realize and we are very appreciative of these organizations, the people and all of the work that they do.

Archives, Records and History Committee:

Joyce Wylie, Chair
Leslie Burrows
Ross Cameron
Shane Doucette

The Archives Committee has had a difficult time finding it's feet and direction. Joyce attended a session in London Ontario where the reorganized United Church held a National meeting of Archivists and the Committee Chairs from across the country to develop how this work will be carried out. Many suggestions were made and a Task Force was established to work on guidelines and policies that would be presented to the General Council Executive (GCE) for approval and then implementation. For many reasons that work has been stalled much of that is due to the pressures on all levels of our United Church to support our congregations and figure out how we go about being church in a pandemic era. The highest priority was keeping our Communities of Faith viable and supporting them as they processed how to be church for their members but also supportive financially for staff. The work of the Task Force unfortunately was slowed significantly and we are still waiting for the results of the work of the Task Force to go to the GCE and then disseminate to the regions across the country. These delays have not helped the moral of the committee and unfortunately our Chair Joyce Wylie has chosen to step back and allow someone else to step forward to lead this extremely important work of the Church. Without our history we cannot learn to be better in the now and the future. Thank you Joyce and your fellow committee members for continuing to support the work of Region 15 in any way you can. We hope that you will find another passion within the Region to share your talents with. We need you!

As I step away from the Chair of the Division to take on another role within the Region, I can't say enough about the dedication of the people that work within this Division. The extensive amount of time and dedication to the work that each of you have is phenomenal. I can't thank you enough for stepping up to the hard work of setting us on the right path for our newly formed Region.

Many Thanks to all,
Respectfully Submitted
Jane McDonald, Chair
Division of Finance and Administration