

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

“So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.” (Galatians 6:10)

Your pastoral relations committee does indeed seek to work for the good of all faith communities and ministry personnel within the bounds of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters. The ministry in which we are engaged continues to be wide ranging, sometimes challenging, always necessary.

In order to seize the opportunity of gathering electronically we meet monthly, usually the second Tuesday, via ZOOM. We have gathered on several separate occasions to address what we see as more long-range matters. We have utilized email polls as outlined in The Manual in order to address emergent issues between meetings.

Much of the work of our committee is in partnership with a core of liaisons who are willing to be our boots on the ground within faith communities seeking assistance. Our deepest thanks to those folk. It is apparent that the efficacy of our work relies on those trained in the position of liaison to work with a faith community. One 2020 offering for training has been facilitated on Zoom and we anticipate another session in the fall. Please give prayerful consideration to taking the training.

The pandemic has created ongoing stress for leadership- both ministry personnel and lay. Additional time has been devoted to the support of ministry personnel who are finding the challenges of electronic pastoral care to be heavy.

REVISION OF MANDATE:

The committee reviewed and reworked its mandate. The new version will be posted on the website.

Part of the revision involves clarifying the role of pastoral relations in the request to sell or rent a manse. As the existence of a manse has an impact upon the pastoral relationship, the first step for a community of faith considering the sale or leasing of a manse is to speak with the pastoral relations committee. Ongoing conversation is taking place with the Property Committee around communications.

CALLS/APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS:

At the time of writing the following numbers give a glimpse of ministry within the bounds of our region:

We now have 113 active Pastoral Charges
56 charges are served by full time ministry
62 charges are served by part time ministry
59 ministry personnel have been called by charges
33 are under appointment

Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters currently has 21 open part-time and full-time ministry positions.

These numbers raise concern around the need for communities of faith to be in conversation and discernment with their neighbours around reviewing ministry needs and considering some form of partnering.

LISTING FOR PULPIT SUPPLY:

A listing of those ministry personnel available for pulpit supply is now posted on the website.

Licensed Lay Worship Leaders:

The coordination of the LLWL participants is now under a sub-committee chaired by Brian DeLong. The committee meets with the full pastoral relations committee upon request and their recommendations are received by the PR Committee and shared with the Executive. An effort to review the possibility of partnering with the Tatamagouche Centre on a learning program is ongoing at the time of writing.

FORWARD PLANNING:

UNITED FRESH START

This program which was to be shared with Region 15 to develop and engage in United Fresh Start, a program designed to encourage an intentional approach to ministry within new covenantal relationships has been on hiatus during the pandemic.

FAITH COMMUNITY SELF ASSESSMENT

A self-assessment process which would address the direction in The Manual (Section G.1.2.2 Regular Self-Assessments) which requires faith communities to conduct and file a self-assessment with the regional council. This first portion will address the fiduciary side of being a pastoral charge: are the policies and procedures of The United Church being followed. A test group of four faith communities have participated in the initial process. In the fall of 2021 a region wide invitation will be forwarded.

HEALTH, JOY AND EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY:

This statement appears in the mandate of the committee and in The Manual. We have joined with our colleagues in Regions 15 and 16 to offer a program in partnership with The Prayer Bench and Janice MacLean: The Soul of the Preacher. Our partnership has enabled an offer of 25% off the registration.

In addition, we have requested input from you regarding ideas as to how 'health, joy and excellence in ministry'. A broader request will be forwarded via email.

PANDEMIC PLANNING:

This has been an incredibly trying time. Faith communities and ministry personnel have been stretched to find ways to offer ministry in the midst of great uncertainty. The pressure of re-defining ministry has taken a heavy toll on leaders in faith communities, on financial realities, on the connectedness of the church.

GRATITUDE:

Our thanks to the members of the region who have supported us through this past year. Our thanks to those who have served as liaison under Covid restrictions. Our thanks to those faith communities who have been patient as the issues with Church Hub have been sorted through.

REGIONAL COUNCIL MINISTER

Our committee wishes to express our thanks to the Regional Council Minister, Kendall Harrison. The on-going ministry he provides has been made more difficult because of the restrictions and realities of the pandemic. As we have acknowledged so very often, Kendall's work is never dull! Our thanks for ministry shared.

I will be stepping down as chair at the rise of the annual meeting. Hugh Ellis (who stepped in as secretary near the end of 2020) will move into the chair. Let me express my thanks to the members of the committee: Aaron Billard, Kelly Burke, Hugh Ellis, Marion Green, Kate Jones, Heather MacDougall, Barbara Prowse. Through it all you have sought to "*...work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.*"

Blessings be,
Catherine Gaw
Chair