

Strategic Plan implementation Report to the Annual Meeting May 27-29, 2022

As we report on what the Region has been working on for the last year it is important to reflect on the progress with respect to the Strategic Plan (SP) for Region 15.

I hope you are all aware that at our last annual meeting held in 2021 we as a Regional Council approved the SP. If you need to review materials related to the plan they can be accessed at <https://ucceast.ca/strategic-plan>.

The executive came together in June of last year and discussed how to proceed with implementation of the plan. We felt the first step was to have the various Divisions and Committees discuss how they could develop their work and to live into the SP as they continue to do their work for the next 2-3 years with focus on the three pillars identified in the SP. Divisions and Committees were given time to discern their steps forward over the summer and were asked to report back in the fall. In addition to the work mentioned above, staff were asked to reflect on the pillars of the plan and to assess their work and position descriptions as well.

As you can imagine the thought and reflection into the work of Region 15 for each Division/Committee is not an easy task. The culmination of that work is outlined below.

Pillar #1 – Discipleship

Division of Finance & Administration (DF&A):

- Promote to our wider communities (members, lay, clergy and CoF) the various funds that can offer support. (Finance Accountability and Investment Committee (FA&I))
- Directing Funds realized from property sales to assist in new and existing initiatives etc. (Property Committee (PC))
- Reflecting back to our Ministries their work of discipleship. (Incorporated Ministries Committee (IMC))

Division of Ministry Resources (DMR):

- Facilitate opportunities for the committees in the Division to get together to share their work and discipleship. (DMR)
- Highlighting the need for Self-Care for clergy and Lay leaders. (Pastoral Relations (PR))
- Working with CoF to look at future possibilities in the midst of changing times. (Future Directions Committee (FDC))
- Meeting with the Saints, providing opportunities for people to meet, beyond business (Faith Stories workshops one idea). (Faith Stories and Community Covenant (FS&CC))

Division of Regional Services and Support (DRSS):

- Offer opportunities for members to deepen their connection to God through engagement with spiritual practices of creation Care, Peace Building, Strengthening relationships with all Relation. (Justice, Mission & Outreach Committee (JMOC))
- Inform CoF of learning opportunities, books, videos and promote things that happen in the Region through the newsletter and social media. (Communications Committee (CC))

- Designing programming for Children, Youth and Young Adults that link to the work of the broader church in the Region. Connecting the work of youth to the other committees and further develop the Narthex program for confirmation. (Children, Youth & Young Adults (CY&YA))

Other:

Nominating Committee (NC):

- Ensure terms of reference for each committee/division are clear and concise, to aid in volunteer recruitment. Encourage committees to rename their committee to better reflect their work, name the commitment needed from volunteers. (NC)
- Use the language of discipleship to encourage recruitment. (NC)

Association of Ministers (AM):

- Education and spiritual renewal for Ministry Personnel through online and in-person gatherings. (AM)

United Church Women (UCW):

- Worship/speakers/financial support for ministries in communities. (United Church Women (UCW))

Pillar #2 – Mission

Division of Finance & Administration (DF&A):

- Assess applications received from CoF through a lens of how the funding helps define the CoF's furthering of God's Mission. (FA&I)
- Invest the funds to support God's Mission into the future. (FA&I)
- Educational events for CoF on property matters, insurance and trustee responsibilities. Property Handbook updates and Summary's. (PC)
- Encouraging CoF to review their property assets to determine if the Mission of the CoF can be furthered with less property and buildings. (PC)
- Help Ministries update their by-laws, constitutions, and provide a faithful support system for our ministries in a high-speed and changing circumstances. (IMC)

Division of Ministry Resources (DMR):

- Working with Pastoral Charges to help them discern their future directions. (FDC)
- Faith Stories workshops online and in-person to help CoF think about their mission and give some tools to talk about that within their CoF and neighbourhood. (FS&CC)

Division of Regional Services and Support (DRSS):

- Find ways to help youth connect their spiritual response to climate change, connecting them to opportunities to learn about community gardening, local food supply, developing programs at church camps. Help children, youth and young adults to connect to the broader community (ex. School lunch programs etc.). (CY&YA)
- Share examples of and provide a forum for exchange of ideas, imaginative cooperatives and renewal through articles in the newsletter and social media to spark further discussion and initiatives. (CC)

- To collaborate with other committees, to raise awareness of justice issues, seek to facilitate the growth of networks and make connection between individuals and CoF for JMO passions. (JMOC)

Other:

Association of Ministers (AM):

- Offer opportunity for clergy to enhance their skills to help CoF to define and live their mission. Improving the skills, health and resiliency of clergy. (AM)

United Church Women (UCW):

- Strong mission commitment local and global, women for change in Zambia, units/local support groups working for justice and the betterment of other. (UCW)

Pillar #3 – Leadership:

Division of Finance & Administration (DF&A):

- Promoting the Ministry Initiatives Fund and other funds that help with programming to provide leadership development. (FA&I)
- Promoting the wisdom of CoF to give leadership in the lowering of the carbon footprint and giving CoF information on where to seek funding for such initiatives. (FA&I)
- Update the yearbook data base reports to examine the financial viability of CoF and to offer support to those that are struggling. (FA&I)
- Develop a policy about the backing-up of computer files and storage. (FA&I)
- Develop a workshop for CoF for financial management and investments. (FA&I)
- Communicate with CoF so they are aware that the Property Committee is available to assist when needed. Update and review the Terms of Reference regularly. (PC)
- Check in with staff and volunteers of our ministries to see if there is leadership training/skill development/or learning opportunities that would assist their work. (IMC)
- Connect our ministries to others who do the same work for support and information/ideas sharing. (IMC)

Division of Ministry Resources (DMR):

- Regularly review the committee mandates, and divisions governance structure to make sure it is giving good leadership. Ensure the committees in the umbrella of the division are fulfilling their mandate. Ensure committee handbooks are up to date. Provide training for committee members about their mandates and related policies. Assist the committees in creating working groups for projects if needed. (DMR)
- Providing Leadership Training in the Fresh Start Program. (FDC)
- Continue to work on the self-assessment tool for CoF. (FS&CC)
- Share the information gleaned from the self-assessment tool with the committees to help with the issues of leadership and mission. (FS&CC)
- Continue to recruit and train Liaisons to support CoF in their Pastoral Relationship and Transition. (Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC))

Division of Regional Services and Support (DRSS):

- Develop Anti-Racism programming for children, provide mental health training for leaders of youth and children. Support current way to develop leadership programming

for children, youth and young adults (ex. Youth Forum and Intermediates facilitator training). (CY&YAC)

- Create a forum for discussion and sharing of information from people experienced in new forms of ministry, create a forum for discussion of governance models this could happen through a column in the monthly newsletter and Facebook or website. (CC)
- Celebrate our leaders and their accomplishments through our newsletter and Facebook. (CC)
- Continue to provide leadership education, advocacy, and action for justice concerns and issues. (JMOC)
- Equip members, including clergy, to be justice leaders in their own CoF and the wider community. (JMOC)

Other:

Association of Ministers (AM):

- Providing conferences, educational opportunities, seminars and collegial support for ministry personnel. (AM)

United Church Women (UCW):

- Provide opportunities for women's leadership growth and support, improvement of communication. Encourage women to take part in the learning events, book studies EDGE programs and other UCC programs. (UCW)

Nominating Committee (NC):

- Orientation for new chairs and secretaries of committees and divisions about expectations and practices. (NC)
- Provide information to new members of the Region about vacancies and regional committee work, as well as opportunities to serve. (NC)
- Encourage committees to review their sustainability and vitality as a committee/division. Reminder that there is the opportunity to create working groups within committees. (NC)
- Encouraging committees to look at their work to assess whether their work would be better enhanced or done through clusters and networks which can engage with a large/membership base. (NC)

Aside from the great work articulated above there are additional questions that we need to consider. How do we equip our communities of faith and our ministry to interpret and live out the SP. The questions we also need to focus on are outlined below:

Leadership Development:

- How can we inspire curious, brave leaders when part-time ministry seems the only option, and neighbouring pastoral charges are hesitant at best to share in a full-time position?
- What does Discipleship, Mission and Leadership mean in light of what is happening in our pastoral charges?
- Training for our ministry staff needs to adapt to changing realities. What does this look like?
- What are the needs of the Region as a whole and is that reflected in the work and duties of the staff?

- There is likely going to be further decline in the number of pastoral charges as we move forward. How can we support them in having a graceful ending?
- How do we have the discussions in our CoF on our SP and the meaning of Discipleship, Mission and Leadership.
- How do we support our leadership in their needs for mental health support and to prevent burnout?
- How do we change the narrative of a dying church to a thriving church?
- How do we help our CoF to design their own action plan with respect to the three pillars in the SP?
- How do we receive feedback from our CoF on what is needed from the Region to live out their Discipleship, Mission and Leadership?

I am sure there are many more questions yet to arise as we travel this path to make our Region more relevant and dynamic. Our next steps will be to annually ask for divisions and committees to evaluate how they are living into the SP and to initiate how we can take the conversations to our CoF and support them in the work of living into the SP. We must continue to listen and hear with not only our ears but our hearts as to our path forward. As President I have taken the opportunity of my sessions on “Conversation with the President” to introduce the Pillars of our SP and to ask those present how they see our CoF living out the SP. There will be work done on a more formal plan for opening discussions with our CoF as to how we can animate the pillars in our CoF. The Executive will be having a day long retreat in the fall to focus on the SP.

We do hope that we can all engage in this work together.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane McDonald
President
Region 15