

**Tri-Region Staff Committee Annual Report 2023-2024**  
**Eastern Regions United Church of Canada (UCC) Prepared April 2024**

Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters (FSLDW), Bermuda-Nova Scotia (BNS), First Dawn Eastern Edge (FDEE)

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Members:                   Rev. Faith March-MacCuish, Executive Minister  
                                   Jim Evans (First Dawn Eastern Edge)  
                                   Rev. Paula Gale (First Dawn Eastern Edge)  
                                   Rev. Derek Elsworth (Bermuda-Nova Scotia)  
                                   Rev. Donna Tourneur (Bermuda-Nova Scotia)  
                                   Rev. Debbie Aitken (FSLDW)  
                                   Martha Vickers (FSLDW)

The Tri-Regional Staff Support Committee for the Eastern Regions of The United Church of Canada met virtually several times via Zoom platform during the past 12 months: May 1, 2023, May 15, 2023, March 13, 2024, March 27, 2024, April 16, 2024.

The Terms of Reference for this committee state that the committee's responsibility is to:

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this model, including how the cost-sharing arrangements are working and help to identify improvements in this arrangement from time to time
- Share experiences and insights about transitional work, including the possibility of any other shared projects.
- Provide support for all staff employed by the Regions and work with the Executive Minister in regards to working conditions and responsibilities.

The Tri-Regional Staff Support Committee annual budget is \$1,500 per year with that shared between the 3 regions at \$500 each.

The committee met online on May 1, 2023. All members and Rev. Faith were present. The sole purpose of this gathering was to have the annual check-in with the Program Staff of the three Regions. The committee compiled a list of questions to ask the staff and an informal sharing was carried out. The committee is very thankful to the staff who answered the questions in a very considered and fulsome way. The Committee then met online on May 15, 2023 to debrief and summarize what was heard at the May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Present for the meeting with staff on May 1<sup>st</sup>, along with the committee, were:

Mr. David Hewitt, Regional Minister 15  
 Rev. Heather Sandford, Regional Minister FDEE  
 Rev. Kendall Harrison, Regional Minister FSLDW  
 Rev. Dr. Sherpherd Munikwa, Justice, Mission & Outreach Minister (shared)  
 Rev. Catherine Stuart, Children, Youth & Young Adults Minister (shared)

The committee also discussed the plan for coverage with the Executive Minister for her Sabbatical. The three Regional Ministers agreed take a month each to be acting Executive Minister. Jennifer Taylor will be receiving all the Executive Ministers emails and will answer those she can and direct the others to the appropriate committee or staff.

The committee then began its meetings again in the winter of 2024. The Executive Minister shared that her 360 Review had been completed in December and she met with her supervisor, Michael Blair, to discuss the outcomes. She shared that there were 31 people asked to respond to her 360; people in leadership from all three Regional Councils, staff and community leaders. She was very humbled by the outcomes. Michael Blair congratulated her on her report and thanked her for her leadership. There was also opportunity for growing edges and personal growth.

The Staff Support Committee met with the Administrative Support Staff on March 13, 2024. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an opportunity to check-in with administrative staff in the regions and for this committee to hear areas of both joys and challenges. The committee has a second meeting to complete the check-in with Administrative Support Staff as one staff person from the Sackville office was unable to attend the previous meeting.

The committee was briefed by Rev. Faith on the departure of Shari Kaster, Communications and Administrative Support, for Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters and Bermuda-Nova Scotia. Shari has been contracted to assist with the annual meetings preparation this spring, for twelve hours a week up to and including the end of May.

The committee then set up a Zoom meeting for an exit interview with Shari Kaster, Communications and Administrative Support, for Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters and Bermuda-Nova Scotia. The committee debriefed regarding the information gathered at the above 2 meetings, and provided support/recommendations to Rev. Faith and the Regions as we move forward.

At this time, the Tri-regional Staff Support Committee members raise concern and support for increased administrative staff hours in the recently vacated Communications and Administrative Support position (21hrs./wk.) in the Sackville office. Further discussion/debriefing on this matter remains pending at the time of this report.

The Executive Minister briefed us on the results of the 360 Review for Rev. Heather Sandford, Regional Minister for Pastoral Relations and Community of Faith Support for First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council. Rev. Heather's 360 review was very positive. She was appreciative of the opportunity to hear how people received her ministry. Rev. Heather has now set her goals for her the year ahead.

The Executive Minister gave an update on the 360 Review for Rev. Catherine Stuart, Children, Youth and Young Adults Minister for the three Eastern Regions. Catherine's review is ongoing

and the Executive Minister will be meeting with Catherine on April 22, 2024 and the committee will be briefed at a subsequent meeting.

The Committee members would like to recognize and commend the staff of all 3 regions for their ongoing dedication, insight and caring commitment to the work of the UCC Eastern Regions. We are all truly blessed for the work each and every one offers in keeping “the wheels turning”!

In closing, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the wisdom, guidance, dedication and steadfast faithfulness of our Executive Minister, Rev. Faith March-MacCuish. As challenging as these times can be for the Church and the wider world, ***we are not alone.***

*Respectfully prepared and submitted,*

*Martha Vickers  
Region FSLDW Reporting Member  
Tri-Region Staff Support Committee  
United Church of Canada*