

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

“We believe in God who has created and is creating” (United Church Creed)

Your Pastoral Relations Committee continues to work on behalf of communities and ministry personnel within the boundaries of the Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region. Our committee is called to this ministry of guidance and support, and we continue to grow into that calling guided by the Spirit.

Our committee continues to meet electronically via Zoom on the second Tuesday of the month including Executive session during July and August and uses electronic votes between meetings for urgent matters. Highlights of each committee meeting are now included in the weekly announcements.

We have two working groups, one dedicated to testing a Self -Assessment process and another providing pastoral support and communication to Pensioners. We wish to thank those communities who have accepted the task of testing the Self-Assessment model and providing feedback. We continue to adjust the format of the Self-Assessment and expect to invite a larger group of communities into the process in the current year.

The Pensioner group is still in the process of connecting to our pensioners and pension survivors. We have held one pensioner gathering in PEI and hope to be able to organize others in the region in the coming year.

We are grateful to Barbara Prowse who continues to provide excellent support, communication and guidance to our Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWLs) as our LLWL Co-Ordinator.

Much of the work of our committee involves a core of trained liaisons who assist communities with Community of Faith Profile creation and their search for ministry personnel. We also appoint pastoral charge supervisors who guide communities during the absence of ministry personnel. Our deep appreciation goes out to all these individuals who step in to assist, often with limited notice.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS in 2023-24

The committee continues to maintain a comprehensive Excel spreadsheet to record significant pieces of pastoral relations data for each Pastoral Charge. This sheet includes communities, ministry personnel, call and appointment information, existence of a manse, liaison, supervisor, etc.

In the current year the committee has:

- Approved a guide for communities and ministry personnel entitled Part-Time Ministry Considerations
- Approved a policy for Designated Lay Ministers seeking Testamur under current United Church guidance.
- Posted Guidelines for Self-Assessment (in draft form) for information purposes.

All documents are available on the regional website.

WORK IN PROGRESS:

The following items are in various stages of review and development by the committee:

- Administrative information Sheets for Pastoral Relations Liaisons and Pastoral Charge Supervisors
- A guide to the steps for the legal closure of a community of faith or Pastoral Charge is being completed in conjunction with the Property Committee
- Developing a policy and training program for sacramental elders for designated congregations who are without ministry personnel for extended periods.
- Development and delivery of a boundaries training program/workshop for LLWL licensing.
- A simplified template for communities involved in the creation of a Community of Faith Profile
- An expedited process to internally speed the review and approval of a Community of Faith Profile
- Adoption of the policy for review and approval of Regionally Recognized/Accountable Ministries
- A review of the need for a policy on Provisional Calls (non DLM process)
- Creation of a list of trained Pastoral Charge Liaisons.

CURRENT STATISTICS: (as of April 22, 2024)

At the time of writing (April 1) the following numbers give a snapshot of ministry within the bounds of our region:

Pastoral Charges	111
Communities of Faith	171

51 charges are served by full-time ministry.

27 charges are served by part-time ministry.

3 charges are cooperative ministries.

15 charges are in shared ministry.

15 charges are in regular Sunday Supply.

52 ministry personnel have been called

25 ministry personnel are under appointment.

5 are students/candidates.

24 Retired ministry personnel are serving in appointment or as PC Supervisors

8 liaisons are currently engaged in profile work and 8 communities are in active search.

27 pastoral changes are under pastoral charge supervision.

The region currently licenses 28 Licensed Lay Worship Leaders.

During the year the committee has approved 2 calls, 17 appointments and reviewed and approved 7 Community of Faith profiles.

LISTING FOR PULPIT SUPPLY:

A listing of those ministry personnel and LLWLs available for pulpit supply are posted on the regional website and is updated as we are notified of changes.

REGIONAL MINISTER AND COMMITTEE

Our committee wishes to express our thanks to the Regional Minister, Rev. Kendall Harrison. Our thanks for his gifts and the passion he displays for the ministry he shares with us.

This ends my third year as chair of this busy, vital and dedicated group. I extend our gratitude to Marlene MacLeod for her dedicated service to our committee as secretary over the past three years as she will be leaving the committee at the end of this annual meeting. She has improved many of our communication processes in that time. She hands over the pen and word processing to Nancy Nicol as our new secretary who comes to the role with an administrative assistant background similar to Marlene's. I also wish to express my thanks to the other members of the committee: Rev. Aaron Billard, Rev. Kelly Burke, Rev. Greg Davis, Rev. Kate Jones, and Barbara Prowse for their commitment to Pastoral Relations. In the coming year we will welcome the Rev. Dr. Ian Manson to the committee.

We also offer thanks to those from outside the regular Pastoral Relations Committee who have assisted with our working groups through the past year.

They include Rev. Jane Doull, Rev. Myles Vardy, Rev. Susan Estabrooks, Rev. Heather MacDougall, Rev. Jennifer Brown, Rev. Dr. Beverly Daley, Rev. Blair Lewis and Rev. Alice Finnamore.

The church continues to evolve in the "post pandemic" era. We live in changing times and change is not easy for many of us. We are challenged to do more with less, embrace the increasing role of technology in worship and church administration and find new ways of cooperation and support as the body of Christ on earth. We try to look to the future while still honouring and respecting our past. As we approach our 100th anniversary as a singular denomination in Canada we are reminded to ask ourselves....Who is my neighbour and how do we share God's message of love, hope and forgiveness with them? It is my hope that we do so by living into our calling to Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship and Daring Justice thus becoming the people that God intended each of us to be! God is always with us..... through the highs, the lows and the "in between" times. Thanks be to God!

Blessings and peace,
Hugh Ellis
Chair
FSLDW Pastoral Relations Committee