

First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council
Priorities, Objectives, and Actions
revised January 30, 2025

On October 11-12, 2023, First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council Executive met at Regional Council office in St John's for a time of prayerful discernment and brain-storming to identify priorities and goals for the future, and to set objectives for achieving these goals. These priorities were brought to the June 7-9, 2024 Annual Meeting of the Region, for discussion by representatives of Communities of Faith. Feedback from the annual meeting sessions was collated, and brought to the September 4-5, 2024 meeting of Regional Council Executive, for further discernment. This document is the result of this process of discussion, discernment, feedback and revision.

Priority 1: Sharing our Faith Story: Building Community

Objective: Engage communities of faith in telling the Good News with each other and with the community at large.

Actions

- Share success stories amongst communities of faith
- Share our struggles amongst communities of faith so that we may learn from one another and discern a path forward
- Foster and encourage connections and initiate intentional gatherings
- Help communities of faith discern their future; host intentional conversations to determine needs/wants
- Share stories, activities, buildings; tell the Good News
- Develop a process to stay in touch and reduce isolation
- Give attention to isolated and disconnected congregations so they are uplifted and inspired
- Empower struggling communities of faith and help them to a renewed sense of mission
- Talk to communities of faith, denominations, municipalities to identify common issues and resources
- Read and respond to annual reports to offer encouragement and share stories
- Share faith stories with media
- Encourage and develop faith stories and promotional material
- Regain confidence in sharing who we are
- Engage in activities that build community trust
- Reach out into the community to meet people where they are; food banks, drop-in centres, etc.
- Uplift and support each other in this work

Priority 2: Inclusivity

Objective: To become an affirming region and inclusive church.

Actions

- Offer educational webinars about inclusivity and personal stories of inclusion; inclusion, welcome, hospitality, are the responsibility of all
- Work towards accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities
- Encourage storytelling and replace the fear of the future with hope and faith
- Prioritize involving youth; including in planning
- Affirm gifts of diverse communities
- Help communities of faith become affirming
- Learn about the impacts of grief and trauma
- Learn from Indigenous leaders and residential school survivors
- Reach out to international students, workers, visitors, etc
- Encourage communities of faith to avail of bereavement sessions
- Prepare the region for affirming vote in 2025; and live into that vision

Priority 3: Nurturing Communities of Faith

Objective: Building trust between the region and congregations by nurturing communities of faith.

Actions

- Improve communication between the region and communities of faith (two-way)
- Nurture people so they can be empowered for ministry
- Share community of faith resources
- Foster opportunities for connection
- Sponsor geographically clustered connection spaces/times/events
- Offer intentional fellowship gatherings (within the denomination and beyond)
- Make biannual calls to retirees; yearly team visits to Communities of Faith without full time clergy
- Plan clergy retreats and symposiums; retreats for lay such as Festival of Faith
- Develop Q&A for congregations; website space for Q&A
- Learn more about the Health, Joy & Excellence Institute
- Develop pastoral units

Priority 4: Managing Resources

Objective: To be good stewards of our resources

Actions

- Learn best practices within and outside the United Church
- Reassess resources (time, people, money) to align with mission and priorities
- Assess current capacity of people, finances to do the work of the church
- Engage Teams, Divisions, members in setting goals and directing resources to meet these goals
- Encourage people to dedicate their time and resources to the work of the church
- Support nominations work and member engagement