

DIVISION OF MINISTRY RESOURCES

The Division of Ministry Resources provides leadership, oversight and guidance to the activities of the committees that support human and ministry resources within this Region of The United Church of Canada. There are five committees within this Division: Faith Story and Community Covenant; Future Directions; Licensing; Pastoral Relations; and Retiree Support. The members of this Division include:

Janet Sollows, Chair
Alicia Cox, Secretary
Joan Griffin, Chair of Licensing
Sean Boulger, Chair of Pastoral Relations
Ruth Gamble, Chair of Retiree Support

Staff support is provided by David Hewitt and Faith March-MacCuish and the President of the Region is an ex-officio member of the Division. This year we have been without chairs for the Future Directions and the Faith Story and Community Covenant Committee. The Division has assumed the work of these committees.

The Division of Ministry Resources met on June 5, September 11, October 22, November 13, November 27, February 26, March 18 and May 7. Committee chairs reported to the Division and motions needing Executive approval were passed along to the Executive through the chair of the Division. At each meeting, our financial statement was reviewed. We also discussed on a regular basis the governance structure review and the General Council's initiative Toward 2035.

This year we dealt with things that would normally come before the Faith Story and Community Covenant Committee as well as the Future Directions Committee. These committees have not been functioning due to the lack of a chair. We did consult with members of these committees to keep them informed of situations and decisions.

The **Faith Story and Community Covenant Committee** developed an Annual Report Review process that was approved by the Executive in the fall. It was decided in the spring that we would hold off on implementing this process until the report of the governance structure was received and we knew where the responsibility of reviewing annual reports would rest.

The **Future Directions Committee** work that we accomplished this year had to do with amalgamations, pastoral charge name changes, disbandings, decommissionings, collaborative ministries and reviews of congregations. Thank you to our Regional Minister, David Hewitt who has coordinated the discussions and has done a lot of the work on these matters.

Here are the reports from the other three committees within the Division of Ministry Resources:

Pastoral Relations Committee Report

Throughout the past year, your Pastoral Relations (PR) held 10 regular monthly meetings. Committee members are: Rev. Karen MacNeill, Rev. Emily Duggan, Sheila Stewart, Jennifer Robarts, Janet Sollows (ex officio, chair of Division of Ministry Resources, David Hewitt

(Regional Minister) and chair Sean Boulger. Members are geographically representative of our Region.

After each regular meeting, the Regional Minister posts to the Region newsletter relevant information relating to Pastoral Relations.

The Committee was busy throughout 2025 with a number of amalgamations of Faith Communities throughout the Region. Such events inevitably produce strong emotions and our Regional Minister and Pastoral Relations has worked extensively to mitigate some of the stressors created by such events. There will no doubt be more issues of this nature in the very near future as we all grapple with the realities presented in Toward 2035.

Throughout 2025, your Pastoral Relations committee began a couple of proactive initiatives intended to promote and assist Communities of Faith in the Region.

First, PR has decided to begin offering funding or grants for ministry personnel wishing to pursue training in the Intentional Interim Ministry Program (IIM). Those wishing to know more should contact the Regional Minister.

Also, in 2025 your PR Committee decided to pay the costs associated with one core module within the United Fresh Start Program. Faith Communities in a new Call or appointment are eligible and are being encouraged by PR to complete the module within the first few months of the Call or appointment.

Of particular concern this past year has been the number of ministry personnel being forced by circumstances beyond their control to take extended medical leave. Naturally, this is deeply concerning for Pastoral Relations and indeed, the entire Region. Congregations are encouraged to continue in their efforts to support the health and spiritual growth of their ministry personnel.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sean Boulger, Chair
BNS Pastoral Relations Committee

Licensing Committee Report

The Licensing Committee of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council met five times since the last Annual Meeting of the Regional Council. Two of these meetings (June 2025 and November 2025) were held in-person at which time the committee conducted interviews with Licensed Lay Worship Leaders seeking to have their licenses renewed. The other meetings were held on-line which continues to be an effective way for the committee to continue its work and deal with emerging issues and requests.

Throughout the year the committee responded to requests for information regarding the process to be licensed as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader and offered guidance and support to meet the requirements for this program. Interviews were conducted which resulted in re-licensing of Tim Aggett, Lisa Clarke, Sara Mattinson, Barbara Bent, Jane Keller, Donald Morrison and Arthur Smith as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders for a three-year period. There are currently 13 Licensed

Lay Worship Leaders in the Region. The Licensing Committee also responded to a request from a Pastoral Charge for a student appointment to be licensed to preside for Sacraments. Six individuals who are in student appointments are currently licensed for Sacraments and/or Marriages.

The Licensing Committee co-sponsored the Annual Gathering of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders in partnership with Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council which was held at Tatamagouche Centre in November 2025. Discussions are ongoing regarding whether or not to continue working together as Regions for this event, and if so, how this might be done effectively. Members of the committee met with Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council L.L.W.L.s who attended the Annual Gathering for a time of meaningful conversation and consultation. As a result, the committee decided to be more pro-active in making L.L.W.L.s aware of opportunities for Continuing Education.

Some of the efforts of the committee this past year included creating templates as working documents to be used for interviews (for licensing and re-licensing of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and for requests for licensing for Sacraments and Marriages) so that the process is standardized. The committee established a “Policy and Procedures” page to keep track of prior and new decisions of the committee and the processes used in fulfilling its mandate.

Plans are being made for the committee to host a workshop/information session at a future Regional Council Annual Meeting focused on the ministry of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, the process for being licensed, and the policy of the Region which guides this ministry. The committee has also been in discussion regarding how we might recognize those who are Licensed Lay Worship Leaders in our Region and what might be an appropriate symbol individuals could wear to represent this ministry with the hope of instituting such in 2027.

The Licensing Committee reminds faith communities that lay persons are required to be licensed as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders in order to offer worship leadership beyond their home pastoral charge. The committee welcomes inquiries about the policies of the Regional Council and contact with those who would consider training to be able to offer this ministry.

The Committee thanks Joan Griffin for her dedicated service to the Licensing Committee as member from the committee’s beginning and then Chairperson for the past three years. Sandi Irving has agreed to assume the role of Chairperson and Jim Webber-Cook will continue as Secretary.

Respectfully submitted, Jim Webber-Cook, Secretary on behalf of Joan Griffin, Chairperson

Retiree Support Committee Report

The mandate of our committee is ‘To provide pastoral care, support and guidance to the retirees of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region, including ministry personnel and lay staff.’ We currently have 84/85 retirees on our email listing, which is by no means up to date.

As newly elected chair at the 2025 Annual meeting of the Region, I sent an email to those on our current list re-introducing myself once again as chair. Our Mandate of keeping in touch through

the year is key in these times and moments we are living within. Notes are sent whenever the chair feels called to connect, or business needs to be shared. I welcome the comments, questions, suggestions that are shared after an email has gone forward. Thank you.

Many retired folks of our region have not connected with us. I've placed notices on the weekly Region announcements, with not much response. I will place another notice within the next two weeks as we near the annual meeting.

Committee Reports are sent to the Division Chair prior to our meetings, held every three months normally. Our next meeting is May 7th, and always held via ZOOM.

Now that winter is beyond us, I will attempt to make arrangements for a cluster gathering or two over the summer/fall months. If you are willing to host, please let us know.

Please send an email to kathjohngamble@gmail.com if you wish to join us as retired members of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region, even though you may be sharing pulpit exchanges or supply. Everyone is welcome!

The Retirees Support Committee includes Chair, Ruth Gamble, David Haan, who has agreed to take part in any way possible, Glenn MacLean, and Brenda McCurdy. Most of our conversations happen via email.

Rev. K. Ruth Gamble, April 2026

On behalf of the Division, I would like to thank Joan Griffin who has resigned as chair of the Licensing Committee at the rise of the Regional Annual Meeting. We appreciate her dedication to the work of this committee. We will be welcoming Rev. Sandi Irving to the position of Chair of Licensing following the Annual Meeting. Sandi has been a member of the Licensing Committee and has agreed to step up to the task of chairing!

Thank you to all the chairs and committee members who serve in positions within the Division of Ministry Resources. Your time, leadership and input are appreciated. As we continue along our journey of faith, may we be receptive to where the Holy Spirit is leading us.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Sollows, Chair