

Living Skies Regional Council November 2 evening Summary

Resources shared at this meeting: The [overview PowerPoint used](#); the [status of 2020 national and regional assessments to congregations](#) in our Region; and the [2020 budget in summary form](#).

On the evening of November 2, 2020, the Regional Council Executive held a special Zoom meeting for delegates and guests to the Regional Gatherings 2020 to provide more information about the Executive's proposal to remove or reduce the 20% regional assessment for 2021 that was to assist outreach ministries to help them find ways to be financial sustainable and vision new ways to carry out their ministry.

About 70 people joined this special meeting that was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair of the Regional Gathering, Rob Reed, who then gave the acknowledgement of the Treaty territories on which we sit and a prayer by Betty Radford Turcott from the book, *Seeing Christ in Others*.

Rob said that the purpose of tonight's meetings was to extend the discussion that had happened on October 28, and that the vote regarding this proposal will still happen at the scheduled meeting on Wednesday, November 4. Instructions for speaking were reviewed and participants were reminded to limit their use of the Chat function.

With power point slides shared by Julie Graham (see above), Regional Minister: Justice and Communication, Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister for Living Skies Regional Council explained how regional councils get their funding. **Money for governance** – things like office rentals, annual meeting expenses, postage, executive meetings and travel – all come from the assessment from the national church. This assessment is split between the General Council and the Regional Councils. For 2020, this amount was \$392,000. **Money for Mission and Ministry** – things like programming, clusters and networks, mission and ministry committees and staff (Kent Mohn, Julie Graham and part of Tracy Murton and Bev Diebert's salaries) come from the Mission and Service Fund. This is the amount the national church receives and is dispersed to the Indigenous Church and the 16 regional councils across Canada. For 2020 this amount was \$289,000. The total monies received by Living Skies Regional Council was \$681,000.

Shannon continued that for 2021, Living Skies Regional Council (RC) will receive \$240,000 for Mission and Ministry, \$49,000 less than in 2020 due to the reduction in funds from M&S. The RC Executive believes that due to the pandemic (cancelled annual meeting and in-person gatherings), they will be able to cover this short fall for this year, but that this practice is not sustainable. In response to a question, Shannon gave a brief review of how money was collected in the former conference structure and how presbyteries often supported the outreach ministries that this proposal will impact. In the new structure, that is no longer happening. Our current budget is significantly lower than the budgets of Saskatchewan Conference; the Conference was generous with their grants, and we no longer have that capacity. She reiterated that the regional assessment is 20% of the national assessment (set by General Council) and we only have a say over the regional assessment portion. She affirmed that the assessment is still based on a 3 year average for the triennium and budget figures will remain the same for 2021. This Regional Council assessment was to be over top of the regular grant amounts to assist the outreach ministries to vision ways to become financially sustainable. Julie Graham then showed a list of the outreach ministries that we are talking about (also found on page C6 of the docket). Shannon acknowledge that with the loss of presbyteries, the restructuring has had a negative impact on some of the community ministries and their ability to connect with local communities of faith.

Those gathered then had a short time of small groups discussion about the proposal and if they could support it. When folks returned, more questions were answered. Shannon informed participants that at this point of 2020, M&S donations are down by 19%. Whatever you can do to support donations to M&S would be helpful. A concern was raised about communities of faith and individuals independently supporting high profile ministries while lower profiled ministries may be overlooked.

As time approached to close the meeting, Rob Reed, Chair reminded folks that the next meeting is in two days and that the decisions around both proposals and the remit will be made. He also reminded folks to bring their communion elements to the meeting. He closed the meeting with a blessing and ended the meeting at 8:33pm.