

## Pastoral Relations Ponderings – Volume 19

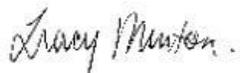
Greetings from the Pastoral Relations desk! I hope this finds you healthy and well, managing to adapt to the constantly changing guidelines while still enjoying some semblance of regular worship life. As we approach the Advent season, one of my favourites, I am mindful of the gift of this time of waiting for the light, especially in this most challenging year. Here are a few updates from the work of the Committees:

1. **Regional Council Liaisons** – the work of supporting communities of faith through conversations about their future ministry needs is now the responsibility of Regional Council Liaisons. As the long-term impact of COVID-19 continues to be discerned, there is an increasing need for people to engage in this work on behalf of the Regional Council. If you have some time and capacity to listen and discern with others, please let me know.
2. **Committee on Community of Faith Support** – as communities of faith are having their long-postponed annual meetings this fall, annual reports and covenants continue to be read by this diligent group of volunteers. If you are wondering whether we have received your report or not, send me an email. Stay tuned for a clear template for annual report writing for the new year.
3. **Missing Covenants** – following the online meeting on November 4 where community of faith covenants were celebrated with the Regional Council, a number of covenants appeared to be missing from the list. My most humble apologies for the oversight. If this is your community of faith, please let me know so that we can have an accurate list moving into the new year.
4. **Committee on Ministry Personnel Support** – as mentioned in the Rambler, a conversation regarding increased premiums for both active members and pensioners is being hosted next week with representatives from the General Council Office. After Christmas, focus will be given to establishing Voluntary Associate Minister relationships between any ministry personnel not in a call or appointment who wish to continue with the functions of ministry.
5. **Chaplains** – much gratitude to the 5 volunteer chaplains (Cathy Coates, Joan Rennie-Laing, Deborah Smith, Jackie Van't Voort and Heather Wyatt) who have contacted all of the active ministry personnel for support again this fall. It is hoped that the focus will shift to supporting retired ministers in a similar way after Christmas. If you have some interest in offering support through some pastoral calling to retired ministers in our Regional Council, please let me know.
6. **Committee on Lay Leadership Support** – 6 people have been interviewed to either have their licences renewed or to be licensed for the first time this fall. We are grateful for the volunteers outside of this committee who participated in those interviews and for the individuals who are offering important leadership to our communities of faith.
7. **Pulpit Supply List** – as we renew licences, a quick reminder that the Regional Council office has a list of people who are authorized to provide pulpit supply throughout the Regional Council. This means their licence is current if they are a Licensed Lay Worship Leader or all of their credentials are current if they are ministry personnel. Contact Bev Diebert for access to this list 306-704-0181.

A reminder that the Pastoral Relations Commission generally meets on the first Thursday of each month; therefore, we require any paperwork to be submitted to Bev Diebert ([bdiebert@united-church.ca](mailto:bdiebert@united-church.ca)) the Friday before the meeting. For the next meeting of the PRC, any paperwork needs to be received by **November 27** in order to be considered on December 3.

As you head into this season of light and wonder, I invite you to create space for the holy to enter, bringing hope and abundant faith. It is clear that we will welcome the light differently this year, either with fewer numbers in our sanctuary or through our computer screens. Let's walk with new openness on this journey through the wilderness, holding one another in prayer from afar. As always, if you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. May you continue to find moments of hope, peace, joy and love in the midst of restrictions. ☺

Blessings and peace,



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