

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

Regional Council Planning Committee:

Convenor	Darrell Reine
Convenor of the Regional Gathering	Rob Reed*
Member	Hoeun Lee
Member	Bonnie Morton
Member	Barb MacNaughton
Staff - Admin	Bev Diebert

*Note: The Convenor of the Regional Gathering is intended to be one year term. Because of the need to cancel the face-to-face Regional Gathering planned for 2020, Rob is now into his second year of serving in this position.

Property Commission

Convenor	Annette Taylor
Member	Bev Kostichuk
Member	George Thurlow
Member	Gayle Wensley
Member	Daryl Woods
Member	VACANT
Staff – Executive Minister	Shannon McCarthy

Grants Committee

Convenor	Leslee Whalley
Member	Cindy Goodman
Member	Herb Conrad
Member	Barry Balls
Staff - Minister: Justice / Communication	Julie Graham
Staff – Financial Administrator	Heather Dootoff

Nominations Committee

Convenor	Susan Reed
Member	Jeannette Warrian
Member	Yvonne Terry
Member	VACANT
Member	VACANT

Pastoral Relations Commission

Member	Jen Dresser
Member	Marvin Mackie
Member	Donna Rumpel
Member	Miles Russell
Member	Janelle Shaw
Pastoral Relations Minister	Tracy Murton
Administrative Staff	Bev Diebert

Committee on Community of Faith Support

Member	Sheila Deforest
Member	Bill Pollock
Member	Deborah Smith
Member	VACANT
Staff – Pastoral Relations Minister	Tracy Murton

Committee on Lay Leadership Support

Member	Faye Ford
Member	Andrew Hecker
Member	Sheila Ivanochko
Member	Patti Sawchuk
Staff – Pastoral Relations Minister	Tracy Murton

Committee on Ministry Personnel Support

Member	Koshy David
Member	Rick McCorrister
Member	Michele Rowe
Staff – Pastoral Relations Minister	Tracy Murton

Refugee Liaisons

Liaison:	Jim Tenford
Liaison:	VACANT

Affirming Process Task Group

Member:	Cindy Bourgeois
Member:	VACANT
Member:	VACANT
Member:	VACANT
Member:	VACANT
Member:	VACANT

REGIONAL COUNCIL GATHERING PLANNING COMMITTEE

As many of you are likely aware, the term of Convenor of the Regional Gathering was intended to be one-year. When our lives and the lives of our church and our communities and our world were subjected to the vagaries of a global pandemic last March, the decision was made to extend this term, because of the unprecedented circumstances. This is why I will be in the chair a second time, when the 2021 Regional Gathering of Living Skies Regional Council convenes online, on June 4, 2021.

Since the online Regional Gathering of October and November 2020 the tasks I have assumed, as Convenor, include attending meetings of the Regional Council Executive as a corresponding member, attending meetings and participating in the work of the Regional Gathering Planning Committee, and what I call ambassadorial duties, as these have arisen.

To the members of our Executive, I extend my deep gratitude. I have witnessed and appreciated the time and energy and faith that you have contributed to fulfilling your duties and responsibilities. I am grateful to spend that time and space with you...

To the members of the Planning Team, I also want to offer my deep thanks. The task of imagining an event that is so vastly different from what we are familiar with is filled with challenges. Your ingenuity and collegiality have served our Region very well...

As for the ambassadorial duties, there was one, which I was delighted to participate in: the writing of a letter of congratulations to Bonnie Morton and Peter Gilmer, on receiving Doctor of Divinity honoris causa degrees from St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon, which I co-signed with Rev. Tricia Gerhard. Congratulations, Bonnie and Peter!

Since we last gathered as a Regional Council, I have witnessed some pretty amazing expressions of faithful service by folks who are entrusted with leading our Living Skies Region, and providing us with guidance and support. So, I want to acknowledge a few of these...

Tracy Murton... Thank you for hosting the Tuesday afternoon clergy gatherings. These have filled and nourished and restored weary souls. And thank you for all the behind-the-scenes ministry (I thought that I was an early riser!)...

The Committee on Ministry Support... Thank you for your care of our clergy – for the retreats and resources. Thank you for listening...

Shannon McCarthy... Thank you for your wisdom. Thank you for the joy you bring to your work (Although, some of that joy has come from Mari!)...

Jamie McKay, Bev Diebert, Heather Dootoff, Kent Mohn, Julie Graham... Thank you for EVERYTHING you do on our behalf. Your skills and abilities and commitment are AMAZING...

Tricia Gerhard... I wish that "Thank you," could be enough, but it doesn't feel like enough. The energy and time that you have given to representing us with the Faith Leaders Group working with the government on churches responses to living faithfully during this pandemic – there are no words that seem enough. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do, as the Chairperson of our Executive...

Good people of Living Skies Regional Council, we are blessed in so many different ways. Yes, we face challenges. But I hope we can appreciate all the ways in which we are nurturing God's realm in this place, at this time. As I close, I encourage you to remember to thank your ministers and your staff... Remember to thank the people who show up every Sunday for

worship, in person or online... Remember to thank the people who lead and participate in education events and service opportunities... Remember to thank God, that in these strange and unprecedented times, we are not alone.

Blessings,
Rob Reed, Diaconal Minister.
Convenor of the Regional Gathering.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Pastoral Relations Commission meets regularly on the 1st Thursday of each month September to June via Zoom. Between regular meetings, the Commission uses a variety of platforms including phone meetings, email polls and special Zoom meetings to conduct emerging business. The deadline for submissions from Communities of Faith or ministry personnel is the Friday previous to the meeting, although in extenuating circumstances requests may be entertained at short notice. Following an initial appointment, the five members of the Commission were given renewals of two or three years in order to achieve some continuity in the event of changes in membership.

An important duty of the Commission is to receive Community of Faith Profiles which are submitted for its approval prior to posting on ChurchHub. Typically, these Profiles are discussed and often clarification is requested from the Community of Faith, especially with regard to financial viability and requirements of ministry personnel, before they are finally approved. If less than a full-time ministry position is required, a plan detailing work expectation is necessary.

The Commission appoints Supervisors to those Communities of Faith that are without settled ministry personnel; Liaisons to those Communities of Faith that are in the process of developing Profiles and Liaisons to assist Search Committees of Communities of Faith. The Pastoral Relations Commission also deals with a variety of requests including change of pastoral relations, retirement, approval of calls and appointments, etc.

During 2020-2021, the Commission developed several Policies: Temporary Marriage License Policy, Appointment Policy (specifying maximum length of appointments for various streams of ministry), Pastoral Charge Supervisor Guidelines, and Voluntary Associate Minister Policy (for retired ministry personnel living in the Region). All of these policies can be found on the Living Skies Region website. They are also reported in the "Pastoral Relations Ponderings" section of the "Regional Rambler."

To accomplish these tasks, the Commission relies heavily on the expertise of the Pastoral Relations Minister, Tracy Murton and the capable administrative skills of our go-to person, Bev Diebert. Without their guidance, our job would be much more difficult.

Respectfully submitted
Marvin Mackie
Chair Pastoral Relations Commission

PROPERTY COMMISSION

Background

The purpose of the Living Skies Regional Council Property Commission is to make decisions related to property matters on behalf of regional council. The commission makes these decisions within the scope of regional responsibilities as set out in C.2.6 of The Manual and property policies adopted by the regional council. The commission also make recommendations to the regional council (or its executive) for new regional policies related to property matters. In addition, in September 2019, the regional council executive gave the property commission the authority to approve the disbanding of congregations.

This report includes the work of the property commission from May 2020 to April 2021. During the year, the commission has met via video conferencing fourteen times. In May 2020 the commission was comprised of Annette Taylor (chair), Bev Kostichuk (secretary), Jim MacNaughton, George Thurlow (chair of cemetery sub-committee) and Daryl Woods. Within a couple of months we regretfully accepted the resignation of Jim MacNaughton. We welcomed Gayle Wensley to the group in October, 2020 and Jonathon Zacharias in April, 2021.

Property Handbook and Policies

A revised *Handbook on Church Property* was approved by the Living Skies Regional Council Executive in May, 2020 and received slight modifications in July, 2020. The *Property Policies and Processes* document was also revised and the latest version was approved in October, 2020. In January 2021 a new Property Fund Policy was approved by the Property Commission and ratified by the LSRC Executive. These documents are all available on the *Policies & Guidelines* page of regional council website

<https://livingskiesrc.ca/governance-admin/policies/>

Communities of Faith – Property/Disbanding Decisions

The property commission is keeping a working list of communities of faith that are considering property transactions (sale, purchase, rental, etc) and/or are requesting to be disbanded. As of April 30, 2021, the commission is in communication with thirty-two communities of faith. Eight communities of faith have already received approval to list or tender their properties. At least twelve congregations are in the process of disbanding.

Since May 2020 the property commission has approved the following decisions regarding properties belonging to communities of faith:

Approval of Rental Agreement:

- Wesley United Church in Regina – November 13, 2020 (partnership agreement with Uganda Canadian Association of Saskatchewan Inc.)

Approval of Crown Resource Land Lease

- Camp Tapawingo – April 15, 2021

Approval of Renovations

- Calvary United Church in Prince Albert (\$203,000) – February 12, 2021
- Grosvenor Park United Church in Saskatoon (\$93,000) – March 12, 2021

Approval of Acquisition by Foreclosure

- Third Avenue United Church in Saskatoon – February 4, 2021

Approved Sales - date sale approved / date transfer completed

- Stoughton Manse (\$150,000) - May 29, 2020 / June 29, 2020
- Earl Grey United Church (\$15,000) – June 20, 2020 / August 5, 2020
- Gravelbourg - St. Stephen's U.C. (\$20,000) – June 25, 2020 / July 14, 2020
- Semans Manse (\$67,500) – June 25, 2020 / July 30, 2020
- Abbey Manse (\$10,000) – June 25, 2020 / August 12, 2020
- Redvers – Knox U.C. (\$55,000) – August 22, 2020 / October 1, 2020
- Brithdir U.C. (empty lot for \$1 to neighbour) – Sept. 15, 2020 / Oct. 28, 2020
- Milestone United Church (\$45,000) – September 25, 2020 / October 9, 2020
- Milestone Manse (\$175,000) – October 16, 2020 / November 23, 2020
- Manor – Knox U.C. (\$2,000) – November 13, 2020 / January 19, 2021
- Prairie River – Robert Hall Mission (\$1 to museum) – Nov. 30, 2020 / April 27, 2021
- Nokomis United Church (\$43,000) – January 8, 2021/February 5, 2021
- Senlac United Church (\$1 to village) – April 15, 2021/TBD
- Spiritwood Manse (\$125,000) – April 15, 2021/TBD

Since May 1, 2020, nine congregations have officially disbanded:

- Lone Rock United Church – May 8, 2020
- Mossbank United Church – November 13, 2020
- St. Stephen's United Church in Gravelbourg – November 13, 2020
- Rouleau United Church – January 8, 2021
- Mortlach United Church – February 12, 2021
- Brithdir United Church – March 12, 2021
- Brock United Church – March 12, 2021
- Earl Grey United Church – April 15, 2021
- Third Avenue United Church – April 22, 2021 (by LSRC Executive)

Abandoned Properties.

The property commission is continuing our work to sell or transfer abandoned properties within the regional council. Some are being transferred to the village or rural municipality and others are being sold to neighbouring landowners. We currently have a list of about 40 properties.

Sales Approved – date sale approved / date transfer completed

- Tuberose (empty village lot to RM of Lacadena) – June 5, 2020 / TBD
- Wartime (empty village lot to neighbour) – June 5, 2020 / April 22, 2021
- Lemsford (2 empty lots to RM of Clinworth) – July 10, 2020 / February 16, 2021
- Dewar Lake (2 empty lots for \$500) – September 3, 2020 / March 23, 2021
- Viceroy (2 lots with building to RM of Excel) – October 26, 2020 / TBD
- Coderre U.C. (1 lot with building for \$300 to neighbour) – Nov. 13, 2020/ February 1/2021
- Crestwynd (empty lot for \$1000 to neighbour) – Feb. 12, 2021 / April 28, 2021
- Dunblane (empty village lot for \$1 to RM of Coteau) – March 12, 2021 / TBD
- St. Boswell (two empty village lots for \$500 to adjacent landowner) – April 15, 2021/TBD

Request that United Church of Canada Transfer Property

- Ruddell (empty lot to Village of Ruddell) - June 5, 2020 / TBD

Cemeteries

We are working with a list of close to fifty abandoned cemeteries within the boundaries of this regional council. Where possible, we are attempting to transfer responsibility to the rural municipality. If the rural municipality is unwilling to take responsibility and no one is currently

caring for the property, then we endeavour to find someone to cut the lawn for a fee. There are many cemeteries that are currently being cared for by local individuals or organizations and we are working to set up protocols for oversight of these properties.

Since May 1, 2020, the following decisions have been made:

Approval for Transfer of Cemetery

- Rosewood Cemetery to Village of Dorintosh - May 3, 2020 / TBD
- New Ottawa Cemetery (lot previously belonging to Speers UC) to RM of Douglas – October 26, 2020 / TBD

Request that United Church of Canada Transfer Cemetery

- New Ottawa Cemetery (lot previously belonging to the Methodist Church) to RM of Douglas – October 26, 2020 / TBD

Conclusion

On behalf of the members of the property commission I want to acknowledge what a privilege it is to work with communities of faith during these difficult times of transition and closure. I also want to recognize the large workload that this small group of people has undertaken. A huge thank you to all the members of the property commission for your dedication and compassion as you work to support congregations through a process that is often emotionally, mentally and even physically challenging.

Respectfully Submitted by

Annette Taylor

Chair, Living Skies Regional Council Property Commission

GRANTS COMMITTEE

The Grants committee met three times by Zoom since the last Annual Meeting.

Members of the committee are Leslee Whalley, Chair, Herb Conrad, Barry Balls, Cindy Goodman, Secretary, and staff support Julie Graham, Heather Dootoff.

The Mission Support grant money for 2021 had just been allocated before the 2020 annual meeting and was not available for the docket. The Mission and Service grant allocation from General Council to the Region for 2021 was 15% less than the previous year. The Living Skies Executive was able to find funds from other areas due to savings from Covid restrictions to maintain the Mission Support grants at \$125,000.00, the same as in 2020. The grant amounts allocated for 2021 are listed at the end of this report. Applications for 2022 are now being accepted until the August 31 deadline. The application form information is posted on the Living Skies website.

The proposal passed at the last Annual Meeting cancelled the Regional Assessment for 2021 which was meant to support Mission Support groups. The Executive assessment task group has continued to meet and discuss how to allocate the assessment fund monies collected from 2020. The task group consists of Tim Ellis, Brian Maitland, Julie Graham, Heather Dootoff, and Leslee Whalley. A Zoom meeting was held April 22, 2021 between the task group and the Mission Support recipients, with Carla Leon making a presentation from EDGE. EDGE is a Network for Ministry Development which began in 2011 as a three-year project focused on new and renewing ministries across The United Church of Canada. In 2014, it was integrated

into the periphery of the Church in Mission unit of the General Council Offices. EDGE works with congregations, regional councils, and ministries across Canada in areas of new ministry, renewing ministry, property, and innovation. Carla gave a presentation as to services available through EDGE. There is a Sustainability Cohort Zoom program through EDGE which many of the groups have already attended, at no cost. The next step would be for groups to have further discussions with EDGE which could be funded through the Regional Assessment Fund. The Regional Assessment Fund grant is also available to community ministries for initiatives of sustainability not developed through EDGE. The meeting was also an opportunity for the various groups to discuss issues around funding as well as get to know each other.

The Living Skies Executive also formed a task group to develop funding information for the website, consisting of Julie Graham, who spearheaded the group, Heather Dootoff, and Leslee Whalley. The page is complete but it will continue to be updated as needed. It can be found under Resources > Funding on the website. The information provided is for grants available through the National Office, Mission Support, and Living Skies Regional Council. Regional Council funding is from monies left to the region by various former presbyteries, Saskatchewan Conference, and other groups.

Information on forms for the various grants is also posted on the funding page. There is a great amount of information about grants available for any community of faith.

The Grants Committee continues to work with the executive in getting the information out regarding grants. Please contact Leslee Whalley with any inquiries about Living Skies funding.

Allocation of M & S Grants for 2021 totalling \$125,000

Lumsden Beach Camp	\$ 1,000
Camp Tapawingo	\$ 2,000
Wellman Lake Camp	\$ 500
South Sask Hospital Chaplaincy	\$20,000
North Sask Hospital Chaplaincy	\$25,000
Regina Anti-poverty Ministry	\$30,000
Riverbend Integrated Community Ministries	\$20,000
LaRonge United Church	\$14,000
U of S Chaplaincy	\$ 7,400
Micah Mission	\$ 2,000
Parkland Restorative Justice	\$ 2,100
Prairie Center for Ecumenism	\$ 1,000

Submitted by
 Leslee Whalley, Chair
 Mission and Support Grants Committee
ldwhalley@sasktel.net

NOMINATIONS

The work of the Nominations Committee is to “gather a slate of nominations for the officers of the Regional Council and its executive, commissions, committees, task groups, steering committees, or teams. It also provides nominations for unexpected vacancies or new positions which occur during the year.” (*From the Structure Document of the Living Skies Regional Council.*)

Throughout the last year, the work of our committee has mostly been to try and fill vacancies within the structures of the Regional Council, as well as to put together a slate of Commissioners and Alternate Commissioners for General Council 44, which will take place online in July of 2022. We are working hard to try and ensure some diversity among the membership of the various groups, and also to look for folks as widely as possible within our Regional Council.

We would like to thank all those of you who agreed to take on new roles this year, as well as those of you we asked, who took time to discern, even when the answer was no. We'd like to thank those of you whose terms are coming to an end with the rise of this Regional Gathering, and those who are concluding roles you've been in. We deeply appreciate your time, your gifts, and your dedication to the work of the Living Skies Regional Council. We would also like to acknowledge and thank Regional Council staff Bev Diebert and Julie Graham for all of their support in our committee's work.

At the time of the writing of this report, we still have quite a number of vacancies and opportunities to serve within the Regional Council. We will keep our lists of vacancies updated on the Nominations page of the Regional Council website. And if you are interested in a particular role, or know someone else who might be, we would be happy to hear from you anytime! We will continue to contact individuals to see if you might be willing to take on particular roles, but we also invite you to submit your own expressions of interest, if you see a role you might be interested in. You can find our nominations form on the Regional Council website, and it can be filled in and submitted online. Once we receive the forms, our committee then makes some decisions, and forwards names to the Regional Council Executive for consideration. We hope you'll have an opportunity to check out our Slate of Nominations, and consider the vacancies and opportunities which are available.

Thank you, and blessings,
Susan Reed, on behalf of the Nominations Committee
Email: lsrcnominations@gmail.com
Phone: 306-482-3932 (Susan – church office)

PASTORAL RELATIONS STAFF REPORT

There is a photo that I often use as my background frame on Zoom calls. It is a picture of the beach I was on when the pandemic really began to be a global issue and calls were made for travelling Canadians to return home. I keep using it as a reminder of both the things we took for granted (the privilege of travel), and our hopes for things to return to the way they were (the privilege of working in an office). As the vaccine rollout continues to reach more people, the vision of a return to "normal" becomes clearer as communities of faith yearn for opportunities to pass the peace, to sing heartily, and to share meals together. We have all worked hard to carry on being the church in this Regional Council throughout the past 14 months, faithfully caring for our neighbours, supporting people in our communities of faith, and offering a glimpse of the Holy to those we meet. We have learned to do this as restrictions constantly shift regarding in-person worship and gathering sizes, and we have adapted to more time online and more time missing those we love. The task now becomes assessing which of the adjustments we have made over the past year will continue to sustain our mission as a people of faith.

As you read in the report from Marvin Mackie on the Pastoral Relations Commission and in the reports below, there are many ways that the regular responsibilities of the wider church have continued through this pandemic, supporting the important work of local communities of faith and those who offer leadership within them. I think you will agree that there is much to celebrate and be thankful for.

Committee on Lay Leadership Support

This group of people have faithfully and thoroughly supported the process for the invaluable contribution of lay leaders involved in worship leadership, especially in communities of faith without called or appointed ministry personnel. In terms of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, this involves participating in interviews and subsequent conversations of discernment to make recommendations to the Regional Council Executive regarding suitability. Since the last gathering of the Regional Council, 5 people had their licenses renewed, and 1 person was approved for initial licensing. A further group of people are in the process of being interviewed this spring. This work would not be possible without the assistance of volunteer interviewers who partner with the Committee members, and so we would like to recognize Jordan Cantwell, Thom Carnahan, Sheila Lavender, and Brian Walton for their patient and faith-filled participation. The Committee members have also initiated support for this group of lay leaders through offering online retreats with Marg Janick-Grayston as facilitator – one in preparation for Advent and the other in preparation for Lent. Both retreats were greatly appreciated by participants as an opportunity for learning, as well as important connections with colleagues. The other component of the work of this Committee is the ongoing licensing and accreditation of Sacraments Elders. This is an annual process that will be completed for the end of June. Finally, a general sacraments policy was developed by this committee and approved by the Regional Council Executive for use both with Sacraments Elders and Candidates.

Committee on Ministry Personnel Support

Support for ministry personnel continues to be a priority throughout our Regional Council. The Committee recognized the deep sense of isolation experienced by active ministers as the pandemic continues to impact our lives and responded in a few key ways: supporting an online retreat for ministry personnel before both Advent and Lent, with leadership from Marg Janick-Grayston, and conducting a wellness survey in early February. The results from the survey confirmed a number of things – ongoing changes to restrictions are stressful both personally and for the communities of faith, ministers are feeling weary yet hopeful, support comes from a number of different sources, and there are many ways that ministry has evolved over the last 18 months. This includes offering pastoral care in new ways and adapting worship rituals to accommodate health guidelines; for many, this has meant worshipping online since March 2020. The data from the survey prompted the creation of an online retreat with leadership from Diane Strickland, traumatologist and compassion fatigue specialist, and in collaboration with St. Andrew's College. This was open to ministry personnel from the tri-Region (Northern Spirit, Living Skies and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils) and was attended by about 40 individuals. Much gratitude to Diane Strickland, Lynn Caldwell, Janet Clark, and Becca Whitla for volunteering their time for workshops, and to the members of the Committee who prepared a worship service that ministry personnel might use for the Sunday following the retreat. The Committee also delayed the implementation of the Voluntary Associate Minister policy until after Easter; this work has now begun. Another initiative from this Committee was engagement with retirees and pensioners, in particular with reference to an annual increase of 13.7% to premiums for benefits. Conversations amongst this group of people, and with General Council Office staff, have led to additional consultation through an online survey. Results from this survey will help inform next steps moving forward for support to this important group of people. The initiative and passion from the members of this Committee has been greatly appreciated by both active ministry personnel and retirees, and has been an inspiration for similar initiatives in other Regional Councils.

Committee on Community of Faith Support

The primary duties of this Committee involve reviewing annual reports, reviewing covenants, and reviewing proposed changes to governance structures. This Committee has diligently and patiently undertaken this task, and can report the following statistics since the Regional Council gathering in November: 81 Community of Faith annual reports, 22 covenants, and 3 governance structures were reviewed. The Committee recommends covenants and governance structures that meet the criteria in *The Manual* to the Regional Council Executive for approval. In addition, standardizing the criteria for reviewing annual reports has helped to identify which communities of faith might benefit from specific support. The covenants approved since November will be celebrated at the gathering in June. The task of approving covenants and governance structures has been a learning opportunity for everyone as discernment is made regarding meeting the governance requirements in *The Manual* while supporting the capacity for contextual differences. The provision from the General Council Executive to suspend the requirement for an annual meeting until December 31, 2021 has meant that there are a number of communities of faith opting not to write an annual report and have a meeting. The Committee developed a condensed means of reporting to help support accountability but not present an obstacle to communities of faith. The next task will be developing a process for communities of faith to engage in self-assessment of their covenants.

Final words

I am grateful for the opportunity to support this work and the privilege to be able to safely do so from home. The task of walking with ministry personnel, lay leaders, and community of faith members offers a glimpse of the very fabric of our denomination, and I am richly blessed to travel this path with others. The members of these support committees and the pastoral relations commission, the Regional Council Liaisons who support the pastoral relations processes, and the many pastoral charge supervisors all sustain and enhance the work of pastoral relations – we are truly not alone. I continue to be amazed by the resilience and faithfulness of the ministry personnel who are offering leadership in styles and contexts that were unfamiliar 18 months ago, and doing so with grace and patience. I encourage you to express your gratitude to them for their ministry in this pandemic church. I have also had the honour to encounter many faithful and resilient lay leaders who are participating in M&P Committees and Search Committees and Property Committees and Stewardship Committees and governing bodies – the list goes on and on – these folks are the backbone and the heart of this United Church of ours. I encourage you to express your gratitude to these folks, as well! I want to offer gratitude to Bev Diebert whose patience with my early morning and late-night requests and tolerance for my silly jokes, has sustained this work throughout the pandemic, and to the rest of the Living Skies staff team who offer support and humour in the Zoom staff room. To quote one of my favourite mystics, Julian of Norwich, who essentially thrived in lockdown, “all shall be well, and **all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.**” **May it truly be so.**

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Murton, Pastoral Relations Minister

YAYAC: YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

In some ways, this feels a bit like “*Annual Report 2.0: The Covid Year*” following up on the re-scheduled Regional Gathering last fall. Over the last year, there have been some significant pivots to innovative online ministry & programming throughout the Region. There have been some successes to build upon, creative ideas to share with each other, and plenty of learning along the way.

Faith Formation & Ministry with Youth & Young Adults

- 1) **Region-wide ministry programming with Youth & Young Adults** has been a challenge throughout the pandemic. In-person connections are an especially integral part of relational ministry with young people. The regional focus has been almost exclusively on resource & support for local communities of faith in developing/strengthening their relationships with young people.
<https://livingskiesrc.ca/programs/yayac/>
- 2) Speaking of innovative, let's recognize and appreciate the **YAYA Ministries in local Communities of Faith** who have maintained regular zoom and/or physically distanced programs, confirmation programs, weekly Zoom Gathering for Young Adults (age 18-35), etc. <https://livingskiesrc.ca/programs/yayac/yayac-network/>
- 3) **UCC Camps & Outdoor Ministries** each have unique operational & staffing structures which affect their ministry options. Some will offer daycamps this summer while others have decided to cancel on-site programming for 2021.
<https://livingskiesrc.ca/programs/yayac/camps/>
- 4) **Ecumenical Chaplaincy at University of Saskatchewan** has recently engaged with the Lutheran Campus Ministry for chaplaincy coverage. The Chaplaincy is exploring sustainability options due to anticipated ongoing reductions in Mission Support Funding.
<https://www.facebook.com/EcumenicalChaplaincyUniversityOfSaskatchewan>
- 5) **CGIT Saskatchewan** for girls aged 12-17 continues with programming & fundraising initiatives in accordance with provincial health guidelines.
<https://saskatchewancgit.wordpress.com/>
- 6) The selection process for youth delegates (age 15-18) to the virtual **Youth Forum at GC44** (July 2022) has been extended to the fall of 2021. Application & Selection criteria will be posted as soon as it becomes available.
- 7) Recommendations, updates and links for **Faith Formation Resources** are part of the Region's website. The goal, as always, is to share resources and insights with each other as a wider church community. <https://livingskiesrc.ca/resources/faith-formation/>.
- 8) Similarly, Communities of Faith are encouraged to link with the **Living Skies Region's YouTube Channel** to share resources and broaden our online worship & faith community together.
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQumvdyab1_LIPlluOPgArg

Other Ministry Programming & Online Events

- 1) **"Practically Prophetic" Webinars** focus on tools & tips related to various areas of applied ministry each month. With much thanks to our presenters for sharing their knowledge and expertise, recordings of the webinars are posted on the Region's YouTube Channel. This has been an intentional collaboration of Living Skies Region Faith Formation, St. Andrew's College, and the Centre for Christian Studies.
- 2) The virtual **Advent Concert** (Dec 2020) & **Spring2Life Concert** (Apr 2021) are available on the Region's YouTube Channel. Each event was a celebration of music

& community, raising a modest amount of money in support of mission-supported ministries and local communities of faith.

Looking ahead, there will be challenges for many of our ministries as we emerge from Covid. At the same time, we've gained experience and discovered hope-filled, creative opportunities for growth as church together.

Hopefully it's not too presumptuous to speak on behalf of the entire church in order to particularly acknowledge & thank the many disciples called to ministry with youth, young adults, children, and families. It has been a very difficult time, and we sincerely appreciate all that you offer as the kind voice, attentive ears, and all-encompassing-bear-hug of Christ with young people.

Respectfully submitted,
Kent Mohn kmohn@united-church.ca
306-221-5529

OFFICE OF VOCATION MINISTER

Well another year has passed in the life of the church; and what a year it has been for us all. Lent has felt like it has lasted a life time and yet I continue to see signs of hope all around me. The adaptability of my colleagues who are in pastoral ministry has been inspiring. Being able to join worship across the country and even the world in ways that we might have done before has been wonderful. I'd also like to thank Northern Spirit and Prairie to Pine Regions for inviting me to preach at regional worship events, it was a great honour to join with you in praise of God.

The work of the Office of Vocation has also continued through this past year in new ways. No longer does my suitcase sit permanently half-packed ready to go to the airport for my next flight. Rather I have been engaging my work, as so many of you have done, online. The new routine has given me more time to chat on the phone or via email exchanges with the ministry personnel in the three regions I work in, which has been a real blessing.

God is continuing to call forth new leaders for the church as the candidacy board continues to interview with inquirers and candidates via zoom. I would like to thank all of the members of the board for their willingness to adjust to this new way of working, although I think we have all agreed that we cannot wait to have an in person meeting again. What we have been missing, is the palpable joy we experience when someone is approved after an interview, and sharing a cup of coffee or meal with these future leaders in the church.

- Completed Promise interviews: 9
- Completed Suitability for Candidacy: 5
- Readiness for SME: 8

The Office of Vocation continues to work in the areas of credentialing and mandatory training to ensure we have excellent qualified clergy for a long time to come.

Submitted by
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