

Pastoral Relations Ponderings – Volume 26

Greetings from the Pastoral Relations desk! As the promise of a summer break looms, there are a few pieces of work to highlight – many opportunities for you to participate in part of our Regional Council:

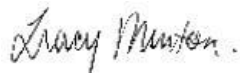
1. **Committee on Community of Faith Support** – in the last month, this committee has reviewed 33 Covenants, which together with the 29 reviewed last fall, includes about 1/3 of the Communities of Faith in the Regional Council. The hope is to continue the process to aim for 100% next year! They have also reviewed 123 annual reports, rating each report in a way that helps to highlight concerns for follow-up or additional support. As we move into the fall, we will work on self-assessments for communities of faith, and follow-up with folks needing some extra support. There is room for 1 more member!
2. **Committee on Lay Leadership Support** – in the last month, this committee has interviewed 7 Licensed Lay Worship Leaders for re-appointment and one new person for initial licensing. Each of these folks are on the Pulpit Supply list with information on their area of preference - contact Bev Diebert at 306-704-0181 for the list to find someone licensed near your community of faith. This committee has also authorized licenses for 16 of our Sacraments Elders. As we move into the fall, we will be exploring training for LLWLs and Sacraments Elders and what might be offered by the Regional Council. There is room for 1 more member!
3. **Committee on Ministry Personnel Support** – as mentioned in the Rambler, this committee surveyed retired ministry personnel in the last month to assess the impact of the increase to benefits premiums, as well as to discern what support this important group of people might need. As the rollout of the Voluntary Associate Minister policy unfolds, we are reminded again of the vital role that our retirees play in our communities of faith. As we move into the fall, we will be discerning ways to continue an online presence for both active ministry personnel and retirees, as well as responding to concerns raised in the surveys of both groups. There is room for 2 more members on this committee!
4. **Pastoral Charge Supervisors and Regional Council Liaisons** – each time there is any change in a pastoral relationship, whether that is a change to the terms of a call/ appointment or an ending, a Regional Council Liaison is required to walk with communities of faith to discern next steps. If the change includes the departure of ministry personnel, a Pastoral Charge Supervisor is also required to provide support to the governing body. We are looking for people in both of these roles in all corners of our Regional Council; however, both of these roles can be completed remotely. In some contexts, this work is short-term, and in other contexts, it takes longer to find a new minister or the discernment is to continue without a called or appointed minister. Contact me if there is a chance you might be interested in one of these vital roles.
5. **Ministry Personnel Gatherings** – a group of folks have gathered weekly online for the last 15 months for support and connection on Tuesdays at 1pm. This group has included both active and retired ministry personnel, and is always open to new folks joining. A request was made for the Zoom room to remain open for the summer and so please feel welcome to join in as you wish for some unstructured collegial support.

6. **Self-care video series** – a reminder that Diane Strickland, traumatologist and compassion fatigue specialist, has created a video series called **Self-Care: Reframing It for Reclaiming It**, for people of faith who don't need another to-do list. It will include six files—four session videos, a promo video to use for advertising the program, and a PDF Facilitator's Resource. For further information and pricing, please contact her at yourstoryissafehere@yahoo.com. **** if you participated in the ministry personnel Lenten retreat in March, you should have received an email from me on May 19 with further information – contact me if you did not receive that email.**

A further 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) the Friday before the meeting. For the next meeting of the PRC, any paperwork needs to be received by **Friday, August 27** for the next meeting on September 2.

There is much to celebrate about this past 6 months as the increased vaccination rate provides some measure of hope that we might return to some of the things that are important to us. There will also need to be a time of discernment to see whether there are practices that we have adapted that we need to continue in their adjusted form. At the same time, there is much work to do as we listen again to the stories of injustice, racism, homophobia and subsequent lament from our siblings across the country and in our own communities. I look forward to hearing what your summer reading might have inspired in you as you contemplate the work you will do to co-create a world of shalom and justice; we all need to do more. If you have an idea for learning or reflection, I'd love to hear about it – note my new phone number! In the meantime, I hope your summer includes time for rest and renewal, growth and reflection, and opportunities for solidarity and grace.

Blessings and peace,



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