

Pastoral Relations Ponderings – Volume 27

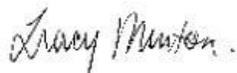
Greetings from the Pastoral Relations desk! The beauty of Creation at this time of year is always astounding. I am equally astounded by the beauty found in communities of faith as people care for one another in our second pandemic fall. Sigh. Here are some updates:

1. **Committee on Community of Faith 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 that may have emerged through the reading of annual reports. While the requirement to have an annual meeting may have been suspended for 2021, it is still important to submit that information so that we might support you well. There is room for 1 more member!
2. **Committee on Lay Leadership Support** – This fall we will be interviewing another 8 Licensed Lay Worship Leaders for renewal, affirming gifts and reviewing credentials so that the pulpit supply list is as accurate as possible. We will also be exploring training for LLWLs and Sacraments Elders and what might be offered by the Regional Council. If you know of someone who might be interested in either of these lay learning opportunities, send them my way!
3. **Committee on Ministry Personnel Support** –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 that occurred in the spring. There is room for 2 more members on this committee!
4. **Pastoral Charge Supervisors and Regional Council Liaisons** – I know this is a repeat ask but we continue to experience openings in these roles. 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 discern and find the right path. Contact me if there is a chance you might be interested in one of these vital roles or you have a suggestion of someone I might encourage.
5. **Ministry and Personnel Committees** – I have said this before, but this pandemic is creating many challenges for our ministry personnel and lay staff. Navigating the changing COVID-19 restrictions and working to create safe places for us to worship and gather (whether that is in-person or online) continues to take a significant toll. Please check in with your staff to ensure they are taking their time off and that they are caring for their spiritual selves.
6. **Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Prevention and Response Policy** – this is a policy that has been updated recently to respond to concerns regarding safety in our places of worship and work. You can find the [full policy here](#). Stay tuned this fall for learning opportunities for M&P Committees, Ministry Personnel, and lay leaders on how we can continue to create safe communities for all.

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, October 1** for the next meeting on October 7.

In this pandemic time where we are anxious about the virus and its impact on our friends, family and communities, the call as people of faith is to be open, compassionate and kind. There are multiple opinions regarding the best way to do this, whether through vaccine mandates, masking, lock-down, or other options. Regardless of your opinion, I urge you to seek to understand and care for one another. We are all struggling. May you find moments of beauty and grace, generosity and hope in these autumn times, knowing that we never walk alone. Thanks be to God.

Blessings and peace,



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10 Things to Remember

1. Love is the answer. Always.
2. Vulnerability is not a weakness. It's a strength.
3. Your body is sacred. Cherish it.
4. Gratitude shifts everything. Be thankful.
5. Forgiveness sets you free. It really does.
6. You cannot change others. Only yourself.
7. Little acts of kindness are never little. Ever.
8. Fun is underrated. Enjoy yourself.
9. Age is just a number. It's never too late.
10. Life is precious. Live it now.


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