

Pastoral Relations Ponderings – Volume 30

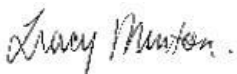
Greetings from the Pastoral Relations desk! The wonder and joy of Christmas is nearly upon us, with daily reminders of acts of kindness and the in-breaking of the light. I give thanks for that reality in the midst of all the pandemic stress.

1. **An update from the Committee on Community of Faith Support** – as the exemption of the requirement to hold an annual meeting is extended to the end of June, 2022, the Committee wanted to ensure that communities of faith are reflecting and learning from the past 2 years of adjustments. *The Manual* requires that a self-assessment be done annually and in Living Skies, we are developing that process so that it will be based on the annual report. Early in the new year, information will be shared with some best practices on writing the annual report to prepare well for this next phase of connection with the Regional Council. Stay tuned!
2. **An update from the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support** – the work of this Committee is so important as we consider ways to enable health, joy and excellence in the practice of ministry and adequate support to retired ministry personnel. The pandemic has been challenging for many and our active ministry personnel have adapted quickly and faithfully and we are grateful. We continue to look for ways to offer meaningful support; if you would like to participate in offering this as a Committee member, let me know.
3. **An update from the Committee on Lay Leadership Support** – with 3 years of work in the new system nearing completion, the Committee is beginning a review of its policies and practices to ensure they match the needs of the church in this time. If you have feedback regarding Licensed Lay Worship Leaders or Sacraments Elders in Living Skies, stay tuned for your opportunity to contribute to the review in the new year.
4. **A note for Ministry and Personnel Committees** – as we approach the second pandemic Christmas, I want to urge generosity as you support the work of the ministry personnel and lay staff in your community of faith. Offer assistance. Offer gratitude. Offer extra days off. The more rested and refreshed folks are as they begin the new year, the better equipped they will be to offer their gifts in your midst.

A further reminder that the Pastoral Relations Commission generally meets on the first Thursday of each month. Due to important vacation time, the next meeting is on January 13. 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, January 7**.

I continue to be awed and inspired by the work of my teammates in communities of faith and the national and regional offices. With grace, patience, courage and faithfulness, the ministry is accomplished in spite of 2 years of global pandemic. As you wait for the birth of the Christ-child in your midst, may the message of justice and hope inspire your best self so that our communities and families will witness the power of light and love breaking in.

Blessings and peace,



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