

Pastoral Relations Ponderings – Volume 31

Greetings from the Pastoral Relations desk! I hope the beauty and awe of winter continues to warm your heart as we move through yet another pandemic phase. Check the highlighted links below for further information.

- 1. An update from the Committee on Community of Faith Support** – a list of [best practices](#) for annual report-writing has been shared with ministry personnel and pastoral charge supervisors to assist in the documenting of the ministry of communities of faith. Next up will be guidelines for self-assessments to assist in goal setting and accountability which is one of the ways the Regional Council can offer support as a more contextualized version of the pastoral oversight visits of the past.
- 2. An update from the Committee on Lay Leadership Support** – a review of the [Licensed Lay Worship Leader policy](#) is underway with opportunities for feedback over the next 6 weeks. Invitations to participate will be sent to all current LLWLs and Pastoral Charge Supervisors, as well as options for communities of faith. Planning has also begun for the Sacraments Elder training to be offered before the end of April. Let me know if you are interested in receiving the information.
- 1. An update from the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support** – a review of the [Voluntary Associate Minister policy](#) and process is underway to provide greater clarity for both ministers and communities of faith. The Committee is also developing an online Lenten event and exploring ways to support retired ministry personnel. We are always open to new ideas so feel free to send them along to me!
- 2. A note about Voluntary Associate Ministers** – just a gentle reminder that if there is a retired minister in your community of faith that provides important ministry leadership (worship, bible study, funerals, communion, weddings, etc.), they need to complete their [application](#) to become a Voluntary Associate Minister. If this describes you, contact me for more information.

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, January 28** for February 3.

It is astonishing to me that we have entered the 4th year of our new structure. While we all had patience and openness to the structure unfolding in 2019, a global pandemic has challenged everything we understand about being church together. Thankfully, our communities of faith are filled with people of courage, strength and wisdom to enable ministry to continue in a variety of ways. If you are reading this, take 1 minute and thank someone in your community of faith for the way they have participated in the vision and call of your ministry over the last 6 months. A practice of gratitude will help bring light into these long, cold days of winter, I promise.

Blessings and peace,

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