

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**Regional Council Planning Committee:**

Convenor	VACANT
Convenor of the Regional Gathering	VACANT
Member	Hoeun Lee
Member	Bonnie Morton
Member	Brian Tudor
Staff - Admin	Bev Diebert

Property Commission

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

Grants Committee

Convenor	Leslee Whalley
Member	Barry Balls
Member	June Blau
Member	Vic Wiebe
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	Andrew Hecker
Member	Sheila Ivanochko
Member	Patti Sawchuk
Member	VACANT
Staff – Pastoral Relations Minister	Tracy Murton

Committee on Ministry Personnel Support

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

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Pastoral Relations Commission (PRC) meets regularly on the 1st Thursday of each month September to June via Zoom. Between regular meetings, the PRC 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.

The current members of the PRC are Marvin Mackie (chair), Jen Dresser, Miles Russell, Janelle Shaw and Donna Rumpel. They are assisted by Tracy Murton, Pastoral Relations Minister and Bev Diebert, Admin Support Staff.

Since the last report in May 2021:

The Commission has approved six Community of Faith Profiles for posting to ChurchHub. The PRC has also reviewed many other C of F Profiles with suggestions for clarification. The two areas that typically are deficient are statistics about financial viability and job description for the ministry personnel, particularly in part-time situations. To that end, the Commission has asked Miles Russell and Bev Diebert to devise a Financial Viability Help Sheet to assist pastoral charges to complete necessary information before submitting the draft Community of Faith Profile to the Commission.

The PRC appointed 26 Pastoral Charge Supervisors to those Communities of Faith that are without settled ministry personnel and 13 Liaisons to those Communities of Faith that are in the process of developing Profiles or to assist Search Committees of Communities of Faith.

The Pastoral Relations Commission also dealt with a variety of requests:

- Completed call or appointment to pastoral charges – 38
- Change in pastoral relations – 10
- Sacramental privilege – 1
- Supervised Ministry Education learning site – 1
- Voluntary Associate Minister – 47
- Collaborative Agreement between pastoral charges 1 completed and several in the discussion stages.

All of the Pastoral Relations Commission Policies can be found on the Living Skies Regional Council's website. They are also reported in the "Pastoral Relations Ponderings" section of the "Regional Rambler."

Currently the PRC is working on a Pulpit Supply Policy, Guidelines for Part-Time Ministry Profiles, and the aforementioned Financial Viability Help Sheet.

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 the Living Skies Regional Council. The Property 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 Property 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 LSRC 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 2021 to April 2022. During the year, the Commission has met via video conferencing twelve times. The Property Commission is comprised of Annette Taylor (chair), Bev Kostichuk (secretary), George Thurlow (chair of cemetery sub-committee), Daryl Woods, Gayle Wensley, Jonathon Zacharias, and Executive Minister, Shannon McCarthy.

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 twenty communities of faith. Seven communities of faith have already received approval to list or tender their properties (one with empty lots, two churches & four manses). Nine congregations are in the process of disbanding.

Since May 2021 the Property Commission has approved the following decisions regarding properties belonging to communities of faith:

Approval of Lease with Option to Purchase:

- United Church Manse in North Portal – December 22, 2021

Approval of Renovations

- Saskatoon - Grosvenor Park United Church (\$257,000) – May 14, 2021
- Spiritwood - Trinity Bissell Memorial United Church (\$38,164) – February 11, 2022

Approval of Purchase of Property

- Regina - Knox Metropolitan (adjacent parking lot for \$1,200,000) – March 11, 2022

Approval of Subdivision of Property

- Saskatoon - Knox United Church (lot 18 & portion of 19) – November 19, 2021

Approved Sales - date sale approved / date transfer completed

- Bracken United Church (\$1,000) – May 14, 2021 / July 14, 2021
- Shellbrook – Knox United Church (\$10) – May 14, 2021 / July 23, 2021
- Spiritwood Manse (\$125,000) – June 11, 2021 / July 20, 2021
- Saskatoon – Third Avenue United Church (\$1,400,000) – May 14, 2021 / July 29, 2021 (LSRC Executive made final decision on the sale)
- Shellbrook – Knox United Church Manse (\$130,000) – June 11, 2021 / July 22, 2021
- Clavet United Church (\$148,000) – June 18, 2021 / August 12, 2021

- Approved Sales - date sale approved / date transfer completed continued:
 - Borden United Church (\$1.00) – August 9, 2021 / December 31, 2021
 - Pierceland United Church (\$2,000) – August 20, 2021 / September 21, 2021
 - Saskatoon - Knox United Church (lots 18 and subdivided portion of 19 to Presidio Holding Inc. for \$1 plus 40 single vehicle parking stalls in planned building) – December 10, 2021 / February 24, 2022
 - Battleford United Church (\$420,000) – December 10, 2021 / sale not completed
 - North Portal - Knox United Church Manse (\$65,000) – February 9, 2022 / February 24, 2022
 - Lashburn - St. James United Church (\$110,000) – February 11, 2022 / March 6, 2022
 - Tompkins United Church (\$500) – April 2, 2022 / TBD

Since May 1, 2021, eight congregations have officially disbanded:

- Fillmore – Grace United Church – May 14, 2021
- Manor – Knox United Church – May 14, 2021
- Redvers United Church – June 11, 2021
- Nokomis United Church – August 20, 2021
- Robert Hill Mission – September 20, 2021
- Borden United Church – December 19, 2021
- Clavet United Church – February 11, 2022
- Senlac United Church – March 11, 2022

In January, the Property Commission had a discussion with representatives from United Property Resource Corporation (UPRC) to give them some idea of church property issues in Saskatchewan and to discuss how they could be more involved. We also gave them suggestions of properties whose potential for income-generation could be investigated. We plan to meet with them again later in 2022

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 twenty-five properties.

Sales Approved – date sale approved / date transfer completed

- Liberty United Church (\$300) – January 31, 2022 / April 4, 2022
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Cemeteries

The Property Commission is working with a list of forty-four cemeteries that are no longer connected to an active congregation. 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, 2021, the following decisions have been made:

Approval for Transfer of Cemetery

- Jan Hus Cemetery (including Jan Hus church building) to Jan Hus SK Preservation Society Inc. for \$1.00 – June 11, 2021 / TBD

Approval for Transfer of Cemetery continued:

- Crane Creek United Church & Cemetery to Parklo Properties – January 10, 2022 / April 5, 2022
- Brithdir Cemetery to Kevin and Sherry Gurski (no remaining gravesites) – February 11, 2022 / March 22, 2022

Property Handbook and Policies

GC41 has adopted a proposal that disbanding congregations must pay their assessments in full up to and including the year in which they apply to CRA to cancel their charitable status. The Property Commission will ensure that all assessments have been paid before approving the final distribution of assets.

The *Property Policies and Processes* document has been revised and the latest version was approved in April 2022. The Property Commission is currently reviewing the *Handbook on Church Property Matters* for required updates including updates for the Manual 2022 and the new United Church Act. Current versions of these documents are available on the *Policies & Guidelines* page of the Living Skies Regional Council website:

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

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 the difficult process of transition and closure. I also want to recognize the large workload that this small group of people has undertaken. Much appreciation 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 in 2021.

Members of the committee are Leslee Whalley, Chair, Vic Wiebe, Barry Balls, June Blau, and staff support Julie Graham and Heather Dootoff.

The grant amounts allocated for 2022 are listed at the end of this report. Applications for 2023 are now being accepted until the August 31 deadline. The application form information is posted on the Living Skies Regional Council website.

The proposal passed at the last Annual Meeting cancelled the extra 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 Mission Support recipients 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. At this time there are some grant applicants working with EDGE on sustainability. The committee is also working on criteria and an application form for the extra assessment collected.

The Living Skies Executive had 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 2022 totalling \$126,758

Lumsden Beach Camp -	\$ 1,500
Camp Tapawingo –	\$ 2,758
South Sask Hospital -	\$20,000
North Sask Hospital –	\$20,000
U of Sask Chaplaincy -	\$ 7,400
Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry (RAPM) –	\$32,500
Riverbend Integrated Community Ministries (ICM) –	\$22,500
La Ronge United Church –	\$15,000
Micah Mission –	\$ 2,000
Parkland Restorative Justice –	\$ 2,100
Prairie Centre for Ecumenism -	<u>\$ 1,000</u>
	\$126,758

Mission Support budget -2022 budget was approved for \$125,000.00 plus \$1758 which has come in for the Community Ministries Fund from voluntary donations.

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 is taking place online in 2022. Additionally, this past year saw the creation of a Justice Committee within the Regional Council, and the work of our Nominations Committee has included working on a position description and seeking folks to serve on this newly created Justice Committee. 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 in June of 2022, 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, as well as Tracy Murton, Shannon McCarthy, and Tricia Gerhard and the Regional Council Executive for their support, wisdom, and direction in our 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 do our best to keep lists of current 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 of the Living Skies Regional Council

Yvonne Terry
Jeanette Warrian
Susan Reed (Convenor)

Email: lsrcnominations@gmail.com
Phone: 306-482-3932 (Susan – church office)

PASTORAL RELATIONS STAFF REPORT

If anyone would have told us two years ago the ways in which our practice of ministry would be changing in light of a pandemic, no one would have believed it. Remember back to March 2020 when we all thought we would have to adjust for a couple of weeks and then it would all be over? Just think of all the ways you have adapted as an individual, and within your community of faith. I have been awed, amazed and sometimes saddened by all that we have needed to let go of as we navigate being people of faith during this time. I am grateful for leaders in all capacities who have offered support and wisdom to one another, whether through sharing tips for online meetings and worship, or understanding the constantly shifting provincial government restrictions, or discerning how to keep one another safe once the restrictions had been lifted. I believe the key ingredient in the ongoing struggle to be people of faith has been a deep reliance on one another and the constant reminders that we are not alone in the journey.

In the midst of it all, the work has continued. You will find the report from Marvin Mackie on behalf of the Pastoral Relations Commission elsewhere in this report. This group of dedicated volunteers have been creatively and courageously reviewing documents and processes to help support pastoral relationships within the Regional Council. As financial pictures continue to shift for many communities of faith, the Pastoral Relations Commission assesses the connection between the financial information and a vision for ministry to enable folks to offer faithful ministry in their own particular context. I am grateful for their capacity to read and interpret multiple documents for each meeting, and the wisdom and humour offered over our Zoom connection in support of ministry in our Regional Council.

Committee on Lay Leadership Support

The mandate of this committee is to provide ongoing leadership development support to lay leaders in the Regional Council, and specifically, to be responsible for the support of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and Sacraments Elders. For the past year, this mandate has included Zoom gatherings for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders for support, interviewing Licensed Lay Worship Leaders for renewal, contracting with Marg Janick-Grayston to offer an Advent learning event for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders focussed on funeral leadership, and offering an online Sacraments Elder course. Since the last gathering of the Regional Council, 13 Licensed Lay Worship Leaders have had their licenses renewed. We are grateful for the following volunteers who have helped with the license renewals over the past year – Debra Berg, Thom Carnahan, Sheila Lavender, Michele Rowe, Jim Tenford, Brian Walton, and Gayle Wensley. We are also grateful for the work of Piotr Strzelecki who worked with two committee members on developing and offering the Sacraments Elder course. As a result of this course, 4 people have begun the process of becoming a Sacraments Elder in their home community of faith. This spring has also involved a re-evaluation of the Licensed Lay Worship Leader policy for Living Skies Regional Council through surveys to current Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and Pastoral Charge Supervisors. Final revisions to the policy are awaiting the decisions of General Council this summer. I am deeply moved by the passion and persistence of the members of this committee who make difficult decisions that consider the best interests of lay leaders, communities of faith, and a vision for ministry in our Regional Council.

Committee on Ministry Personnel Support

The mandate of this committee is embedded in the title, with the purpose of supporting health, joy and excellence in ministry practice. Given that the whole means of ministry leadership has shifted a number of times over the past year, this work has continued to adjust to meet the changing levels of support required during a pandemic. There are two primary ways this support was offered this year – through the weekly ministry personnel gatherings over Zoom, and through the bi-monthly gatherings of Voluntary Associate Ministers, also over Zoom. These connecting times provide an opportunity for ministry personnel to share their wisdom

and support with one another as it relates to their specific contexts, as well as to highlight any areas of concern or future learning needs. The committee recognized Clergy Appreciation Month in October by sending a thank you card to each active minister in the Regional Council. This committee also hosted again an online Ministry Personnel event in March with resource leaders from across the country that offered broad opportunities for support and learning. Much gratitude to Alcris Lumongi, Karen Medland, David Robertson, Janet Ross, Michele Rowe, Kathy Roy, and Becca Whitla for their contributions to the success of this event which was attended by 28 people across the Tri-Region (Northern Spirit, Living Skies and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils). The Voluntary Associate Ministers policy was also reviewed this year; like the Licensed Lay Worship Leader policy, it will be finalized following the decisions of the General Council this summer. While the policy is intended to support the ongoing functions of ministry for folks not in an active call or appointment, each of the gathering times over Zoom has felt like a long-lost opportunity to see friends and colleagues, which is a delight to witness. The dedicated group of pastors on the committee prayerfully and playfully discern how best to support both active and retired ministry personnel, and are faithfully adjusting their strategies to respond to the immediate needs.

Committee on Community of Faith Support

In many ways, the mandate of this committee is the most extensive as they embody the role of oversight and support to communities of faith. Over the past year, the committee has read annual reports and covenants, looking for areas of concern and celebration. Since the last gathering of the Regional Council, the committee has read 70 annual reports, as well as approved 2 governance structure documents. Given that some communities of faith did not produce an annual report or have an annual meeting in 2021, there has been a lot of catching up to do! This year, the committee unrolled the final aspect of accountability from *The Manual* in the new structure, the self-assessment, as a means to help communities of faith with ensuring compliance with denominational and provincial guidelines. While it might appear that the folks on this committee are primarily rule-based, the faithful, compassionate and intentional way that each community of faith is reviewed is humbling and an honour to witness.

Final comments

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of working with a number of different groups of volunteers in our Regional Council in addition to the ones named above: supporting pastoral relations processes through search team training, supporting lay employees and pastoral relationships through Ministry & Personnel Committee training, ongoing consultations with folks regarding a variety of issues such as dwindling membership and finances, and offering ideas and support for both ministry personnel and lay volunteers in situations of challenge. The work is rich and diverse, always with a sense that there is so much more we could offer. My deepest hope is that folks across the Regional Council know that there is consistently a space to ask the hard questions or to seek resources, and that we will happily offer what we can in response.

For those of us on the Regional Council staff team, we were used to working remotely together and therefore adjusting to working through technology was not a shift over the pandemic. However, I am grateful for my colleagues who are quicker to absorb the nuances of Zoom to help support the work of the Regional Council so that we might offer effective and efficient guidance. I say this every year, but there is absolutely no way that I could function in my role without the patient and consistent support of Bev Diebert in the Regional Council Office. From answering questions to posting information online, Bev lives into her title as administrative support every.single.day. I would also like to offer a shout-out to Tricia Gerhard, our outgoing Regional Council Executive chair, who has functioned as our liaison with the provincial government through a time that no one would have predicted or volunteered for. Her pastoral and attentive care in this work was invaluable as we navigated changes and restrictions and interpretations of guidelines that were never designed with churches in mind. This work is also

supported by the Pastoral Charge Supervisors in more than ½ of the communities of faith that are part of our Regional Council – these folks have been the conduit of information regarding restrictions and regulations, and have offered the care and compassion required to walk with communities of faith. In addition, the work of the Regional Council Liaisons in supporting pastoral relations processes is an invaluable resource during times of change and transition regarding ministry personnel. As the long-term impact of the pandemic continues to be felt throughout the Regional Council, the work of these two groups of people will become even more critical.

It really does take a village to support ministry and faithful communities. I am humbled and honoured to be doing this work in this time and place on behalf of the Regional Council. As the writer of Ecclesiastes would say, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven”. May we each find the time for the things that matter most: seeking justice and peace, engaging the world in acts of support, faithfulness and love.

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Murton
Pastoral Relations Minister

MINISTER FOR THE OFFICE OF VOCATION

Hi my name is Karen Medland and I am the Minister for the Office of Vocation working in Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regions. Well, another year has passed in our ministry together during these strange times.

As your Office of Vocation Minister I feel blessed to serve with you all in this work, trying to support you in any way I can. We continue to see people responding to the call from God to ministry which keeps the candidacy board busy.

We have at present 38 candidates and inquirers within the three regions that I support. Out of that number we expect to see 8 be commissioned, ordained, or recognised sometime this year, which gives me great hope for the church as we look to the future. If you or someone you know is interested in serving in paid accountable ministry, please contact the Office of Vocation where you will be directed to an Office of Vocation Minister for assistance.

Some of you may already be aware that I am moving on from this role and joining Chinook Winds Region as the Pastoral Relations Minister. It has been a great honour to serve you all over the last three years and I pray that your ministries continue to show the love of God in the world to all who encounter them.

Blessings
Rev Dr Karen Medland
Minister for the Office of Vocation, Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regions