

## **MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

### **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

### **Property Commission**

Convenor	Annette Taylor
Member	Bev Kostichuk
Member	George Thurlow
Member	Daryl Woods
Member	Jonathan Zacharias
Member	VACANT
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	Yvonne Terry
Member	Jeannette Warrian
Member	VACANT
Member	VACANT

### **Regional Council Meeting Planning Committee:**

Convenor	Carolyn Woodall
Convenor of the Regional Gathering	VACANT
Member	Chantalle Morrow-Fesciuc
Member	Brian Tudor
Member	Darrell Woods
Staff - Admin	Bev Diebert

**Committee on Community of Faith Support**

Member	Bill Pollock
Member	Deborah Smith
Member	VACANT
Member	VACANT
Staff – Pastoral Relations Minister	Tracy Murton

**Committee on Lay Leadership Support**

Member	Tricia Challoner
Member	Andrew Hecker
Member	Doreen Hewitson
Member	Sheila Ivanochko
Staff – Pastoral Relations Minister	Tracy Murton

**Committee on Ministry Personnel Support**

Member	Joy Cowan
Member	Michele Rowe
Member	Pam Thomas
Staff – Pastoral Relations Minister	Tracy Murton

## **PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION**

The Pastoral Relations Commission (PRC) meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month (unless circumstances intervene) 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 Pastoral Relations Commission 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.

This Report covers from May 5, 2022 to April 7, 2023.

The Commission has approved six Community of Faith Profiles for posting to Church Hub. 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.

The PRC appointed 19 Pastoral Charge Supervisors to those Communities of Faith that are without settled ministry personnel and five Liaisons to those Communities of Faith that are in the process of developing Profiles or to assist Search Committees of Communities of Faith. Many of these positions are vacant as it is difficult to find volunteers to fill them.

The Pastoral Relations Commission approved a variety of requests:

- Completed call or appointment to pastoral charges – 22;
- Change in pastoral relations – 11;
- Supervised Ministry Education learning site - 1;
- Voluntary Associate Ministers – 10;
- Collaborative Agreement between pastoral charges – 2 completed and several in the discussion stage.

The Pastoral Relations Commission approved two policies: Pastoral Charge Supervisor's Guidelines and Registration of Ministry Personnel to Perform Weddings within Living Skies Regional Council.

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

Respectfully submitted  
Marvin Mackie  
Chair

## **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 communities of faith.

This report includes the work of the Property Commission from May 2022 to April 2023. During the year, the Commission has met via video conferencing eleven times. The Property Commission is comprised of Annette Taylor (chair), Bev Kostichuk (secretary), George Thurlow (chair of cemetery sub-committee), Daryl Woods, 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, 2023, the Commission is in communication with seventeen communities of faith. Five communities of faith have already received approval to list or tender their properties (one empty lot, two churches & two manse) and another seven are considering the sale of property. Seven communities of faith are in the process of disbanding.

Since May 1, 2022 the Property Commission has approved the following decisions regarding properties belonging to communities of faith:

#### Approval of Renovations

- Wynyard United Church (\$12,643) – May 13, 2022
- Lumsden - St. Andrews United Church ( \$50,000) – September 9, 2022
- Watson - Trinity United Church (\$20,000) – September 22, 2022

#### Approval of Subdivision of Property

- Tompkins United Church (mineral rights) – April 14, 2023

#### Approved Sales - date sale approved / date transfer completed

- Big River United Church Manse (\$175,000) – May 13, 2022 / July 6, 2022
- Assiniboia – St. Paul's United Church Manse (building only for \$25,000) – May 28, 2022 / December 1, 2022
- Gainsborough – Knox United Church Manse (\$20,000) – June 2, 2022 / August 11, 2022
- Balcarres – St. Andrew's United Church (empty lot for \$1) – June 10, 2022 / August 25, 2022
- Loreburn-Hawarden United Church Manse (\$135,000) – June 10, 2022 / June 29, 2022
- Davidson United Church Manse (\$150,000) – August 26, 2022 / September 26, 2022
- Wakaw United Church (\$100,000) – October 4, 2022 / TBD
- Lacadena United Church (two village lots for price already paid for building) – November 4, 2022 / February 23, 2023
- Penzance United Church (\$1,000) – December 9, 2022 / TBD
- Shaunavon – Centre Street United Church (\$25,000) – January 13, 2023 / TBD
- Churchbridge – St. Andrew's United Church (originally sold in 2010 but never transferred) – April 14, 2023 / TBD
- Tompkins United Church (transfer of mineral rights to current owners of property) – April 14, 2023 / TBD

Since May 1, 2022, six congregations have officially disbanded:

- Shellbrook - Knox United Church – May 13, 2022
- Kelfield - St. Paul's United Church – May 13, 2022
- Milestone - Lang-Milestone United Church – July 8, 2022
- Asquith United Church – September 9, 2022
- Lacadena United Church – December 9, 2022 (effective Feb. 23, 2023)
- Lashburn – St. James United Church – January 14, 2023

In September 2022, the Property Commission met via Zoom with Miriam Bowlby and Carly Forester from Kindred Works (formerly UPRC) to provide them with a short list of communities of faith that might be appropriate for their consideration. Since then, Kindred Works has provided the Property Commission with quarterly reports of the projects that they are pursuing in Living Skies Regional Council.

### **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. In the past year, the Property Commission has sold or transferred six properties. We have also determined that one is a cemetery and that three others are the responsibility of active communities of faith. We currently have a list of fifteen abandoned properties.

#### Lease Agreement for Mineral Royalties

- Request The United Church of Canada to approve, sign and seal the lease agreement on the NW 28-10-05-2 Ext 0 Title number 107056234 with Land Solutions on behalf of their client with the following conditions: \$85.00 per acre, a 3-year Term and a 15% Royalty

#### Sales Approved – date sale approved / date transfer completed

- RM of Fillmore - Huronville United Church (empty lot with cairn – transfer to RM) – June 10, 2022 / July 19, 2022
- RM of Invergordon - formerly Methodist Church (empty lot for \$500) – June 10, 2022 / October 12, 2022
- RM of Lumsden - formerly Presbyterian Church (empty lot for \$500) – June 10, 2022 / July 13, 2022
- RM of Wellington - Colfax United Church (3 empty village lots for \$600) – July 8, 2022 / September, 20, 2022
- RM of Redburn – Hearne United Church (3 empty lots with cairn for \$700) – July 8, 2022 / January 31, 2023
- RM of Elcapo – Rillington United Church (2 empty lots transfer to RM) – April 14, 2023 / TBD

### **Cemeteries**

The Property Commission is working with a list of forty-two cemeteries that are no longer connected to an active community of faith. 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 setting up protocols for oversight of these properties.

Since May 1, 2022, the following property decisions have been made:

#### Approval for Transfer of Cemetery

- Hillside Cemetery to RM of Gravelbourg – July 8, 2022 / September 3, 2022
- Jan Hus Cemetery and Church to Jan Hus SK Preservation Society – September 9, 2022 / TBD (note: approval from June 11, 2021 had to be redone with corrections)
- Old Stone Church and Cemetery to RM of Abernethy – April 14, 2023 / TBD

#### **Property Handbook and Policies**

The Property Commission continues to update the *Handbook on Church Property Matters* and the *Property Policy and Processes* document, as required. 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/>

#### General Council Assessments

The Property Commission determined that General Council does not adjust the assessment for multi-point pastoral charges when one congregation is disbanded. For the next two years their assessments are based on calculations that include revenue received from the now disbanded congregation. The Property Commission believes that this policy is unfair to the small congregations that remain. We have written an email to Erik Mathiesen, General Council Treasurer, expressing our concern.

#### Lease Agreements

The Property Commission acquired the services of legal counsel to create a sample lease agreement. This agreement will be made available to all communities of Faith to provide information for them to consider when they are leasing their facilities to outside groups.

#### Checklists

The Property Commission recognizes that the amount of detail in the handbook can be daunting, so we have created a checklist that communities of faith can use when selling property and/or disbanding.

#### **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 communities of faith through a process that is often emotionally, mentally and even physically challenging.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Annette Taylor  
Chair,

### **GRANTS COMMITTEE**

The Grants committee met two times by zoom in 2022.

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

The grant amounts allocated for 2023 are listed at the end of this report. Applications for 2024 are now being accepted until the August 31 deadline. The application form information is posted on the Living skies website under Resources.

The Executive assessment task group has not made any final decisions regarding the Assessment Fund collected. Several organizations have taken advantage of working with the EDGE program. 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. There was a Sustainability Cohort zoom program offered in 2022 through EDGE which many of the groups have already attended, at no cost. The next step is 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 community ministries for initiatives of sustainability not developed through EDGE. 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 Funding Page, found under Resources on the Living Skies web page, is now complete but it will continue to be updated as needed. 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.

Allocation of M & S Grants for 2023 totalling \$125,000.00

Camp Tapawingo –	\$ 3,000
South Sask Hospital -	\$ 20,000
North Sask Hospital –	\$ 20,000
U of Sask Chaplaincy -	\$ 7,000
Regina Anti-Poverty (RAPM) –	\$ 32,500
Riverbend Integrated Community(ICM) –	\$ 20,000
La Ronge United Church –	\$ 17,750
Micah Mission –	\$ 1,500
Parkland Restorative Justice –	\$ 2,000
Prairie Centre for Ecumenism -	<u>\$ 1,250</u>
	\$125,000

Submitted by  
Leslee Whalley, Convenor  
[ldwhalley@sasktel.net](mailto: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 Governance Structure Handbook 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. 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 acknowledge that the work of Nominations is challenging. We don't want to overload the same individuals with more tasks, and yet there are pieces of work to be done. We are certain there are others within the Regional Council who might be interested in some of this work. So, even if you are not personally interested in a new role, we hope you might familiarize yourself with the current vacancies and available opportunities, and promote them to others you know, and within your communities of faith.

We would like to thank all who have agreed to take on new roles this year, as well as those whom we have asked, who took time to discern, even when the answer was no. We would like to thank those who are concluding their terms. We gratefully appreciate your time, gifts, and 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 in particular, for all of their support in our committee's work.

At the time of writing this report, we still have 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. If you are interested in a particular role, or know someone who might be, we would be happy to hear from you anytime! We will keep contacting individuals hoping we might find some willing to take on particular roles; however we also invite you to submit your own expressions of interest if there is something you are passionate about or might be in the future. Even if it is not on the vacant lists, we keep all expressions of interest on file.

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](mailto:lsrcnominations@gmail.com)

## **PASTORAL RELATIONS STAFF REPORT**

I am so excited to be writing a report that people will read in preparation for a gathering in person (well, or read while there is down time at the meeting) and for folks attending the Regional Council Gathering remotely. It is always a challenge to write a report that articulates the breadth of the work that falls under the umbrella of pastoral relations. When the new structure began on January 1, 2019, we were giving ourselves permission to have questions about practice and process for as long as it took to feel secure in the new system. Then we hit a pandemic, and our questions turned to adaptations for an online church and how to support pastoral relations processes remotely. Now 4 years later, we have learned many things about how we work together, both in person and remotely, as we continue to modify our processes to respond to particular contexts throughout the province in the most efficient and helpful manner. I celebrate the ways in which this Regional Council has supported communities of faith and pastoral relationships to create opportunities for faithful and local expressions of ministry.



You will find the report on the Pastoral Relations Commission elsewhere in this docket, written by Marvin Mackie. These folks diligently read documents related to finances and ministry to offer support in the pastoral relations processes, ensuring that the vision expressed on paper matches the capacity of folks financially.

### **Committee on Community of Faith Support**

The structure we inherited in 2019 included a variety of ways to enable Regional Councils to support the ministry within communities of faith. Where presbytery pastoral oversight visits were concrete opportunities to celebrate and share concerns, this Committee has struggled with meaningful ways to engage local contexts from afar. The process of completing covenants in 2021 helped us review ministry goals and governance needs with the communities of faith who undertook this work. We will be distributing signed copies of these at our Regional Gathering (and mailing those we can't hand-deliver). The process of completing self-assessments in 2022 helped communities of faith identify areas of policy development and accountability for those who undertook this work. Each year, the faithful members of this Committee review annual reports (at the time of this writing 79 reports have been reviewed) and identify places where extra support might be necessary. However, there are currently only 2 members on this Committee, compared to the numerous volunteers who helped with this task in the presbyteries. Gratitude to our additional readers, Deborah Springer and Pam Thomas, who are helping with this process of accountability. This Committee has also reviewed and recommended the adoption of one governance structure over the last year. This fall the Committee will be reviewing its mandate in order to develop goals that are both meaningful and achievable in its support for communities of faith.

### **Committee on Ministry Personnel Support**

Presbyteries were a supportive context for both retired and active ministry personnel, in addition to a place of accountability and belonging. In the fall of 2019, we gathered folks for conversation and learning in 3 locations, but then when the pandemic hit, opportunities to replicate the events the following spring were cancelled. Support moved online with weekly Zoom gatherings for ministry personnel, and bi-monthly gatherings for those ministers who have retired or are in-between calls or appointments (also known as Voluntary Associate Ministers). Both of these regular gatherings have been significant opportunities for conversation and connection. However, the consensus continues to be that in-person gatherings are critical for the health and well-being of all ministry personnel. Therefore, in the fall of 2022, the Committee hosted 4 retreats for active ministry personnel around the Regional Council (Regina, Melville, Saskatoon and Kindersley) that were well-attended with a strong desire for replication in 2023. Gratitude to the communities of faith who hosted, and to the volunteer chaplains who provided care (Pam Thomas, Marg Janick-Grayston, and Brian Walton). The Committee will also be hosting a lunch for retired ministry personnel at the Regional Council Gathering in Prince Albert as a way to concretely support this important group of people.

### **Committee on Lay Leadership Support**

This Committee has had the most clear and concrete task in the new structure – providing support and accountability for lay leaders in the Regional Council. After the initial development of policies and practices related to the accreditation for Sacraments Elders and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, we are now in the process of reviewing and fine-tuning the process to meet the needs of the church in our particular context. Since the last meeting of the Regional Council, 8 Licensed Lay Worship Leaders were interviewed and renewed, with an additional 8 in the process at the time of this report. We are grateful for the contributions of Debra Berg, Sheila Lavender, Michele Rowe, Jim Tenford, and Brian Walton who assisted with interviews for both Sacraments Elders and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, and continue to provide support to this process. Last summer, the General Council approved a proposal on leadership

that has implications for the contributions of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders which the Committee is in the process of interpreting for the context of our Regional Council. Ongoing consultation and feedback over Zoom with our Licensed Lay Worship Leaders has provided an important component to the review, while offering opportunities for collegiality and support. We also hosted a second online Sacraments Elder training course to provide opportunities for lay leaders to undertake this important task in their community of faith, and to serve as a refresher for those already offering this leadership. Gratitude to Piotr Strzelecki and Committee members Andrew Hecker and Doreen Hewitson for their leadership in that process. As a result of this course, 3 new Sacraments Elders were licensed to add to the 3 folks who engaged the process with a mentor over the past year.

### **Final thoughts**

As more and more communities of faith find themselves without called or appointed ministry personnel, the challenge of maintaining a connection between the Regional Council and local expressions of ministry continues to grow. I am exceedingly grateful for the 75 people who have taken on the role of Pastoral Charge Supervisor in these locations as a means of support and accountability. These folks have offered faith-filled care and compassion, sometimes in person and sometimes remotely, as communities of faith continue to offer ministry in their particular context. It continues to be a challenge to recruit folks who are willing and able to take on this important role that is required by our polity and so we are exploring alternatives for the next year. I am also grateful for the 8 people who are currently active as Regional Council Liaisons, helping to interpret Pastoral Relations policies and procedures for communities of faith in transition. These folks have competently answered questions, attended meetings, and provided support (again sometimes in person and sometimes remotely) in the challenging times of transition. I am humbled by the contributions of these volunteers who commit their time to walk alongside communities of faith that are not their own.

There are a host of other volunteers throughout the Regional Council who support the work of pastoral relations whose names will not appear in the Nominations report found elsewhere in this docket. Ministry and Personnel Committees support the day-to-day employment for both ministry personnel and lay staff, ensuring equity in process while creating healthy work environments. Worship Committees care for the public expressions of faith, many of whom rely on the services of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and Sacraments Elders, paying attention to the details that enhance our collective practice. Search Teams diligently review information on potential candidates to discern whether a good fit might be possible, delicately balancing the pressure from their community of faith to find a new minister while ensuring that the person they recommend matches the vision for ministry being articulated. Governing Bodies faithfully guide the operations of the communities of faith, making decisions to enable the fullest expression of vision while holding responsibility for the physical space, especially when difficult situations arise. Each of these groups interact directly and indirectly with the work in my portfolio and involve many Zoom meetings and phone conversations to ensure the Regional Council is supporting local ministry as best we can. Our communities of faith would not function without the work of these folks I am privileged to work with.

The members of the Committees and the Pastoral Relations Commission that I serve bring hope and joy to the work that I do. Every meeting is filled with laughter, sometimes tears, and always a genuine opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ in our midst. As we have collectively and cautiously emerged from the pandemic, it has become abundantly clear how desperately we need one another for our own sense of health and well-being. We may have emerged slightly smaller as a whole, but I believe we have emerged more connected to one another, and more committed to ongoing encouragement and care across the Regional Council. I am grateful for staff colleagues who challenge and support the work that we are engaged in together – online conversations and occasional in-person gatherings have created a solid foundation for our remote work environments. And of course, my work would not be

possible without the concrete support from Bev Diebert, who laughs at my jokes, remembers the details, and manages to put words onto paper from the ramblings of our minds. I am honoured to be doing this work on behalf of the Regional Council, and I look forward to more ways of creatively and compassionately working together. May we continue to find moments to celebrate in the midst of our focus on accountability, as my favourite poet Mary Oliver would say in her poem Three Things to Remember:

“As long as you're dancing, you can  
break the rules.  
Sometimes breaking the rules is just  
extending the rules.  
Sometimes there are no rules.”<sup>1</sup>

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracy Murton  
Pastoral Relations Minister

### **MINISTER FOR THE OFFICE OF VOCATION**

I stepped into the role of Vocational Minister in August of 2023. There has been a very steep learning curve and I am grateful for the patience extended as I learn the ropes.

I am also grateful for the many opportunities I have had to become acquainted with ministry personnel across my three regions. It is a privilege to be invited into discerning conversations with respect to sabbaticals, retirement and vocational clarity. I have been able to join the zoom ministry gatherings in Northern Spirit and Living Skies (Prairie to Pine still to come). I have also enjoyed seeing many of you at the professional boundaries' refresher workshops – both in-person and online. I was able to facilitate in-person workshops in Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg. Last fall I participated in a clergy retreat offered by Living Skies Pastoral Relations Minister, Tracy Murton and this April I was invited, by the Prairie to Pine Committee for Ministry Personnel Support, to offer a similar retreat in that region. It is my hope to also offer a retreat, in conjunction with an in-person professional boundaries refresher in Northern Spirit Regional Council next fall.

#### **Prairie Candidacy Board**

The Prairie Candidacy Board has been hard at work supporting 29 candidates on their journey through the Candidacy Pathway. We have an amazing and diverse board consisting of: Chair, Rob Smith; Aurora Espenant, Brenda Curtis, Chewie Mulenga, Doreen Hewitson, Mary Annan, Mokwadi Basele, Salesi Takau, Shirley Goodrich, SunDo Hyun, Taeil Yang, and Wayne Youngward.

Of the 29 candidates, 9 are from Prairie to Pine, 12 from Living Skies, 7 from Northern Spirit and 1 from another region. We have 4 in the Designated Lay Ministry stream, 8 in the Diaconal stream, and 17 in the Ordained stream. We have 12 candidates in Supervised Ministry Education (SME). 8 candidates are completing the pathway in 2023 - 2 will be commissioned, 2 recognized and 4 ordained.

#### **Oversight and Discipline of Ministry Personnel**

Over the past year, there has been a focus on deliberately consulting with regional councils through an increased number of case conferences, during the informal phases of oversight and discipline proceedings.

---

<sup>1</sup> Oliver, Mary; *Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver*, © 2017, Penguin Press, p. 48.

As the response committee continues its work there is recognition of the need for more trained investigators, reviewers and consultants, as some people have stepped away from the work, for a variety of reasons.

The Office of Vocation takes seriously its responsibilities with respect to ensuring standards for accreditation are being met. These include annual declaration of criminal charges and mandatory training. The Standards committee reviewed the Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel and the Board of Vocation approved changes to better include guidelines for social media and digital technology.

### **Admissions Committee**

*(Admission work is now staffed by Sarah Bruer in the Office of Vocation, this is her summary)*

If you go to The United Church of Canada website and search for admissions, you'll find that the admission process is currently not accepting new applications. This pause does not mean that our work with admission ministers is paused. It is merely allowing us to focus our energy on supporting the 194 ministers who are already at various stages within the admission process. In 2022, the Admission Board conducted 36 interviews; and another 12 have already been conducted in 2023. Meanwhile, the Matching Commission is piloting a new program that we hope will make it easier for Admission Ministers to find the appointments they need to complete the admission process, with five ministers looking forward to joining us this year. Having come through such interviews and appointments, this spring we are collectively celebrating with 11 ministers who have completed the admission process and will be admitted to the Order of Ministry in The United Church of Canada.

Again, thank you for your patience and support as I adjust to this ministry. I welcome every and all opportunities to connect with ministry personnel in Prairie to Pine, Living Skies and Northern Spirit Regional Councils. My contact information can be found on each of the regions' website. If you see me at the regional council gathering, please flag me down and introduce yourself.

Rev Laura Fohse,  
Minister for the Office of Vocation, Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regions