

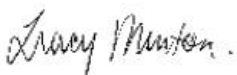
## Pastoral Relations Ponderings – Volume 57

Welcome to the work of the Pastoral Relations desk in Living Skies Regional Council. This is the place to find the most recent information about the support Committees and updates for M&P Committees. Happy reading!

- 1. An update from the Committee on Community of Faith Support** – As we near the end of 2024, reflect back on the ministry that has happened within and outside your community of faith. As indicated in the [Best Practices document \(found here\)](#), there are a number of ways to tell the story of your community of faith – through reports, financial information, and statistics, each context is different and an important part of the United Church in Living Skies. This is the content the Committee is looking forward to reading in the annual reports.
- 2. An update from the Committee on Lay Leadership Support** – This Committee has completed its fall series of interviews for both Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and Sacraments Elders. Gratitude to folks who partnered with Committee members to participate in this process and provided much wisdom and grace: Debra Berg, Jan Coffey-Olsen, Sheila Lavender, and Nora Vedress. Stay tuned for new ways to support these important leaders in our Regional Council in the coming year, as well as further training opportunities for lay folk.
- 3. An update from the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support** – Care for ministry personnel who are retired continues to be a focus for this Committee. In the spring, opportunities to gather around the Regional Council will be created, in addition to the bi-monthly online Voluntary Associate Ministers connection. If you have a passion for helping with a gathering in your area, let me know. We are also looking for folks to join this Committee to help design ways to offer support for both active and retired ministry personnel.
- 4. A note or two for ministry and personnel committees** – There are many ways to express appreciation over the Advent season for the staff who support the ministry in your community of faith. A word of thanks, an offer of help, time off in lieu of the extra work of the season, or any other option you can imagine. These folks are working extra hard to create opportunities for spiritual nurture during this sacred time. Whether it is shoveling an extra time for a Sunday afternoon event, adding an extra practice for a special Christmas Eve anthem, sourcing extra costumes for the Christmas pageant, copying and folding bulletins for extra services, or preparing extra worship opportunities – your staff need extra tenderness and care during the final push towards the light.

The Advent season is full of so many expectations of colleagues, family and friends, and some of those contexts are full of sadness and grief, challenge and pain. If you've spoken to me at all in the last 3 weeks, you will know that I had the great opportunity to witness a context full of joy, connection, community, and love that provided a much-needed balm. I'm not talking about a worship service, but going the Eras Tour with my kid. When we get wrapped up in the stress and busyness of the Christmas season, we often forget that our call to compassion and restoration exists outside of our homes and churches. The simple acts of kindness I experienced and witness at the concert reminded me that we all have a part to play in making the world a place filled with magic, peace and love. May you find the moments of light that make your heart sing, and imagine all the ways to share that light with everyone you encounter, from a friendship bracelet to a smile to a symbol of love.

Blessings and peace,



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