

Pastoral Relations Ponderings – Volume 66

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** – It has been so inspiring to read goals from communities of faith, large and small, as they emerged from the self-assessment tool. From updating the membership role to exploring the establishment of a local food bank, churches continue to engage the responsibilities of the denomination and serve their community. The 74 self-assessments that we received have been read and are in the process of follow-up by committee members. Contact will be made with the remaining folks to see if assistance is needed in order to complete the final self-assessments. Now focus shifts to annual report season. The Committee looks forward to receiving and reading these in order to offer support as needed, holding them in connection to the self-assessment tool just reviewed as the same person will read both for your community of faith. A reminder that there are [guidelines found at this link](#) regarding the content for annual reports, and a requirement for financial statements to be independently reviewed.
- 2. An update from the Committee on Lay Leadership Support** – As indicated in the Rambler, the Committee is exploring offering Sacraments Elder training in the spring. If you or someone you know is interested in this training, let me know. We are also beginning conversations about additional ways to support lay leadership in the Regional Council. If you have suggestions or comments, feel free to pass them along.
- 3. A note or two for ministry and personnel committees** – It is now the season to schedule opportunities for the annual review of your staff. There are resources available for your use, [found at this link](#). An annual review is required for all individuals on your payroll (lay staff and ministry personnel). If you regularly engage the services of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader, it is also highly recommended that you schedule a conversation with them to check in. An opportunity for feedback helps all of us to feel valued and appreciated, which in turn helps us to feel motivated. Contact me if you have questions about this important responsibility.

I had the great fortune to travel to the west coast of British Columbia last weekend. Old growth forests and vast ocean views were a soothing balm to the challenging news, a reminder that we are a part of something far greater than ourselves. There are so many opportunities to see the beauty offered by Creator and to celebrate all that we can learn from nature, even in the midst of dwindling budgets and aging buildings. The interconnectedness of the forest reminded me of the stories I've heard of people and communities holding and supporting one another through all kinds of challenges – not only do we know how to show our care with food (nothing beats a good potluck), we show our care with presence when someone is struggling, when someone needs help with a task, or when someone needs reminding that the days are getting longer again and light is returning through the darkness of winter. May you find moments of grace in the midst of life that remind you of the love of both community and Creator, offering support, nourishment, and peace.

Blessings and peace,

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