

Listening Team Guidelines for Communities of Faith Commission

Having identified concerns arising on a pastoral charge or individual Community of Faith, a best practice is to initiate first a more informal approach rather than a review.

This is a process to follow:

1. Offer support to the governing body of the Community of Faith by having a Listening Team come to hear the stories of the people involved and provide a report of the conversations with recommendations to the Community of Faith Commission.
2. The report would list the details of the conversations and not name names.
3. The Listening Team will request the following information be provided by the Community of Faith prior to its visit:
 - a) recent Annual Reports from the last 3 years
 - b) current Financial Statements
 - c) current and past budgets (at least 3 years)
 - d) something on your congregation and ministry - who you are and what your mission is?
 - e) an outline of the History of the church
 - f) number of members, average attendance, numbers of funerals, weddings, new members, baptisms
 - g) what are the current activities, current programs?
 - h) what does your governance (decision making) look like?
 - i) Is there anything else to add about your congregation that would be of interest or relevant?
4. The Listening Team will bring its findings and the COF Commission may choose to make recommendations. These may bind the Community of Faith to a particular action which the COF Commission will communicate to the appropriate bodies and personnel of the region.
5. There should never be just one representative.
6. There should be three separate meetings, one with the order of ministry personnel, one with the Ministry and Personnel committee, and one with the Governing Body. Each meeting should have a defined time line. A suggestion for the successive meetings could be one hour (ordered minister), one hour (M & P) and one and one half hour (governing body).
7. There may be a desire to meet with church groups such as a UCW group, choir, etc. at a separate time. Again a time schedule should be outlined in advance.
8. An announcement should be crafted by the Listening Team to be read at 2 Sunday Worship services and put in the bulletin outlining the specific arrangements of the Listening Team provided by the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Region. One could state that it is the role of the Commission to encourage and monitor the health and well-being of each Community of Faith in the Region.

The United Church of Canada
Shining Waters Regional Council

Sample Report Template:

Report of the Listening Team for the listening exercise with ABC Community of Faith
By _____ and _____ dated _____

Background

Participation

Current Health

Strengths and Signs of Health

Challenges and Barriers to Health

Theme 1

Theme 2

Recommendations

Conclusion