

## PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

*I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.*  
(Isaiah 43:19)

I quoted this scripture from the prophet Isaiah as I began my final report to Toronto Conference from the Settlement and Pastoral Relations Committee. That seems like such a distant memory now. I have returned to these words of Isaiah as we transformed and the new Pastoral Relations Commission (PRC) of Shining Waters Regional Council (SWRC) came into being. In these still new days of SWRC, along with the added layer of COVID-19, all of us have had to “make a way in the wilderness” and a “river in the desert” attempting to align ourselves with what new things are before us.

The purpose of the PRC is to “provide support for ministry personnel throughout their ministry, including equipping, covenanting, pastoral relationships and retirement. ... We set policy and give direction. ... We are responsible for: recognizing a new pastoral relationship by entering into a covenantal relationship with it; living in a covenantal relationship with ministry personnel. We are responsible for licensing licensed lay worship leaders. We are responsible for co-operating with communities of faith in recruiting, choosing, calling, appointing, and covenanting with ministry personnel and communities of faith; ending calls, appointments, and covenants with ministry personnel and other staff; and appointing a Regional Council liaison officer to assist a community of faith in pastoral relations matters at designated times. The PRC offers support to retirees and celebrating retirement. We are also responsible for encouraging and supporting ministry personnel toward health, joy, and excellence in ministry practice; and assisting with informal conflict resolution processes. This responsibility is shared with the Community of Faith Commission.” (Terms of Reference, Pastoral Relations Commission)

The PRC meets monthly on Zoom and twice in the year we have had a full day face-to-face meeting. One of these days was shared with the Communities of Faith Commission. It was a time to discover what each of our commissions is responsible for, where we overlap and how we can be of support to one another. At each of our meetings we approve a list of calls, appointments and at times license those needing to administer the sacraments. We also receive the staff report on liaisons and pastoral charge supervisors. Some of the other highlights from our meetings have been:

- a. Conversations and support for the *Joy, Health and Excellence for Ministry Personnel* advisory group.
- b. Reviewing our mandate for the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) Committee
- c. Approving implementation points for the GS 49 Temporary Amendment Of Bylaws Re: Pastoral Relations in response to COVID-19. This was a temporary amendment to pastoral relations policies in *The Manual* to enable the governing body or equivalent of a community of faith to make urgent decisions on behalf of the community of faith.
- d. Supporting and offering a program for ministry personnel coming into a new Team Ministry.

I want to thank all the members of the Pastoral Relations Commission – Donna Bowman-Woodall (ordered); William Haughton (ordered); Barbara Hendren (lay); Liz Mackenzie (ordered); Beth Moore (lay); Robin Pilkey (lay); James Ravenscroft (ordered) Paul Stott (lay) and Bright Yun (ordered). I would also offer my thanks to everyone who has served as a liaison and pastoral charge supervisor in this year. Your support, service and care in assisting the ministry of SWRC has been most appreciated.

To Donna Rutz, our staff administrative support – thank you for all you do for the PRC - keeping us on track, making sure paper work is organized and for your constant support, especially in my role as chair. A very special thanks to Rev. Todd McDonald, and Dale Hildebrand, our Pastoral Relations Ministers, who offer constant wisdom, support, advice and care to the commission and myself. They have made our tasks easier to carry out. We appreciate and value the relationship we have with Todd, Dale and Donna.

The way ahead for our commission will be to maintain and respond to directions from SWRC and the General Council as we continue to support the varied ministries of our ministry personnel. We look forward to serving in these changing times.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Comar (ordered)  
Chair, Pastoral Relations Commission