

## PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free,  
there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

(Galatians 3:28)

The purpose of the Pastoral Relations Commission (PRC), as stated in the terms of reference, is as follows:

*The Pastoral Relations Commission will set policy and give direction within their mandate.*

*The Pastoral Relations Commission will provide support for ministry personnel throughout their ministry, including equipping, covenanting, pastoral relationships and retirement.*

In reality, this involves things such as: 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; appointing a regional council liaison to assist a community of faith in pastoral relations matters at designated times. 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 Communities of Faith Commission.

Currently, the Pastoral Relations Commission meets monthly on Zoom, although our June meeting was held in-person, and our October meeting was also an in-person meeting held with the Communities of Faith Commission. At each of our meetings we review a list of calls and appointments, and at times license those needing to administer the sacraments; we review requests for a change of pastoral relations; and we review recommendations from the Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) Committee for licensed lay worship leaders and respond to requests for Voluntary Associate Minister status. We also set and review policies which guide pastoral relations work in the region and receive the staff reports. Some of the other annual highlights from our meetings have been:

- a) the Marriage License Policy was reviewed
- b) the annual telephone allowance was reviewed
- c) it was agreed that financial support for gatherings of retirees could be provided from our budget
- d) a proposal for Clergy Peer Learning Groups was approved
- e) a new Flourish Advisory Group was approved
- f) a budget for the commission for the year 2023 was recommended to the regional council
- g) the purpose of the Pastoral Relations Commission was reviewed
- h) Jill Strapp, on behalf of Toronto United Church Council (TUCC), presented a report re: the Ministry Team Development and Orientation Program required for new ministry teams in long-term pastoral relationships
- i) Kellie McComb, Office of Vocations, presented & answered questions about the Supervised Ministry Education (SME) process

One piece of ongoing work for the commission is the work on the Equity Project received at our meeting in June, 2021. The Equity Task Group appointed to work with the results, brought forward a complete work plan in June, 2022, and the commission continues to work on the project. Here is what the commission accomplished since the last annual meeting of the regional council.

- An Equity Advocate responsibility description was created in consultation with the pastoral relations liaisons. The Equity Advocate, a member of the search team, seeks to ensure equity concerns are addressed during a search process.
- A template position description for a ministry personnel that is available to search teams was revised to encourage equity commitments.
- Pastoral Relations and Communities of Faith Commissions met to talk about applying an equity lens for the creation of Living Faith Stories.
- An enhanced equity training module for search teams was presented to pastoral relations liaisons for search team training purposes.

Thank you to everyone who has served as a pastoral relations liaison or pastoral charge supervisor during the past year. Your support, service and care in assisting the ministry of Shining Waters Regional Council has been most appreciated.

I want to thank the members of the Pastoral Relations Commission for all of their work throughout this year. The members of the commission are: Andrew Comar (ordered); William Haughton (ordered); Barbara Hendren (lay); Sung Ran Kim (ordered); Deirdre Lawrence (lay); Liz Mackenzie (ordered); Beth Moore (lay); Lawrence Nyarko (ordered); Robin Pilkey (lay); Paul Stott (lay); Donna Bowman-Woodall (ordered). Your willingness to give so freely of your time, expertise and diverse perspectives is greatly appreciated.

The ministry of the Pastoral Relations Commission and the work of the chair is supported by a faithful and dedicated staff team. I offer heartfelt thanks to Donna Rutz, our staff administrative support who keeps us on track, ensuring paperwork is organized, minutes are recorded, and details are attended to. Sincere thanks also to Rev. Todd McDonald, and Dale Hildebrand, our Pastoral Relations Ministers, whose wisdom, advice, and care has supported the commission beyond measure.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Bowman-Woodall (Rev.), Chair