

Regional Staffing Council Report Synod 2016

This year the Regional Staffing Council has been comprised of the following members representing the Presbyteries and WMS of our Synod:

(Voting Members)

Ann Paterson (Convener) (2014)	Edmonton-Lakeland
Rev. Jin Woo Kim (2014)	Central Alberta
Sandra Cameron Evans (2013)	Calgary-Macleod
Rev. Lisa Aide (2014) replaced by Rev. Jean Bryden (06/16)	Edmonton Lakeland
Lorna Price (2014)	Peace River
Marlene Montagne (2015)	WMS Synodical

(Members without Vote)

Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw	Director of Regional Ministries
Rev. Joanne Lee	Moderator of Synod
Richard Anderson	Synod Treasurer, ex officio

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The Regional Staff Council (RSC) met via three teleconference calls on March 12, 2016, August 24, 2016 and September 23, 2016. Regular contact was maintained with the Director of Regional Ministries (DRM) over the course of the year by phone, email and in person.

At these meetings the Rev. Dianne Ollerenshaw presented the RSC with a comprehensive list of her ministry / mission work following Synod in October 2015 to October, 2016 under the four categories of her responsibilities outlined in the Standing Orders (2.10.3). The RSC reviewed her ministry, and provided input where she might direct her energy for the rest of the year.

We include a summary of her ministry from October 2015 - October 2016. This is based on the key responsibilities as outlined in the Standing Orders.

Mission Strategizing

In May, concluded five years of work as Co-Interim Moderator of Calvin Hungarian Presbyterian Church, Calgary. While serving with this congregation, some of the focus would be similar to an “interim ministry.” There has been instruction on the code of conduct for elders and the exercise of pastoral care. Elders are sharing more at meetings and working collaboratively as a team with some change in organizational style. Session committees still need to grow into their mandates. There has been an improvement of congregation’s relationship with presbytery.

Supported Memorial Church, Rocky Mountain House, with monthly communion services during ministerial vacancy

Consulting with Mission and Justice committee of Knox, Calgary, on implementing TRC Calls to Actions

Challenging congregations to address TRC Calls to Action

Building relationships with leaders in Treaty 7, 6 and 8 when opportunities arise

Working with Calgary Interfaith Council on Indigenous concerns

Working with KAIROS Calgary and Prairies North Region
Organizing educational day at Synod 2017 on UNDRIP and repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery
Organized 2016 synod education day, "Understanding and Engaging the Canadian Religious and Cultural Landscape" with guest, Joel Theissen.
Organizing informal gatherings of clergy and sometimes all presbyters for lunch, book group, theological reflection to build friendship and support
Working with local teams with Dr. Stan Ott and Vital Churches Institute. Joining covenant groups of clergy between key sessions with Stan Ott. Coordinating needs of Stan Ott and ensuring materials prepared for gatherings he attends.
Working with YCC Campus Ministry Team - United/Presbyterian Ministry
Working as "General Presbyter" in St. Andrew's, Calgary

Leadership and Program Development

Facilitated workshops with Sessions and Boards of Managers
Retreat leader for Session of Knox, Lloydminster
Facilitated for Edmonton-Lakeland Presbytery workshop on Leading with Care and full day workshop on Study Guide, Body, Mind and Soul: Thinking together about human sexuality and sexual orientation in The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
Working with a team to organize Calgary-Macleod annual retreat
Consulting with clergy on improved communications, conflict management, behavioural covenants
Working with Planning Team of Mill Woods, Edmonton, in going forward with goals of mission and vision from their amalgamation plan
In Calgary-Macleod Presbytery I am often appointed the role of mentoring candidates in Education and Reception who need to review Canadian Presbyterian Church History
Preaching in all presbyteries

Mission Education

Planned Trip for Canada Youth International Guests to see southern Alberta and learn about ministry in this region and was able to have local congregations host meals and greet guests. Also some young people from Alberta were able to build friendships with guests.
Facilitated Blanket Exercise and worship resource, Enfolded in the Creator
Consulting with congregations providing resources and making suggestions how Sunday School may network locally partnering or supporting a project

Pastoral Care

Working with clergy in CM Presbytery to process their "Clergy Self Reviews."
I will be providing supervision/accompaniment for a minister on Sabbath Leave
Provide some pastoral care to clergy by meeting clergy for coffee, listening long distance, praying by phone and encouraging.
For remote ministers offer to preach when attending presbytery so they may have a Sunday not responsible for the service. Often take a minister for a meal and share in conversation when rural or remote
Appointed Interim Moderator of Faith Presbyterian Church, Fort McMurray, commencing May 8, 2016

- Sent pastoral letters by email to congregation and tried to connect families that lost homes
- Responded to emails from individuals and congregations requesting best way to financially support Faith Church or make donations
- Drove donations-in-kind from Calgary and Central Alberta to Fort McMurray
- Support to Presbytery of Edmonton-Lakeland by helping move belongings and car of Faith Church minister to Ontario
- Helped keep presbytery and national church informed of events
- Liaison to PWS&D and Synodical Support to Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB)
- Networking with regional ecumenical partners, organizations and agencies in RMWB, local clergy, and created itinerary for Guy Smaghe to visit Fort McMurray.
- Liaison to Presbyterian Record - Picked up Andrew Faiz, Senior Editor, from Edmonton and took him to Fort McMurray for one weekend. Introduced Andrew to members of Faith Church and we were able to provide some orientation to him

Message from the Director of Regional Ministries

In Jeremiah 29, the prophet paints an amazing picture of a people called to love God in the context of a culture that is not their own. Jerusalem has been sacked, its temple destroyed, and its leadership taken into exile in Babylon. The faithful have been lamenting: “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?” The Babylonian exile was a crisis of unprecedented proportion. The people must have wondered if God had abandoned them. The people were at a loss, broken and without hope.

The prophet Jeremiah faithfully proclaims the “Word of God” and his counsel is hard to take in. Those in exile are called to seek the welfare of the city and pray for it, for in its peace they will find their peace. These are shocking words for the remaining survivors who have been dragged off to Babylon. The prophet instructs them to make a complete turnaround, paradigm shift, and sea change. He tells them it is time to stop fighting the Babylonians. No more violence. No more defiance. He tells them to THRIVE - not simply survive. Jeremiah tells them they are no longer captives in exile; rather they are missionaries of Shalom. Could it be that God is challenging us to make an equally profound, radical shift in our self-perception not unlike the one demanded of Israel so long ago?

I think God is inviting us to embrace a new identity to be God’s agents of blessing, God’s missionaries of Shalom. We are being invited to provide a ministry of presence, to participate in public, faithful engagement in our neighbourhoods, to pray for all who dwell in our communities, befriending and connecting with the stranger. How might God be sending us out of our buildings to immerse and listen to the people of our city, so that we may know the stories, hopes, fears, laments, biases and values of the people living around us? Where do we see acts of common good already happening in our communities and where do we see gaps or needs not being addressed? Consider how we as individual disciples and congregations might become missionaries of Shalom!

As I travel throughout the Synod from Medicine Hat to Fort St. John, I see God's people seeking the shalom of the city or town where they live, praying for the community, and participating in faithful engagement.

In Edmonton, Westmount Presbyterian Church in the North Glenora neighbourhood, realized their church building and manse was aging and was not environmentally friendly. They began to dream for the future and decided to lease their land for non-profit development. They partnered with Internet Housing Society of Edmonton to build rental housing for large families and to include a space for their church building. They also partnered with Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers because they wanted refugees and new immigrants with large families to be able to make a home in Edmonton and be part of the community over the long term. The old structure has come down and the congregation awaits its new home as well as the opportunity of making strangers friends. This is an example of being missionaries of Shalom.

While leading a Session workshop at Centennial Church, Calgary, I learned that a group in the church has grown potatoes over the summer in raised beds out between the sanctuary wall and parking lot. I didn't think there was enough land to grow and harvest a crop. Last week members of the church dug up the potatoes and sent them to the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank. Everyone is waiting to hear how many pounds had been harvested. Their enthusiasm was infectious. "Seek the shalom of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its shalom you will find your shalom."

I think congregations are beginning to risk and look for ways to sow seeds of shalom. Churches are learning how they may become a community hub, providing spaces of peace for the greater community to use. Knox, Calgary, hosts a community kitchen for mothers to learn economic and nutritious ways to prepare meals. St. Andrew's and Varsity Acres in Calgary offer weekly fellowship for people living with dementia and respite time for family caregivers. Many of our churches provide spaces or meeting rooms for groups like Alcoholic Anonymous that are safe places for the greater community. St. James Church in Dawson Creek is embarking on a new venture making space for "Monkey See Monkey Do Preschool." St. Giles, Calgary, has a labyrinth accessible from Confederation Park and invites the community to walk a path of prayer.

The University of Calgary Campus Ministry hosts many weekly and monthly events with the purpose of creating "spiritual connection through open Christian Community." One program that reaches out to the "unchurched" campus community is The Drum, Dine and Discuss group. There are also learning circles, a peer partner ministry and contemplative worship for students seeking to grow in Christian formation and the faith.

Nine congregations in the Synod have partnered with Dr. Stan Ott of Leading Moments (previously Vital Churches Institute) for two years commencing April 2016. Over the summer Sessions have encouraged leaders, committees and group to pray for one another using a method called "Word-Share-Prayer" (Read-Reflect-Respond-Request). This format instructs groups to start each meeting using 7 minutes for individual study, 7 minutes to share one insight per person and 7 minutes to pray for one another. A different scripture text is used for each gathering. This

group of congregations has also been challenged to host a “Pizazz Initiative.” Knox, Red Deer, entered a float in the Westerner Days Fair & Exposition Parade and St. Paul’s, Eckville, hosted a picnic in the town playground with old fashioned games, dunk tank, free hot dogs, ice cream and lots of laughter. In the fall St. Paul’s is borrowing a farmer’s field to host a community/provincial obstacle course race that is family friendly. “Seek the shalom of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its shalom you will find your shalom.”

Sometimes seeking the shalom of the city involves prayerful and public engagement. In Calgary, Metro Alliance for the Common Good has been hosting a listening campaign to discern the needs in the city. In October they will hold a “discernment assembly” to hear about the different concerns identified in the city. Then they we decide to focus and work on a few issues. They are seeking the welfare of the city.

Presbyterian congregations are being challenged to look at the 94 Calls to Action released from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada last year. Resetting our relationships with Indigenous people will take time and commitment. The PCC is committed to working for justice in those areas of Canadian society where the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are woefully inadequate in our country: access to health care, education, clean water, housing, land, reasonably priced food, and safety for girls and women. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides a clear and positive framework for reconciliation and The Presbyterian Church in Canada commits to using it to enhance our journey of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous people in Canada.

After the wildfires in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, I have been meeting leaders in Fort McMurray who are seeking the welfare of that region. In the recovery and rebuilding stages many are coming together focused on community wellness and resiliency. PWS&D plans to partner with the Wood Buffalo Food Bank. Since June 1 through July 31, 91% of those who received hampers had never been to the food bank before.

One learning from the 2013 floods in southern Alberta is that after a disaster often there is an increased demand for counselling and support. PWS&D will be partnering with Borealis Counselling Services to support “One-on-one Barrier-free” counselling to residents facing financial constraints, “Wellness and Critical Incident” workshops, support groups, and extra staffing. Waypoints (previously Fort McMurray Family Crisis Society) is expecting to see a 30-40% increase in domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse in the region post the wildfire evacuation. This estimate is based on post-natural disaster research from around the world including examples in Alberta. The trauma of fleeing one’s home, losing one’s home and in some cases losing one’s pets in such a horrific way leads to both acute and long-term stress that results in a number of mental health and wellness challenges for community members. Waypoints is looking to increase its capacity to not only meet the expected increase in needs but to put in place preventative measures to reduce the impact of stress and therefore the negative outcomes that its research demonstrates.

PWS&D also plans to provide Transitional Housing Support through the Session of Faith Presbyterian Church in Fort McMurray. Some funds will be held in reserve until other needs

become apparent in the community. Working locally and ecumenically, we hope to host Compassion Fatigue Prevention and Resilience workshops to address such themes as: The Cost of Caring, Personal Assessment, Building Resilience and Creating a Personal Plan.

Jeremiah counselled those in exile to pray for the welfare of the city. We also are encouraged to lift up prayers of intercession for our communities; our people and leaders. May we also pray for one another that we may provide a faithful witness in our homes, workplaces, and daily life.

In Baptism we are joined to the body of Christ, the church. We are anointed with the Spirit and appointed to be a royal priesthood, serving Christ and one another in the world. Our baptism initiates a life of discipleship and commitment. May we accept the invitation to be missionaries of Shalom. May we rely on God's abundant grace as we seek the welfare of the city and pray on its behalf.

Respectfully submitted,
Dianne Ollerenshaw

In reviewing Dianne ministry in the past year, RSC continues to be appreciative, pleased, and grateful for Dianne's ministry particularly in light of her work and ministry to the people of Faith Church in Fort McMurray following the catastrophic fire there in May, 2016. We believe she continues to be a positive voice, presence, and witness for church throughout our Synod.

Our Recommendations:

The following Recommendation is a result of the changes that the Life and Mission Agency have made in funding Regional Staffing across Canada. The grants for Regional Staffing are now part of what is called *Regional Resource Grants*.

Rec. 1: That the Convener of the Regional Staffing Council on behalf of the Synod of Alberta and the Northwest transmit a request for a Regional Resource Grant of \$61,500 to the Life and Mission Agency for consideration to fund our Director or Regional Ministry and that all required supporting documents (an application form, narrative description, and budget for 2017) be included.

RSC also presents two budget recommendations for your approval and inclusion into the 2016 Budget of Synod.

Synod Staff Expense DRAFT budget							
		2015 budget	Total	2016 budget	YTD	2017 budget	
Book allowance		\$ 600.00	\$ 436.31	\$ 600.00	\$ 537.16	\$ 600.00	
Employee Benefits		\$ 10,846.00	\$ 11,009.00	\$ 12,187.00	\$ 10,269.22	\$ 12,225.37	
	CPP	\$ 2,425.00	\$ 2,480.00	\$ 2,550.00	\$ 2,544.30	\$ 2,544.30	
	EI	\$ 1,305.00	\$ 1,303.00	\$ 1,337.00	\$ 1,337.06	\$ 1,170.67	
	Pension	\$ 7,116.00	\$ 7,226.00	\$ 8,300.00	\$ 6,387.86	\$ 8,510.40	
Housing Allowance		\$ 18,600.00	\$ 18,600.00	\$ 18,600.00	\$ 13,950.00	\$ 18,600.00	
Medical/Dental Plan		\$ 4,200.00	\$ 4,224.00	\$ 4,400.00	\$ 4,400.00	\$ 4,620.00	
Stipend		\$ 49,650.00	\$ 49,650.00	\$ 50,444.00	\$ 43,586.70	\$ 51,150.00	COLA adjustment
Study Leave		\$ 1,200.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 1,200.00	
Travel		\$ 8,000.00	\$ 12,591.44	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 11,138.49	\$ 9,000.00	
Utilities		\$ 4,500.00	\$ 5,506.70	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 3,864.18	\$ 4,500.00	
Other		\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,439.44	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,498.15	\$ 2,000.00	
		\$ 100,596.00	\$ 103,546.89	\$ 102,931.00	\$ 89,318.90	\$ 103,895.37	
Life and Mission to contribute		\$ 61,493.00		\$ 61,493.00		\$ 61,493.00	
Synod to contribute		\$ 39,103.00		\$ 41,438.00		\$ 42,402.37	

Rec. 2: That the budget for Director of Regional Ministries for 2017 be \$103,895.37

Rec. 3 That the budget for the Regional Staffing Council for 2017 be set at \$1,000 and that this figure be forwarded to the Synod Treasurer.

I would like to thank the members of the RSC for the hard work, diligence, and wisdom that they have shown with the work of the RSC. As this is my first year as convener I have appreciated their support and flexibility. We are fortunate to have such a ministry in our Synod and especially one that is blessed with Dianne's commitment. Please continue to pray for her and continue to make wise use of the gifts, talents, and expertise that Dianne brings to this important ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Paterson, Convener