

REPORTS –PROGRAM STAFF

Erin Acland
Keeper of the Archives



At this point in 2020, I expect that Covid Fog is a well-known phenomenon, and I definitely experienced it while thinking about the last year, or rather trying and nearly failing to recall what work was like pre-Covid. As always, it was busy with enthusiastic researchers, the occasional meeting, and mountains of boxes of backlogged records to process. However, that work has been overshadowed by the last six months when I've been working at home, and away from the records.

While there is always lots to do and I had no trouble keeping busy, my normal work has been completely disrupted. It is only since mid-August that I have returned to the Archives for one day per week. Currently, I am focusing on my backlog of research requests (over 150 were received since mid-March), and feeling deeply grateful that I could work from home when necessary and now can return to my physical work place under stringent protocols.

I have been in physical proximity to our archives for a total of 5.5 days since mid-March, and I have cherished that time. There is nothing quite like having your normal day-to-day life turned on its head to make me appreciate what I have and grieve for what I'm missing.

Reference

In 2019, the Archives received 418 requests. I researched 274 requests received by phone or email, and 85 researchers visited in-person. As well, 59 record creators contacted the Archives for advice on how to manage their records, or how to transfer or gift their archival records to the Archives.

Accessions

In 2019, conferences, presbyteries, and congregations transferred twenty substantial accessions to the Archives. Including:

- All Native Circle Conference
- Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
- Northland Presbytery
- Cambrian Presbytery
- Winnipeg Presbytery
- Assiniboine Presbytery
- Rainbow Ministry

- Red Rock United Church
- Killarney United Church
- Hargrave United Church
- Douglas United Church
- Ochre River United Church
- Raymond Flett Memorial United Church
- Winnipegosis United Church
- Knox United Church (Fort Frances)
- Knox United Church (Emo)
- Guthrie Devlin United Church
- Pembina Parish United Church
- Silver Heights United Church

In addition, dozens of small but meaningful record collections were gifted to the Archives.

Grants

The Winnipeg Foundation has generously given a \$20,000 grant to the Archives to fund the archival processing of the records we hold from Teulon Residence.

University of Winnipeg

A draft Stewardship Agreement between the U of W and the United Church has been created and discussions continue about how the Archives can best be cared for indefinitely, but no decisions have been made at this point. While the Church will not give up ownership of its archival records, in future the work of maintaining, preserving, and providing access to the Archives may be under the purview of the U of W Archives.

General Council Task Groups

Since June 2019, I've served as the regional archivist representative on the Archives Consultation Task Group and the Records Ownership Task Group. After much research, discussion, and discernment, both Task Groups have created guidelines and policies about how best to maintain the denominational archives in the future as we live our new structure, and increasingly create records solely in digital environments.

*Respectfully submitted,
Erin Acland, Keeper of the Archives*



Julie Graham
Regional Minister: Justice and Communications

My process of getting to know the people of the Regional Council didn't go quite as planned, and the communications half of the job has taken priority over the "justice" part of the job, at least for a good part of 2020. I try to divide my time equally between Prairie to Pine, Living Skies, and Northern Spirit, with time set aside for tri-Region program initiatives, and for staff and national commitments. Unfortunately, this means that each Region gets the equivalent of only about one dedicated day per week, but I hope to learn how to best maximize this time.

In mid January I joined a three-Region team of staff, led by Jamie McKay, that focused on creating and posting the wide range of essential content to the three new Regional Council websites. The team included Cherry Abad, Bev Diebert, and Kathy Jackson, with help and support from all of the other staff. This took a lot of our collective time and energy through mid-March.

Five days after the sites successfully went live, the COVID shut down had begun. The next three months were focused on updates and tools for keeping the three Regions up to date, supported, and safe. As delegates know, all travel was cancelled, so getting to know the Region and its people moved online.

By June, a number of long-delayed program pieces were back on track, including an informal multi-Region intercultural "chai and coffee" focused on racism and Black Lives Matter; and an online learning and conversation workshop on non-binary gender language and its positive impact.

Each of these supported some key wider priorities, such as Affirming work and Intercultural ministry.

Support for **Affirming work**: I want to express my gratitude to the Equity and Diversity Committee for its strong support of the "Breaking the Binary" webinar named above; and for its positive and energizing approach to the Affirming process it is carrying on behalf of the Region. Making contact with all Affirming ministries and ministries in the Affirming process is one ongoing area of work.

Intercultural ministry and engagement: The Western Intercultural Ministries Network has moved its Calgary event for the West online and opened it to the entire church. Learning how to do this work online is now more important than ever, and this Network is offering leadership in innovative ways in difficult circumstances within the new structure. How we practice intercultural ministry on the ground has always been a challenge, and Black Lives Matter and Indigenous Lives Matter are a call to make.

Nominating Committee: this area of work is crucial and has never been simple. The 2019 restructuring has made it more difficult and complex, at least for now. Strategies we're discussing have included using the website to maximum effect; how to create invitations that respect different cultures and practices; offering good information on opportunities and the scope of the request; continuing to work on how interested people can show their interest and talk about their skills and background. We hope to have conversations between the three Regions.

Getting to know **Clusters** and supporting them, especially those that carry forward work such as right relations, Affirming and more, will be a priority through 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Graham, Regional Minister: Justice and Communications

Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils.



Judy Hare
Pastoral Relations Minister

The time since the Inaugural meeting of Prairie to Pine Regional Council in June, 2019 has presented both challenge and opportunity. There was a period when committees, commissions and staff were able to continue to sort out and work within their mandates and functions in the new structure. Communities of Faith and Ministry Personnel were able to sort out their needs and supports and attempt to determine who was doing what now in the new structure without presbyteries and with the new entity known as the Office of Vocation .

The work of the Pastoral Relations Minister includes **resourcing and supporting the work of several committees and commissions** within the new Regional Council structure: Committee on Community of Faith Support, Committee on Lay Ministry/Lay Leadership Support, Committee on Ministry Personnel Support, Pastoral Relations Commission with Pastoral Relations Liaisons. Each of them have a report in this workbook outlining their work.

Early in the new structure the plan had been for **Cherry Abad** to take over responsibilities for the administrative roles connected with the Pastoral Relations Commission such as receiving documents and drafting the agenda based on those, attending meetings and taking and formatting the minutes, allowing Elsie Douglas to focus on being the corresponding secretary and me as the Pastoral Relations Minister to focus on supporting Liaisons in their processes, responding to questions from Communities of Faith on pastoral relations matters, recruiting and supporting Pastoral Charge Supervisors, approving profiles for posting and completing the Record of Call/Appointment documents on Church Hub once final motions were made. The need for more of Cherry's time to support other aspects of the work of the Regional Council has meant that Cherry now provides support to the Pastoral Relations Commission by formatting minutes and sharing motions at intervals with the Regional Council Executive. Judy receives documents, sets the agenda and does follow up with documents on Church Hub. Elsie attends the meetings, takes the minutes and does follow up correspondence.

A report outlining the current Pastoral Relationships within Prairie to Pine Regional Council and the changes processed since the Inaugural Meeting in June, 2019 is included in this workbook. As of September, 2020 there are 173 non Indigenous Communities of Faith within 141 Pastoral Charges. Of those 5 Communities of Faith are in the process of disbanding or amalgamating; 25 pastoral charges are without paid accountable ministry personnel and are not in a profile/search process; another 11 pastoral charges are currently engaged in a profile/search process without any appointment while others are relying on one of 18 retired supply appointments. 61 Pastoral Charges rely on the support of Pastoral Charge Supervisors, three of those have ministry personnel who are candidates for ministry, five have ministry personnel from other denominations two of whom are in the Admissions process and two Pastoral Charges have ministry personnel on Long term Disability. We have had several new pastoral relationship begin since the COVID 19 period on March 15,2020 .Some have held Covenanting Services via ZOOM but 16 covenanting services have yet to be held and are being planned to take place somehow at some point hopefully this fall.

The twenty one **Indigenous Communities of Faith in the former Keewatin Presbytery and the Ministry Personnel** serving them are an important part of Prairie to Pine Regional Council. There were two Pastoral Charges who were engaged in pastoral relations processes this year as their ministry personnel prepared for transition in ministry status (Cross Lake with Samuel Ross ready for recognitions as a Designated Lay Minister and God's Lake with Elenor Thompson almost ready for Ordination). Thanks to Lorraine Kakegemic and Aileen Urquhart for their work with these communities. There were a few changes in the staff who were working most directly with the Indigenous Communities and providing some liaison information to the Pastoral Relations Minister and Commission of Prairie to Pine over the past year: first Cheryl Jourdain who was in the position of Community Capacity Development Coordinator (CCDC) moved into the role of Acting Executive Minister for Indigenous Ministries with the retirement of Maggie Dieter. Over the following months several people in different combinations carried out the work of CCDC working with the Keewatin Circle (Gloria Cook, Rick Hebert, Joe McGill and Charlene Burns). Gloria completed her work in early 2020 and Joe retired the end of July, 2020. The General Council welcomed Murray Pruden into the role of Executive Minister for Indigenous Ministries and Justice in July, 2020. We continue to await some clarification on matters related to dual membership.

There continues to be challenges with **navigating CHURCH HUB** by both Ministry Personnel and Communities of Faith especially Search Committees in places with limited or no access to high speed internet. Navigating the profile and search processes especially in the Indigenous Communities of Faith has only been possible using an alternative paper based system. I am so impressed by how proficient and comfortable ministry personnel and lay leaders have become with carrying out the mission, ministry and everyday tasks of the church using alternative means. Necessity has pushed us along into places it might have taken us longer to venture into were it not required.

The **Executive Minister**, Shannon McCarthy, went on **sabbatical** from December 1, 2019 through March 01, 2020 and the Pastoral Relations Minister in each of the Regional Councils that she has oversight responsibility for assumed the necessary responsibilities of that position in her absence. For me, that meant supporting the Executive of the Regional Council in their work especially working with the Treasurer and Financial Administrator in finalizing a Budget for 2020. In July and August the Pastoral Relations Minister for Northern Spirit was on holidays and a split **sabbatical** and I provided some coverage there along with my colleague from Living Skies.

I was SO grateful when **the websites** became functional in early March, 2020. It was a place for people to get information such as **processes, policies** and forms that are specific to the Prairie to Pine Region or things that they could not easily find on the General Council website. Thanks to Julie Graham, Jamie MacKay and Cherry Abad. I cannot imagine what it would have been like navigating these past six months without a website.

In March, our part of the world began its journey with COVID 19 and how the church exercised its mission and ministry changed significantly. As of mid-March most of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council staff began working from home. Poor quality internet and ZOOM access from my apartment meant that as soon as permitted I **returned to work by myself in the office** at 1622B St. Mary's Road.

We attempted to find ways to help leadership in the Communities of Faith and Ministry Personnel access information, strategize about how to do mission and ministry within the pandemic restrictions and support one another in this historic journey. Most **Tuesday afternoons between late March and the end of June opportunity was created for Ministry Personnel from Prairie to Pine Regional Council to gather together via ZOOM. After a break over the summer we have re-engaged that practise on every second Tuesday afternoon.** There were also occasional opportunities for lay leaders from Communities of Faith either as **a Tri-Regional Council group including Living Skies and Northern Spirit as well as Prairie to Pine or within our Region alone** to gather via ZOOM to share their questions and concerns during these unusual times. There will be some opportunity to these conversations again this fall starting on Tuesday, September 15, 2020.

Over the past year I have spent time connecting Ministry Personnel who are not in an active pastoral relationship and who want to continue to be open to exercise some of the functions of ministry into **"formal association relationships"** with Communities of Faith (The Manual (2019) section I.2.5.3). While some have done this initially we are still sorting out how to review this annually based on data received from the Office of Vocation Minister related to whether Ministry Personnel have completed their Annual Declarations related to Criminal Records Status and other

mandatory training refreshers (matters under the oversight of the Office of Vocation). All in good time.

As part of my **responsibilities within the wider United Church**, I and Jamie Bradshaw, Ministry Personnel at Strathclair and Shoal Lake have been part of **the Ministry Streams Task Group**. The Ministry Streams task group was established to deal with a number of proposals from GC43 (2018) connected to ministry streams and ministry needs of rural and marginalized communities of faith. The task group is mandated to consult widely with various groups of people within the church. ([click here](#) for the mandate, page 11 of the General Secretary's Accountability Report from GCE Sept 2019). Some of these proposals came from the former Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario and I am grateful to be able to participate work that will impact our Communities of Faith and how ministry is available to them.

In response to requests for ways to support communities of faith and ministry personnel in rural areas **A United Church Rural Ministry Network** has been established by Catherine Abbey, Ministry Personnel in Living Skies. UCRMN, have put together a one page webpage at UCRMN.ca

In response to calls to provide access to worship services from communities of faith without regular paid accountable worship leadership, a **national task group on technology** was established. **The Rural Connect** initiative uses a hub/satellite model (or a Host/Partner model) where a hub church hosts the technology needed to connect up to three satellite partner churches in a fully interactive service, where all the churches participate and contribute to the worship, They have purchased a number of small boxes that can be affordably rented by satellite churches that only require plugging in and turning on - no technical skills needed at all. A cellular hotspot ensures sufficient bandwidth no matter what the local internet may be. In addition, we are providing loans for congregations to become hub or host churches, with an easy and generous repayment schedule. Hubs can charge for their services and this provides a revenue stream for repayment and then income for the church in subsequent years. The initiation got a bit sidetracked this spring with COVID 19 but they are now back on track. This is the link to the project's website: www.ruralconnectucc.ca

Part of my responsibility as Pastoral Relations Minister is to **process requests for licensing for sacraments for Sacraments Elders or Candidates for Ordered Ministry or Designated Lay Ministry** after relevant educational requirements, motions and forms have been completed. In 2019-2020 Pastoral Year there were approximately 36 Sacraments Elders licensed within Prairie to Pine to administer the sacraments within the Community of Faith where their membership is held. This is fairly consistent with the number of requests thus far in 2020-2021. At least one complex situation was taken to the Regional Council Executive for a decision on licensing. Some licences for Candidates in appointments were also processed.

In 2020, COVID 19 has resulted in some **shifts in the way** things like meetings, workshops, interviews, Covenanting Services, farewell and retirement celebrations but we are getting them done.

Connections with some of my staff colleagues in the Tri-Region area and nationally has increased significantly during this COVID period of time. I am grateful that I have become for proficient at and comfortable with some technology and platforms. Thanks to all of the volunteer members of the various Communities of Faith – Profile /Search Committees, governing bodies , Ministry and Personnel Committees, the Regional Council Committees and Commissions who has been willing to adapt to phone connections and ZOOM meetings and find innovative ways to continue with the mission and ministry of the church and its bureaucracy in these unusual times.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Judy Hare, Pastoral Relations Minister,
Prairie to Pine Regional Council

Shannon McCarthy
Executive Minister



Well this has been an interesting year in the lives of our Regional Council! This was our first full year in operation with the structures that we created through the transition, and just when we thought things were running smoothly and we were getting in a groove...COVID 19 happened. So here we are in the fall of 2020 having online meetings that were originally supposed to happen in May and June, and life has changed dramatically in the last 6 months.

I was blessed to be able to take a Sabbatical in December, January and February to read, study and get in some needed Sabbath. That seems like a very long time ago now! I do want to thank all the staff who covered for me, especially the three Pastoral Relations Ministers: Judy Hare, Tracy Murton, and Earl Reaburn. They took on the difficult job of doing their own work as well as taking on some of mine and I truly appreciate it.

The Regional Council Executive has continued the work of establishing procedures and connections for the Regional Council, trying to vision and set the goals for the ongoing work of the Regional Council. They have tried to do this while also learning what it means to be intercultural and make decisions in a new way. We are also committed to working with all the councils of our denomination to work towards becoming an Anti-racist church. Thank you to the Executive for their commitment and faithfulness!

Much of the work of the Regional Council is still about establishing relationships with Communities of Faith, Incorporated Ministries, Camps as well as trying to enable the formation of clusters and networks. There are many demands for time, attention and financial assistance and unfortunately your Executive has had to make hard decisions about where to allocate staff time, financial resources and people resources. We are also committed to working with all the councils of our church to work towards becoming an Anti-racist church.

The transition from Conferences and Presbyteries to Regional Councils is still new, luckily one of the blessings of that transition is that we were in a better position when we were forced to work from home due to COVID 19, because all the staff are now using the same laptops and software programs we were able to adjust quickly. During this time I think our staff did an amazing job maintaining connection, providing support, calmly offering as much information as possible and thanks to our new websites we were able to communicate quickly! Special thanks to everyone who got the websites up and running just in time, especially Jamie Mckay, Julie Graham, Cherry Abad, Bev Diebert, and Kathy Jackson. It was also a benefit that many of our committees and commissions were already familiar with zoom and we were able to make decisions quickly to support Ministry Personnel and Communities of Faith in this difficult time.

I am always amazed at the ability of our church to come together during difficult times, I am confident that regardless of the challenges that the year ahead will bring the people of our Regional Council will meet them head on with prayerfulness, determination and faithfulness.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils.

