

**Prairie to Pine Executive Minutes
February 6, 2024 via Zoom**

EXECUTIVE PRESENT	Erica Wittevrongel (Chair), Pat Bird (Past chair), Jennifer Pakula, Ken Delisle, Lynne Sanderson, Meghan Chorney, Craig Miller, Tricia Gerhard A quorum was present.
REGRETS	None
CORRESPONDING MEMBERS PRESENT	Dawn, Joey Dearborn, George, Christopher Davis
STAFF PRESENT	Shannon McCarthy (Executive Minister); Julie Graham (Justice & Communications Minister); Heather Dootoff (Finance Administrator), Judy Hare (Pastoral Relations Minister);
CALL TO ORDER	Erica called the meeting to order at 6:01. We checked in and Lynne Sanderson led us in reflection & prayer.
APPROVAL OF AGENDA	We reviewed the agenda. It was approved as amended.
APPROVAL OF MINUTES 018-2023/2024	It was agreed by consensus: That Prairie to Pine Executive approve the minutes of December 5, 2023 as distributed.
BUSINESS ARISING Archives	Erin is still working with Westworth to discuss what the release will look like.
CORRESPONDENCE	NA
FINANCE	Heather reported. In November it was projected that we would have a \$30,000 deficit. Right now we are sitting at almost a \$10,000 deficit. We received two sums of money from CDI and Winnipeg Foundation that was almost \$30,000 so that changed the picture significantly.
COMMITTEE REPORTS	
Co-chairs	Pat Bird attended the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service. It was a wonderful turnout.

Erika and Jennifer met with Jordan Cantwell to brainstorm what a Town Hall meeting regarding proposal 2 would look like. That led to a meeting with staff to discuss the goal and next steps to take.

**Community of Faith
Support**

Pat Bird reported.
The committee continues to work on the second grouping of self-assessments. Hopefully by the February meeting they should be done.
Preparing to help with phoning to connect with folks regarding the remit.

Three motions for disbandment:

Whereas **Ashern United Church** has ceased to be an active community of faith, have dispersed their assets, archived their records, transferred memberships as per Regional Council expectations, have plans in place for completing final CRA and UCC statistical reports, and now request to be disbanded as a United Church Community of Faith;

Therefore, it is proposed that Prairie to Pine Regional Council disband Ashern United Church Community of Faith effective December 31, 2023

019-2023/2024

It was agreed by consensus:

That Prairie to Pine Executive disband Ashern United Church Community of Faith effective December 31, 2023.

Whereas **St. Andrew's United Church** in Elm Creek part of the Crossroads Pastoral Charge has ceased to be an active community of faith, have dispersed their assets, archived their records, transferred memberships as per Regional Council expectations, have plans in place for completing final CRA and UCC statistical reports, and now request to be disbanded as a United Church Community of Faith;

Therefore, it is proposed that Prairie to Pine Regional Council disband St. Andrew's United Church, Elm Creek Community of Faith effective December 31, 2023

020-2023/2024

It was agreed by consensus:

That Prairie to Pine Executive disband St. Andrew's United Church, Elm Creek effective December 31, 2023.

Whereas **Knox United Church, Minitonas part of Hillsvie Pastoral Charge** has ceased to be an active community of faith, have dispersed their assets, made plans to archive their records, transferred memberships as per Regional Council expectations, have plans in place for completing final CRA and UCC statistical reports and now request to be disbanded as a United Church Community of Faith;

Therefore, it is proposed that Prairie to Pine Regional Council disband Knox United Church, Minitonas effective December 31, 2023

021-2023/2024	It was agreed by consensus: That Prairie to Pine Executive disband Knox United Church, Minitonas effective December 31, 2023.
Equity and Diversity	Do not have a chair currently and working on onboarding. Julie will mention some of this work in her report later in the meeting.
YAAAY	George reported. January 14 they had a meeting and discussed a lot of things. Zebu is coming up February 17-19 at Killarney United. The theme is Global warming of hearts, a look at climate justice. Rendezvous will be held July 3-6 at Rock University, St. Catharines Ontario. The theme is audacious. Looking at transportation options for that event. Looking for new, younger members for the committee so if we know of anybody, send them to YAAAY.
Property	NA
Incorporated Ministries	NA
Nominations	Joey reported. Dawn has joined us at our meeting today as she is considering serving the role of Co-Chair on the Executive. Thank you Dawn for your consideration. Doug Neufeld from Brandon has agreed to serve as Chair Elect. The next big piece of business to deal with is to elect General Council Commissioners. Later this month there will be a Nominations Open House on zoom.
Lay Leadership Support	Don Chau was not able to join us. Judy has included some comments in her report later in the meeting.
Ministry Personnel Support	Christopher reported. A lot of time has been spent planning a few upcoming events: pensioners gathering, retiree celebration and active ministers gathering. In the past the retiree banquet would happen alongside the annual meeting. However, since we are not having an in person annual meeting this year, the question is, how do we go about planning this. The idea of tacking it on to the Active Ministers gathering on May 15 might be our best option.
022-2023/2024	It was agreed by consensus: That Prairie to Pine Executive approve the combination of the Active Ministries and the Retiree Events on May 15, 2024.

A question for Heather is do we have a budget to help subsidize the cost of the meal etc. They would still buy a meal ticket, but it would be nice to help reduce the cost. The event will happen on May 15 at Crestview.

Shannon has volunteered Chantal Winslow to help with planning of local arrangements.

Joey and nominations will need to help discern who would be invited.

Other

STAFF REPORTS

Executive Minister

Shannon would like to thank the Executive for the generosity and support as she dealt with the passing of her mom. The flowers and all the cards and messages were greatly appreciated.

Working on catching up and getting back into the swing of things.

Shannon spent some time in Yellowknife and had the opportunity to preach.

A conversation with Ken Thomas from the property commission and Eric Matheson from General Council regarding Augustine Center has been taking place. Augustine Center is the incorporated body that oversees Augustine Center and they are connected to August United Church. They are in a financial pinch. They are in need of a significant amount of money to help them pay their bank loans etc. They are in discussion with General Council about that. However, one of the caveats of this arrangement might be that the regional council becomes the holder of the property.

Shannon is working with Kindred Works to figure out the details of a trust to hold the property. A process to do this will be forthcoming.

The building was formerly Augustine United Church. They have added business floors, and a provincially funded day care to the building. They formed an incorporated body to manage the rental and the use of space etc. There have been delays due to government turn over etc. which has delayed funding. So they are in a situation right now where they need help making those mortgage payments. Rather than losing the building, they are asking for help from General Council.

Pastoral Relations Minister

Report of the Pastoral Relations Minister to February, 2024 meeting of the Executive of Prairie to Pine Regional Council

Since the last meeting of the Executive in December I have experienced both the lull of an almost- two- week break from the office over the holidays and the significant volume of work when starting back up after being away from emails and phone calls.

Much of the work has been centered around the Committees and Commissions that I work with:

The Pastoral Relations Commission took a break from meeting in January, 2024 as there were no time sensitive matters requiring action. I and some Liaisons continue to have and facilitate conversations with several Communities of Faith and Pastoral Charges **exploring collaborative ministry** , at various stages of putting collaborative agreements in place and finding Ministry Personnel for them. We have a few locations in the early stages of exploring or **testing out ecumenical arrangements** in consideration of putting an Ecumenical Shared Ministry agreements in place at some point in the future . We are waiting on the arrival of the new Anglican Bishop of Brandon. We have another Collaborative Ministry in the process of appointing an Admissions Minister who will require **some support navigating the Immigration processes**. I was involved in facilitating a Saturday training **workshop for Search Committees** on January 13, 2024. I also participated in an updated **informational session on the Admissions Matching Project** on February 04, 2024 as did some people from one of the Search Teams within our Regional Council .

The **Committee on Lay Ministry and Lay Leadership Support** met on January 24,2024. Among other things the Committee is planning for **a couple of initial licensing interviews for people completing their LLWL training** . The Committee also had an initial conversation about **a Policy on lay-led communities of faith with and without Congregational Designated Ministers**. That Policy will ultimately come to the Executive for consideration after the Pastoral Relations Commission and others have input . Three members of that Committee and I participated in the facilitation of a **Sacraments Elders Training** on Saturday, January 20, 2024 with ten participants.

The **Committee on Community of Faith Support** held its monthly meeting on January , 2024. Along with receiving, reading and responding to the **2023 Self-assessment reports** from Communities of Faith, they agree to **assist with contacting the non-Indigenous Communities of Faith/Pastoral Charges that we had no information about their plans for voting on the Remit**. There were between 10-20 calls to be made. A large part of their **work continues to be with Communities of Faith /Pastoral Charges who are completing processes and marking the occasions of amalgamations and disbanding**. They will be bringing motions related to the disbanding of three Communities of Faith to this meeting. This work requires coordination with the Property Commission and sometimes, Pastoral Relations Commission and always with the Canada Revenue Agency .

The Committee on Ministry Personnel Support met on February 01, 2024. They discussed plans , a speaker and a date for **a face to face gathering of active ministers** (May 15, 2024)and **a separate gathering for Ministry Personnel known as**

pensioners on June 10, 2024. I did approach the subject of **how the retirees might be celebrated in 2024** given that Prairie to Pine Regional Council will not be holding a face to face meeting and after strategizing about some options they are bringing some suggestions forward for your consideration of the Executive at this meeting or some point soon. There may be 2-3 retirees. The CMPS also **supported an initial ZOOM gathering of the intercultural ministers within Prairie to Pine Regional Council** to talk about their hopes for connection with one another.

It is likely that there will be at least **one Designated Lay Minister requesting testamur**. This process involves the submission of documents and an interview. We should know by the end of March whether we will be holding a Celebration of Ministry Service before the summer.

I have had a couple of conversations with **Jordan Cantwell, the Growth Animator** working with our Regional Council with plans for her to connect in in a couple of ways in the coming months.

In December I facilitated the **Cultural and Diversity Orientation session for MacGregor and Trinity (Portage) United Churches** and was able to be present at the airport to welcome Rev. Elijah Mwandila and his family (Sarah, Elijah, Christopher and Benjamin) on December 21, 2024 .I was also able to have an initial ZOOM conversation with Elijah and those supporting him and the two pastoral charges.

I have spent some time **navigating our UCC systems and those of our insurers** on behalf of Pastoral Charge Ministry & Personnel Committees and treasurers with three Ministry Personnel on or returning from Restorative Care Plan and /or Longterm Disability .

I have informed the Executive Minister that I will not be taking a sabbatical in this cycle. I have sufficient time in my work hours to complete the project most needing attention in this region (CDMs and ministry options for small communities of faith).

Respectfully submitted, Reverend Judith Hare, Pastoral Relations Minister

Justice & Communications

An update on the search the landfill campaign that went out in the last newsletter.

The Equity and Diversity committee now has 6 or 7 people. The committee is finding its way forward. They hosted a PIE day preparation event last week. There was 25 people who attended.

Had a meeting today to discuss some urgent pastoral care needs of gender diverse people and their loved ones and teachers that are impacted.

Tricia Gerhard will be one of 3 speakers at a national PIE day event on March 15.

The fossil fuels divestment proposal that was passed at the annual meeting is being worked on. There is a very active committee. Linda Trono is handling all of the edits

and getting materials ready to go out to the different financial institutions. They are planning a public event as well.

**OTHER
Remit**

Thank you to Judy and the Community of Faith Support Committee for their work on the phone campaign that was just launched. We have identified the priority pastoral charges to phone.

We are hoping to see that there is a big jump in numbers when we get the next figures on Monday.

Last week we had another discussion session with Marie Pruden and Gloria Cook along with Shannon. It was a really rich discussion.

Proposal 2

In December Erica met with Jennifer and Jordan Cantwell. We had decided that we wanted to brainstorm alternatives to a yearly in person annual meeting as that is not financially or resource feasible. This discussion led to a further discussion with staff members. The goal was to discern the purpose of a town hall.

One of the discussions was around whether we needed to vote down the proposal. If it was still on the table, is that leading people to think that it could still happen.

It was also pointed out that we don't yet have any information about our online annual meeting gathering for 2024 and that it would be helpful to get that information out before we had a Town Hall meeting.

It might also be wise to share with people all of the in person events that ARE happening this year. They may not realize that there will still be an active ministries gathering, and an even for retirees etc.

It is also important to clearly communicate what our struggles are with making that happen: money, staff resources, time, etc.

We have three avenues:

1. Vote down proposal
2. Vote down proposal and have something to replace it
3. Do nothing

After some discussion it was decided that we want to vote down the proposal and then take steps to communicate that it has been voted down. Then we want to say "but look at all this other great stuff".

It was agreed by consensus:

That Prairie to Pine Executive take no action in regards to proposal 2.

Erica will send her drafted letter to Julie and work on getting something out to communicate our decision. Julie will get a letter drafted that includes dates for other events like the retiree gathering etc.

**Online Annual
Gathering in 2024**

We need to have a meeting this year in order to elect our commissioners. At a meeting with staff that happened not too long ago, it was discussed that maybe September or October would be good.

Shannon is still waiting to get the deadline for electing commissioners but best guess is October/November 2024.

Do we want to do two sessions of 2.5 hour max or take a Saturday to do it all at once?

October 3 and October 10 were suggested. Others felt like a Friday and Saturday session might be better.

**Response to Alberta
re: Trans Youth**

M has asked the Executive to consider putting forward a statement in response to what is going on in Alberta regarding trans rights.

There will be a letter coming from Affirm United and Affirming Connections asking each regional council to do specific things.

Our region could have been in a very similar situation if the conservatives had been voted in.

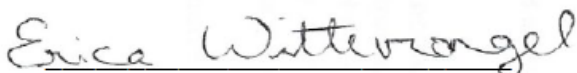
Julie will work with Equity and Diversity, alongside Erica and M to get a letter drafted.

YAAY will also ask if any of their members want to be a part of the conversation.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting will be March 5, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT


Erica Wittevrongel, Chair


Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

