

Office of Vocation Report
Northern Spirit, Living Skies and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils
Rev Laura Fohse, Vocational Minister

Prairie Candidacy Board

The Prairie Candidacy Board has been hard at work supporting 27 individuals on their journey through the Candidacy Pathway. We have an amazing and diverse board consisting of: Chair Rob Smith; Vice-Chair Doreen Hewitson, Aurora Espenant, Chewe Mulenga, Mary Annan, Mokwadi Basele, Salesi Takau, Shirley Goodrich, SunDo Hyun, Wayne Youngward, Hugh MacGregor, Keith Hall, and Rick Burton.

Of the 27 engaged with the Candidacy Pathway: 5 are from Prairie to Pine, 8 from Living Skies, 9 from Northern Spirit and 5 are from other regions. We have 1 in the Designated Lay Ministry stream, 6 in the Diaconal stream, and 20 in the Ordained stream. We have 5 candidates in Supervised Ministry Education (SME). 4 candidates are completing the pathway in 2023, 3 will be ordained in Living Skies Regional and 1 will be ordained in Northern Spirit Regional Council.

The Prairie Candidacy Board has engaged in equity, diversity and anti-oppression training as mandated for all General Council committee members. They are committed to take into account a diversity of realities and experience among interviewees. These include cultural, language, physical, visual, auditory, and neurodivergent considerations. They will continue to learn, adapting and adjusting our practices in the process.

Admissions Committee

(below are excerpts from the Office of Vocation Accountability Report prepared by the Rev. Norm Seli, chair of the Board of Vocation, and the Rev. Marlene Britton, Director of Policy and Programs for Ministry Personnel)

The number of ministers in the Admission process reached 200 people in 2022. This led to a shortage of accompaniers meaning that ministers expressing interest in admission were told there were dozens of ministers ahead of them waiting to speak with someone about applying for the Admission process. For those who reached the entrance or final interview stage, there was a queue of approximately three months before an interview slot was available. Most significantly, the Admission Board noted an alarming reality: when it came time to seek an admission appointment, the process was not functioning equitably for racialized ministers. Consequently, we entered 2023 with the Admission process paused. Throughout 2023, the focus of admission work has been on addressing these bottlenecks and inequities.

As of December, 2023 there were 126 ministers in the admissions process – 53 of which were seeking appointments. There were 15 ministers admitted in 2023.

Below is a list of other committees of the Office of Vocation and a brief description of what they do. Information taken from [Office of Vocation: Structure and Responsibilities May 2023](#):

Board of Vocation is the elected member body accountable for the work of the Office of Vocation to the General Council.

Standards for Accreditation Committee implements the policies set by the General Council by recommending standards to the Board of Vocation. These standards are to contribute to the effectiveness of ministry personnel in their leadership in communities of faith and beyond, responding to God's call.

Credentialing Committee responds to applications from ministry personnel for intentional interim ministry, educational supervisors, readmission, ministry partners, military chaplains and other chaplains as required.

Response Committee is responsible for receiving and addressing concerns and determining the most appropriate process or committee to address eligible concerns.

Remedial Committee is responsible for ensuring compliance by ministry personnel; assessing and deciding whether to accept an investigator's findings in relation to allegations of misconduct; assessing and deciding whether to accept a reviewer's report findings with respect to the effectiveness of a ministry personnel; determining the appropriate disposition of substantiated concerns.

My Highlights

As Vocational Minister I am provided with many opportunities to connect with ministry personnel and candidates for ministry. These interactions are a highlight for me. Whether I'm sharing resources with someone seeking information on things like retirement and sabbatical or listening to someone share about struggles in their pastoral relationship, I feel immense gratitude for the commitment, compassion, and faithfulness of our ministers. Theirs is not an easy vocation and I appreciate any opportunity to support them along the way (even if its just to problem solve a ChurchHub fail).

I am responsible for facilitating many of the mandatory boundaries trainings. I'm aware this isn't everyone's favourite learning opportunity but I appreciate those who show up, engage, and share their experience, strength and wisdom with each other. We are working at updating the trainings to ensure they are relevant and interesting to the participants.

In 2023 I began offering monthly Zoom gatherings to ministry candidates. Some months we are joined by a guest with some expertise and other months we just show up and check in with each other. This is an opportunity for them to share their celebrations and frustrations on the Candidacy Pathway with each other and offer encouragement.

I most frequently encounter God through interactions. Connecting with others grounds me and reminds me by whom and to what I have been called.