

**REPORT from the Committee on Community of Faith Support (CCFS)
to the Prairie to Pine Regional Council, August 22, 2024**

This Committee is tasked

“to provide oversight and support to communities of faith, especially pastoral charges in their day to day mission and ministry and guidance with matters of transition such as structural changes, amalgamation, realignment and closure.

This committee ...[makes] recommendations on matters requiring decisions to these bodies. In the former structure, much of the work of this committee was done by Pastoral Oversight Committees in Presbyteries.” (www.prairietopinerc.ca/governance)

The CCFS meets monthly by Zoom and currently has five members and one staff person. Each Pastoral Charge is assigned to a member who attempts to make contact regularly (when there is current contact information). We are to be a supportive presence, provide resources or pointing you to where you can find them. We stay abreast of how Pastoral Charges are faring in their work, and in times of transition.

This committee, beginning in 2019, is responsible for creating the template for the *Covenant of Mutual Commitment, Accountability and Support*, which is a required relationship of every community of faith and Regional Council in the United Church of Canada, according to the *Basis of Union* (Section III) and our By-laws (*The Manual* B.1.1.3). We are very pleased to announce that the work of approving those Covenants, for non-Indigenous communities within our Regional Council, has been successfully completed!

The next block of work has been creating a template for the Self-assessment process. This process is mandated by our By-laws (B.2.1). This is a written document which is very similar to the work of former Oversight visits. As such our Regional Council has determined that these Self-assessments should be completed on a similar 3-year cycle; we are entering our third year of that cycle this Fall. These Self-assessments provide an opportunity to not only to assess the practical requirements of being part of the United Church of Canada but also to reflect on the joys and challenges of being a congregation within this large denominational church to which we belong.

The document template for Self-assessments is an evolving tool. It is reviewed and changed annually based on feedback from communities of faith who have completed them. We want this to be an opportunity for honest self-assessment not an onerous task, particularly when communities of faith and Pastoral Charges are involved in multiple visioning and governance processes. As a committee we read and respond to 33 Self-assessments per year.

In addition to this foundational governance work, the CCFS is here to support Pastoral Charges as they consider their future direction. This involvement is done to different degrees, based on several factors. It includes providing or directing towards resources to assist in creating of Collaborative Ministries, amalgamations and realignment within and between Pastoral Charges, co-writing Ecumenical Shared Ministry agreements, and the process of disbanding. We recognize that this work takes time and some of the detailed aspects can feel frustrating. We keep in touch

with and receive updates on an average of 21 communities of faith and/or Pastoral Charges each month.

Since Sept 2023 we have been involved with 47 congregations. Of these 5 were officially disbanded*, there were two amalgamations,** and there was one new Ecumenical Shared Ministry (Souris) agreement completed.

For those places in our Regional Council, among the non-Indigenous Churches, without regularly Called/Appointed ministry personnel, we read the annual Report of the Pastoral Charge Supervisor. In the Fall of 2023, we received 38 reports and (at the time of writing) we have received 13 reports for the 2023-24 Pastoral year. While there are some reports still to come, the number of reports is lower in part due to amalgamations, closures/disbanding or the creation of Collaborative Ministry agreements.

We also are mandated with the oversight work of ensuring Pastoral Charges submit their Annual Reports to the Regional Council office, complete the United Church Statistical Forms, have registered votes on any General Council Remits and are up-to-date with the payment of denominational assessments.

We are very grateful to *Heather Lea* for her ongoing support of the work of this committee with specific pastoral charges, despite formally stepping away from the CCFS in 2023 after four intensive years of work. We are grateful to *Cheryl McKitrick* who has served diligently since 2020 working around some health and personal challenges. Deep thanks to *Pat Bird* for Chairing the Committee and keeping the “current lists” of our involvement straight. We are also very grateful, beyond what words can say, to *Cheri Abad* for the administrative support she provides with grace and seeming ease as she does the “paper juggling” keeping us on track. For her administrative skills, attention to detail, deep knowledge of the Church processes, hands-on shepherding and sense of humour through it all, we are deeply grateful to *Judy Hare*, our Regional Council Staff person, beyond what words can say.

Submitted by

Committee for Community of Faith Support: Pat Bird (Chairperson), Irene Chabluk, Silas Lee, Bill Miller, Heather Sandilands (Secretary)

* Alexander UC, St. Andrew’s UC (Elm Creek), Korean United (Wpg), Ashern COF (SW Interlake PC); and Knox UC (Minitonas). There are several others in process of doing the tasks required for disbanding.

**Gilbert Plains and Grandview were amalgamated into Grand Plains Pastoral Charge; Emerson UC and Dominion City amalgamated to form Valley Pastoral Charge