

Office of Vocation Report

To the Prairie to Pine, Living Skies, and Northern Spirit Regional Councils – 2024

As I reflect on the past year, I am once again filled with deep gratitude for the faithful ministry and generous spirit of the people in these three regional councils. It continues to be a privilege to serve as Vocational Minister alongside you, supporting ministry personnel and those discerning a call to ministry.

Candidacy Pathway

The Prairie Candidacy Board has had another full and faithful year, offering wise and compassionate accompaniment to individuals on the Candidacy Pathway. In 2024, we supported **27 people** (8 from Northern Spirit, 8 from Living Skies, 3 from Prairie to Pine, and 8 from other regions), with representation across all ministry streams: 19 in the Ordained stream, 7 in the Diaconal stream, and 1 in the Designated Lay Ministry stream. Six candidates were engaged in **Supervised Ministry Education**.

The board conducted **26 interviews** over the year, covering all stages of the pathway—from Promise through to Readiness for Ordination. Four candidates completed the pathway in 2024, and we celebrated their ordinations in Living Skies and Northern Spirit.

A particular trend this year has been the number of applicants from outside of Canada or from other denominations—people with theological degrees and years of ministry experience now seeking to serve within The United Church of Canada. This brings both gifts and challenges to our process and calls us to be flexible, thoughtful, and open-hearted in our discernment.

Candidacy Board Members

The work of the Prairie Candidacy Board is made possible by a remarkable group of volunteers. Please join me in thanking the following members for their time, wisdom, and commitment:

- **Northern Spirit:** Wayne Youngward, Kimberly Roy, Mary Annan, Hugh MacGregor, Mkwadi Basele
- **Living Skies:** Rick Burton, Shirley Goodrich, SunDo Hyun, Doreen Hewitson, Aurora Espenant, Keith Hall
- **Prairie to Pine:** Tammy Bleue, Chewe Mulenga, Rob Smith (Chair)

A special thank you to **Shirley Goodrich** and **Mkwadi Basele**, whose terms conclude this year. Your faithful service has helped shape the future of ministry in this church. We look forward to welcoming new board members following the General Council meeting in August.

Ongoing Connections & Support

I continue to host **monthly Zoom gatherings** for candidates, providing a space for connection, questions, and mutual support. These gatherings are sometimes themed, sometimes just a check-in—but always an important reminder that we are not alone on this journey.

In addition, this year I began offering a **monthly online communion gathering for ministry personnel** across the three regions. This has been a beautiful and simple space for prayer, community, and sacred pause—a chance to reconnect with Spirit and with each other.

Of course, much of my time continues to be spent responding to questions about retirement, sabbatical, annual declarations, ChurchHub issues, and all the small (and sometimes big!) things that ministry personnel juggle behind the scenes. Whether it's offering resources or just listening, I am continually inspired by the resilience and heart of those in ministry.

Boundaries Training

I, along with my colleagues, facilitate the **mandatory boundaries trainings** for ministry personnel across The UCC. While these aren't always people's favourite events, I've been encouraged by the thoughtful participation and shared wisdom of those who attend. We are working to update these sessions to ensure they remain meaningful and relevant.

ReGenerate Leadership Program

I am also very involved, as the **Activity Lead**, for the **ReGenerate Leadership Program**, one of Moderator Carmen Lansdowne's key initiatives. This national program is designed to cultivate imaginative, courageous leadership for the church we are becoming—rooted in spiritual practice, relational connection, and collaborative learning. ReGenerate brings together emerging and established leaders to reflect, grow, and reimagine ministry in a changing world. It's been a joy to help shape and lead this work, and I'm excited about the transformation it's already sparking in participants and communities of faith across the country.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I remain committed to walking with you all in this sacred work—supporting those in ministry, nurturing the next generation of leaders, and weaving connections across our vast geography. It is a joy and honour to serve in this role.

With deep gratitude,

Rev. Laura Fohse

Vocational Minister for Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils