

Northern Spirit Regional Council Property Commission

Report to the Council June 2020

“The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple,
the church is not a resting place; The Church is a people.”

-- Donald S. Marsh & Richard K. Avery



The Property Commission (PC) is a group of people who are helping other groups of people - communities of faith, when their buildings no longer fit their needs. Or when they wish to amalgamate with another congregation that also has a good functioning building. Also, sadly, when a community of faith is no longer “a people” the building has to be sold and/or transferred to a purpose other than a place of worship.

All of the above could be a time of celebration but it is also a time of stress. The Property Commission is grateful that The Regional Council Commission established policy that has enabled it to carry out its mandate. From time to time the PC will suggest changes but the Policy is mandated by the Regional Council.

In the past year the Property Commission has taken action to approve the sale of Knox United in Isley due to closure, Westlock United and Swan Hills (not yet sold) due to down-sizing and Gibbons (not yet sold) due to amalgamation. The PC is in touch with the Drayton Valley United Church Trustees as they close the church and transfer it to new owners (an offer is expected for use by a community organization). Bissell Centre is assessing the viability of acquiring the Beverly United Church building to expand its mission in Edmonton.

These latter transfers are good news stories that represent a continuation of the legacy of the mission and service of the people of faith who built the churches. When properties are sold, this legacy is honoured by contributing a portion of the revenue to wider church initiatives, in particular, calls to the church to support Indigenous ministries according to a formula established by the Regional Council Commission.

Even with a policy with which to work, the Property Commission has been finding its way sometimes through trial and error. Former property conveners of the presbyteries bring their expertise to the issues before us. Earl Reaburn and the Communities of Faith Support Committee have also provided advice. I am grateful for the work and encouragement of Erin White, corresponding secretary and organizer of our files, Bob Miller, recording secretary, Jim Beliveau, Greg Parker, Susan Waldie; and our staff support Executive Minister Shannon McCarthy.

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Dawson, Chairperson