

Northern Spirit Regional Council
Report from the Executive Chairperson
April 24, 2021

Greetings one and all in the name of the Risen Christ!

As I have just finished a full year (of what was theoretically a one-year term) as the Chairperson of the Northern Spirit Regional Council (NSRC) Executive, I am pleased to offer you this brief report. For more detail of what your Executive has been doing month by month I encourage you to look back at the monthly newsletters that come out after each meeting. We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month and I strive to have the newsletter to the Kathy at the Regional Council Office for placing on the website within a week of each meeting.

Even when we are not in the middle of a pandemic most of our Executive meetings happen via ZOOM to make the best use of our time and to avoid travel costs. This year, of course, ALL our meetings have been held in virtual space. I find this works well for most of our routine business but we have a need to have discussions about a vision for NSRC and how we see ourselves living out our ministry that may happen easier when we are all in the same room. Some day we hope to meet in person again for these longer discussions.

Each month when the Executive meets, Earl Reaburn joins us and updates us on what the committees he resources are doing. This includes the Pastoral Relations Commission, the Ministry Personnel Support Committee, the Lay Leadership Support Committee and the Communities of Faith Support Committee. Out of these updates have come some policy questions and also a push for us to talk about where we see NSRC being in 5 years time. Thank you to Earl for all you do, and thank you to those Committees.

Also at our meetings we hear from our Executive Minister, Shannon McCarthy. Shannon shares what is happening in NSRC but also a bit about what is happening in Living Skies and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils (where she also serves as Executive Minister) and happenings at General Council. Shannon also helps keep us within the bounds of policy as we make our decisions.

At our April 2021 Executive Meeting, we appointed a new Treasurer for NSRC. Donna Kline replaces Shauna Scott who had expressed a wish to step down a while ago. Shauna was Treasurer not only for the first two years of NSRC existing but also for several years (since 2006) as Treasurer of Alberta and Northwest Conference. Thank you so much Shauna for your faithful service. And thank you to Donna for stepping forward into the role.

Financially speaking we are still waiting for a “normal” year so we know what our budget should maybe look like. The first year we were in transition and still sorting out how we would live into this new structure and then the pandemic hit. With pandemic-related restrictions a lot of things that might have happened have not happened. Which does mean we have saved costs, but also means there is ministry yet to be done in areas. Of special note is that we are still sorting our how best to support things like Clusters and Networks, which seems to be the place in our new structure that local initiatives can take root and grow.

This year we have not had anyone in the role of Convenor of the Annual Meeting (which is why I am taking that role on for the meeting itself). In the Structure we accepted at our inaugural meeting in Valleyview in 2019 the Convenor role was not only for running the Annual Meeting but also to be the one who would attend events on behalf of NSRC. Of course, with the pandemic there have been fewer of those events anyway. The Convenor was also expected to be a (or the) main contact between the NSRC and groups like the Edmonton & District Council of Churches so in the absence of a Convenor we have had some discussion about how best this representative function can be fulfilled. No full answers have come out of that conversation as yet!

Which brings me to a final point. We are still sorting out how to have an effective Nominations process. This is, of course, hardly unusual in the church. Many of us in our local communities of faith know the struggle to fill vacancies. Since we have only been able to come together face-to-face once, and many of our previous connections were based on who we saw at Presbytery, it has been a challenge to establish a nominations network across NSRC. Currently we need more Executive members and some of the current members are reaching the end of their terms. As I said above, I took on chairing the Executive as a one-year term but we have yet to find a Chairperson-Elect so I guess I get a two-year term. This year we are needing to elect Commissioners (and some alternates just in case they are needed) to General Council 44 which will happen in 2022. NSRC will send 11 Commissioners to GC44, myself as Chairperson of the Executive and 10 others. The United Church works best (or only) if we the members are willing to serve. What is Christ calling you to do within the church this year?

Your current Executive is made up of myself, Marilyn Carroll, Margaret-Anne Hall, Peter Chynoweth, Alistair MacKay, Donna Kline (Treasurer), and Mary Annan. We are joined each month by the staff team serving NSRC: Shannon McCarthy (Executive Minister), Earl Reaburn (Pastoral Relations Minister), Julie Graham (Justice and Communications Minister), Heather Dootoff (Finance Administrator), Jamie Mckay (Executive Assistant & Recording Secretary) and Kathy Jackson (Administrative Support for NSRC). I thank all of the above for their service to the Church over the past year. I thank all of you for the ways you have served the Church over the past year.

May Christ lead us into the next year with hope, with faith, and with passion for God's Reign!

Peace,

Gord Waldie

Executive Chairperson for NSRC