

**Northern Spirit Executive Minutes
May 12, 2021 via Zoom**

Present	Gord Waldie (Chairperson), Donna Kline (Treasurer), Donna Kline (Treasurer), Mary Annan, Marilyn Carroll, Peter Chynoweth, Margaret-Anne Hall, Alistair MacKay. A quorum was present.
Corresponding Members	There were no corresponding members in attendance.
Regrets	There were no regrets.
Staff Present	Shannon McCarthy (Executive Minister), Earl Reaburn (Pastoral Relations Minister), Heather Dootoff (Finance Administrator), Julie Graham (Justice and Communications Minister), Kathy Jackson (Office Administrator & Recording Secretary).
Call to Order	Gord Waldie opened the meeting at 9:30 AM (MDT).
Opening Worship and Check-in	Gord Waldie gave a reflection and led a prayer. We checked in by sharing what we see as signs of spring and what we hope for the upcoming summer.
Agenda Review	We reviewed the agenda and changed the order of
001 – 2021/2022	It was agreed by consensus: That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive accepts the agenda, as amended.
Correspondence	There was no correspondence.
Approval of Minutes	We reviewed the minutes from March 10, 2021 and April 14, 2021.
002 – 2021/2022	It was agreed by consensus: That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive accepts the minutes of March 10, 2021, as amended and the minutes of April 14, 2021, as corrected.
Alberta Social Studies Curriculum	Being Good Relations will draft a letter and send to the Executive to review. The draft letter will be discussed at the next meeting.
FINANCE	Heather Dootoff reported. Not much has changed since March. In May, funds were sent to Living Spirit United Church and an updated report from General Council on salaries and grants still needs to be received. Heather proposed to add Donna Kline as a signing authority with online banking access.

003 – 2020/2021

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approves DONNA KLINE as a signing authority with online banking access to the Northern Spirit Regional Council Connexus Credit Union account in Saskatchewan.

PASTORAL RELATIONS

Earl Reaburn reported.

**Pastoral Relations
Commission**

The Pastoral Relations Commission is working out the complexity of figuring out how Garneau United Church can have ministry personnel if that ministry person is expected to be on as staff as chaplain at Ashbourne.

The commission requested approval for a policy on the length of pastoral relations appointments.

004 – 2020/2021

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council approves the Northern Spirit Regional Council Policy on Length of Pastoral Relations Appointments (Appendix A), as distributed.

**Communities of Faith
Support Committee**

McDougall United Church is now in covenant with the regional council.

The committee is working with the Korean United Church to empower their board to take leadership on decisions for the congregation and not defer to the minister.

Living Spirit has completed their Living Faith story and we need to figure out how to celebrate and covenant with the regional council.

Busby United Church has decided to close at the end of June and needs to write a letter to their pastoral charge (Morinville) to let them know.

Pierceland United Church has decided to close and the committee will be working with on their disbanding.

The student working at Spirit of Peace United Church in Spirit River has asked that she not have her appointment renewed. It has been a difficult learning site since there is pressure from members of the church community to open worship.

**Ministry Personnel
Support Committee**

The Ministry Personnel Support Committee continues to hold weekly meetings. They watched a presentation from Amy Kaler, Assistant Chair of the Sociology Department at the University of Alberta, on the four different we experience COVID-19:

- 1) Disorientation – not knowing what is going to happen.
- 2) Changed relationships – isolation from other people but also feeling too close to the ones we are always with.
- 3) Loss of markers – funerals, weddings, easy access to ordinations, admissions, and pastoral charges and ministers.
- 4) Increasing disparities

Karen Medland joined one week and walked ministry personnel through updating their police record checks and how to keep checking on ChurchHub.

Over the summer, ministry personnel will hold un-hosted meetings every Tuesday via Zoom to gather, check-in with each other, and find out what went on during the week.

The Ministry Personnel Support Committee would like to acknowledge people's moves in and out of the regional council and do so in a timely way so that people may have the chance to say goodbye to ministry they have worked with.

Another idea was to create an In Memoriam for congregations that have closed. Like retiree biographies, a history of the congregation could be written and added to the regional council report, giving acknowledgement and thanks to their ministry while the congregation has the opportunity to say who they are and leave a final message.

**Lay Leadership
Support Committee**

The Lay Leadership Support Committee hosted a second gathering of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWLs). Some things they talked about were possibilities for continuing education and standards of practice.

The committee is currently receiving applications for renewals of licenses from LLWLs. Last year there were thirteen applications and this year the committee received fifteen.

There has been discussion on whether it should be a requirement for LLWLs to complete the racial justice workshop. Completing the workshop is not a national requirement but the LLWLs felt it would be a good thing to complete for their own education and credibility.

**Moving Assistance
Grant Policy**

The Northern Spirit Regional Council Moving Assistance Draft Policy Recommendation (Appendix B) was reviewed.

Edits to original draft

Peter Chynoweth noted edits have been to original draft. The eligibility criteria of the financial statements have been expanded in the prescribed formula, as well as a statement that should the grant prove insufficient to cover 60% of the moving costs, the Northern Spirit Regional Council will work with the Community of Faith to seek alternate sources of funding. The appendix of the draft Moving Assistance Policy is a schedule of geographically isolated communities of faith.

005 – 2021/2022

**It was agreed by consensus:
That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approves the Moving Assistant Grant Policy for Moving Financial Assistance Policy (Appendix B), as presented.**

*Isolated community
criteria*

We began a discussion about how to determine what criteria makes a pastoral charge an isolated community. We agreed there are many factors including:

- Distance
- Geography

- Road and flight access
- Internet and telephone access
- Travel congestion

We agreed to continue the discussion on isolated community criteria at a later date.

006 – 2021/2022

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approves Fort Nelson Pastoral Charge and Yellowknife Pastoral Charge to be listed as isolated Communities of Faith in the Northern Spirit Regional Council Moving Assistance Policy.

REPORTS

Executive Minister's Report

Shannon McCarthy reported.

Annual meeting

Shannon thanked Gord Waldie for his dedication and leadership as Chairperson of the Executive and for presiding over a successful annual meeting. Shannon thanked the staff working behind the scenes, many of which come from other regional councils. Special thanks to Kathy Jackson and those who pulled together the annual meeting with just over a month to prepare.

GC deadline extension

The General Council extended the deadline for annual meetings and the pastoral relations exceptions from June 30 to December 31, 2021. A Sunday worship service was held to formally acknowledge and apologize to the unwed mothers and the forced adoptions that the United Church took part in. The assessment formula was approved by General Council and can be found in the United Church Commons.

44th General Council

The commissioners for GC44 will be elected from the 16 regional councils and the National Indigenous Council throughout 2021, and education sessions on the business coming to the 44th General Council will begin in February 2022. The July 2022 meeting will make decisions and elect the new Moderator for the next three years. The current terms of the 43rd General Council's commissioners, national committees, and Moderator were extended a year from 2021 to 2022 because of the pandemic.

Anti-racist church

We need to take steps to form the Anti-Racist Task Group. Terms of reference will need to be drafted before we start searching for people. We will discuss the task group at the June meeting.

Communications & Justice

Julie Graham reported.

Recap for 2021 NSRC Gathering

Some of the feedback we heard was:

- The social aspect of the annual meetings was greatly missed.
- The time dedicated to technical questions before the start of the meeting was also became an unofficial time for socialization.

- It would be nice to incorporate some kind of fun activity and community building.

Proposal process

We had a short discussion on the annual meeting proposal process.

Two main points arose from the discussion on the proposal process:

- To remind people who are writing proposals to consider whether the proposal is specific to a geographical area.
- The formation of a Business Committee.

We agreed to give feedback to the Annual Meeting Planning Committee and to talk further at a later date.

Together We Worship

We reviewed Together We Worship.

Last year the Executive agreed to set aside budget funds to ensure the option to subscribe to Together We Worship was available to communities of faith who found the cost to be prohibitive.

There are many livestreams available for worship but the biggest appeal of Together We Worship is that the services are available for download, making them ready to view and subject to internet connectivity.

We agreed that funding Together We Worship provides worship but is also a link and an expression of support for places that are without ministers.

007 – 2021/2022

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council continues to provide financial support for Together We Worship under the same terms described in 2020.

Mission and Ministry Grant Committee

Fort Nelson was granted a Mission and Ministry Grant for the year, to be paid in four installments. Two installments have been paid, one of which was sent after they no longer has a paid minister. Jack Stevenson sent a letter asking how they could return the payment.

008 – 2021/2022

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive will not pay the third and fourth installments of the Mission and Ministry Grant to Fort Nelson, and thank them for their offer to return the second installment.

Margaret-Anne abstained.

Structure Discussion

We began a discussion about evaluating the new structure.

Questions we raised to think more about:

- What is it we are evaluating?
- Do we evaluate ourselves?

- How can we engage with committees and commissions?
- How have expectations changed for staff and Executive members?

We are invited to reflect on these questions and bring more to discuss at the next meeting.

Incorporated Ministries

There was nothing new to review from incorporated ministries.

Nominations

Nominations received an Expression of Interest from Leslie Penny to serve as a member of the Executive.

009 – 2021/2022

**It was agreed by consensus:
That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive appoint LESLIE PENNY as a member of the Executive, for a two-year term, effective immediately.**

Marilyn Carroll will be in touch with Leslie Penny about the acceptance of her appointment.

Next Meeting

The Executive agreed to meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 9:30 – 12:00 PM via Zoom with the next regular meeting date:

- June 9, 2021

Closing Prayer

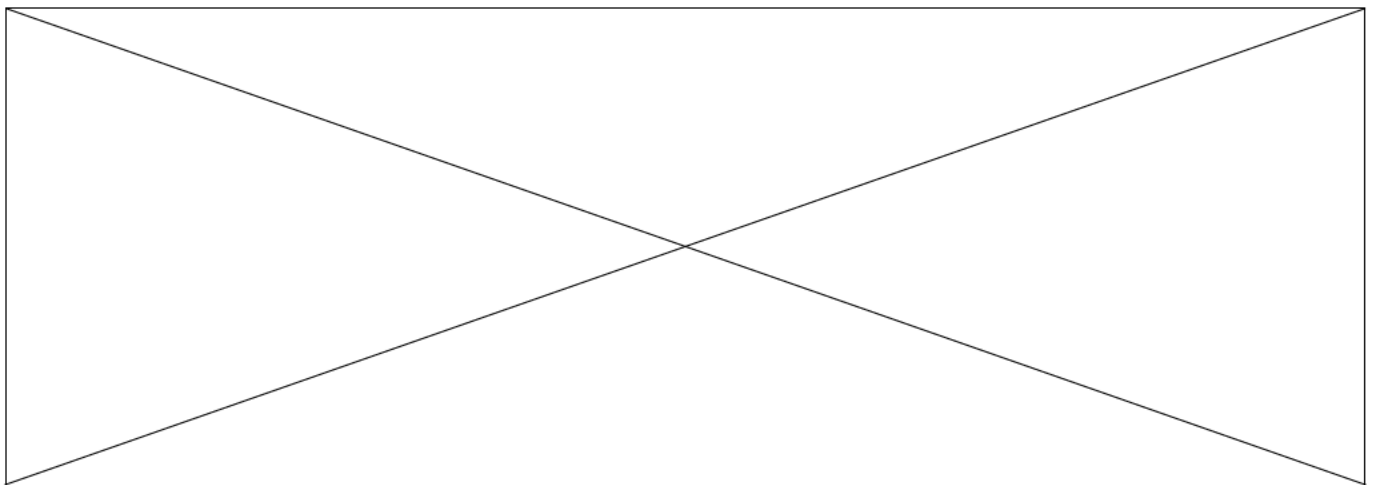
Peter Chynoweth led us in a closing prayer.

Adjournment

Gord Waldie adjourned the meeting at 12:15 PM (MDT).


Gord Waldie, Chairperson


Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister



For Pastoral Relations Commission discussion, and Regional Council Executive action.
May 6, 2021: PRC recommends Draft Policy to the Regional Council Executive.

Northern Spirit Regional Council
Policy on Length of Pastoral Relations Appointments
May 2021

Preamble

Before the procedure for approving policies of the Northern Spirit Regional Council was finalized, the following policies were approved by the Pastoral Relations Commission. These have governed the decisions of the Commission since their approval at its January 22-23, 2019, meeting.

General Policy Statements

From The Manual (2021) of The United Church of Canada:

I.1.7.2 Regional Council Approval

The regional council is responsible for deciding whether

- a) to approve a call [or appointment] offered by a community of faith; or
- b) to appoint a designated lay minister to the community of faith.

I.1.7.3. Term and Renewal of Appointments

For the appointment of a ministry personnel to a community of faith, the regional council

- a) must specify the term of the appointment; and
- b) may also renew the appointment on the request of the community of faith.

I.2.1.10 Reimbursement of Moving Expenses

a. **Relationship established by call:** If the regional council approves a request from a member of the order of ministry to end a pastoral relationship established by call within the first three years,

- i) the member is responsible for reimbursing the community of faith for a portion of the moving costs paid at the start of the pastoral relationship.

This portion is based on the actual length of the pastoral relationship and the United Church's expectation that a pastoral relationship established by call will last at least three years; and

- ii) the regional council must ensure that the member of the order of ministry fulfills this responsibility. The regional council may waive this requirement in exceptional cases.

b. **Relationship established by appointment:** If the regional council approves a request from a ministry personnel to end a pastoral relationship established by appointment before the end of its term, the regional council may require the ministry personnel to repay a portion of the moving expenses paid at the start of the pastoral relationship.

Further Manual references are cited in brackets ().

Placing a reasonable limit on the length of Appointments offers the Regional Council an opportunity to review the terms of renewed Appointments, and to look regularly at the financial situation of the Community of Faith.

Specific Policy Statements

Appointment of Designated Lay Ministers

The Board of Vocation has responsibility for determining an individual's readiness for recognition as a designated lay minister. (H.4.7)

For Pastoral Relations Commission discussion, and Regional Council Executive action.

May 6, 2021: PRC recommends Draft Policy to the Regional Council Executive.

The policy of the Northern Spirit Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission is that the appointment of a Designated Lay Minister will be approved for a maximum of three years (renewable).

Ministers from other Denominations Applying for Admission to the Order of Ministry in The United Church of Canada

The policy of the Northern Spirit Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission is that Ordained or Diaconal Supply Ministers in the process of admission to the Order of Ministry in The United Church of Canada will be appointed for up to a maximum three-year term.

Other Appointments: Candidate Supply, Retired Supply and United Supply

The Candidacy Board authorizes candidates for ministry as ready for ministry leadership, including candidate supply appointments. (E.3.3.3c)

A retired member of the order of ministry is not eligible to accept a call unless the Office of Vocation returns them to active standing. (I.1.2.4).

The Regional Council is responsible for appointing ministry personnel to a community of faith. (I.1.8)

The policy of the Northern Spirit Regional Council Pastoral Relations Commission is that all other appointments be approved for a maximum of one year.

Intentional Interim Ministers:

The United Church of Canada Interim Ministry Policy sets the policy for length of Intentional Interim Ministry Appointments.

Intentional Interim Ministry Policies and Procedures for Designation (2019):

https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/interim-ministry_policies-procedures-designation.pdf

Intentional Interim Ministry: Resource for Regional Councils (2019):

https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/interim_ministry_regional-council.pdf

Northern Spirit Regional Council Moving Assistance Policy Communities of Faith

General Policy Statement

Communities of Faith are responsible for paying the moving expenses of Candidates and other Ministry Personnel when beginning a new pastoral relationship. This includes travel expenses, and expenses for moving the person's possessions. It also includes the moving expenses of the person's immediate family if they move with the person or within the first year of that person's placement. It is expected the pastoral relationship will have a term of at least three years.

Communities of Faith may be eligible to apply for assistance in the form of a grant to cover a portion of the moving costs. Eligibility will be based on the following criteria:

1. A Community of Faith has modest income and insufficient funds or other assets to pay the moving costs;
2. A Community of Faith is listed in Appendix A of this document as a geographically isolated ministry.
3. A Community of Faith has not received a grant for moving assistance within the past three years.

If the Community of Faith is deemed eligible, the Northern Spirit Regional Council will provide grant assistance according to the following formula.

Prescribed Formula

1. The first \$2,000.00 of moving expenses are to be paid by the Community of Faith;
2. The Community of Faith may apply for a grant to assist with up to 60% of the remainder of moving expenses; the grant not to exceed \$6,000.00;
3. Applications must include:
 - a) the latest audited Year End Financial Statements including a Statement of Income or Statement of Receipts and Disbursements and a Balance Sheet;
 - b) a current period financial statement including a Statement of Income or Statement of Receipts and Disbursements and Balance Sheet;
 - c) the current budget; and
 - d) information on how the new pastoral relationship will impact the financial position of the Community of Faith.

Should the grant prove insufficient to cover 60% of the moving costs, the Northern Spirit Regional Council will work with the Community of Faith to seek alternate sources of funding.

Reimbursement of Moving Expenses

It is the expectation of the Regional Council that a pastoral relationship established by call or appointment shall normally be at least three years in length.

When the Regional Council approves a request for a change in pastoral relationship initiated by the ministry person before the end of the third year, the Regional Council shall require that the moving expenses for the move to that Community of Faith be reimbursed by the minister to the parties who paid on a pro rata basis. This includes repayment of part of the grant to the Regional Council.

For example, a ministry person called or appointed, who requests a move after 15 months, would be obliged to repay 21/36 of the moving expenses paid for the move to whomever paid for the moving expenses. The Community of Faith would be obliged to ensure the Regional Council was repaid 21/36 of the grant provided to the Community of Faith.

This requirement applies to all Ministry Personnel. This requirement shall not normally be waived. However, if, in an exceptional circumstance, the Regional Council wishes to consider waiving the requirement, it may not do so until after consulting with the Community of Faith and all parties involved.

In the case of an appointment, the Regional Council shall specify in the appointment, what obligation, if any, there shall be on the part of the appointee to reimburse all or part of the moving expenses in the event of an early termination of the appointment by the appointee.

Appendix A: Schedule of Geographically Isolated Communities of Faith

Fort Nelson: Hillcrest Pastoral Charge, Fort Nelson, British Columbia

Yellowknife Pastoral Charge, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

(Fort McMurray Pastoral Charge, Fort McMurray, Alberta)