

## LIVING WATERS PRESBYTERY

Living Waters began very early in its mandate to want something that was different and better than the previous “presbytery experience by congregations.” We moved actively to a theme that has been our approach throughout...

To serve, support, nurture and to seek justice.

2018! Networking leading potentially to Clusters & Networks

“What can we do working together that we can’t do alone?”

We also decided as an Executive that we need to create something that would pave the way to the new regional structure. This has been a primary focus for commissions, staff and we have retained consultants, led by the Vision and Church Development Commission. The learning has been enormous and our early expectations changed through the organic process we have used. We have many people following up from five gatherings in the fall. Most contacts are now on Glip/Zoom and cover over 20 topics where there is passion.

We see this as an approach which will allow heightened collaboration between Communities of Faith in the new Region.

### Living Presence Ministry

There has been the creation of the bold new Living Presence Ministry as a ten-year project in the explosively developing new urban area in East Gwillimbury, which now has a Community Pioneer Minister living and working in the new community with the active engagement of five neighbouring congregations. Already we are seeing results from this ministry that will continue into future.

### Community Connections & Right Relations Commission (CCRR)

Made up of social justice-minded people that have a lot of compassion to seek justice and ensure that there is no one left behind! e.g. poverty, minimum wage, women in prisons etc.

Mission & Service applications have been fully supported.

Strong support is given to right relations work, building good communications and trust with First Nations communities, focusing on the UN Declarations. A lodge building project was held on Georgina Island and youth from the presbytery and the Island joined in building a healing lodge as well as tree planting.

In 2018 we shared with Toronto Southeast Presbytery in establishing a Social Justice Animator position. Ren Ito has filled that position.

### Vision and Church Development Commission (VCD)

Right from the beginning of the Presbytery, VCD has encouraged the development of a culture of planning in our congregations, and has issued a set of planning “tools” (some in partnership with EDGE) and subsidized their use by congregations, providing funding for 2/3 of the cost.

To develop leadership skills for the changing circumstances of our church and society, VCD has organized three leadership cohorts – two for clergy and one for lay leaders. VCD has encouraged regional collaborations with varying degrees of success.

### Spiritual Development Commission

The Commission has been blessed with active and engaged members over its nine years, who have worked to provide spiritual care and leadership in the presbytery.

In 2016 Living Waters became an Affirming Presbytery. The celebration worship event was deeply moving as we heard many people’s testimony of what it meant to them to be an Affirming Presbytery, and we are encouraging a number of our member congregations to engage in the Affirm process.

A major success has been the formation of Camp Awesome! Our seven-week presbytery-wide vacation Bible camp program has welcomed hundreds of young people to a week of fun and faith learning over its five years. It has also been a good opportunity for our young staff to become engaged in leadership in the church.

We partnered with Grace United Church to hire Jeffrey Dale as our Youth Ministries Coordinator to ensure that in our time of change and realignment the youth in our area would be cared for and led. Jeffrey has done excellent work forming connections and relationships with congregations across the presbytery, and leading us to find innovative ways to minister to young people.

We will be leading a daylong celebration in September for fun and worship for all of Living Waters at Camp Big Canoe, to be joyful for all that we have been and look with hope to what we will become.

### Congregational Life Commission (CLC)

The Commission now works closely with the Vision and Church Development Commission, both Commissions sharing the same staff support, to promote vital and faithful congregations. The main role of the Congregational Life Commission in this collaboration has been ensuring proper administrative oversight of funds and dispositions of real property.

### Personnel Support and Education Commission (PS&E)

The presbytery has developed a good network of support for its member congregations and there is within the presbytery a fellowship that attracts presbyters to attend meetings.

There is a fairly large Personnel Support & Education Commission which has met regularly and endeavoured to faithfully discern best practices and best options in supporting pastoral charges. This has required volunteers for listening circles, transition teams and supervision. The commission has also supported many students during the life of Living Waters Presbytery. The commission has also ensured that the presbytery has celebrated milestone years and the retirement of members of the order of ministry.

What do we see that should continue in the Region & Financial Commitments beyond 2018?

- a. Living Presence Ministry which is funded through to 2020.
- b. Youth Ministry which is funded through 2020.
- c. Developing Networking leading to Clusters & Networks to be funded through 2019.
- d. Camp Awesome! to be funded through 2019.
- e. Social Justice Animator to be funded through 2019.

**NORTHERN WATERS PRESBYTERY**

## 1. Reflecting on the past nine years, what has been significant about your presbytery?

Nine years ago, when all of Grey Presbytery and parts of Dufferin-Peel, York and Simcoe Presbyteries formed Northwest Presbytery then soon named Northern Waters Presbytery, we came together wondering what we could accomplish as a larger presbytery. It took time to get to know the needs of the presbytery and to get the Commissions and committees up and running. Commissions have done the bulk of the work of the presbytery so each presbytery plenary meeting could be a mix of worship, education (including business), and community building.

Youth have been a focus in the presbytery with events planned by the Program Commission and the Faith Formation Committee. The Youth Leaders' Network has provided support to others doing similar work and to share ideas. Some notable youth activities have happened during the last nine years. Youth and leaders have attended Rendez-vous twice (Winnipeg and Montreal) that included pilgrimages by bus organized by Northern Waters staff and volunteers. Some of our Youth took part in "Open Hands Nicaragua" in 2017.

Recently, the Congregational Life Commission has put together Listening Teams and developed best practices for handling conflict or other issues. The Commission has a tracking document for motions that pertain to each pastoral charge. They have also a tracking document that shows whether pastoral charges have complied with various pieces of legislation.

In the early years of the presbytery technology tips were provided to presbyters. Presbytery has been looking at ways technology can be used and discussions have been held to organize hubs so that smaller congregations could continue to exist. This work is ongoing.

Education & Students Commission has supported individuals choosing one of the streams of ministry. The Governance Commission has worked to create policies to guide the presbytery and worked with pastoral charges and the presbytery to obtain grants for special projects.

We have worked on the process to become an Affirming Presbytery but there is still work to be completed.

Visits from two Moderators have been highlights. The Very Rev. Gary Paterson visited September 20, 2014 at Georgian Shores in Owen Sound and spoke in the afternoon during the plenary about the changes happening in the United Church and then he gave the sermon at the evening service that followed supper. The Way Forward held Nov 4, 2017 at Trinity United in Collingwood was a resounding success with The Right Rev. Jordan Cantwell as our keynote speaker. Workshops on a variety of topics were offered and there was music. We closed the formal portion of the day with an experience of Definitely NOT Church with Norm Seli and Drew Winters. The day closed with a Coco Love Alcorn concert.

It has been wonderful to have staff support working locally to support the work of presbytery and the communities of faith. This has been so appreciated as they are more aware of the needs and the people involved. Their support has made the work of the volunteers easier. Since 2014,

our two Program Ministers have worked full time with half of their salaries paid through PTCC grants as the work load was too great to be done in half-time positions.

2. What are the main priorities that you would like to see carried into the new region(s) you will be in?

Listening Teams

Youth Leaders' Network and events for the Youth

Hubs that use technology for worship services so that smaller congregations could continue to serve their local communities.

3. What financial commitments have you made that extend beyond December 2018?

None at present

## SOUTH WEST PRESBYTERY

1. Reflecting on the last nine years, what has been significant about your presbytery?
  - ♦ South West Presbytery (SWP) enthusiastically embarked upon the Effective Leadership Project by creating a Mission Leadership Support Commission comprised of four subgroups, one of which was the Mission Articulation team. They followed up with those communities of faith which needed additional education and support. Eighty percent of communities of faith, have completed their mission articulation profile.
  - ♦ South West Presbytery reorganized the governance structure in 2015 to include six Commissions with a number of teams reporting to them, in order to break down silos for facilitation of communication and support for communities of faith focused programming.
  - ♦ The Pastoral Relations Team developed and used a spreadsheet over the past several years, which listed all churches and provided an indication of the status and general health of each congregation. This tool was used for review and follow up of any concerns. This team was responsible for creating a number of policies to provide guidance to congregations. These are summarized in our new comprehensive handbook located on the South West Presbytery website.
  - ♦ The creation of a policy document entitled *Cultivating the Urban Forest* provided a theological and policy lens for decision-making and ministry in South West Presbytery.
  - ♦ South West Presbytery is home to two Community Ministries and three mission churches – Good Tree Korean Church, Filipino Christian Fellowship, and the emerging Francophone Ministry - as well as seven ethnic communities of faith; three other ethnic communities of faith amalgamated with Caucasian communities of faith in the last four years. With the support of our Minister for Mission, these ministries are developing a network for support and education. The Mission: Present & Future Commission developed policies for welcoming new ethnic churches and establishing new missions. South West Presbytery is also home to a variety of other community ministries such as Weston King Neighbourhood Centre, The Journey and others based in local pastoral charges. Other communities of faith are changing their mission to meeting the emerging needs of their neighbourhoods (e.g., Lansing United Church, Grace Place and Roncesvalles to name some sources of these efforts)
  - ♦ The presbytery hired a minister for two years to address the Intercultural needs of our presbytery. He provided a report for us to use as guidance for our communities of faith to become more intercultural in focus.
  - ♦ The Property Team has been responsible for assisting communities of faith to repurpose properties where the original expectation was to sell the property. A good example of repurposing was Lansing United Church which grappled with the complexity of property development in an urban area and now houses three communities of faith –Lansing, Alpha Korean and the Filipino Christian Fellowship. The Property Team has developed robust policies, found in the South West Presbytery handbook and guided a number of churches through major renovations, through the sale of a manse, and through sale of properties in the case of amalgamations.
  - ♦ There is a vast array of programs based in communities of faith that address today's urban reality. These food banks, meal programs, after-school activities, camping, community

services, and other programs are funded not only by Mission Support Grants through South West's PTCC account but also through monies from a variety of other sources.

- ♦ The presbytery has supported two community ministries in the Jane Finch and the Davenport Perth area. This support will continue until the year 2022, until the new region decides whether it fits with their priorities.
  - ♦ The two Social Justice Committees of Toronto, South West and Toronto Southeast have been meeting jointly which augers well for their future success in the new region.
2. What are the main priorities that you would like to see carried on into the new region that you will be in?
- ♦ South West Presbytery financed a Regional Youth Ministry Project over the last year in order to discern best practices in involving and supporting youth in faith development. It was our intention to fund this ministry by hiring a youth minister to continue this work, as it was beginning to bear fruit. South West Presbytery sees this ministry as having top priority. We would encourage the regional council to act promptly to support this initiative financially, so that the momentum generated is not lost.
  - ♦ Financial and staff support for our three new missions is important in order to ensure that they succeed. The rapid development of an ethnically diverse population in the GTA suggests the welcoming of new migrant congregations should be a priority for the southern part of the region.
  - ♦ The two community ministries will require ongoing financial support and accountability oversight.
  - ♦ Communities of faith will require considerable staff and volunteer support in navigating the Effective Leadership process, if it continues as presently conceived.
  - ♦ Education of our lay and ministerial leadership, (for example Fresh Expressions), is seen as an important means of encouraging the development of forward looking leaders.
  - ♦ The significant number of aging traditional United Churches suggests the need for development of a policy for caring for aging churches, beyond the amalgamation choice, and this work should be an important priority.
3. What financial commitments have you made that will extend beyond December 2018?
- ♦ \$ 1,301,400.00 of funding has been set aside to support the two Community Ministries until the year 2022
  - ♦ A legacy fund has been established to support any initiatives that we have funded in the past and to support any needs that emerge over the next period of time during which the regional governance is being established.

## TORONTO SOUTHEAST PRESBYTERY

Reflecting on the past nine years, what has been significant about your presbytery?  
And what are the main priorities that you would like to see carried into the new region(s) you will be in? Gifts to Region 10.

### Support for Traditional Congregations

Of very high importance to Toronto Southeast has been the desire to strengthen and support traditional congregations as times and culture and our own structures change. We have tried to do this in a variety of ways:

- a) By providing consulting services to support the work on the Ministry Articulation Profiles so that planning and clarity of ministry directions might be enhanced. We believe that we have an important model of getting to great MAPS to share.
- b) By financially supporting congregations in engaging in their neighbourhoods in a variety of ways – through EDGE or with other facilitators. In a similar but different project also designed to engage people by listening as opposed to asking, we are beginning a pilot project based on the work of Alan Roxburgh – the importance of doing ministry in our context and of believing that God wants us to extend radical hospitality and also to receive the gifts of hospitality from others.
- c) By financially supporting congregations to do Environics studies to understand their neighbourhoods.
- d) By offering a support program for ministry personnel.
- e) By engaging an Animator whose role is to work with congregations in whatever way is important for them. This staffing has ended but it would be our belief that there is a great need to have someone to proactively not just support but offer inspiration, encouragement and coaching.

### New Ministries

Toronto Southeast Presbytery has invested over the years in a variety of new and different kinds of alternative ministries. The future ways of being church will be much different than we currently enjoy. People will continue to look for traditional as well as non-traditional ways to be community and to explore spirituality. The range of experiments have been ones modeled after the Fresh Expressions Movement, one that meets the needs of specific new populations, and alternative worshipping and learning communities. These have been promoted and funded and coached.

The learnings and evaluations from these can/should be compiled as the church continues to invest in ways to offer these creative ways of making Christian community together. Stories and videos of some of these are being compiled to be shared as models or examples.

### Workshops for Treasurers

For about 15 years, Clyde Harris, Treasurer has offered three or more workshops each year for treasurers in the former Toronto Scarborough Presbytery, and has continued to run workshops



for the 5 treasurers of pastoral charges within Toronto Southeast, South West and Northern Waters Presbyteries.

These have been well received by the treasurers of many of our congregations, with usually one or two new churches and new people attending each event. Out-going treasurers inform the new treasurer. The average attendance in Toronto Southeast Presbytery is between 15 and 20 with a high number of 26 about a year ago.

The people who attend are asking how do we ensure the workshops continue? The question is how this will happen since there is a definite need.

#### Education and Students Interview Procedure

The Presbytery E&S Team appoints a liaison, who is usually one of the representatives on the discernment committee to accompany each candidate through the entire process. This has been unique to Toronto Southeast Presbytery and is a model which could be considered going forward.

#### Development of a Property Policy:

Toronto Southeast Presbytery has established a new committee, including members from Mission Strategy and Finance & Property to deliver a strategy for making decisions about properties.

The EDGE/CMHC project has completed a church property inventory across Canada which focusses on development and mostly re-development for housing. There is also a consultant's report which may be useful to support and resource congregations and trustees who become overwhelmed with the issues of polity and practice.

Areas to be considered in this property policy

- If a property is kept for re-missioning, how can the Region help?
- How to re-invest for an unknown future?
- How can a congregation focus on mission without concern about the roof?
- Intentional conversations / a plan about what will happen when something is available for sale.
- How can we deal with trusteeship? What happens with the holding and the need for funds for maintenance?
- Trust is important.

#### A Solid Finance & Property Commission that monitors Financial Health

The Toronto Southeast Presbytery Finance & Property Commission has seen as its mandate the importance of providing advice and support to Congregations challenged by financial planning, leasing, property maintenance and renovation as well as redevelopment. Also, the property issues involved in mergers or closings are usually new to a Congregation, but not to the Commission.

This type of formal procedure has been well received and will continue to be needed in the new governance regime. We offer considerable experience in this area at least in the City of Toronto.

Serious consideration should also be given to broadening the mandate of such a Commission to include annual monitoring of statistics and financial health of all Congregations. Such an enhanced mandate could enable better understanding and earlier recognition of looming financial issues and possible corrective action or reduction in the stress of winding down.

What financial commitments have you made that extend beyond December 2018? And Why are these commitments important to your presbytery?

#### PTCC Grants

The presbytery has used the Annual Net Revenue Grants to support local agencies which are both historical and important. There will be grants approved in December 2018 for 2019 and possibly beyond.

There are other PTCC grants which go at least until 2020.

#### Toronto Southeast Presbytery Major Capital Fund.

This fund has just been established with funds from the sale of properties in amalgamations to support congregations in the current Toronto Southeast Presbytery who are experiencing financial needs that are unprecedented in recent history. This financial help, loans or grants, are required for capital projects and long term funding for operations that cannot be funded from other sources such as the Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation (PTCC) or The Toronto United Church Council (TUCC).

