

A Deep Look at the Notes from the HFRC Fall Break Out Rooms on the Regional Evaluation

A small team from Executive, Yvonne Wright, Debbie McMillan, and Deborah Laforet, volunteered to take a look at the compiled notes from breakout room conversations on the evaluation of the Regional Council at the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Fall meeting. They met four times over Zoom and looked at each point with the goal of assessing for which part of the region council (Commission, Executive, staff, etc.) the notes would be most relevant.

		Thoughts & Ideas	Responsibility
Connecting communities of faith to the Regional Council	Regional Reps	A list of lay reps connected with pastoral charges needs to be obtained. Is this the role of the Volunteer Recruitment Committee's to explore how to encourage pastoral charges to find representatives? Could the Nominations Committee work with the Congregational Support Commission in developing a strategy. It was easier to find people to serve in the old structure. You went to presbytery and you were expected to take a role.	Volunteer Recruitment/Congregational Support Commission
	There is a longing/nostalgia for Presbytery	See Below	Executive
	Clusters	Three churches working together in Brantford called Shared Services. Eight churches in Oakville meeting monthly. How do we share these stories with other communities. On Facebook? Regional Meetings? What about the upcoming meeting in May? How might Greg Smith-Young assist with this? What is the work churches might cluster around? How do we get geographic regions together to explore what might be a common purpose? This takes persistence and a couple of people who are spearheading the initiative.	Executive
Communicating with communities of faith	Sharing COF News	With the formation of church clusters, news is more readily shared. Also, if there are lay reps, they would communicate within their own community or back to the region about their community (ambassadors for the region).	Church clusters and Lay Reps
	Clarify expectation for the communication role of reps	Summaries of Information that are easy for reps to share with their governing body and congregation would be helpful	Staff?
	Fix ChurchHub	Not our Domain	Send feedback to National office
	Pulpit Supply	Can there be a button on the website to identify resources for pulpit supply with up to date contact information, sorted by geography?	Staff
	Visit COFs	When would it be possible and under what circumstances could COFs receive a visit or face to face assistance? We don't want to wait until COFs are in crisis. Maybe COFs are visited first on Zoom when they are healthy, with room to meet in person if needed.	Executive needs to talk about this further.

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	Create a database	John Bedell and Dave Pritchard are willing to work on the development of a database to help connect COF in HFRC.	Unclear what information this database holds, but a good idea to reach out to John and Dave to figure out what they have in mind.
	Website management	Are there resources for COFs that need support in managing their own websites that might be listed on the website?	Congregational Support Commission
Support to communities of faith searching for a new minister	Church Hub is difficult to use	Not our Domain	Send feedback to National office
	HFRC Website	Use website expert to help create a region website that is more intuitive and user friendly. Toolkits and documents need to be reviewed with an eye to being more user friendly and understandable. Executive could make a motion to have someone come in and do a review of the website.	Executive
	New Processes Still Unfamiliar		
	Zoom Training for Search Committees	Maybe offer enhanced ChurchHub training as an add-on to the Search Committee training? Invite anyone who struggled with what was in the Search training to consider another session where the processes are demonstrated slowly with plenty of screen shots and questions can be asked.	Congregational Support Commission
	Liaisons	Executive needs to create policies around mandatory use of liaisons with COFs. The idea of recruiting liaisons from those who have just gone through the process is a good one. How does that happen? Might the Congregational Support Commission let Volunteer Recruitment know that the search is finished and that a liaison might be recruited? Maybe new liaisons could journey with another liaison to become more familiar with processes.	Executive and Congregational Support Commission
	Staff Support	More support is needed for innovative ways of doing church in 2023 and beyond, including how to have tough conversations at the congregational level about discerning the way forward, how to seek out other churches to consider collaborative ministry or innovative calls that result in full-time hours for clergy instead of trying to find ministers for a multitude of part-time positions.	Executive and Congregational Support Commission
	FAQ Resource	More communication on questions that lie outside of processes. This connects with the above comments on staff support.	Executive and Congregational Support Commission

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	Transition from Search Process to M and P	Hiccups between the end of the search process and M and P taking over; resources are not clear. More communication around processes.	Human Resources Commission Congregational Support Commission
	Part-time ministries	Clear guidelines are needed on what is involved in part-time positions. How much time is spent on worship preparation; does 20 hours a week include worship every Sunday? Also, how to establish what potential candidates need and expect from a congregation and vice versa, especially in a congregation that is moving from full-time to part-time.	Human Resources Commission Congregational Support Commission
	International Candidates	There is very little “nitty-gritty” advice, like who handles the immigration details, driver’s licenses, help with finding housing, who pays for the moving costs, how do you assess experience in a different setting, how would you support someone who has come to a new country in practical terms? are there resources available or people who can speak to the experience as communities of faith or clergy? Many would like to hear about the experiences of churches who have called someone from outside Canada. Again, how do we share good news experiences? Can search committees hear from COFs who have called International Ministers? YouTube video could go far in this instance.	Human Resources Commission Congregational Support Commission
	Too few candidates	Broader question around recruitment to ministry	National Church and Theological Schools
	Develop resources to support lay-led worship	Those resources are out there but maybe they need to be easier to find. Maybe have a page on the website that shares these resources for lay-led worship.	Staff
	People miss connections	Some are looking for the Regional Council’s blessing: “we hear you, we hear that you miss presbyteries, and we bless you to form your own gatherings and inter-community events”.	Executive
	We miss hearing the news	See #2 around communications.	
	Leadership from Regional Council setting up networks/clusters is needed	Executive might map out what clustering is, what it offers, and how to support communities of faith to gather in their own way.	Executive

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Networking communities of faith	Gather based on shared interests	Might this kind of clustering happen through the Discipleship and Justice Commission? People could also meet around their roles. What if liaisons met to support one another?	Discipleship & Justice Commission
	Region-wide Pulpit Exchange	This might also depend on geography. It could also happen within clusters. What about having urban worship leaders come to an rural centre and vice versa or other varieties to expand our experience. Not sure who would do this though. This could also be a topic of discussion at table groups at an in-person meeting.	Executive to determine who might implement this.
	'Networking' Days (Halton Presbytery model)	The day in June being planned by the executive falls into this category. When clusters form, this could be an interesting idea to plant.	Executive and Regional Clusters
	We need to be realistic; the Regional Council may not be able to 'do it all' for us	Maybe when clusters are formed, all the work won't be expected to fall on Regional Council.	
Enhancing "health, joy and excellence in ministry practice"	Longing for Collegial Support	Where is collegial support happening now that presbyteries are gone? Does the creation of clusters of communities of faith help with this? Do ministry personnel need to create their own clusters? Maybe once clusters are in place, the "persistent friend," which was when conference staff visited presbytery meetings, could visit the clusters. This could be staff or executive and commission members.	Executive
	Feeling Powerless	How do people regain the agency they feel they've lost?	Executive
	Mandatory Regional Retreats	If there was more intentional retreat work done, that was funded and communicated carefully to communities of faith, there might a decline over time of the number of needs for a 911 Line (see below). Could this be the role of the regional pastoral minister and the Human Resources Commission - to create funded retreats for clergy. Many will object to 'mandatory' retreats, but there needs to be a mechanism that encourages clergy to attend.	Human Resources Commission and Pastoral Support Minister

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practice	911 Line for Clergy	What is the role of the regional pastoral minister? Does it need to be made more clear for the Regional Council and is it a key piece around connections with clergy? Maybe there could be a team that works with staff that makes these connections? A 911 line or email might be helpful, but might this work be shared with a team so it all doesn't land on one person. Also, in a healthy cluster, hopefully isolation will be less and there would be more support between colleagues.	Human Resources Commission and Pastoral Support Minister
	Concern about excessive workload of Regional Staff	How do we put more work on volunteers? There needs to be more work on finding regional reps, which might happen more organically through clusters. Also, how do staff release work to volunteers?	Executive
	Promote October as Minister's Appreciation Month	Region might highlight this month more and communicate it more. Again, if clusters were aware, they could also support this initiative.	Human Resources Commission
Connecting with retired ministry personnel	Identified Needs	social and communication, a complete accurate and up-to-date list of retirees, recognition and appreciation, ministry is a life-long calling, no connection is an awful waste of wisdom and experience for the region, opportunities to gather around food are a lifeline	Human Resources Commission
	Clusters	How do we get a team going? Maybe two or three people (a special task group reporting to Discipleship and Justice) to communicate with retirees in the region or bring them together for a social gathering. How do they connect to clergy gatherings happening in their area? How do we define retired? Is it retired in active ministry or retired and inactive? Would this all fall under Human Resources or would only those in active ministry report to Human Resources? We wonder if retired and inactive ministry personnel would fall under Discipleship and Justice, like the UCW.	Executive
	When people retire	Provide a brochure on what the RC provides, give thanks for service and assign people to a geographical cluster with a contact person	Human Resources Commission
	Inclusion of DLMs	Retired DLM's need to be connected in the same ways as other ministry personnel.	Human Resources Commission

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	Voluntary Associate Ministers and Minister Emeritus/a	Is this a regional or national process? Are there clear written descriptions of a Minister Emeritus or a Voluntary Associate Minister (VAM)? Do both categories need to be approved by someone? Does a VAM need more vetting and who does that? We wonder if VAMs would fall under Voluntary Associate Minister, but we're not sure about Minister Emeritus as this feels like an honour bestowed on a retired minister by a congregation.	Human Resources Commission
	National church	This does not fall under the Region, but the Region could carry concerns to the national church as needed.	National Church
	Newsletter	Important to mail to those who aren't on email. Does this happen? Are there currently intentional ways of keeping retired ministry personnel connected if they aren't online?	Human Resources Commission
	Can retired ministers have a place on Executive?	Do we need to formally articulate a need for elder wisdom? How do we access the wisdom of our elders? Could there be room for honouring the wisdom and experience of our retirees without being a voting member?	Executive
Supporting justice work in communities of faith	Share Information	See #2 around communications.	
	Create clusters around common interests	Not sure how the D&J Commission is to manage what is happening at all the communities of faith in the region. Could this happen more organically at local church clusters? It might be easier for the Commission to connect with these clusters. Maybe at in person regional gatherings, how might people connect over these interests? Maybe have people list their outreach projects and then have them gather over similar projects.	Executive and Regional Meetings
	Form Ecumenical Partnerships	Support Communities of Faith in their work with other denominations and with ecumenical organizations like Kairos.	Discipleship & Justice Commission
	Educate on the difference between 'charity' and 'social justice'	There are lots of resources on this. D&J Commission can lead by example and offer resources as needed. Maybe a workshop on this would be helpful. Offering workshops with clusters of communities of faith might be a good way to offer these kinds of opportunities.	Discipleship & Justice Commission

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	Create "safe" space	Not sure this is a regional responsibility, except to lead by example. The D&J Commission might offer resources for creating safe spaces and be available to communities of faith that need support creating these spaces. We also wonder if 'safe' spaces includes sometimes being held accountable for what is said, in order to create a 'safe' space for all.	Discipleship & Justice Commission
	Involve Youth	The communities of faith need to empower youth and encourage them to become involved. The D&J Commission is finding ways to support youth leaders and creating events for youth, but these need to be supported by congregations.	Congregations/Communities of Faith
What is our purpose and how will we know we are living it out?	Keep HFRC statement and live into them	"Let's not spend time changing something we haven't worked to put into action". Agreed. This is a purpose statement, not a vision statement. We need to figure out how to live into this purpose. The executive needs to determine whether we are living out this statement and explore a process to help the Regional Council determine how to live out this purpose.	Executive
	Connecting	See Above	See above
	Supporting	See Above	See above
	Empowering	See Above	See above
Equipping the church for "such a time as this"	Support for Connecting		How does Executive and the Regional Council find time to have bigger conversations? Good at getting through an agenda and finishing tasks, but where is the time found to talk about being an anti-racist church, to look at the Affirm plan, and to look at some of the topics above like connecting, creating and supporting collaborating ministries, supporting anxiety and addressing behavioural issues, etc. Retreat is a good opportunity to have some of these conversations. Having a dinner conversation once every few months. This helps to build relationships and stronger connections, and to have the deeper, more meaningful conversations that need to happen.
	Support for Collaborative ministry		
	Change position description for new HFRC position	The new Growth Animator position is not an HFRC position. This is a national initiative and the position is through General Council.	
	Support Dealing with Anxiety and Behaviour Issues		
	Resources to be Spiritually Fed		
	Help Visioning		
	Accessibility		

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	Support Identifying and Raising Up New Leaders		