

CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT COMMISSION REPORT Fall 2024

The Congregational Support Commission (CSC) carries primary responsibility for the relationship between communities of faith and the region and their partnership on matters requiring a decision by both the community of faith and the regional council, other than the pastoral relationship. The responsibilities of the Commission include:

- The articulation of ministry (Community of Faith Profile)
- The use of financial and property resources
- Local governance;
- The overall health and well-being of communities of faith, such as changes in the life cycle, dealing with real property etc.

If you have questions about any aspects of the life and work of your church, the toolkits on the Horseshoe Falls website are a great place to start!

: <https://hfrucc.ca/toolkits>

Pastoral Charge Supervision

A new policy regarding Pastoral Charge Supervision came into effect on January 1, 2024. More information about this new policy can be found at the toolkit link above under Toolkit #10. A big thank you to those individuals who have taken on the role of Pastoral Charges Supervisors over the past year. Your time and dedication to this important role is appreciated and valued. We are always looking for those who would like to serve in this capacity! *If you are interested in becoming a Pastoral Charge Supervisor and are a member of the order of ministry or a lay representative to the region, please fill out and submit the interest form found in Toolkit #10.*

Property

Effective June 26, 2024 funds from the sale of a manse are no longer restricted. This includes past, present and future sales. These funds may be used for any purpose decided by the congregation. However, if the amount being withdrawn in a year equals \$250,000 or 50% of net revenue used for assessment purposes (whatever is lower) this is a major asset transaction requiring regional council approval by the CSC.

In addition, regional council approval by the CSC is required if your Community of faith is entering into a lease of your property, applying for a loan from an extension council or any other party, as well as any "major renovation" (repair, work, addition, upgrade or capital improvement or like project) to your real property that is estimated or expected to cost the lower of 50% of net revenue used for assessment purposes for the prior calendar year or \$250,000.00 or more. Detailed information can be found in Toolbox #5 using the Toolbox link above.

Communities of Faith

Vulnerable Congregations

The CSC recognizes that many communities of faith are beginning to see signs that their finances and volunteer resources are declining. A Webinar about Vulnerable Congregations was held in March to help communities of faith engage in conversation and explore options about the future of congregational life. If you are interested in learning more, a recording of this webinar can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xssm5ta30-Y&list=PLBcwukBM7j-Ae4Cjl6Z3Qr2eHzDnxPjKf&index=45&t=113s>

Good News Story

The commission would like to lift up and celebrate the work of eight United Churches in Oakville who have formed a cluster and have been meeting and working together over the last year. (Glen Abbey, Maple Grove, Munn's, Palermo, St. John's, St. Paul's, Trinity and Walton)

The Cluster is working towards a better understanding of what they can be together, not only to serve their individual congregations but also as a shared presence in the community. Conversations around collaboration, communication and meeting together continues with a focus this year on The United Church's 100th Anniversary celebrations, Collective Outreach opportunities and Food Security. Introductions have been made to committee chairs within churches. The cluster promotes one another's special worship services, bible/book studies, joint confirmation classes, fellowship and fundraising events through a twice monthly newsletter. They worshipped together over the summer and four of the churches are investigating collaboration that has a formal arrangement. One person remarked: *"It's enlightening to see how we are all similar but we also have differences. Yet it feels like we belong together. It's a joy being and seeing old friends even if we hadn't met before."*

Collaborative Ministry Agreements (Newly approved or Terminated)

- Bethesda United Church and Ryerson United Church, Ancaster (ended by mutual agreement)
- Rockton United Church, Sheffield United Church, Lynden United Church & Freelton-Strabane United Church

Sales of Property

- Vineland United Church
- Listed for Sale:
 - St. Paul's United Church, Oakville
 - York United Church, York

Disbanded Communities of Faith

- Trinity Pastoral Charge, Thorold
- Faith United, Milton
- Elcho Pastoral Charge, Wellandport

The Commission meets monthly on the second Tuesday. All documentation that is needing approval must be sent to the Congregational Support Minister for the commission's review no later than the first of the month.

Many thanks to Lynne Allin for her faithful dedication and expertise in her role as Congregational Support Minister. Lynne is on Sabbatical from September to November 2024 and we are grateful to Ann Harbridge and John Neff who are supporting the work of the commission during this time.

In May we said goodbye to Judy Chartrand and Mary Anderson as they ended their term on the CSC. Thank you both for your commitment as well as the wisdom you shared throughout your service to the region. We welcomed three new members in June: Doug Caldwell, Barb McGill and Kate Young. Other members of the CSC include: Shawn Bausch, Jane Captstick, Ross Gowan, Steve Lowden, Karen Tobey and Jane Wyllie

Respectfully Submitted

Adrienne Robertson

Adrienne Robertson, Chair