

EXECUTIVE MINISTER REPORT
First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council

Reflecting on the Year

In John O 'Donohue's book To Bless the Space Between Us; one of the blessings says: "As high over the mountains the eagle spreads its wings, may your perspective be larger than the view from the foothills."

As Regional Council members, Executive and Staff, our responsibility is to have a perspective that is larger than the view from the foothills. It is also important to know the view and the experience from the foothills in order to provide support and leadership.

This has been a difficult year for everyone. Having come through the 2019 transition year, 2020 was to be the year when all of our Divisions and Teams would begin their work, and design their programs through the lens of the Mission, Theological Convictions and Operating Principles that were approved in 2019. Just as we began to make our plans we began to hear of a virus that was considered dangerous and highly contagious. Before we were into the first quarter of the year, we needed to close our buildings and develop a new way forward. That we did. With the support of one another, we were able to learn new ways of doing things that would take us into a place of resilience and hope. This pandemic has taken much away from us, but it has also given us new possibilities. It is important as we reflect on 2020, that we, as a church, discern about the things we have learned and wish to keep, and what things from before the pandemic do we wish to leave behind. It is also important as a region that we discern our ministry priorities through the lens of our named Mission, Theological Convictions and Operating Principles.

This has been a year of many ups and downs. For those of you who are on the ground and ministering to our communities of faith, you have had the heavy work of being present in the midst of the complicated grief of COVID. I know there is an overall fatigue amongst our volunteers, our ministry personnel, and staff, and rightly so. This has been no ordinary year. It has been heavy and hard. It has been a year when the smallest decisions have taken so much more energy, creative thinking and time. The words *thank you* seem so inadequate to express the gratitude for everyone who has given so much of themselves to the living out of the Gospel in this time and place in our history. Well done and Thank You.

I have listed some of the work that I, and others, have spent time with this year. If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch:

- 1) Ensuring that any community of faith and ministry personnel had the tools they needed and the information to follow the pandemic protocols. Providing information sessions as well as written material to help with the preparation of shutting down our buildings and learning new ways to be church.
- 2) Providing town hall meetings for the three regions to talk about plans and ways forward within the pandemic.
- 3) Providing information and updates for communities of faith to have information about financial programs and give assistance where needed.
- 4) Providing, through the region, tools for conducting meetings for the communities of faith. The regions have been able to provide the zoom links and conference calling for communities of faith free of charge.
- 5) Providing worship services for the communities of faith for when the clergy are on vacation.

- 6) Working to make sure we, as a region, have timely responsiveness to our communities of faith. Thanks to all of the divisions, teams, and staff working together, we have been able to do this. As we move forward it is our hope that this will continue and become even more efficient.
- 7) Working with the executives, divisions and teams to continue to discern their role and function.
- 8) Supporting the divisions and teams in their work.
- 9) Ensuring the regional policies are updated, and that communities of faith are aware of the regional policies.
- 10) Supporting the Presidents, Annual Meeting Committees, and working to provide the online platform so that we can have our annual meetings in a good way despite the disappointment of not being able to be together. All three regions were able to have their annual meetings and do the work that was needed.
- 11) Working with the office managers and the finance team to provide budgets for the region and the Audited Statements.
- 12) Connecting and supporting our staff through regularly planned one on one sessions (every 8 weeks) to discuss workload, well being, concerns and goals as well as tri-regional staff gatherings.
- 13) Engaging with the presidents and the executives for each region in developing the agendas. Providing educational opportunities for the executives.
- 14) Working with the Regional Ministers to assess ways to support ministry personnel and communities of faith in the region.
- 15) Supporting incorporated ministries when needed, as well as being the ex-officio member of all boards.
- 16) Being the connection between the General Council and the Region, along with the staff; helping to highlight initiatives from the General Council that will help communities of faith in their ministries.
- 17) Identifying gaps - working with the executive, division, teams, and staff to identify gaps that need to be addressed.
- 18) Working with the reviews and the appeals in the regions.
- 19) Asset Management - working with the office managers and the division and finance teams to manage our assets both in terms of finances and staff.
- 20) Conducting follow-up on work coming from the regional council annual meeting and executive meetings.

Operating Fund

Again, this year it has been difficult to estimate the budget needed to have a full program year, as we have not had a regular year since we have become a region. We ended the 2020 year in a surplus position. The 2022 budget process is underway. In 2020 we prepared for the Mission and Service 2021 cuts. This was not an easy task and in our region some of our ministries did have a slight reduction. We do not anticipate reduction in 2022, however, as with anything, there are no guarantees.

Restricted and Unrestricted Fund

Working with the Board of Trusts and Investments and the office manager to make sure our applications for funding are updated to reflect the new structure. Evaluating the investment portfolio and policies on a bi-yearly basis.

Staffing

We welcomed Rev. Catherine Stuart as our Regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults and thank her for beginning her ministry in the midst of a pandemic. Even though she has worked for the first

year in the midst of pandemic protocols, she has done a wonderful job at working to support the three regions.

All of our staff have worked hard over this past year to support our communities of faith, our divisions, and teams, our ministry personnel and our laity. I take this opportunity to thank each one of them for their continuous support, faithfulness, professionalism and ministry in the work of our First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council.

Rev. Faith March-MacCuish
Regional Executive Minister