

ECORC Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Network

February 13, 2023 - MINUTES

➤ 27 attending --- great turnout - thanks for attending tonight!

Nancy Payne was the chair tonight and Paul Kneebone the recording secretary.

Meeting started at 7:00pm.

Land acknowledgement (Nancy Payne)

Opening prayer (Paul Kneebone)

Approval of minutes from Nov. 29, 2022: Susan Pleasance moves, Chris Ingersoll seconded.

Business arising from previous meeting.

- i. overview of survey results. Nancy highlighted some of the key results.
- ii. response to letter regarding timing of ECORC learning events. Bill Sheaves, Chair of Covenant Support Team (CST) acknowledged our concerns – “all good points.”

New business

- i. Conversation and Q&A with Rev. Darren Liepold, ECORC Pastoral Relations Minister.
[Key questions and concerns brought up by attendees are in *italics* --- and summary of Darren’s comments follow.]
 - Nancy led off with some common questions/concerns:
 - a. *Rationale about limiting number of services in any one community of faith to 10 Sundays within ECORC.* Cdn. Shield has 24 Sundays, but only 8 ordained ministers in the whole region. Question: are there enough retired ministers & ministers to fill a lot of the gap. LLWL do a very important job, and the 10 number could possibly be reviewed down the line.
 - b. *Question of Sacramental Elders --- is this something that is being considered?* Yes, talking already about offering course(s) starting in late Spring. Will be publicized through a Pastoral Relations newsletter issue, which will appear as part of a future weekly *ECORC eNews* issue online.
 - c. *Ongoing discussion about matter of Congregational Designated Ministers, etc.* Was discussed at the last national GC44 but deferred to regions. All Pastoral Relations ministers will be meeting again in March, and it is on their agenda.
 - *Feedback from at least some congregations is why just 10 per congregation per calendar year.* Such policies are decided by regional councils, not national.

- LLWLs go to some congregations where there has not been a minister for a long time – and no communion for 2-3 years.
- How many retired ministers do pulpit supply and if so, how often? A lot of retired ministers do (2/3's according to Darren) preach some Sundays. What's hard is last minute requests – esp. in remote locations when ministers get sick, for instance. He understands the need to fill the lack of communion over a long period of time.
- Discussion about non-qualified lapsed LLWLs, or any lay person, preaching regularly --- instead of inviting one of 30 approved LLWLs. The “vagabond toolbox” that Darren and others are addressing. Due to trends that were exacerbated by COVID pandemic and continue now. Those congregations were struggling before COVID, and they're struggling more now. Working now with those congregations to discuss and deal with “next steps” ---- tools they need to continue. First session of “vagabond tools” coming up for SW area of the Region. Darren encourages us as LLWLs to attend and participate.
- Some are seeing more and more former LLWLs not now with approved status (i.e., continue to be lapsed, by their own choice) doing more than 10 Sundays per congregation. A few scenarios where up to 20-30-40 Sundays. At the same time, we as properly approved LLWLs are seemingly penalized for adhering to the guidelines.
- Seems like the ECORC Assembly of Elders put more stock in idea that LLWLs do more than just Sunday preaching. Darren made a few comments.
- After this June, are congregations free to pay a non-LLWL Pulpit Supply fee? If any congregation decides to hire a non-LLWL for Sunday preaching, we're left to the whims of the congregation. But they too cannot preach more than 10 Sundays in a year. Keep in mind that LLWLs are not employees, no M&P committee to go to when things might go off the rails.
- Is there anywhere on the ECORC website a church can go to find out clear guidelines for preaching scenarios, etc.? Not presently part of the LLWL Forum or LLWL Network. Where do we find such information clearly available for everyone to easily access and understand?
- What is the present relationship between congregations and the region --- vs. former system involving Presbyteries? After 4 years, we are still finding our way. Some of these we aren't doing well at this point.
- To help make these changes, we need more folks from the local level. There was a big gap between when David Timpson first became sick and when Darren joined the ECORC team. We do need to do more enforcement re. non-LLWLs preaching out there.

- Nancy finished off by expressing gratitude to Darren for joining us tonight and giving of his time so freely in his busy schedule. She thanked everyone for the topics discussed, and that have been done so openly, candidly, and positively.

Update from Feb. 7th LLWL Forum meeting

- Gathering planned for April 29th at Bridgenorth UC. Now we need possible topics for that date: Suggestions given tonight included --- prayers and writing prayers; getting started (on a sermon and liturgy); how to organize a sermon – the 4-step process or whatever; music selection in a service; using PowerPoint & multi-media in an Order of Service/sermon. Some of these suggestions were written in the Zoom Chat. You can also send any ideas to Paul or Nancy after this evening's meeting.
- New LLWL candidates: two have recently finished the United in Learning LLWL course of study; two others are presently lapsed LLWL now wishing to be reinstated.
- Current 2023 policies on T4As (must include pulpit supply AND any mileage payments) and restating of current pulpit supply rate (\$232 per Sunday – whether on service or two, and \$0.55 per kilometre for mileage).
- Reminder: pulpit supply payment is for the whole day, not per service
- Cathy Gradante has written a letter setting out these 2023 rates and T4 information --- addressed to church treasurer job title.
- Kathleen Whyte mentioned that contrary to Feb. 7th Forum minutes, she is still on the Council of Elders.
- Paul Kneebone gave a summary of other items at last week's LLWL Forum meeting. See copy of the meeting minutes that everyone should have received for further details. Several to-do results --- Paul will send a brief letter template you can use for the letter of support from your congregation. He also can send to anyone needing a new Police Vulnerable Sector Check this year a request letter, signed by Darren Liepold.

Next meeting: TBD ---- within two weeks of the next Forum meeting, 7:00 via Zoom.

Closing reflection (Carol O'Neil)

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

--- Paul Kneebone, Secretary – ECORC LLWL Network