

**SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**Name of Pastoral Charge:** Rivers United Church

**Phone number of Pastoral Charge:** 204-328-7940

**Communities of Faith (congregations) in the Pastoral Charge:** Rivers United Church

**E-mail for Pastoral Charge:** ruc@wcgwave.ca

**Pastoral charge Mailing Address:** Box 444, Rivers, Manitoba R0K 1X0

**Physical address of the church building:** 347 Main Street, Rivers

**Name of Ministry Personnel:** Sheila Deforest (Candidate)

**Name of Pastoral Charge Supervisor:** Rev. Barbara Jardine

**Contact person:** Dianne Kowalchuk

**Email:** dckowalchuk@hotmail.com

\*\*\*\*\*

**Self-assessment Questions**

1. Vision and Mission

- a. Describe how the work and activities of your church community connect with your congregation's mission and vision?

**The Mission of Rivers United is “to grow in faith as followers of Jesus”. Our Vision includes 10 aspects. We strive to achieve that Vision through:**

- **Regular worship services that joyfully praise God and welcome all**
- **Building connections in the community through thrift sales, fall supper, other events**
- **Significant financial donations to organizations e.g. Canadian Foodgrain Bank, local foodbank, high school breakfast program, women's shelter in Brandon, Bear Clan (Brandon)**
- **Monthly Sunday school program**

- b. Have you been able to do what you said or wanted to do?

- **Because we are financially sound at the moment, we are able to help where monetary help is needed**
- **We are always working to achieve our Vision; the pandemic and dwindling church attendance has set us back a bit.**
- **We are determined to thank God for what we have rather than moaning about what we have lost.**

*Send hard copy of Self-Assessment Report to: Prairie to Pine Regional Council. Committee on Community of Faith Support.  
60 Maryland Street, Winnipeg, MB R3G 1K7.*

- c. How did your activities help the church achieve its goals?
  - **This is a work in progress.**
  - **Our activities provide fellowship; some of these activities also provide funds for worthwhile organizations and projects, locally and in the wider church.**
- d. In what ways did your activities take you in a new direction?
  - **When we had a fulltime minister and a manse, we were always worried about money. Subsequently, we were without a full-time minister for a few years and sold the manse. This has given us a solid financial footing so that we can concentrate on our Mission and Vision.**
- e. Does this mean you might want to change your goal or vision?
  - **No, our Vision is solid.**
- f. If some of the work was in a new direction or in contrast to your stated mission, please explain.
  - **As stated above, things are no longer the way they were. Our church is not full and is not abounding with young people**
  - **But we find that the Mission and Vision can now be at the centre of our work because we don't have to worry about money.**

## 2. Joys and Sorrows

- a. Identify some of the things at your church that brought the community joy, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment. Why are these important to the church you are called to be?
  - **our student minister, who very quickly became part of the family**
  - **the willingness of lay people to step forward to do pulpit supply when needed**
  - **our choir which provides anthems and musical leadership**
  - **learning new songs**
  - **the beautiful banners that were recently sewn by volunteers**
  - **celebrating the seasons in the decorating of the sanctuary**
  - **the thrift sales and fall supper**
  - **the financial donations that we are able to make**
  - **the well-attended monthly Sunday school**
  - **a committed church council made up of caring people**
  - **the ready volunteers for the Lay Supervision Team (LST) to help our student minister**
  - **outreach through the e-mailing of church services**
  - **our paid staff, including Sunday school teacher, administrative assistant, and caretakers**

**These activities define who we are as a church. It is doubly satisfying that we are still able to achieve all of this!**

- b. Identify some of the things at your church that brought the community sorrow, discouragement, and/or difficulty. Why do these matter to the ministry/call of the congregation?
- **Dwindling attendance**
  - **In the past, when we didn't have a minister, it was a heavy load to find pulpit supply.**
  - **The assessments that are required work for the LST members. Not all church members are intellectuals, and one shouldn't have to be an intellectual in order to sit on a church committee. The LST looks forward to trying the new system of assessment; there are challenges with the old process.**
  - **The bureaucracy of the United Church of Canada**
  - **The pastoral relations process. At this time, there is one person who has all the answers for pastoral relations questions and that one person is overwhelmed. The system since re-structuring is not working.**
  - **Policies that are not fully articulated. Where does it say that a minister who wants to work 20 hours a week in one PC must find additional work in another PC that needs a minister?**

**We are working on the attendance. This matters because numbers make a difference in the future of the church. As for pulpit supply issues, this is a burden and the resulting discouragement can become palpable to the congregation. The other four difficulties matter because they all cause frustration and even anger at times. We have capable people in our congregation, but at times what should be a simple process becomes difficult and time-consuming. We are not feeling like loving "children of God" in those times.**

### 3. Hopes and Fears

- a. What are some of your hopes as you look forward to living your call and ministry at your church over the next three years?
- **We hope we're still here!**
  - **We hope that we will be able to increase our congregation, that we can draw people in.**
  - **We hope that our student minister will stay with us and that we can learn and grow with her.**
  - **We hope that we will find the time, leadership, and motivation to focus on social justice issues.**
- b. What are some of your worries/concerns as you look forward to living your call and ministry at your church over the next three years?
- **Our student minister will be finished here on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Will we be able to keep her? How difficult will the pastoral relations process be?**
  - **Will the Sunday worship attendance numbers continue to fall?**
  - **Can we draw younger members? We are getting older!!**
  - **What resources will replace *Seasons of the Spirit*?**

4. Finances

a. How is your church doing financially? **Very well**

- Have you seen changes in levels and/or patterns of giving over the last three years?

**Givings are going down**

- If these patterns continue, what would this mean for the future of the church?

**We would still be here, but we would not be able to make the financial donations that give us so much satisfaction. We would have to keep our fundraising for our own needs.**

b. Are you taking any specific steps to address finances at the church?

- **We encourage people to carry on with their giving.**
- **We will not send out a canvass letter, because it is difficult to ask for money when we have \$200,000 in the bank.**
- **We do not ignore our finances – the finance chair and treasurer keep a close eye.**
- **It is a relief to have the focus taken off raising money.**
- **We are doing major work in the building while we have the money (repairing and replacing sanctuary windows).**

Would you like help to address these issues? **No**

c. To what extent does the United Church denominational assessment impact your congregation's financial situation? **The assessment has no impact now, but the question is, "What do we get for our money?" Maybe someone could explain that to us.**

5. Organization

a. How has the organizational structure of your pastoral charge been working over the last three years?

- Is it clear and effective? **Yes**
- What might need some attention or change? **Might need to lessen the number of committees and shrink the size of the committees if there are no new people to serve.**

b. How do leaders in your church learn what is expected of them? **We have been doing these jobs for many years. There are seldom new people! But when there are new people, they would learn what is expected of them by attending council and committee meetings, by asking questions, and by reading the Constitution.**

i. How do people learn about the organizational structure? **By reading the Constitution (which is very easy to read)**

ii. Is there anything written down that explains who does what jobs?

a. **Job descriptions for "staff" (choir director, organist, treasurer, admin assistant)**

b. **Complete list of committee duties in constitution**

**6. Civic and Church Requirements** There are various government regulations and United Church polices which apply to communities of faith. Please indicate which of the following best describes your familiarity with the policies, and how you try to do what is required:

1- At least one member of the staff is familiar with the policy and its application, but not the Board.

2- One staff (if any) and at least one member of the Board is familiar with the policy and its application.

3 – We know there is a policy and think we are following it, but haven’t actually read it.

4 – We have a vague idea about this but don’t think it applies to anything we are doing.

	Familiarity with this gov’t or UC policy. <b>1, 2, 3 or 4</b>	How do you manage this matter? What additional support might you need?
Privacy policies	1	
Copyright policies - material copied in print, including pictures, e.g., in church bulletins	2	
Copyright policies – material copied in audio or video recordings, e.g., for use on T.V or YouTube	2	
Employment & labour standards	2	
CRA rules for employers	2	
CRA rules for charitable organizations	2	
United Church Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, & Violence Prevention and Response Policy	2	

*Send hard copy of Self-Assessment Report to: Prairie to Pine Regional Council. Committee on Community of Faith Support.  
60 Maryland Street, Winnipeg, MB R3G 1K7.*

### 7. Does the governing body have a:

	YES	If not please explain why not
Chairperson elected by the community of faith / pastoral charge?	yes	
Secretary elected by the community of faith / pastoral charge?	yes	
Treasurer who is member of the governing body?	yes	
Pastoral Charge Ministry & Personnel Committee?	yes	
Lay person(s) elected as member(s) of the Regional Council?	yes	
At least three people named as Trustees who can act if / when required?	yes	

### 8. Other Administrative Responsibilities

	YES	Notes or explanations of exceptional issues
Does the governing body meet at least 4 times per year?	Yes	Meets 8 times usually
Is the annual charitable return filed regularly with CRA?	yes	
Is the annual United Church statistical report normally filed by the deadline?	yes	
Describe how you safely store the print and/or digital copies of Minutes of the governing body.		Minutes are saved on the secretary's computer. Print copies are saved in church basement cupboard.
Describe how you safely store the print and/or digital copies of financial records for seven (7) years.		Financial records are saved on the treasurer's computer. Print copies are stored in church basement cupboard.
Are Burial, Baptism & Marriage Record books completed as required, including names, signatures, dates, license numbers, etc. Describe how and where they are stored.	Yes	Stored in the minister's office.
Is the Historic Roll of Members updated annually?	Yes	Updated by a rep from the Spiritual Leadership Committee

Send hard copy of Self-Assessment Report to: Prairie to Pine Regional Council. Committee on Community of Faith Support.  
60 Maryland Street, Winnipeg, MB R3G 1K7.

**Names of people** involved in preparing this report, **the role they have** in the community of faith, and **contact information** (phone and / or email) for at least two of them.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Phone or email</u>
Debbie Johnston	Council Chair	<a href="mailto:jerrydebbiejohnston@hotmail.com">jerrydebbiejohnston@hotmail.com</a>
Connie van Dixhoorn	M&P Committee member & Trustee	<a href="mailto:johncon@mymts.net">johncon@mymts.net</a>
Heather Lamb	Vice Chair of council	<a href="mailto:heather.lamb5@icloud.com">heather.lamb5@icloud.com</a>
Monica Madden	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:mmadden@redferns.ca">mmadden@redferns.ca</a>
Lynn Madden	M&P Committee member	204-303-9013
Tara Bray	Spiritual Leadership Committee chair	<a href="mailto:taralynbray@gmail.com">taralynbray@gmail.com</a>
Sheila Deforest	Candidate for Ministry	<a href="mailto:sheila.a.deforest@gmail.com">sheila.a.deforest@gmail.com</a>
Dianne Kowalchuk	Secretary, Lay Rep to Prairie to Pine	<a href="mailto:dckowalchuk@hotmail.com">dckowalchuk@hotmail.com</a>
Debbie Phythian	Ministry & Personnel Committee chair	<a href="mailto:debbiephythian@gmail.com">debbiephythian@gmail.com</a>
Dave Falkevitch	Trustee	<a href="mailto:dfalkevi@gmail.com">dfalkevi@gmail.com</a>
Lori Kiesman	Outreach Committee chair	<a href="mailto:lorikiesman6@gmail.com">lorikiesman6@gmail.com</a>
Megan Lelonde	SL Committee member	<a href="mailto:meglelonde1974@gmail.com">meglelonde1974@gmail.com</a>
Jamie McFadden	Stewardship Committee chair	<a href="mailto:jmcf@mymts.net">jmcf@mymts.net</a>

**Date the Report was reviewed & received by the local Governing Body**

November 14, 2023

This should be noted in the minutes of Governing Body.

### **Comments of the Governing Body**

Although the Council members groaned when they were informed about this assessment, it really was a good exercise in voicing our frustrations and counting our blessings. PS: As a matter of format, please do not include questions within questions.

### **Person responsible for mailing this Self-Assessment Report to the Regional Council**

Dianne Kowalchuk

**Person responsible for emailing the report to the Regional Council** to Cherry Abad ([cabad@united-church.ca](mailto:cabad@united-church.ca))

Dianne Kowalchuk

*Send hard copy of Self-Assessment Report to: Prairie to Pine Regional Council. Committee on Community of Faith Support.  
60 Maryland Street, Winnipeg, MB R3G 1K7.*