

## ***QUESTION # 1***

***In your experience of life at presbytery, what was good in former times?***

### **Point #1- Comments on the Court**

#### **Comments on Plenary**

- Not everything was done by committee so people knew more about the work of Presbytery.
- More business discussed in court
- More discussions in the court
- Custom of each committee giving a full report in the plenary session, giving presbyters an opportunity to put a face to that committee. This made us much better informed and made us feel a part (informed at least), and much more likely to retain the business, participate, and perhaps discuss outside the formal meeting.
- Finding out what divisions are up to.
- There used to be interesting debate and discussion on the Presbytery floor. Now it seems many decisions are cut & dry before the meeting. - connecting with other Presbyters
- Should be more info given before votes are taken – less rubber stamping.
- Decisions used to take place in the court.
- More participation in decision-making.
- When everyone was on the same side.
- good communication
- transparent & caring for one another
- There was a larger crowd.
- Better attendance

#### **Comments about Committees**

- Going to different division meetings to see how they handle their division.
- All committees met as a whole
- Joining the finance committee I belong to it.
- More general committees PC&O, Pastoral Relations etc.
- E&S & PR all met together
- Belonging to a committee.
- Knew what you were voting on

#### **Comments on Leadership**

- Chair used to play a bigger role in meetings as a leader in unifying the churches & nurturing involvement in our common life and ministry. learning about the wider church
- Good leadership
- Setting and communicating policies
- Leadership
- Strong & effective leadership at the front

### **Comments on Structure and Organization**

- Not quite so parliamentary day meetings
- Day meetings
- Day meetings
- Moving to central location
- More variety in reports
- Not as rushed
- Tightly run meetings
- Daylight meetings
- Should return to 10:30am-4pm
- When presbytery started at 10am and was over by 4pm when you live in the Snow Belt that's a better time.
- Depending on where held it varied in format.
- Day meetings
- Moving around to all the churches in the presbytery.

### ***QUESTION # 1***

***In your experience of life at presbytery, what was good in former times?***

#### **Point #2 – Comments on Fellowship/Relationships**

- Companionship
- Interaction with clergy
- Interacting with fellow clergy
- Meals.
- Getting together with colleagues
- Meals
- Gathering as community to eat, play and learn together – creative worship
- You could count on seeing your colleagues and presbyters. Attendance was good but not any more.
- Supportive relationships
- Fellowship
- Support for clergy e.g. during crisis
- Some fun
- Opportunity to exercise collegiality in a relational way that encourages health and well-being.
- Presbytery paid for your meals
- Collegiality
- Presbytery had social times to celebrate e.g. Christmas & summer picnics with no business allowed.
- Opportunity to meet with friends and colleagues.
- Connections and relationships
- Respect for roles and processes carried out with integrity.

## ***QUESTION # 1***

***In your experience of life at presbytery, what was good in former times?***

### **Point #3 – Comments on Spiritual Dimensions**

- Going to different division meetings to see how they handle their division.
- Sing songs and more music to bring people together
- More music/energy
- Singing
- Worship.
- Singing
- Fellowship
- Worship service.
- Songs – enthusiasm

## ***QUESTION # 1***

***In your experience of life at presbytery, what was good in former times?***

### **Point #4 – Comments on Learning**

- Anytime there were discussion groups.
- Workshops pertinent to those living in our presbytery e.g. Varna-farmers, why not one on health system and closing of hospitals – what's the vision?
- Choice of workshop
- Presentations that engage and involve the whole court.
- Workshops that offered learning opportunities.
- We used to have at least two workshops to choose from, often it was a dilemma to decide which I would attend. Now we rarely have a workshop – at least an interesting one.
- Real workshops not lectures
- Real workshops
- Actual workshops with participatory pieces for everyone present.
- Workshops arising from a concrete need or passionate inspiration
- More workshops
- Real workshops
- At least two workshops, well organized and planned in advance.
- Learning
- Rural church events
- Real workshops
- Workshop overlap
- Learning & challenge

## ***QUESTION # 1***

***In your experience of life at presbytery, what was good in former times?***

**Point #5 – Comments on Presbyters**

- People with passion
- Positive rather than negative.
- People with passion
- Open communications
- Positive
- Enthusiastic people.
- Passion of some people in their particular area.
- More open, more positive, more passion.
- Passionate people.
- Enthusiastic people with specific agenda
- More argumentative on the surface.
- Light passion – involved – youth group- singing – lively discussion
- People committed to Presbytery and its vital ministry

***QUESTION # 1***

***In your experience of life at presbytery, what was good in former times?***

**Point #6 – Comments on a Greater Mission**

- Feeling connected to the larger Body of Christ.
- having someone to turn to when local congregation needs help.
- Responsibility for supporting covenant relationships entered into by presbytery.
- A greater sense of the United Church of Canada – less lone wolf syndrome
- Community of faithful people that directed many areas of the faith community.
- Coming together with common needs and purpose
- When we were growing and the mission was clearer.
- A time to hear from congregations
- Focused projects e.g. refugees
- Promoting & following (or taking steps to change) united Church polity.
- More reporting from conference as to what is happening at the local level.

***QUESTION # 1***

***In your experience of life at presbytery, what was good in former times?***

## Point #7 – Other Comments

- We were younger – or a younger group.
- Not much change that I’m aware of in the time I’ve been a member
- Attendance was better
- Not so much change in presbytery members lay or clergy
- Presbytery has remained basically the same during my years on it.
- Meals were seen as a gift and mission work to presbytery, not as a fundraiser
- Freeing up funding.
- Smaller territorially
- Youth at a meeting to get energy flowing.
- Youth involvement
- Youth day – energy

### **QUESTION # 1**

*In your experience of life at presbytery, what was good in former times?*

### **Summary of Comments**

#### **Comments on the Court**

##### **Plenary**

More Discussion in court .....	8
Transparency of Committee work .....	3
Good Communication .....	2
Better Attendance .....	2

##### **Committees**

More general committees .....	3
Belonging to a committee .....	2
Visiting other committees .....	1
Knowledge of issues .....	1

##### **Leadership**

Importance of the Chair .....	3
Setting and communicating policies .....	1

##### **Structure and Organization**

Day Meetings .....	7
Varied location .....	2
Not as rushed .....	1
More tightly run .....	1
Varied format .....	1
Central location .....	1

**Comments on Fellowship/Relationships**

Collegiality with clergy ..... 7  
Relationships ..... 5  
Supportive ..... 3  
Meals ..... 3  
Fun/Social times ..... 2  
Respect for roles and process ..... 1  
Free Meals ..... 2

**Comments on Spiritual Dimension**

Singing ..... 5  
Worship ..... 2  
Fellowship ..... 1

**Comments on Learning**

10  
Choice of workshops ..... 3  
Learning ..... 2  
Rural Church ..... 2

**Comments on Presbyters**

Passion/enthusiasm ..... 10  
Positive ..... 2  
Open communication ..... 1

**Comments on Mission**

Connection to congregation ..... 4  
Connection to broader church ..... 4  
Clearer Vision ..... 3  
Responsibility for covenant relationships ..... 2  
Specific projects ..... 1

**Other Comments**

Youth at meeting ..... 3  
Little change ..... 2  
Freeing up funding ..... 1  
Smaller territory? ..... 1  
Less turn over in delegates ..... 1  
Getting older ..... 1  
“Real Workshops” ie topical, participatory,

**QUESTION # 2**

***WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT PRESBYTERY NOW?***

# Point #1 – Responses about the Court

## Concerning Committees

- Able to sign up for a particular division.
- several committees are dedicated to task and follow up on decisions
- If you are in a division there's wonderful info and discussion
- The work and discussions in committee and our attempts though limited by the reporting system to share information and enthusiasm.
- Co Faithful committees ding their best with challenging situations & processes
- Attention to detail by some committees.
- Experienced committee who can discuss items and know what they are talking about.
- Good committee (Finance) where everyone can participate in the discussion.
- Committees are valuable. I feel that I am contributing when I am on a committee & learning and doing something useful.
- Discussion in the committees
- Good informative discussions in committee
- the meetings (committee).
- Committee work
- Members who work
- E&S support
- More power is given to committees to govern the church body
- I g Pastoral care and oversight committee
- Committees cover individual and social needs
- Collegial work in committee
- Committee groups
- Pastoral care & oversight
- World outreach
- committee work
- **We need to find ways to let enthusiasm of committees and wider work get shared in wider presbytery.**
- Discussions to be shared
- Good educational meetings that accomplish something

## Concerning Structure and Organization

- Manageable time – all day was too long.
- Early adjournment
- Committees meeting 1 1/2hrs before supper.
- Minutes are available on-line
- Web site
- Meetings done in reasonable time
- Our web site
- Want to hear from committees 4-6pm
- Early agenda

- Smoother operating with less people.
- Early adjournments
- good business but dry
- Equal representation of ministers and lay people
- Committee presentations (infrequent though)

#### **Other**

- Tradition is strong
- Tradition
- Tradition is strong

#### **SUMMARY POINT #1**

- 1) MEETINGS ARE DONE IN GOOD TIME – 5**
- 2) NEGATIVE COMMENTS ON 3 ASPECTS OF PLENARY EXPERIENCE – 3**
- 3) USE OF E-MAIL AND WEB SITE – 4**
- 4) COMMITTEE MEETING TIME IS GOOD – 1**
- 5) STRONG TRADITION MAINTAINED – 3**
- 6) BALANCED REPRESENTATION CLERGY/LAY – 1**
- 7) WORKING ON COMMITTEE AND THE WORK OF COMMITTEES PROVIDES PURPOSE, SIGNIFICANCE, SATISFACTION – 24**

#### ***QUESTION # 2***

#### ***WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT PRESBYTERY NOW?***

#### **Point #2 – Responses about Fellowship/Relationships**

##### **Concerning Social Time and friendship**

- Social aspect – fellowship and sharing.
- Lunch-fellowship-attending different churches in presbytery.
- brings people together across presbytery
- Fellowship – sharing
- Fellowship
- Getting to meet new people.
- Still a degree of fellowship
- Meals together – getting to know one another
- Meals
- Fellowship at mealtime
- Seeing friends
- Supper is usually good
- Fellowship
- Fellowship and worship
- Meals and fellowship
- Food & fellowship
- The people who attend
- Friends and colleagues
- Not so cliquy, more open
- Having dinner together

- Meal & fellowship
- Fellowship & meals
- Fellowship and meals
- informal contact with others.
- Like the diversity
- 

### **Concerning Developing Relationships**

- Meeting people committed to the United Church, justice and peace. issues.
- Presence of pastors holding a wide range of views.
- Meeting with people who may or may not share your views. learning new things.
- Connections
- Meeting other people and talking about problems that we share.
- Getting together with colleagues
- Honouring all parts of the Body.
- Networking with others
- Gathering of people who are committed to church.
- Opportunity to interface with people who have an interest in camps
- Connecting with people
- exchange and discussion on local problems in fellowship time - networking
- Collegiality
- Relationships
- Networking
- Opportunity to network
- Lay and clergy working together
- networking – sometimes it gets lonely in smaller congregations
- Spirit of mentoring and guidance from experienced clergy for new
- Meeting other people and talking about problems that we share.
- Interest and dedication of those who do participate

### **SUMMARY POINT #2**

**1) ENJOYMENT OF A SOCIAL ASPECT OF PRESBYTERY BEFORE AND DURING SUPPER FOR DEVELOPING/CONTINUING FRIENDSHIPS AND THE INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION – 23**

**2) RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE FOCUSED ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH IS VALUED - 18**

## ***QUESTION # 2***

### ***WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT PRESBYTERY NOW?***

#### **Point #3 – Responses on Spiritual Dimensions**

- Worship services usually meaningful.
- Worship.
- Dynamic worship
- Worship – variety & thoughtfulness
- Worship & fellowship
- Spirit of the Lord is present
- Worship is generally good
- Worship services
- Worship service.
- Worship usually
- Worship is usually stimulating
- worship
- Music
- Enjoy short worship time
- Worship delightful
- Worship.

#### **SUMMARY POINT #3**

##### **1) WORSHIP WITH THE MUSIC IS VALUED – 16**

## ***QUESTION # 2***

### ***WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT PRESBYTERY NOW?***

#### **Point #4 – Responses about Learning**

- Some workshops
- Workshops
- Education and learn from workshops.
- Informative workshops
- Some workshops though many seem irrelevant to the average lay person or congregation.
- Information
- Good workshops
- Most workshops
- Discussions of different topics
- Workshops
- Workshops are often good
- Workshops that have interaction between speaker and members of court
- announcements
- Announcements
- Updates on church work
- Getting to know more about the workings of presbytery

- a way to keep current in activities of church.
- Finding out what divisions are up to.
- Learning what is happening in the presbytery
- Hearing what is going on
- Announcements
- Announcements
- Handbook for new presbyters

#### **SUMMARY POINT #4**

**1) INFORMATION FOR THE SAKE OF KEEPING UP-TO-DATE ON EVENTS/NEWS VALUED – 10**

**2) EVENTS/INFORMATION FOR THE SAKE OF LEARNING MORE IS VALUED - 13**

### ***QUESTION # 2***

#### ***WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT PRESBYTERY NOW?***

##### **Point #5 – Responses about Presbyters**

- Kathy and the book table.
- Resource centre presentations
- Sharing or resources e.g. Youth Minister and pastoral support minister.
- Resource centre & pastoral care and Oversight.
- resource Centre reports
- Resource Centre.
- Resource Centre.
- Resource Centre reports
- Resource Centre
- Resource centre staff inspires and is hands on useful
- Neil and Kathy are amazing resource people
- Resource Centre
- Resource centre
- Resource centre
- Pastoral Support Minister
- Resource Centre
- resource Centre
- Pastoral Support minister
- Resource Centre
- Resource Centre
- Our two staff are both doing valuable work and set us apart from most crises besting presbyteries.
- Pastoral support minister.
- Access to resources
- Resources available to pick up

#### **SUMMARY POINT #5**

**1) RESOURCE CENTRE WORK, PRESENTATIONS, AND DIRECTOR ARE**

## ***QUESTION # 2***

### ***WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT PRESBYTERY NOW?***

#### **Point #6 – Responses about Greater Vision/Mission**

##### **Awareness (knowing)**

- A chance to better understand issues in the United Church.
- **We need to have more about good things and struggles of churches to inspire and link us e.g. maybe profile one or two every month.**
- Hearing about activities and ideas taking place in our presbytery and United Church as a whole.
- Sense of belonging to the UCC
- Contact with news from the wider church
- Do realize it is the grassroots of the UCC

##### **General Change**

- Some people are trying to be progressive.
- Change and adapt
- Courageous initiatives to try new things
- Willingness to do things differently and explore new ways.
- There is a growing desire to change and adapt.
- Growing desire to grow and adapt
- Like addressing issue of change at presbytery
- Getting change started by asking the questions

##### **Mission (doing)**

- The chance to become more involved in the United Church.
- The work done by Pastoral Oversight and others who work directly with congregations in transition.
- Support of a student minister.
- Its good that we see our children's camps each year.
- Commitment to our camps.
- Support to pastoral charges.
- experiences that reflect the reality of who and what we are called to be in God's desire
- Meeting other church families by going to other churches.
- Partnership and support for congregations in transition
- Experience of belonging to larger church
- Support for congregations
- How to cope with church attendance
- Learning what to take back to the church Board about F&A

### **SUMMARY POINT #6**

- 1) **NEED FOR AND WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE IS VALUED – 8**
- 2) **WE NEED A WIDER SENSE OF PURPOSE AND UNITY BETWEEN PRESBYTERY AND CONGREGATION– 2**
- 3) **WE NEED A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND UNITY INVOLVING THE NATIONAL CHURCH – 4**
- 4) **MISSION THAT INVOLVES HEALTHY TIES BETWEEN PRESBYTERY AND CONGREGATION/CAMPS – 10**
- 5) **MISSION THAT INVOLVES MORE CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL CHURCH - 3**

### **QUESTION #3**

## **IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT PRESBYTERY THAT DIMINISHES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF PRESBYTERY?**

### **Point #1 – Suggestions**

- Should we try something new like brief updates on issues that involve the entire church family? At present I do most of my reporting from data on our web sites, and not from presbytery meetings.
- Need more opportunity to connect/get to know fellow presbyters. How about a Bible study “Living the Questions” in groups applying our discussions to our work at presbytery
- Have day meetings in winter

### **QUESTION #3**

## **IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT PRESBYTERY THAT DIMINISHES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF PRESBYTERY?**

### **Point #2 – The Court**

#### **Leadership Issues**

- When court discussions go on endlessly over small items (small to me)
- definition of roles is lacking
- Often we get bogged down in procedural details.
- Executive officers need to be educated in how to effectively carry out their responsibility. If there is not a competent co-ordination of the plenary session, interest is soon lost.
- Boring and at times petty things monopolize the time.
- Wrangling over trivia
- Dead, meaningless meetings going nowhere
- Low attendance
- When a presbytery member offers to serve in a committee and is not called.

- Leadership poorly prepared – meetings inefficient & occasionally frustrating
- Leadership at the front
- Responsibility falling on too few
- The chair needs to ??? the meeting ???

### **Communications Issues**

- When the courts discusses something in language I don't understand
- Presbytery is intimidating
- If presbytery is to be effective there needs to be a better way of disseminating information. I'm aware of what my committee is doing but when committees only bring motions to the floor and do not submit a summary report for inclusion with the minutes, there is virtually no way for one committee to be aware of what the other committees are doing.
- Lack of communication between committees
- Some things not explained very well
- Sometimes can't hear very well.
- Dull presentations
- Boring
- Complaining
- Lack of background/explanation for newcomers e.g. use of jargon
- poor sound systems make it difficult to hear conversations

### **Structure and Organizations Issues**

- Not enough time for the more active committees to complete their work.
- Committees only allowed to bring motions & have to come back just to present a report after many have gone home.
- The reporting system from committees is not very helpful to DWO
- Long meetings
- Long meetings
- Mostly cut and dried.
- Long meetings with a lot of arguing over technicalities.
- Night meetings too long
- Reports too long & dry
- Long meetings
- Difficult to follow the order of business.
- Shortening reporting to control length of meetings is over-rated.
- Too traditional – flexibility needed
- Long bureaucratic meetings
- Slow moving meetings
- Overly focused on bureaucratic functioning.
- I don't think there's been much change. Overall I think it is pretty good.
- No orientation
- There is no report from other committees to say what they have discussed.
- No reports from committee meetings brought to the court so we don't know what others are doing

- Focus on administration
- Focus on positions not people
- Long, dragged out meetings
- Foolishness during discussion time.
- No enthusiasm for the work overall
- Not putting new members on committees that make the presbytery experience worthwhile.
- So much sitting
- Idiotic courtesies and reflections – itemized accounts when we have all been there.
- Too long
- Court time.
- Like watching paint dry
- meetings move slowly

### **Venue Issues**

- Using Main Street constantly
- Is it fair that the church that hosts also does worship – many clergy and congregations are not taking their turn (also for meals)?
- Why does presbytery always come to Mitchell?
- Lack of allowing us to get to know our neighboring congregations
- Held during working hours and crossing over to night. diminishes possibilities of getting delegates.
- How come some churches never host presbytery?
- Meeting in Mitchell so often
- Why do we meet in Mitchell so much?
- Every one should get a chance to host presbytery
- Hard to get to if working
- more congregations to host presbytery so they can see us

### **Issues re: Committees**

- Knowing little or nothing about the work of other committees
- Committee meetings a waste of time
- At one meeting I spent my time reading a magazine because no other committee members showed up.
- At many other meetings just visited with whoever came as had no chair, and no direction.
- Insufficient awareness of what will be discussed at committee level
- Lack of reports or poor reports
- Lack of interested involvement by presbyters – more work than can be completed by a few committees and others never heard from – do they not have something to tell us?
- Put some committees together

# **QUESTION #3**

## **IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT PRESBYTERY THAT DIMINISHES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF PRESBYTERY?**

### **Point #3 – Presbyters**

#### **Lack of Commitment**

- Lack of dedication
- No commitment to attend a committee or to even regularly attend the whole meeting.
- Poor attendance
- Lack of support for those doing the work and carrying the load.
- Some ministers avoid attending and are negative about presbytery
- Several members do not seem to be involved in the work of presbytery.
- I have no idea why anyone would want to be a presbytery rep if they aren't willing to contribute to improvement in some way.
- Members who don't take part of the work load.
- Members who rely on everyone else to know the answers to concerns that they themselves should know about.
- Lack of clergy attendance. They are not fulfilling their covenant promises. Can they be fined?
- Clergy who don't attend or get involved at committee level
- Where are all the ministers?
- Lack of participation for work e.g. Pastoral Relations.

#### **Lack of Fellowship/Relationship**

- I seem to be on the far right of people in my committee making wonder if I'm weird.
- I don't know everyone at Presbytery
- Need more collegial time for clergy.
- A hard place for new-comers – cliques
- Disrespectful interactions that create hurt feelings and animosities
- Cliques – mistrust- gossip
- Very cliquey
- Unwelcome environment at presbytery
- Unwelcoming when I first attended
- Clergy who do not want to be under or refuse to accept the discipline of presbytery
- Those that love process over content
- Long discussions on the floor about procedural minutiae - bickering

#### **Lack of Knowledge or Understanding.**

- Two or three people always taking up time to argue a very small point.
- Members not sure what their job is

## QUESTION #3

# IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT PRESBYTERY THAT DIMINISHES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF PRESBYTERY?

### Point #4 – Decision-Making

#### Powerlessness/Worthlessness

- Rubber stamping of motions even though committee has done their work.
- Rubber stamping motions with insufficient information.
- No knowledge of motions – all decided in committee – too much rubber stamping.
- Rubber-stamping
- Decision-making quixotic – important things pass quick, little things drag on
- Going through the motions of decision making when the important discussion has already happened in committee.
- Work is done in committee so just rubber-stamp decisions without knowing background especially for personnel sensitive committees.
- Rubber-stamping motions especially significant ones with very little input to assist us. Seldom do I have anything to report back to my congregation that is of use to them.
- Rubber stamping motions with no debate – makes them irrelevant
- committees necessary but how to stop rubber-stamping
- when hidden agendas are displayed to the detriment of individuals
- When back-room deals are made and the Presbytery is reduced or bullied into acceptance.

#### Lack of Information

- Voting on things I don't know about
- I'm often asked to vote on issues of which I have little or no understanding
- Not knowing the reasons for decisions.
- We are ill informed and not capable of making intelligent decisions
- Committees do not report and so delegates know little about the purpose of the committee.
- Rushing at one time, over-talking issues at other times.
- Lack of discussion – maybe we need small group discussion then plenary
- Tripping over ourselves by making “reverse-field” decisions
- Difficult to make informed decisions due to lack of information – not available or confidential. **Perhaps my own failure to ask the right questions.**

# **QUESTION #3**

## **IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT PRESBYTERY THAT DIMINISHES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF PRESBYTERY?**

### **Point #5 - Vision/ Mission**

#### **Presbytery/Congregation Relationship**

- Presbytery interfered – presbytery didn't interfere.
- Communication of information – congregations need into to get rid of we/they feelings
- Lack of enthusiasm from home congregations – hard to get new delegates.
- Complaints about presbytery (us vs them)
- The lack of ability to communicate the atmosphere, commitment & ideals to my congregation or instigate some reaction.
- Presbytery has been stereotyped
- Lack of interest in congregations about sending Delegates.
- Presbytery dues are crippling congregations. At \$24 we don't get a good enough return at the congregational level.
- Us vs them mentality
- Us vs them in church and presbytery
- Very little to take back to congregations contributes to alienation.
- We vs they between congregation and presbytery
- Lack of support/encouragement for longer term pastorates
- Congregations blaming presbytery
- Us vs them between congregations and presbytery
- Bad-mouthing of presbytery
- Outside comments about power of presbytery and closing of churches
- When some members of committees of presbytery demean congregations
- When decisions are made and not explained clearly to congregations.
- When presbytery appears to ignore the wants and needs of the congregations

#### **Mission (doing)**

- Need more community spirit – a common purpose maybe – reflects an aging UCC
- Need to find more vibrant & inclusive ways to nurture wider connections of churches in geographic areas.

#### **Internal**

- Need to hear more good things & struggles of churches to inspire us – maybe profile one or two every month.
- Lack of meaningful substance to our work
- No new opinions, initiatives, innovative projects
- Lack of vision
- Continual changes from GC regarding ministry has everyone upset and confused.
- Continual decline of UCC as a conciliar church – want our own rules

- Little or no support from exec for clergy and pastoral charges.
- General lack of denominational identity

### **QUESTION #3**

## **IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT PRESBYTERY THAT DIMINISHES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF PRESBYTERY?**

### **Point #6 – Learning**

- Workshops need to be announced and planned before-hand.
- Lack of valuable, interesting workshops
- Workshops- feedback/action, not just going through motions
- All workshops geared to lowest common denominator – need separate clergy & lay workshops
- Need more expertise in M&P, Oversight, E&S, PR etc all well beyond lay volunteer level of requirement to do well
- Do presbyters need some training in being a presbyter
- Ideas: central learning, shared education, music
- Lack of helpful workshops
- Have real workshops

### **QUESTION #3**

## **IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT PRESBYTERY THAT DIMINISHES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF PRESBYTERY?**

### **Point #7 Other**

- Worship is usually directed towards a theistic understanding of God
- Not more youth at presbytery and nothing to attract them
- Nothing does
- Youth not involved on committees and in the general discussion
- More music

### **QUESTION #3**

## **IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT PRESBYTERY THAT DIMINISHES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF PRESBYTERY?**

### **Summary of Comments**

#### **Comments on the Court**

#### **Leadership Issues**

Trivial.....	7
Leadership.....	6

**Communications Issues**

Language.....	7
Technical .....	2

**Structure and Organization Issues**

Meeting Length .....	15
Process and Content.....	4
Orientation .....	1
Courtesies & Reflections .....	1

**Venue Issues**

Meeting Site .....	9
Time of Meeting.....	3

**Committee Issues**

Membership.....	8
Knowledge of Other Committees.....	5
Reports .....	3
Reporting System .....	2
Committee Length of Time.....	1

**Comments on Presbyters**

Lack of Commitment.....	15
Personal Issues .....	9
Presbytery Discipline.....	1

**Comments on Decision Making**

Decision Making .....	10
Rubber-Stamping Impressions .....	9

**Comments on Vision/Mission**

Presbytery/Congregations (We/They Feelings) .....	9
Presbytery Actions.....	6
Presbytery Not Initiating New Things/Vision.....	3
Attracting Delegates from Congregations .....	2

Sheet 2

Stereotyping of Presbytery.....	2
Reason for Existing .....	2
The United Church of Canada.....	2
Doing Mission .....	2
What are Others Doing?.....	1



- Presbytery structure is outdated – fossilized
- People no longer understand what it means to belong to a nation-wide denomination. We have become Congregationalist.

**QUESTION #5 (summary contained within the responses)**

**IN “TRANSFORMING CONGREGATIONS FOR THE FUTURE”, LOREN B MEAD IDENTIFIES 9 THINGS CONGREGATIONS NEED FROM THEIR “MIDDLE JUDICATORIES” i.e. PRESBYTERY**

**1) Congregations need help when they get in trouble**

- 15 already doing/doing some of this
- 14 should do/do more  
\*\*\*\*\*
- advice only
- maybe not soon enough in identifying the trouble or what is required.
- we don't have the expertise beyond nice caring people.
- The need for help when in trouble is crucial
- Need to know where they are going & how eg amalgamations]
- Too late.

**2) Congregations need to be left alone.**

- 7 doing/doing some
- 1 should do  
\*\*\*\*\*
- they need to be affirmed and encouraged – so does Presbytery
- no! all congregations need contact of some type at sometime. All congregations need to be aware of Presbytery and Conference, what they can do to support them – not just hear from them when the church has troubles.

**3) Congregations need to be ‘jacked up’ when they are off base.**

- 4 doing/doing some – 2 not doing/doing enough
- 9 should do/do more  
\*\*\*\*\*
- congregations see our input as interference. They generally hate The Manual, hate pay scales, hate housing allowances, hate Presbytery and so perhaps hate themselves.

**4) Congregations need pastoral care.**

- 10 doing/doing some – 3 not doing/not enough
- 12 should do  
\*\*\*\*\*g

- congregations need to do this for minister
- pastors in some cases particularly need ‘outside’ care

**5) Congregations need pastoral care for their pastors.**

- 17 doing/doing some
- 12 should do/do more
- \*\*\*\*\*
- congregations need to do this for minister

**6) Congregations need help in leadership development.**

- 4 doing/doing some – 3 not doing/not enough
- 14 should do/do more
- \*\*\*\*\*
- know where to get help when requested
- need for short courses and workshops

**7) Congregations need technical assistance**

- 2 doing/doing some – 2 not doing/not enough
- 3 should do/do more
- \*\*\*\*\*
- know where to get help when requested

**8) Congregations need a sense of their place in a larger mission**

- 2 doing/doing some – 3 not doing/not enough
- 32 should do/do more
- \*\*\*\*\*
- Churches who are this are thriving
- Talk to churches who are healthy
- Too many irons in the fire. Most churches can only support one mission. Easier to support none than to choose
- This is the biggest thing we could do in presbytery and is, I think, the one we do the least.
- Need a lot more of this
- Work on #8 to try and get away from the us vs them views congregations have.
- Is the most vital for our future.
- Do they want it? Luke 10
- Presbytery reps need to do better here
- Few people in congregations have a sense of the larger church. They do not trust Presbytery or Conference or head office. Find they think locally only.
- Need opportunities for youth to be part of bigger things than their own small congregation can provide

- Need to hear from Matthew Stevens more

**9) Congregations need someone who listens and listens and listens.**

- 5 doing/doing some – 1 not doing/not enough
- 10 should do/do more  
\*\*\*\*\*
- after listening we need to be able to provide answers
- need to talk to each other

**ASSUMING MEAD IS ACCURATE, WHAT ARE WE DOING ALREADY AND WHICH ONES SHOULD WE BE DOING?**

- How does one act in a constructive way when ones congregation changes in directions which are not nourishing for one.
- Congregations need help to avoid getting in trouble
- I think he's probably right.
- All of these functions require a level of technical competence beyond what well intended lay folk can do. Our incompetent leadership, however well meaning, can't do an effective job.
- 1,2, and 3 above only works when we have #8
- what we are doing is very subjective to particular congregations
- not all aspects in The Manual work for every individual situation in every pastoral charge. They should not be set in stone to the point that alternative solutions are never allowed. The UCC is its own worst enemy in regard to many of the policy decisions of the last few years. This is evident to me in the decline and demise of the UCC.
- Suggestion: have 4 all day Saturday meetings each year with Exec meeting between. At Saturday meetings have some study/discussion/passion.
- Send a pastoral letter yearly to remind congregations of their role in/with presbytery
- Invitation of congregations twice yearly to gatherings with a speaker, music, policy discussions. Learn about the conciliar church, and authority to act.
- Neil is doing the most effective work in this area. We could probably do without Presbytery providing we kept Neil and Kathy for that matter.
- Is a ministry to youth – rural youth – our presbytery's larger mission? Is that our support for the Youth Minister position?
- It is most important that we do 4, 5 & \* pretty well.

70 workshop sheets handed in.