

**REPORT ON THE
LAURENTIAN REGIONAL MINISTRY**

2018

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF
THE LAURENTIAN REGIONAL MINISTRY

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1.

DESCRIPTION & HISTORY OF THE LAURENTIAN REGIONAL MINISTRY

A. DEFINITION

The **Laurentian Regional Ministry** (LRM) is a community of Christians in the Anglican tradition (Diocese of Montreal) seeking to follow the leading of God in the Laurentian region of Quebec. Our churches have played a historic role in the area, though we came together as a regional body in July 2015.

B. PURPOSE

The Laurentian Regional Ministry has been called together in order to offer a stronger witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ in our region. We strive to offer a voice of welcome to everyone we meet, and prophetic challenge to ourselves and to the world around us. We offer one another solidarity and mutual support in the context of changing social structures and values. We maintain that we are stronger together.

Our Vision is that, together, we will hear, proclaim and enact the message of Jesus Christ for the benefit of the people of the Laurentians

C. HISTORY

The Laurentian Regional Ministry was established in July of 2015, after two years of discernment and preparation. Overseen by the territorial archdeacon, the Ven. Ralph Leavitt, a lay committee consisting of approximately two people from each parish in the region met together on a regular basis and put together the initial Regional Ministry profile.

In July of 2015, the Ven. Ralph Leavitt was inducted as Incumbent of the LRM and the Rev. Nick Pang was appointed Associate to the Incumbent. The ten churches constituting the LRM came together in an effort to promote mutual support in the context of declining finances and a growing realization that most congregations could no longer support the cost of full-time ministry. For over two years the ministry has been learning how to work together as a grouping of parishes.

Following the retirement of Archdeacon Ralph we moved into a new chapter with the arrival of the Rev. Josée Lemoine as Associate Priest of the regional ministry. Josée has brought with her great skills and experience in missional ministry. Around the same time we were joined by the Rev. Jane Bell who has been working as honorary Assistant Curate for nearly a year.

Although we are still young, the LRM is beginning to move out of its beginning stages into an operational structure that can sustain itself in the years to come. We are no longer simply beginning, but progressing.

D. GOVERNANCE

The main governing body of the LRM is the “Management Committee” whose members are elected by the Annual General Vestry Meetings of the various parishes. Each parish is entitled to one representative on the Management Committee, except for the Parish of the Lower Laurentians which is granted two members to represent their four churches. Members of the Management Committee are elected for a period of two years.

The LRM is overseen by two full-time clergy, both of whom are members of the Management Committee. The clergy team is responsible for liturgical leadership in the region as well as administrative and pastoral duties.

Because of the dual structure of the parishes and the regional ministry clergy are also licensed on a dual structure. The primary license granted by the Bishop of Montreal is as Team Leader or Associate Priest of the Laurentian Regional Ministry. Responsibilities within this structure are to be established by the clergy team in consultation with the Management Committee. The secondary license is as follows:

“Clergy A” is licensed as Incumbent of the the parishes of Ste Agathe, Arundel, Morin Heights and St Sauveur, and Kilkenny. They are simultaneously licensed as Associate Priest of the Parish of the Lower Laurentians, and Lachute.

“Clergy B” is licensed as Incumbent of the Parish of the Lower Laurentians (Mille Isles, Louisa, Lakefield, Dunany), and Lachute. They are simultaneously licensed as Associate Priest of the parishes of Ste Agathe, Arundel, Morin Heights and St Sauveur, and Kilkenny. — The particular geographic region in which one ministers is not necessarily tied to the role of either Team Leader or Associate Priest.

As stipulated in the original documentation of the Lay Committee which established the LRM, there may also be opportunity for the LRM to host a diocesan-funded Assistant Curate.

The finance committee of the LRM oversees the financial plan of the region including the annual update to the Fair Share Agreement.

2.

ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE LRM

In the Fall of 2017 the LRM Management Committee ran a survey in the parishes of the strengths and weaknesses of the regional ministry model. Below is an overview summary of the feedback received in comment form. It has been broken it down into three categories: strengths, areas for improvement, and elements to be let go. Within each category some of the major themes have been joined together.

A. STRENGTHS

Leadership

- Provides opportunities for lay leadership (including liturgical)
- Flexible clergy team permits diversity
- Allows clergy team to split up responsibilities

Pastoral Care & Coverage

- Provides regular leadership for Sunday worship.
- Provides access to pastoral and sacramental ministry (baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc.)
- Provides clergy support when clergy are requested

Diversity & Fellowship

- Provides an energizing and refreshing diversity of viewpoints and perspectives
- Creates a sense of openness to diversity and difference within the church
- Allows for “young” clergy who are engaged with the wider world
- Facilitates getting to know new people and greater cooperation
- Provides fellowship with the wider church through the Deanery picnic, etc.
- Energizes the community through special joint services (Ordinations, Installations, etc.)

Stewardship

- Allows for financial viability for the parishes
- Enables sound financial management
- Creates an opportunity to pool resources

Creativity

- Allows new initiatives to develop (i.e. Messy Church, book studies, training days, etc.)

B. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Healthy Leadership

- Workload of lay leadership, especially wardens.
- Workload of clergy
- Need for greater autonomy (not just responsibility)

- Too much administrative overhead
- Physical/geographical distance is a challenge

Pastoral Care & Coverage

- Need for more consistent and frequent pastoral visiting
- Need for greater interpersonal relationships with the clergy
- Clergy need exposure to parishioners, especially at coffee hour.
- Need for a training program for lay ministry, in particular in Pastoral Care.

Stewardship

- Use of church buildings for community events, etc., outside of the worshipping community.
- LRM as resource base for the parishes
- Provide clerical/technical help + centralize (not monopolize) some services

Communications

- Need to explain/communicate what the LRM is and why it exists.
- Need better communication all around
- Greater clarity around scheduling

Outreach

- Stem decline in membership/attendance
- Greater promotion and marketing
- Connecting with people on the margins of the community who occasionally attend church
- Openness to others and diversity (racial, age, denominational, etc.)
- Visibility of clergy in the community
- Reaching out to those who once attended and supported the church

Youth

- Youth participation and engagement + a plan for transition out of youth ministry
- Reaching specific age brackets (notably, everyone under 60 as 80% of those who completed the survey were over the age of 60)

Worship

- Accessibility of the liturgy/worship practices
- Common, bilingual MP liturgy
- Timing of services on Sundays

Discipleship

- Opportunities to meet with others to discuss faith, not necessarily in a church building.

C. ELEMENTS TO BE LET GO

- Focus on organic unity of the 10 churches as a single unit (unreasonable expectation)

3.

REFRAMING THE CONVERSATION

A. WHAT IS MISSION FROM A THEOLOGICAL LENS?

Mission is based on the great commandment Jesus has given us to love God, our neighbours and ourselves (Matt. 22:37-40), where “loving” is demonstrated through actions.

To help us understand and state what these actions ought to be, Anglicans throughout the world, including the Anglican Church of Canada¹, have worded them in the form of Marks of Mission. The Marks of Mission are based on biblical texts which we have established in covenant with God when we were baptized and confirmed² - promises we reassert each time we participate in the service of baptism, confirmation or reception of new members in our communities.

These are as follows:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.

This is what Jesus asked his disciples to do: “go into the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation”³. To proclaim something means to announce something officially or publicly. Jesus asked therefore that we tell publicly what the good news is, and that we do this everywhere in the world. After Jesus ascended to heaven, the apostles asked the same commitment from all Christians.

2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers.

A good example of teaching and baptizing new believers is found in the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch⁴. In this text, the Ethiopian Eunuch is reading the prophet Isaiah, but he does not understand what he is reading so Philip explains it to him, and he then tells him the good news about Jesus. The Eunuch believes what Philip is telling him, he has faith, so when they pass by water, the Eunuch asks to be baptized. After baptism, all need to be nurtured in order to grow and mature in faith.

¹ The beliefs of the Anglican Church of Canada, <http://www.anglican.ca/about/beliefs/>, 2017-12-05

² Book of Alternative Services, pp. 158-9

³ Mark 16:15

⁴ Acts 8:26-38.

3. To respond to human need by loving service.

This is based on the Great Commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves⁵. Jesus himself helped the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed⁶, those who lived at the fringe of society.

4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society.

The story of Jesus asking for water from the Samaritan woman at the well illustrates this mark. Jesus transformed the unjust structures of society when he, a man, addressed a woman, not just a woman but a Samaritan one, and not just a Samaritan woman but one who had had 5 husbands (was she a widower or a divorced woman, the story does not say), who was living with a man without being married to him when she met Jesus⁷, and who was rejected by her people due to her life situation. When his disciples see him speaking to this woman, they are astonished because men did not speak to women they did not know back in those days, and especially not women who had had different marital situations.

5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

We have been given dominion over the earth⁸. This means that we have been put in charge of it. This implies that we need to be good stewards of it, not to destroy it. The privilege of having dominion also comes with the responsibility of caring and maintaining.

B. SHIFTING OUR CHURCH CULTURE

Church as service provider vs. Church as community

When everyone went to church, there was not much need to do mission, to be God's witnesses. All were Christians and almost everyone was practicing the religion.

When Christianity was the religion of only some people, missionaries were constantly sent to bring the Word of God and the Good News of Christ to non-believers. We can think of Augustine of Canterbury in the 6th century who brought Christianity to Britain. We can also think of 19th century missionaries who went all over the new world to bring the Good News of Christ. The methods employed in the past were often extremely unjust and problematic, but the grace is that many people undertook to be like Jesus and his disciples, and made new disciples.

Many of us who still practice and attend church have continued to do church in the same way, following the customs that were prevalent in the 1960's and before, while today, different generations relate differently to religion and connect differently to spirituality. We also face the situation where a number of people among the younger generations have never heard or been exposed to religion.

⁵ Matt. 22:37-40

⁶ Luke 4:18; Luke 7:22 (cf. also Mark 10:46-52, Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 10:25-37, John 13:3-5)

⁷ John 4

⁸ Gen. 1:26-31

Churches are no longer at the centre of their communities. When all or most of the population were Christians, clergy became professionalized Christians taking on the responsibilities of many religious, spiritual, and administrative matters. In this way, the “Church” (i.e. the clergy and lay title holders) has often been seen as a service provider to the “community” (everyone else).

One of the main problems with this attitude is that whether we are celebrating Sunday services, holding Bible studies, having prayer groups, fellowship activities, etc., all activities are organized for and attended by Christians; rarely does someone who is not a believer attend one of these and as a result become a new Christian. This places our church communities at risk of becoming small isolated groups, often disconnected from what is happening in the wider society among the different generations.

Jesus’ directive to go and make disciples did not apply only to clergy and some chosen ones, but to all believers. All believers are disciples; the only difference between clergy and non-clergy is that members of the clergy are also called by God and sent by the church to administer the sacraments, much like some others are called to a healing ministry or other ministries.

We all had our lives transformed by Christ and sharing our experiences encourages people to come to Christ to live similar experiences. How many people who had lost faith or never known God have become believers because of our testimonies?

The question remains therefore: are we, as church communities and as individuals, doing what God is asking from us and is summarized in the 5 Marks of Mission?

C. WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE LRM?

Worship: to provide safe and secure communities in which, together, we can worship the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;

Fellowship: to provide opportunities for the members of our communities to care for each other and to enjoy fellowship together;

Stewardship: to take good care of the physical, financial and environmental resources with which we have been entrusted, both for the present and the future;

Outreach: to know and meet, to the degree possible, the needs of the communities in which we serve and of communities throughout the world which need our support.

4.

PROPOSALS GOING FORWARD

Below are some proposals that the Management Committee is making in order to better align the mission of the Laurentian Regional Ministry with the mission that God is calling us to in the world. We have prayed, we have listened to the communities of the church through the surveys, and we offer these proposals as a way for us to walk forward together.

We propose ...

A. REGIONAL PROPOSALS

1. ... To have an annual meeting for the LRM, open to everyone. This could be held on the same day as the Deanery Great Chapter meeting (half day deanery meeting and half day LRM annual meeting.) This would be an occasion to update people about the LRM and to have an opportunity to vote, if needed, on certain items.

2. ... To limit the number of standing committees to two: Management and Finance. Other needs including communications, worship, and outreach can be addressed on an event basis, or a temporary working group basis, rather than an ongoing committee basis.

Scheduling

3. ... That at least twice in every 6-month schedule the incumbent of the parishes holding the early Sunday services be scheduled only in that church, enabling them to stay for the social hour afterwards. (Lachute in the South, Ste Agathe & St Sauveur in the north).

Worship

4. ... That a working group of worship leaders be struck to develop a bilingual Morning Prayer booklet to be shared across the region.

5. ... That a worship leaders' training event be held on a minimum annual basis in order to equip and support lay worship leaders.

Lay Pastoral Visitors Group

6. ... That a training program be established across the region to equip and support a team of lay pastoral visitors.

Communications

7. ... That a monthly regional e-newsletter be developed in order to share events and information relevant to the ten congregations of the LRM.

Administration

8. ... That the Management Committee explore tools and policies that will help support ministry across a wide geographic area (webcasting meetings, sourcing supplies/resources at group rates, etc.)

B. LOCALIZED MINISTRY

Worship

9. ... That a working group explore the possibility of occasional evening services on a rotating basis that could also involve a potluck supper or other social time.

10. ... That the churches of the LRM explore the possibility of developing parish-based small groups that meet for mutual support, prayer, and growing discipleship outside of the Sunday worshiping community.

Youth

11. ... That a working group explore what dedicated youth programming would look like apart from Sunday worship times.

Outreach

12. ... That each of the parishes of the LRM dedicate time to developing an action plan for one thing that they can do to reach out to the surrounding community outside of the regular church membership.

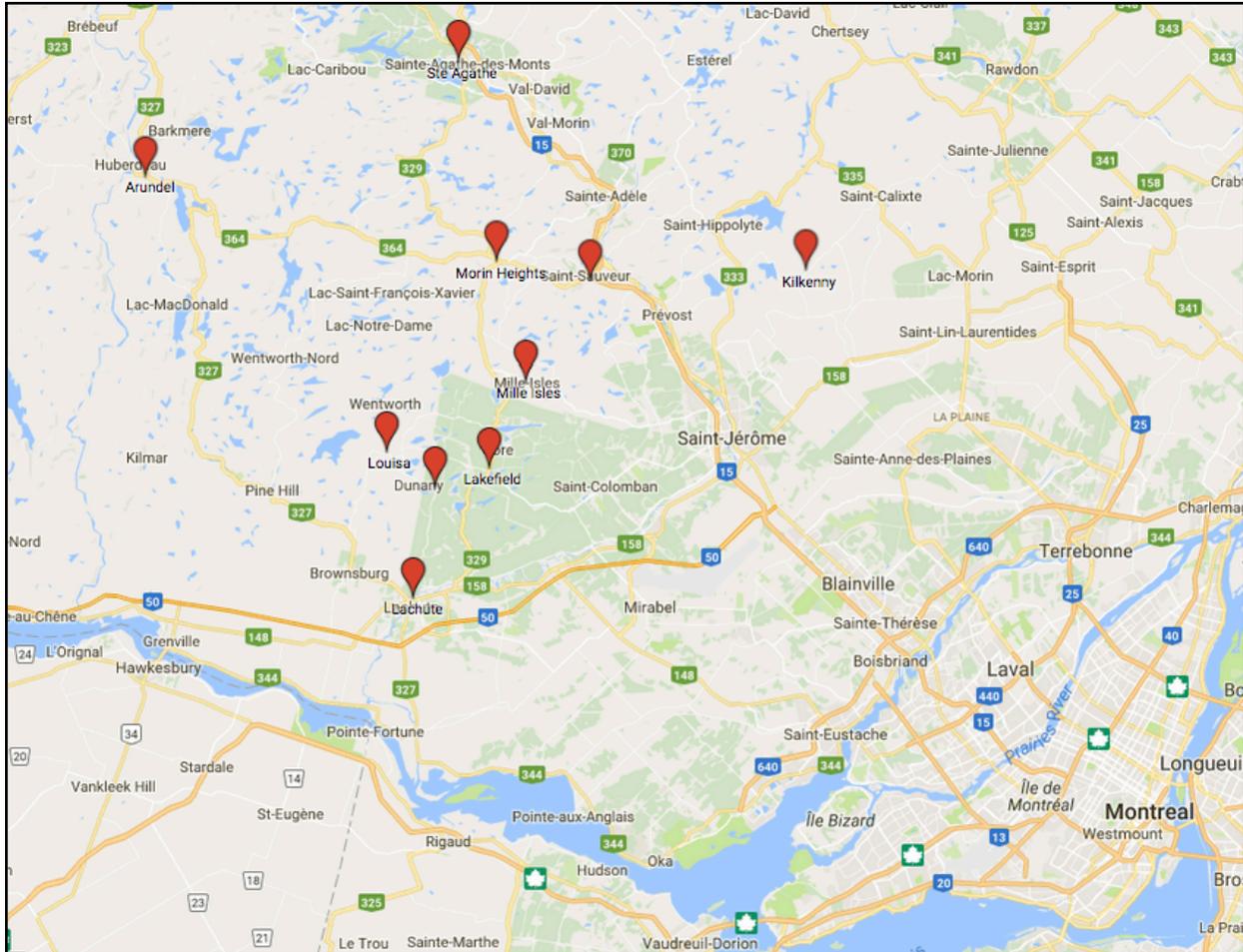
APPENDIX A.

2018 FAIR SHARE AGREEMENT

Parish	Attendance total 2013 / 2016	%	Assessment 2014/ Assessment 2017	%	Fair Share %
Total for LRM 2014	170	100.00%	\$53,126.00	100.00%	100.00%
Totals for 2017	149	100.0%	\$49,331.00	100.00%	100.00%
Arundel	29	17.00%	\$6,971.00	13.00%	15.00%
	27	18.1%	\$8,107.00	16.4%	17.3%
Lachute	33	19.50%	\$6,211.00	11.50%	15.50%
	30	20.1%	\$7,314.00	14.8%	17.5%
PLL	21	12.50%	\$5,519.00	10.50%	11.50%
	22	14.8%	\$5,893.00	11.9%	13.4%
Ste. Agathe	39	23.00%	\$21,350.00	40.50%	31.75%
	24	16.1%	\$15,058.00	30.5%	23.3%
St. Sauveur	23	13.50%	\$7,302.00	13.50%	13.50%
	21	14.1%	\$6,852.00	13.9%	14.0%
Morin Heights	24	16.11%	\$5,773.00	11.00%	12.50%
	24	16.1%	\$5,700.00	11.6%	13.8%
Kilkenny	1	0.50%	nil	0%	0.25%
	1	0.7%	\$407.00	0.8%	0.7%

APPENDIX B.

MAP OF THE PARISHES



Christ Church (PLL), Mille Isles
1258 chemin de Mille-Isles, Mille-Isles, QC

Grace Church, Arundel
7 route Church, Arundel, QC

Holy Trinity (PLL), Lakefield
4 chemin Cambria, Gore, QC

Holy Trinity, Ste Agathe
12 Rue Préfontaine O, Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, QC

St Aidan's (PLL), Louisa
86 chemin Louisa, Wentworth, QC

St Francis, St Sauveur
94 avenue Saint-Denis, Saint-Sauveur, QC

St John the Baptist in the Wilderness, Kilkenny
978 rue de la Chapelle, Saint-Hippolyte, QC

St Paul's (PLL), Dunany
1127 chemin Dunany, Gore, QC

St Simeon's, Lachute
445 rue Principale, Lachute, QC

Trinity Church, Morin Heights
757 chemin du Village, Morin-Heights, QC