

Ministry Committee Report

Assembly, May 26-28 2017, Merritt, BC

*“APCI walk together with all God’s people, journeying into a new creation, and trusting with faith and courage in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We love as Jesus loves, living with integrity and openness, and are committed stewards of God’s world.”
(adopted May 2011)*

At Assembly 2013 in Ashcroft the ministry committee was formed with the task of creating a vision for ministry for The Territory of the People (APCI). The Ministry committee started by gathering as much information as possible that cover the four orders of ministry and the roles of those ministries - laity, pastoral elders, ordained clergy (Bishop, Priest and Deacons). Over the years, we gather information that would help us in the Territory of the People (APCI) to create a vision for ministry that would fit with our parishes. This work culminated with a gathering in Williams Lake in the spring of 2015, called Our Way Forward.

The mandate for the gathering was:

- Begin the work of developing a vision of ministry that is grounded in baptism and that affirms and encourages the gifts of all.
- To explore the values that practical models of ministry will be built on.
- To explore together the leadership needs of parishes for the next part of the journey.
- To begin the work of deepening our understanding of the orders of ministry: laity, deacons, priests and bishop and how they serve God’s mission in the world.
- To find ways to strengthen and develop partnerships and teams working together with the various orders of ministry.

The gathering brought out a deeper understanding of what it means to ministry of all the baptized. We presented this information at Assembly 2015 in Valemount. The Valemount assembly we had a world café and asked questions about the understanding of collaborative ministry and ministry developer. We had very valuable feedback with a great number speaking about the needs for both teacher, mentor and the need for pastoral elders. A motion was passed at Valemount asking the Ministry Committee to secure funding for APCI to hire a ministry developer to help parishes develop a vision for ministry in their parishes. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure that funding. We are in the hope of reapplying for funding for Ministry Developer as we continue to refine our criteria for the position and the vision of how we see ministry in the next five years.

Some parishes have done an immense amount of work on their own visioning process. St Alban’s Ashcroft has raised up two of their congregation to serve as non-stipendiary priests at in their parish and in APCI. This was a considerable and lengthy discernment process, which worked well for that community. This model may or may not work for all parishes but it proposes one of many options we have in APCI.

Our feeling is we need to help the parishes develop a realistic vision for each with the help of a mentor, teacher, ministry developer or pastoral elder. One thing that was not mentioned was never mention was passion. In our experience those who are the most effective are

passionate for their calling. These ministries may ultimately require examining the viability of some parishes, and restructuring how we provide ministry in some communities. More Deacons, limiting communion to once or twice a month, create pastoral teams in communities to help with the needs of the community. Where we can undertake a process that addresses what we really value in our ministry, what we truly need and let go of those things which are less important. Some of this process must take into consideration the age demographics we are facing; the resistance to change; but the value of the transformation of the ministry and church in this time in our history. Perhaps as well we do more education with parishes on our Baptismal Vows and expectations of how we are to be in this world. Acts 2:2: 42 states “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” This is our blue print for discipleship of our Anglican Community. If we are so called to strengthen discipleship, then we only need look at Acts 2.42 for the inspiration we need to realize the importance of education, fellowship, prayers and breaking of bread.

Each parish has unique and similar problems, we are not alone we are family. One of the strengths of family is supporting each other in times of stress. We are rethinking ministry in APCI and it starts with asking what it is we really need and how do we live in to this ministry. We also affirm that we need to educate parishes as to the alternatives for ministry and allay the fears of those in parishes that worry about closing parishes (although that is always a possibility) and helping them to live into their Baptismal vows that they are the church not the hard-sided building. We also should consider how the parish is perceived in their communities and the role they fill in their community, the outreach that is done and the places of possible new growth.

The Ministry Committee recommends the following mission statement be adopted as a way of giving direction for moving us ahead on this journey.

The Territory of the People will seek to develop a model of collaborative ministry for use within the parishes.

We understand collaborative ministry to mean the discernment, formation, and training of all the baptized to give leadership in ministry within the parishes. That training will be provided to parishes, clergy and lay leaderships on the guiding principles of new forms of collaborative ministry within the Territory.

These guiding principles reflect the following theological principles:

- *That the Body of Christ, is the whole people of God,*
- *That living out the Christian faith and sharing the gospel story is the responsibility of the whole people of God,*
- *That it is the work of the whole community to equip each follower of Christ for the tasks of ministry they are taking up,*
- *That each member is responsible to seek to be faithful to Christ and to be fully incorporated into the life of the Church,*
- *That living in communion as faithful followers is made possible through regular participation in Eucharistic worship and common prayer and study,*
- *That we trust in the Holy Spirit which means we recognize and use the gifts of all,*
- *That diversity will be celebrated and respected,*

- *That the teaching office of the Church plays an important role and will be entrusted to those who the faithful discern to be called, gifted, and adequately formed in a life of prayer and the pursuit of truth,*
- *The charism and function of episcopal ministry is to preserve and enact the unity of communion,*

Strategy for developing collaborative ministry within the Territory of the People:

- *New leadership will be hired to help develop how we will live into new models of ministry,*
- *Parishes would be encouraged to develop a plan to review and envision new visions for ministry within the parish context,*
- *Parishes committees would be encouraged to develop a plan to discern new leadership for the parishes,*
- *The Territory would develop a plan to provide support for the discernment, training and education of clergy and local collaborative ministry teams,*