

Title: Clarify Discernment for Designated Lay Ministry

Originating Body: Halifax Presbytery

Maritime Conference Action: Transmit with concurrence and append note

Financial Implications: N/A

Staffing Implications: N/A

Proposal:

Halifax Presbytery proposes, through Maritime Conference, that The 40th General Council (2009):

Direct that the discernment process for Designated Lay Ministry be fully integrated within the discernment process for other forms of Ministry

Background:

- a) The Discernment Process for Designated Lay Ministers has been made a separate process from the discernment process for other forms of ministry, with a separate application form (DLM 501/2009 vs. DIS 201/2008) and separate terminology (applicant vs. inquirer). The process now requires that the applicant/inquirer discern whether they are called to Designated Lay Ministry or to Ordered Ministry prior to starting discernment. This is counter to our understanding of the role of discernment and restricts the call of the Spirit during Discernment.
- b) The General Council implementation team, as part of the implementation of the new DLM/CDM policies, during national conference calls to Presbytery chairs of Pastoral Relations and Education & Students Committees, stated that there would be a separate DLM discernment handbook that would be ready in the fall of 2009. In response to the question of how a congregation/presbytery would discern which discernment handbook to use, the response was “that the DLM discernment handbook would be the default”. Essentially this means that we are now making DLM the default path towards ministry in the United Church of Canada.

NOTE: The annual meeting of the Maritime Conference notes that the intent of this proposal seeks the establishment of one discernment process for all forms of ministry within The United Church of Canada.