

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT REPORT TO SYNOD, JULY 2019

The Continuing Education and Leadership Formation role was vacant for over three years before Fran Barber moved into it in July 2018. Sharon Hollis laid a rich and solid foundation in the role for ten years prior to that three year hiatus. So the focus thus far has been on raising the profile afresh of the importance of engaging in ongoing learning and leadership development. Ministry agents are entitled to a minimum of fourteen days a year study leave in which to participate in events, courses and training opportunities. This first stage of Fran's work in the new context of the eLM Unit in which the role sits, has involved listening to colleagues' experience of Continuing Education in order to discern future needs in ministry and leadership development. Fran works in close collaboration with Dev Anandarajan (Intercultural Leadership Development Coordinator), with Mel Perkins (Lay Education) and with Pilgrim Faculty. Around the Synod Fran has heard joy and enthusiasm for learning and for ministry, but also the challenges associated with ministry in a world where the church has fewer and fewer cultural supports.

There is a continued need for ministry and leadership skills-based programs such as the Intentional Interim Ministry Training Program which qualifies individuals to become Intentional Interim Ministers. IIM ministers offer ministry in communities living through acute change, transition and conflict. However, given that the church in the 21st century is changing constantly, IIM training is a very instructive course to do in any ministry context. IIM is a two part qualification, the first part of which, Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry, can stand alone. Fran has participated in the delivery of Part One (FTM L) and is training with Rob McFarlane (NSW) and Sharon Hollis to deliver Part Two (FTM C).

There is continued appreciation amongst ministry agents for one-off events and conferences throughout the year, held regionally where possible. There is also enthusiasm for the opportunity to participate in Pilgrim Units as part of Continuing Education.

One of the key themes to emerge from this initial stage of discernment is that effective learning from one-off events (or units) requires follow up (theological) reflection in one's context of ministry and with colleagues. Encouraging a culture of **Peer Learning** Groups is therefore an important aspect of this role. Peer Learning Groups represent an evidence-based way in which ministry agents can deepen their learning through theological reflection on ministry practice, and remain connected to colleagues in a world where ministry can be isolating. Sharon did considerable work in this area five years ago. However, the ongoing challenge is encouraging widespread involvement from ministers in such learning models. Focus for this role in coming years will include working with presbyteries to establish, support and resource more of these Peer Learning Groups. Fran is supporting one PLG at present and has another in process.

Fran has also engaged with the Culture of Safety Unit on Code of Ethics Training and Supervision, and anticipates being part of a wider conversation with the TMEC regarding ministers' accountability for Continuing Education. These are important areas particularly in the light of the church's need for transparency in relation to professional standards. On behalf of the presbyteries, Fran's role continues to deliver the Orientation to Ministry Program for Phase 3 ministers.

The changes in presbytery leadership over the last year have influenced the possible scope of Fran's work. In the coming years Fran looks forward to opportunities to working with presbytery leaders so that education for ministry agents may be well resourced and supported in their regions.