

AGENDA 2.5.1

Board of Support for Pastoral Ministry

MEMBERS

Sara Bayha, Rev David Eckermann (chair), Joan Grosse, Terry Helbig, Margaret Mayer, Rev Eugene Minge, Rev Nigel Rosenzweig, Rev Dr Stephen Pietsch and Bishop John Henderson

PURPOSE

The Board for Support of Pastoral Ministry is an Advisory Board to the College of Bishops to help them in their pastoral care of the pastors of the LCA and their families. The board receives advice and requests from the College of Bishops, and acts on them.

BACKGROUND

This will be the final report of the Board for Support of Pastoral Ministry (BSPM). After Synod, the responsibility for providing support for pastors and their families will reside with the Church Worker Support Department. The chair of BSPM wishes to thank all those who have served as members or consultants of the Board over the years of its existence. Their efforts and input has been much appreciated.

During the last synodical term, the BSPM has continued its work of supporting the College of Bishops in its role of providing support and encouragement to the pastors of the LCA and their families. During this synodical term, this support has been achieved through the following means:

1. Phone calls by members of BSPM to pastors, including those celebrating major anniversaries of their ordination. This has been received very positively by recipients, often with surprise that the LCA has remembered them in this way.
2. Produced a report on 'Pastoral Supervision', which has been sent to the College of Bishops, in regard to options for a mentoring and support program that might reduce the likelihood of pastoral burnout among the pastors of the LCA. While some support for individuals is available in most Districts, there is no common structure or mechanism for a general level of support for pastors. Therefore there is a continuing issue of pastors who are stressed and/or suffering burnout in the LCA. Many congregations and parishes are often not sufficiently aware of these problems.
3. Met with the Manager of the new Church Worker Support Department to facilitate the incorporation of BSPM into that Department.
4. Investigated the setting up of a Facebook page with items and information concerning pastoral support.
5. Hosted an annual breakfast for the College of Bishops as a small token of the church's support for them in their often difficult task.
6. One member of BSPM was appointed to the committee overseeing the Student Assistance Fund of Australian Lutheran College. This Fund provides limited financial support for needy pastoral students and their families while studying at ALC.
7. Investigated the need for ongoing support of pastors' widows.
8. Studied the ALITE Report on Pastoral Ministry in the LCA which was released in 2017. This report confirms much of what BSPM has identified as problems confronting pastors in the LCA.

SUCSESSES

1. The completion of the report on 'Pastoral Supervision'.
2. The very positive response by pastors to their receipt of personal phone calls at difficult times, and also on significant anniversaries of their ordination.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The problem of burn-out among pastors and lay-workers is a continuing one for the LCA. The need for support is great. BSPM is now likely to be replaced with an Advisory Committee for Support to Pastoral and Lay Ministry as part of the Church Worker Support Department. This Department will be responsible not only for pastors and their families, but also all lay church workers and their families. Perhaps now is a good time for the Church Worker Support Department to re-evaluate the best way to provide this much needed support for church workers and their families.

ALIGNMENT TO LCA STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2013-2018

Where the Strategic Direction has been applicable for our work, BSPM has aligned with that direction. BSPM has been committed to the overall goal of encouraging the ongoing work of the LCA to effectively share the Gospel of Christ with individuals and communities.

COOPERATING LCA BOARDS AND AGENCIES

BSPM interacts mainly with the College of Bishops, since both have a responsibility for pastoral care. BSPM has appreciated the time that the Manager of the Church Worker Support Department has spent at BSPM meetings, although there has really been little impact on the workings of BSPM by the development of the new structures during this past synodical term. BSPM has continued on as usual in providing support to the College of Bishops in their work of caring for the Pastors (and their families) in the LCA.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The board does not have a budget and requires no financial support from the LCA.