



DIOCESE OF YUKON +

Box 31136

Whitehorse, YT Y1A 5P7

(867) 667-7746

E-mail: synodoffice@northwestel.net

The Ministry of Presence

A Historical Introduction

At one time, the Diocese of Yukon had 15 stipendiary clergy. The number of people attending worship services, giving of their financial resources, and being part of a worshipping community was much higher than the present day. Mining companies were thriving and required their employees to live on-site. Many companies saw the value of the Church, and directly assisted with supplying buildings and labour. The Anglican Church of Canada, which provides financial support through the Council of the North, was in a better financial position.

By 2010 the situation had drastically changed. Many mines had closed and employees either moved or became unemployed. Today's mining employees are not always required to live on site. Companies fly employees in and out. There is little contact, of a positive nature, with the local community. In addition, the financial state of the Anglican Church of Canada has changed resulting in a decrease in grants provided to the Council of the North Dioceses.

Over time these factors encouraged, or required, the Diocese to make changes. Some clergy positions had to be terminated. This often led to reduced attendance and reduced offerings. Some parishes were shut down. Some parishes were led by lay leaders with very little training, experience, or understanding of what it actually takes to oversee a parish. Added to this has been the effects of residential schools.

The Diocese recognizes the ongoing need for pastoral care in every community regardless of size or state of buildings or ability to financially support clergy. The geographical area covered by the Diocese is large. We are continually praying for guidance and direction to cover the needs. The Ministry of Presence program, begun in 2012, was one of the answers.

The Concept

The Ministry of Presence is having a volunteer in the community, clergy or lay, to be the presence of Christ. The person is provided housing and utilities. In some cases, there is a small honorarium. The person provides liturgy and emergency services such as funerals. The volunteer is the representative for the Diocese and is the "first call" in the community and provides pastoral care as they are able.

The ministries or other needs are negotiated through conversation with the community, the volunteer, and the Bishop. Each appointment differs according to the parish & community needs and the volunteer's skill set. In addition to liturgical offerings, some volunteers have undertaken the following: youth work, visitation, bible study, leading retreats, and training laity.

The global COVID pandemic highlighted the benefits, and the need, of this program. We recall the realities of scripture and the early church. Recall that early church leaders, such as Paul, had employment and led the church often as itinerant ministers. Many of our Ministry of Presence participants have taken on secular employment in the communities they serve. We have one who is a substitute teacher, one who drives an ambulance, one who worked with social services, and one who worked with the local health unit and First Nation.

The Diocesan Commitment

The Diocese of Yukon will provide the following:

1. Transportation costs - we will cover fuel, food, and accommodations along the way and on the return trip, if and when necessary. Due to the high costs, we will cover one personal vehicle only and what will fit in that vehicle.
2. Accommodations - this normally means a vacant and furnished rectory. Often this means an older 2 or 3 bedroom house. The diocese will ensure that the rectory meets all safety and health requirements and that it is furnished. Remember, we cannot cover the costs of moving furniture.
3. Utility costs - normal utility costs will be covered by the parish. Some parishes do not have their own computers or laptops. Most communities have access to the internet, but it is often sketchy and the broadband limits are low. The costs of these services and supplies will be agreed upon by the parish, diocese, and volunteer
4. Diocesan activity costs - the diocese/parish will cover the travel and accommodations (often billets) for attending diocesan events such as meetings, training, and parish leadership requirements.
5. Remuneration - a small honorarium if required - although a full stipend is not possible, the diocese will provide an honorarium to assist with higher food costs. Usually, this is \$500 per month less mandatory government deductions such as taxes. The diocese will also ensure coverage of worker's compensation.
6. Supervision, encouragement, support - the bishop's cell phone number is provided. Other diocesan leadership members are available when needed. Training is available.
7. Finally - the Diocese of Yukon provides an experience like no other; an opportunity to minister in a historical setting and in some of the most awesome beauty that God has created. We offer an adventure that involves unique challenges, opportunities, and experiences.

The Volunteer's Commitment

The volunteer agrees to:

1. Have an income that is sufficient to live on such as a pension or employment in the community. The honorarium is a supplement and is not sufficient on which to live.

2. Provide a vehicle in good working order complete with insurance and registration.
3. Provide adequate medical insurance. The current diocesan medical insurance through the National Church is not available to volunteers. After three months Yukon Medical is available. However, it does not cover prescriptions, dental or extensive medical travel.
4. Under the direction and authority of the bishop, or the bishop's designate, provide regular and emergency liturgical and pastoral services and other ministries as agreed with the parish and the bishop.
5. As a member of the diocesan ministry team, participate in synods, leadership meetings, and training opportunities.
6. Bring with you a desire to share faith, a desire to live Matthew 28:18-20, a desire to enjoy the beauty around you, and a spirit of adventure.

For more information, or to apply for a Ministry of Presence position, please contact the Bishop at (867) 667-7746 or through synodoffice@northwestel.net