



LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY

January 4, 2016

Greetings to you and the members of the presbytery as we celebrate the light that shines in the darkness, the Good News of God made flesh.

In 2015 The General Assembly resolved that the church (congregations, sessions, presbyteries, synods and denominational committees) be encouraged to engage in a year of prayerful conversation, discernment and Bible study on the topics of human sexuality, sexual orientation and other related matters raised in the overtures. *Body, Mind and Soul – Study Guide on Human Sexuality* was produced to help assist the church in this regard.

As part of the Life and Mission Agency's responsibility to support and help equip congregations and presbyteries and in response to the Assembly Council's resolution that the Life and Mission Agency be requested to assist the church with educational resources and resource people on the use of the study guide, the Agency will make available a number of resources in the months ahead. These will include offering each presbytery access to a one-time grant of up to \$1000 from the Conference Support Fund to support presbytery sponsored educational initiatives that encourage people and courts to study, reflect on and discuss issues related to sexual orientation and the church.

Each presbytery has different needs and will have to determine what is most appropriate and helpful in its context. Some presbyteries may elect to host one or a series of gatherings or workshops. These events may include resource people such as speakers or facilitators (e.g. clergy, health care workers, mental health professionals, theologians, individuals whose personal lives/family are touched by this matter, and scientists, etc.). Ideally, education events will be structured in ways that:

- rely upon the principles of respectful speaking and listening used by the General Assembly in 2015
- incorporate study and prayer
- represent a spectrum of perspectives and interpretive approaches
- include input from a variety of disciplines (e.g., theological, medical, social and biological sciences)

- promote opportunities for dialogue and conversation
- direct participants to the church's website and introduce them to its resources, in particular *Body, Mind and Soul – Study Guide on Human Sexuality* and the historical documents and resources it refers to, at presbyterian.ca/sexuality

Application forms for these funds can be found at presbyterian.ca/funds under the heading "Conference Support Fund".

Normally, applications submitted require an extract of minute from the presbytery. However, because of the unique nature of this discussion, the ambitious timeline, and to encourage educational initiatives undertaken in a timely fashion, only a letter of endorsement from the clerk of the presbytery will be required in this case.

Thank you for the work that you do as the clerk of presbytery and for passing along this correspondence to the appropriate group within the court.

Please contact Justice Ministries or Canadian Ministries for additional information.

Sincerely,

Jennifer de Combe
Associate Secretary
Canadian Ministries

Ian Ross-McDonald
General Secretary
Life and Mission Agency