



Riceville–Pendleton Pastoral Charge and Presbytery

The Riceville–Pendleton Pastoral charge has a long history of working with Presbytery. Prior to the formation of the Seaway Valley Presbytery in 1967, our congregations were part of the Ottawa Presbytery and all meetings were held in Ottawa. At that time the community was predominantly farming and agricultural based; and the minister was usually the only person who attended these meetings as they were held mid-morning to mid-afternoon. This was a very large group and the smaller, country charges had little say and were rarely given the floor.

When Seaway Valley Presbytery was formed, there were many changes. Each church within a Charge was entitled and encouraged to send a representative, who was willing to take part in one of the Divisions i.e. Christian Development, Stewardship, Pastoral Relations, Finance and Property, Pastoral Care and Oversight, and others. These Divisions have changed, been renamed and refocused over the years, but still form an important part of the workings of Presbytery; a level of government within the Church.

With a change in the way of life of many people who live in the country and attend our churches (less agriculture and more jobs off the farm) and with the time change for the meetings, people who are working in jobs in the various surrounding cities and other business are now able to attend. It is not easy, but it is done. The minister is also expected to take an active part in Presbytery.

The Division meetings are usually held at 4:00pm on the day selected for Presbytery, which has been the last Thursday of the month, for the months of September, October, November, January, March, April and June. The May meeting is part of the Montreal & Ottawa Conference Annual Meeting, now

held at John Abbott College, Ste Anne- de-Bellevue, Quebec, just outside Montreal. Prior to this, the M & O Conference was held for many years at Bishop's University, Lennoxville, Quebec.

Following the Division meetings the host church, provides a meal for all attendants, the funds received for the meal stay with the host church. A worship service follows, led by the host minister and others in the congregation. The business of Presbytery takes the floor after the service with the Chair of Presbytery conducting the meeting. Reports from the various committees are given, debated and approved, with or without amendments. There is also a time for "Enrichment," which can be a special speaker, a presentation by a presbyter, or someone from a concerned group such as the Canadian Food Grains Bank, Missions and Service, The House of Lazarus, or Rideau Hill Camp.

You can see that it is a very busy time when one attends Presbytery. There are the trips to the meeting and home again, usually carpooling is part of the plan, sharing with presbyters from other churches if possible, enjoying the scenery and discussing the events of the day.

Many changes have taken place in the workings and approach of Presbytery and the primary function of Presbytery is to provide help for all congregations, to encourage new ways to approach change and to provide support should a problem arise.

Close attention is paid to "Accessibility" and meetings are now held at churches that are fully accessible. For one term it was decided to hold all meetings in a "central" location. This was good in some ways but gave those churches more work in preparing meals etc. Now we continue to move around the Presbytery, which gives everyone a chance to see and learn about the other congregations that make up Seaway Valley Presbytery.

The current Presbytery representative is Margaret Scott. Alternates are Helen Lalonde and Catherine Clemens.