

September 9, 2009

Welcome Presbyters,

On September 15th, we have our very first presbytery meeting after two years of long prayerful preparation by Toronto Southeast Presbytery. At this time of a new beginning, what does it mean to say that we are one body? A vision found in Ezekiel 37 shows us the concrete dynamics we are experiencing these days. A single cell is significant, just as well as the whole. What Jesus counted to be of crucial importance in his ministry is listening to a small voice or one missing member out of a hundred. We, Toronto Southeast Presbytery have become a bigger body that now numbers around 60 pastoral charges. In this bigger body, even one small cell, "YOU" still have significant importance.

It is time that we begin this venture into a new history by shaping ourselves as one body of Christ. As a presbytery, we've already begun to hear and see the many good, positive signs that melt away any lingering fears or uncertainties. In this new journey, we trust that God has created us with unique beauty in each one of us. We, the church of Jesus Christ, traditionally find this beauty in Jesus' ministry of reaching out to the powerless, poor, sick, and the like. But through our revisioned eyes, we can discover that there is also both communal and individual attractiveness. Let us ponder what attraction we have to others in the world, as congregations, presbytery, and as individuals.

At this presbytery meeting, we will have celebration of dedicating the Presbytery offices and covenanting of the servants of the Presbytery. It will be a meaningful event in our new beginning and it is a blessing. We will have reports from GC40. This will help us to have closer connection to the Church's moving as a whole into the future. We will also have business items to enable the functioning of the presbytery, keeping it in working order with continuity. And we will participate in carrying out the decisions of the whole Church, i.e., remits from the General Council. To discern for your voting, first of all, focus on the changes themselves, and then their consequences while having conversation with friends in ministry.

All these meaningful and important things will begin with our gathering. We will get to better know each other as we share in some delicious food and stories. In this gathering we will begin to affirm how each one of us is crucial to shaping the presbytery in a beautiful and attractive way. Again, we are one body, and we are all connected to one another. Sharing your vision and your presence at the first Presbytery meeting is vital. It is my dream to experience and see how a fresh wind sweeps over in our gathering for a new creation in this time of many new beginnings.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Lee
Chair, Toronto Southeast Presbytery, Toronto Conference, The United Church of Canada