MAR. 12/00

The United Church of Canada
Oshawa Presbytery
35-321 Blackthorn Street
Oshawa, Ontario
L1K 1L3

ATTENTION: Linda Winton, Secretary

Dear Oshawa Presbytery:

This letter is in regard to the meeting held on Tuesday, February 29, 2000 at Newcastle United Church, at which a vote was taken regarding the Pastoral Relationship at Newcastle United Church.

While it is understood that Oshawa Presbytery is acting in good faith to solve what is a very difficult problem we would like to express our deep concern at a number of flaws inherent in the process leading up to and including the vote. It is our belief that the following will cast a questionable light on the results of the vote and how it was obtained;

1. The notification period for the vote did meet the criteria as outlined in The Manual, (1998), however, there was insufficient notice for a meeting called for a purpose of this magnitude and many active members were away from Newcastle or had previous commitments and were unable to attend.

2. Nineteen (19) people, prior to the notification of the meeting had in good faith announced their intention to become members of Newcastle United Church on Palm Sunday, but were, of course, not in a position to vote at the meeting.

3. A number of adherents, presently active and working in the church, (some of whom are lifetime members of The United Church of Canada), wished Presbytery to acknowledge their numbers as a factor in Presbytery's final determination and were ruled out of order at the meeting.

4. The nature of the vote itself was confusing in that an "approve" vote meant Rev. Chisling was to leave and an "opposed" vote meant he was to stay. In many people's mind the question was "Will Rev. Chisling stay or not?" This lead to some assuming that a "yes" vote meant he would stay and a "no" vote meant he would go. There was a request from the floor to have the ballot clarified and yet it was not done and confusion was apparent.

5. The number of votes cast at the meeting was greater that the number of ballots issued. This point was raised, along with other discrepancies, at the meeting but was disregarded.

6. Discrepancies appeared in the membership roles, as well. A member who was baptized and confirmed in Newcastle United Church and who has been an active

member for at least the past two years was informed that he was **not** on the membership list.

7. A phone campaign was conducted outside the direction of the Newcastle United Church Official Board and official organizations of the church by those in favour of Rev. Chisling's removal which resulted in the following;

   a) Many of the votes in the affirmative being made by those who have not been active or even present in the church for many years. In fact, many of those present at the meeting, and permitted to voted had not ever met Rev. Chisling and were therefore casting a vote on an issue that had no first hand knowledge about.

   b) An imbalance in the process for those who were willing to trust in the process being conducted by Presbytery as the proper forum for communication.

Although it is our understanding that those who conducted the unofficial phone campaign were organized to "inform" only, many callers expressed personal opinions against Rev. Chisling placing undue stress on other members and adherents (especially the elderly). In fact, some of the campaigners, not all, clearly advised people "to come out and vote against Rev. Chisling."

In sum, we acknowledge that Oshawa Presbytery has acted in good faith and followed procedures as laid out in The Manual (1998). However, given all of the above we wish to make it clear that the "request" to Presbytery embodied in the vote is seriously flawed and not representative.

We urge you to understand that since this vote so deeply affects matters of faith and community, the process itself ought to follow the equitable maxim that "justice must not be done, it must be seen to be done." (The Manual (1998), Section 065, Pg.92).

We understand a special meeting of Oshawa Presbytery Executive has been called to deal exclusively with the question of our Pastoral Relationship and ask you to consider in your deliberations that the vote taken on Tuesday, February 29, 2000 and the request for change in Pastoral Relationship are not, in fact, what they appear to be.

Sincerely,

Amanda Stott

Pearl Evans

C.C. Bay of Quinte Conference, Wendy Bulloch, Executive Secretary
K. Virginia Coleman, General Secretary of the General Council, United Church of Canada, Etobicoke, ON