



CRACKED OPEN

PMRC
AGM 2025

AGENDA & REPORTS



AGENDA

THURSDAY

1:00pm- Registration
2:00pm- Regional Rep Orientation
2:45pm- Opening Music and Gathering
3:00pm- Welcome, Introductions and Land Acknowledgement
3:00pm- Children's Program Begins
4:00pm- Opening Worship and Theme
5:30pm- Grace
5:30- Supper
7:00- We Are the Church Cracked Open with Stephanie Spellers
8:30- Evening Reception with cash bar

FRIDAY

8:45am- Opening Music
9:00am- Gathering and Announcements
9:10am- Worship and Memorials
9:50am- Introduction to Business
10:30am- Break
10:45am- M&S and UCC Foundation
11:00am- M&S Fundraiser Game
11:10am- Proposals – Learning Phase
12:00pm- Announcements and Grace
12:15pm- Lunch
1:15pm- Gathering Music
1:30pm- Losing Our Lives to Gain Real Life with Stephanie Spellers
3:00pm- Break
3:20pm- Heritage Moment
3:25pm- General Council Guest, Jennifer Jantzen Ball
3:45pm- General Council Vision to 2035
5:00pm- Business- Nominations and Proposal Discussion
5:30pm- Announcements and Grace
5:30pm- Supper
6:45pm- Gathering Music
7:00pm- Affirming Ministries
8:15pm- Closing Worship
8:30pm- Adjourn

AGM 2025 WEBSITE [HERE](#)

CONNECT WITH WHOVA, OUR ONLINE MEETING PLATFORM [HERE](#)

AT 10AM ON SUNDAY, STREAM THE CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY [HERE](#)

SATURDAY

8:45am- Opening Music
9:00am- Gathering and Announcements
9:10am- Worship
9:30am- The Future of Faith with Stephanie Spellers
11:00am- Break
11:15am- Gathering Music
11:20am- Heritage Moment
11:25am- Office of Vocation Report
11:55pm- Youth Council
12:15pm- Announcements and Grace
12:15pm- Lunch
1:15pm- Gathering Music
1:30pm- President's Address and Executive Accountability Repot
2:30pm- Executive Minister's Report
2:45pm- Break
3:05pm- Music
3:15pm- Business Decision Phase
3:55pm- Heritage Moment
4:00pm- Gratitude
4:15pm- You Shall Live! Closing Worship
5:30pm- Benediction and Grace
5:30pm- Supper
6:30pm- Centennial Celebration

SUNDAY

10:00am- Celebration of Ministry Worship Service

CRACKED OPEN



with Keynote Speaker,
Stephanie Spellers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 Agenda

MESSAGES

- 5 President's Message
- 7 Executive Minister's Report

CELEBRATIONS

- 13 Celebrands
- 21 Newcomers
- 26 Retirees
- 46 Anniversaries
- 47 Memorials

BUSINESS

- 64 Mission
- 65 Regional Executive Accountability Report
- 76 Ends Policy Summary
- 77 Ends Policy
- 83 Guidelines for Business Procedures
- 85 Business Committee Motions
- 89 Proposals Guidelines
- 92 Proposal Form
- 96 Nominations Committee Report
- 98 Nominees- President Elect

FINANCE

- 101 Finance Advisory Council
- 106 Property Development & Building Management
- 109 Provision
- 112 Stewardship

MINISTRY AND MISSION

- 115 Archives & History Committee
- 118 Camp Spirit
- 121 Camping Ministry
- 124 Campus Ministry
- 132 First Third Ministry
- 136 Indigenous Ministry
- 143 Justice
- 147 LeaderSHIFT
- 150 LeaderSHIFT Church Planting
- 157 Ministry Covenant Support Committee
- 162 Office of Vocation
- 164 Western Intercultural Ministry Network

CENTRES FOR EDUCATION

- 168 Naramata Centre
- 175 Vancouver School of Theology

FINAL PAGES

- 184 Staff List
- 186 Draft Minutes of the 2024
- 215 AGM
Proposals Received

The background of the entire page is an abstract composition of overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in various shades of blue and green. These shapes vary in size and opacity, creating a layered, mosaic-like effect. A solid blue horizontal band runs across the middle of the page, serving as a backdrop for the title.

MESSAGES



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“As Jesus sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head.” - Mark 14:3

Dear Church,

You know what I need these days? I need us.

The encouragement of us.

The strength of us.

The joy of us.

The goodness of the Spirit moving amongst us.

Since January, I've been reminding my community of faith on Sunday mornings that we have, in Jesus and in our different embodiments of the way of Jesus, everything we need for these turbulent times. And when we gather, when we come together, we remember and proclaim with our whole selves that there is another way of being in this world.

When we get this “being the Church” thing right, we are good news to the poor.

We are streams in the desert.

We are midwives of justice.

We are a sanctuary for those discarded by empire.

When we get this right, we are the people of God, overflowing with God's good and holy Spirit.

That's why I'm so looking forward to our time together as the Pacific Mountain Regional Council. What we stand for and, more importantly, the way we embody it, is so, so needed in this world - a faith that is prophetically joyful, and risk-taking, and justice-seeking, and made beautiful by its diversity.

But the growing instinct I see in myself and in those around me is to protect our hearts from the perpetual torrent of moral violence and the rising tide of dehumanizing rhetoric around us. Like the disciples right before they first witnessed the risen Christ, I, too, want to hide behind the locked doors of my anxieties. The invitation at the heart of our gathering in Nanaimo is to resist that impulse to save ourselves, and to be, over and over again, the Church **Cracked Open**. That's when our hearts can breathe most freely. That's when the precious gift within can be lavishly poured out as a healing balm to our neighbourhoods and communities.

Little did we know how much the world would change in the two years since we invited **the Rev. Canon Dr. Stephanie Spellers** to be our speaker. Then, she was wrapping up nearly a decade as canon to the Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop Michael Curry for evangelism, reconciliation and creation care. Now, she comes to us more as a prophetic voice of holy resistance, living amongst and learning from the "nones and dones." We hope her words ignite within you a renewed imagination for all that lies ahead.

Yes, there is business to be done, decisions to be discerned, and relationships to be nurtured. Through it all, our hope in planning this gathering is that we might return home renewed and reinvigorated, that we might live out this good news with joy, with grace, and maybe a little holy mischief, too.

May it be so,



The Rev. Dr. Simon LeSieur
President
Pacific Mountain Regional Council





EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT

CRACKED OPEN

This year's theme, "*Cracked Open*," invites us into one of the most tender and powerful moments in the Gospel of Mark—the story of the woman who breaks open her alabaster jar to anoint Jesus. It is an act of beauty and vulnerability, a bold offering of love poured out without hesitation. She knew something sacred was unfolding. She knew what needed to be done—and she did what she could.

When I first read Stephanie Spellers' book *The Church Cracked Open*, I found language for what I had been sensing for some time: that we are not just witnessing decline. We are being reshaped. The church is being cracked open. The world is being cracked open. And through the fractures, something precious is being revealed—something honest and holy, something courageous and deeply hopeful.

This theme feels especially timely in our Centennial year. As we celebrate one hundred years of faithful ministry in The United Church of Canada, we also ask: what needs to be broken open now, so that new life might emerge? What fragrance, long held within, is waiting to be released?

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Supporting healthy, vibrant, and faithful communities of faith remains central to our shared ministry. Across the Region, communities of faith are navigating shifting demographics, financial pressure, leadership transitions, and questions of identity and purpose. Some are grieving. Some are dreaming. Many are doing both at the same time.



We continue to strengthen tools like the self-assessment process and ministry planning support, offering communities a way to reflect deeply on their purpose and sustainability. This work is not about problem-solving alone—it is about accompaniment. About being present. About listening for the Spirit moving in the midst of it all.

To be cracked open is to let go of certainty and control—and to discover, in the process, a deeper trust in the Spirit's guidance and the possibility of transformation.

Support for Ministry

We are acutely aware that many of our communities of faith are struggling financially. Rising costs, aging infrastructure, and diminished capacity can make the future feel challenging. And yet, just like the cracked alabaster jar, we know there is something precious within these vessels—something worth honouring and supporting. That's why we are creating a new Strategic Ministry Support Fund—an accessible, practical source of funding to help communities of faith live into their ministry plans. We are also adding resources to the ProVision Fund, so we can support more bold ministries that are daring to respond to the world's deep needs.

This is not just about sustainability. It is about hope. It is about saying to our communities: *we see you, we believe in you, and we are with you.*

Property as Sacred Opportunity

Our approach to property continues to evolve—from simply managing buildings to stewarding spaces for ministry, justice, and renewal. Through partnerships and creative visioning, places like United Commons in Victoria, the Lakeview project, and Queens Avenue are showing us what is possible when we dare to dream beyond the known.

These decisions aren't easy. They involve risk, trust, and imagination. Our Executive has been working hard to create a property vision, rooted in equity, innovation, and faithful stewardship, which is guiding us toward a future where property becomes not a burden, but a blessing for the generations to come.



EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

LeaderShift

LeaderShift continues to be a vital wellspring for nurturing ministry leaders. Whether through clergy retreats, rural ministry conversations, governance workshops, or decolonization learning at Camp Fircom, we are creating spaces where leaders can be restored, re-equipped, and reconnected.

This cracked open time reminds us that leadership can't be heroic or solitary. It must be collaborative, honest, and rooted in care. Our calling is to hold space for the resilience and flourishing of those who lead—and to remind them that they are not alone.

First Third Ministry

First Third Ministry continues to be an important expression of our vision as a Region. In a world where young people are carrying so much—anxiety, uncertainty, disconnection—the church is called to be a place of welcome and belonging. A place where they are seen, heard, and held.

We know that for many, their experience of church has included exclusion or silence. We are determined to offer something different: spaces of trust, curiosity, formation, and joy. From Camp Spirit to Youth Trek, from Young Adult retreats to intercultural family gatherings, from Youth Council to campus ministry, we are seeing what happens when we pour out our best for the next generation.

We're not doing this work for appearances or for the sake of survival. We're doing it because, like the woman with the alabaster jar, we feel the Spirit calling us to offer what we have—even when the outcome isn't certain, even when it's costly. And in that faithful outpouring, something sacred is being released.



FAITHFUL PUBLIC WITNESS

Affirming Ministry

We remain steadfast in our public commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice. As an affirming Region, we are revisiting our own policies and practices to ensure they reflect the welcome we proclaim.

In a time when trans and gender-diverse youth are under attack across this country, we are called to speak and act boldly. Through partnerships like Affirming Connections, letter-writing campaigns, education, and public witness, we say clearly: *you are beloved, you are sacred, and you belong here.*

Reconciliation:

The journey of reconciliation is not a straight line, nor is it finished. While the National Indigenous Church is now autonomous, we are grateful for the enduring and mutual relationship between Pacific Mountain Region and Indigenous Ministries in BC. We walk forward together in commitment and humility.

We continue to learn and unlearn, to act with intention, and to hold space for truth-telling and healing. Reconciliation is not a destination—it is a way of being.

This is gospel work. This is what love looks like in the public square.

CRACKED OPEN IN A CRACKED WORLD

Let's be honest—the world is wild right now. Political division, climate disaster, war, displacement, injustice. It's easy to feel overwhelmed, disoriented, and heartbroken.

But maybe this is exactly the moment we've been prepared for. Maybe this is when the church is most needed—not as a fortress, but as a vessel. A people cracked open by compassion. A community shaped by justice. A movement powered by grace.

We don't need to have all the answers. We need only to bring what we have, to show up in love, and to trust that God is still at work—especially in the breaking.

The jar is broken. The fragrance fills the room. This is not an ending—it is an anointing.

Something holy is being released in this cracked open moment. And I see it—in communities of faith finding their voice, in youth discovering belonging, in leaders daring to rest, in ministries on the margins coming to life.

As we mark one hundred years of United Church witness, may we also crack open the jars we've held too tightly. May we pour ourselves out for love. And may we discover again and again the sacred beauty that has been there all along.

With deep gratitude and fierce hope,



Treena Duncan
Executive Minister
Pacific Mountain Regional Council





CELEBRATIONS

CELEBRANDS

BEING COMMISSIONED

Lynda Dickson
Cheryl Perry

BEING ORDAINED

Lauren Kirkey
Daniel Martin
Alexandra “Sandi” Parker
Keri Wehlander

BEING RECOGNIZED AS DESIGNATED LAY MINISTER

Nancy Painter

LYNDA DICKSON

Lynda Dickson completed her Master’s degree in Public and Pastoral Leadership at the Vancouver School of Theology in 2021. Following a further year of deep personal reflection and discernment, she switched streams in her UCC Candidacy Pathway in 2023 and was accepted at the Centre for Christian Studies in an accelerated graduate studies program: *Diaconal Ministries: Studies In Transformation And Action*, which she completed March 29, 2025.



Lynda believes the unconventional and radical transformational messages of faith, hope, and justice, find their locus in the divine inclusive presence of a loving God. A queer theologian, Lynda is a creative, and experienced Post-secondary Educator; a Community Development professional with over 20 years’ experience “connecting the dots” in Non-Profit Housing communities; as well as a successful relationship developer building consensus among elders within diverse cross-cultural settings.



Lynda's praxis is one which continues to be authentically grounded in the Diaconal Ministry precepts of Social Advocacy, Education, and Pastoral Care, and in this regard, she says she is grateful for the many diverse outreach opportunities which have called her "to be Church out of the Church," in service and support of marginalized and vulnerable intercultural voices. Lynda often borrows a quote from Feminist Activist and Catholic Worker Co-founder Dorothy Day (1897-1980) who said, "we should live in such a way that our lives wouldn't make much sense if the Gospel were not true."

During the past three years of her UCC Candidacy, Lynda has supported the efforts of the PMR's Justice Ministers at regional events, the ongoing Affirm United Dialogues, and she continues to share her leadership in support of her fellow ministry colleagues by providing ongoing pulpit supply in communities of faith across the lower mainland.

Lynda lives with her wife Tori Phillips in White Rock, BC, and is currently in a part-time Team Ministry Appointment. In this role, she is supporting the emergence of a new United Church Plant, "SANCTUARY ON 6th," located in the community of New Westminster, BC, which is situated on the unceded and un-surrendered land of the Halkomelem-speaking peoples, specifically the Qayqayt First Nation.

Lynda is thankful for **Eiyeh** (in Hebrew "**I Am**"), the invisible childhood friend who never let go of her hand on the journey, for the Plan that wasn't hers, for the presence of the Holy Spirit accompanying her in morning meditations, and for the queer kaleidoscopic perspective God has given her to acknowledge and affirm all the diverse and missing voices in community. 🌈

CHERYL PERRY

Cheryl has been in ministry for 21 years. She has a background in curriculum development and worked in the field of religious publishing before coming to work in the church.

Her path into ministry is born out of a lifetime of church involvement that has shaped her and encouraged her gifts. Both of her parents were ministers; her mom, who was also a lay minister, was a very important influence in her life.

Cheryl's theological training ground was as part of the development team for The Whole People of God, an internationally-recognized, lectionary-based curriculum. The influence that being part of this team had on her was significant and still underpins a lot of her ministry and leadership style. Cheryl loves to collaborate in teams and finds working with others sparks creativity.

Cheryl is a parent to three children and shares that privilege with her partner David Bertetic. As a family they love to cook and eat together, play board games, and travel. In her spare time, she likes to read, write, and watch movies.

I think one of greatest challenges for the church, in the coming time, is to adapt to what is changing all around us. The next 100 years will look a lot different than the last 100 years. Our traditions and history are still important because they root us, but we need courage and creativity to try things in new ways, and a willingness to be led by the Spirit into the future. 🙏



LAUREN KIRKEY

As a child it was my maternal grandmother who first introduced me to the church. Although I didn't go every week, I knew there was something special about the gathering, this Way and this Jesus. I was all in.



One Sunday my grandmother pointed to the minister and said, "That should be you one day." What I thought to be a sweet idea (but internally dismissed), turned out to be quite prophetic. Here we are years later finally stepping into that call that God had for me all along and loving it.

The biggest challenge for leadership in the coming time? Daring to lead authentically and vulnerably, holding great respect for our history and traditions while remaining flexible and curious to see where God is leading us now. That takes heart, discernment, trust, and a generous spirit for the world God is bringing about. 🌱

DANIEL MARTIN

My first call to ministry was in grade 1 at a small Baptist church in California when I was helping the kitchen team clean up after a celebration. One of the church grandmothers got down on my level, looked me in the eyes and said: you're going to be a pastor someday—and I've spent most of my life wresting with, running away from, and back to those words spoken into my soul by a fellow disciple.



Over the past 20 years of ministry to the church, I've served most often as a Family Pastor and pursued a BA in Family & Children's Ministry. Having moved around a bit for seminary, I finally settled at VST with a MA in Public & Pastoral Leadership, then completed Testamur at Montreal Diocesan Theological College. My journey into the United Church began at University Hill, followed shortly by serving as Campus Ministry Animator with the region and as Youth & Young Adult Minister at St. Andrew's-Wesley. I'm currently appointed to Becoming Church, a church plant in New Westminster.

My faith journey has been heavily reliant on an intimate and unwavering devotion to Jesus—so much in the church and this world has let me down but throughout it all, his love and constant invitation out my comfort zone into deeper transformation has kept me going.

I think one of the biggest challenges for leadership in the coming time will be learning how to hand over the “keys” of the church to a new generation of leaders—a practice of letting go and entering into hope filled discussions around what following Jesus looks like in a post-Christian era of empire decline. 🙏

SANDI PARKER

I was born into the Anglican Church, where my early and growing faith was formed and nurtured. That, along with exploring other Christian denominations during my early adult years gave me an appreciation for the breadth and diversity of expressions of faith of those who profess to follow Christ. Together with my family I came to the United Church in 2007 where we chose to make our spiritual home. As a Counselling Psychologist and with a love for my work in both post-secondary institutions and community agencies, I was simply looking for a place to worship on Sundays. Little did I suspect that my intent to 'just sit here in the back row and listen' would lead to recognition as a DLM in 2008, and 14 years in ministry at Highlands United Church, first as Children, Youth and Family Minister and later in Community Development and Congregational Minister. The many opportunities for ministry, the depth of vision and purpose, and the deep sense of community, connection, and creative spirit filled imagination throughout that time energized, inspired and sustained me.



Retiring during Covid to settle into life on the Sunshine Coast, another surprise awaited me after my husband and I decided to move to Vancouver Island. I received an invitation to serve in a team ministry in Central Saanich United Church, coming full circle to work with Rev. Cheryl Black, who was my gracious and patient mentor when I began at Highlands.

I currently am privileged to serve on the ProVision grant committee of the PMR, and at each meeting I am excited and encouraged to see the vision, imagination and faithfulness that goes into the many ministries of Communities of Faith across this region. I pray as leaders we will continue to dream big dreams, be open to the nudging of the Spirit, and be courageous, innovative and hopeful as we move into our next century.

I am grateful for the support of my entire family, who encouraged me to say 'yes' to this call, and I am excited to become (a little late to the party!) the 3rd person in my family to be able to put 'Rev' in front of their name!



KERI WEHLANDER

Keri Wehlander is grateful for the many paths she has journeyed throughout her ministry and the Spirit-filled companions that have walked with her. She has served a variety of communities of faith in the U.S. and Canada. Keri currently serves Oasis United Church, a deeply committed and Affirming community of faith in Penticton, BC. Keri is the author or editor of several books with resources for prayer, worship and spirituality. She is also a hymnwriter and has hymns published in *More Voices*, along with others that are published in hymnbooks for the Anglican and Methodist denominations and the Church of Scotland.



Keri believes that cultivating a resilient and imaginative hope is critical for all of us in this chaotic and uncertain time. This is, in many ways, a time that is an “apocalypse” in the original Greek sense of that word: a time of unveiling. Things that are being revealed to us can overwhelm and discourage us.

The central story of our faith – Jesus’ death and resurrection – is a story of hope in the midst of crisis. We are consistently invited to live as Easter people – as people who believe in resurrection even when it feels as though we are standing in the middle of a tomb.

In this way, hope is more than a feeling; it is a decision. It is the decision to believe that something meaningful will emerge from our efforts to walk in the way that Jesus taught. 🙏

NANCY PAINTER

My faith is rooted in my rural Manitoba upbringing, where our lives were intricately entwined with creation and God was visible in skies and fields as far as you could see. My commitment to social justice started from the seed planted when my Sunday School teacher told us that if we only had a little money, it went in the Local side of the envelope. When I repeated her words at home, my mother said emphatically, no, you give to those who need it most. I don't think she even remembered the exchange later, but it's still a strong memory for me.



I grew up in the United Church, then was away from it for many years, although still close to God. In the 2010s, I discovered St. Stephen's United Church in East Delta, where I was soon a part of a small, warm community of deep faith. It was heartbreaking when we had no choice but to close it in 2019, after it had served the community for 128 years, but it was where I heard God's call.

When I felt God nudging me toward ministry, I went to the VST Explorers' Weekend. That was February 2020, and the last time I was in a classroom for two-and-a-half years. It felt good to finally get off Zoom and experience the last half of my DLM education in person. With churches locked down, COVID also delayed my Supervised Ministry Education. I started with a half-time SME, covering a sabbatical leave at Peninsula United Church in South Surrey. For the last two-and-a-half years, I've been serving full-time as the minister at Ladner United Church in Delta.

My faith journey has benefited greatly from the support of my lay supervision teams, education supervisors and mentors, not to mention my Tuesday morning centring prayer group (you know who you are!). I thank God for your support and the wisdom you so generously share with me. 🙏

NEWCOMERS

Letitia Berger
Shannon Mang
Allison “Ally” Phillips
Meriel Simpson
Fredrick Thondhlana
Gregory Wooley

LETITIA BERGER

Letitia Berger is new to the Pacific Mountain Region. About a year ago, she and her wife moved from Calgary, Alberta to Port Coquitlam, B.C. When Letitia moved to B.C., she was finishing her schooling to become a Diaconal Minister. She had done a practicum at Trinity United Church in Port Coquitlam and did some pulpit supply at a few different churches in the Lower Mainland. Her move to B.C. has allowed her to grow and learn how to work with the community and the church.



Then, in her final year of school, she accepted an appointment at Aldergrove United Church. She graduated from the Centre for Christian Studies and was commissioned with the Chinook Winds Region on May 11, 2025. She has now accepted a call at Aldergrove United Church and looks forward to working with the community of faith there and the Fraser Valley Cluster. 🌱

SHANNON MANG AND GREG WOOLEY

Shannon and Greg are currently serving at Osoyoos-Oliver Pastoral Charge.

In the fall of 1984, Greg and Shannon moved from Regina to Vancouver to begin their theological studies at VST. Forty years later, they're back in BC, as a team doing a 22-month Intentional Interim Ministry at Osoyoos-Oliver. Together they are parents of three adult children who live in Alberta and BC.



Shannon's first Intentional Interim Ministry was at Trochu-Elnora, AB, in 1994-95 and more recently did IIMs in Calgary, AB and Markham, ON (a ministry carried out remotely from Alberta!) In addition, she served with rural churches in Wadena, SK, Acme, Innisfail and Irricana, AB as well as serving five urban congregations in Calgary. She serves on the Executive and Board of the Interim Ministry Network, and is passionate about walking with congregations through the holy ground of liminal, transitional times in their history. Shannon agrees with the late Phyllis Tickle's assertion that we are all living through Christianity's latest "garage sale" and that all ministry is transitional ministry.

Greg has served in Wadena, SK (teaming with Shannon), Calgary, Crossfield and Canmore-Banff, AB. In the middle of all that, he was away from paid accountable ministry for a dozen years, working as the communications specialist at a school in Calgary where he learned web and video skills that were put to good use during the pandemic at Ralph Connor Memorial UC, Canmore. Back in Presbytery days, Greg served as both a Treasurer and Secretary of Presbytery, and his favourite moment in ministry was when the Canmore community came together in 2015 to form a joint refugee sponsorship project, with the United Church as its home and hub, If you are having trouble finding him, look for a snowshoe trail or an MLB ballpark! 🐾

ALLY PHILLIPS

Ally (he/him) is in his third year of seminary at the Center for Christian Studies in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and is a Candidate for Diaconal Ministry. Ally grew up in St Catharines, Ontario, and now lives in Kelowna, BC, where he works as the Youth and Intergenerational Minister at Central Okanagan United Church. In his spare time, Ally enjoys cooking delicious gluten-free food, spending time with the gaggle of kids who call him “Uncle Ally”, and being trans in public. 🌈



MERIEL SIMPSON

A first generation Canadian, I was born and grew up in Toronto. I received my B.A. in Modern Languages from Victoria University, U of T and over the years at my home church, Dewi Sant Welsh United Church in Toronto, I taught Sunday School, was on Council, assisted the Clerk of Session and did some lay preaching. For many years, I worked in the corporate world, initially in the airline industry, then as a computer programmer and finally as a Communication Specialist for a bank.



Like many other people, my call was not a “burning bush” but a slow realization and response to God’s nudges and whisperings, which have never stopped through the years. My faith is about following the Way of Jesus, to live like him and share his lessons with others. I believe that while we all appreciate our beautiful worship areas, it’s the people who are the church and who make God’s works of love visible.

I received my Master of Divinity degree from Emmanuel College, Toronto. In 2015, I was ordained and appointed to Cosburn U.C., where I ministered to a small congregation in the throes of deciding to become part of a regional church. Two years later, I was delighted to receive a call from Scarborough Bluffs U.C. and we had seven wonderful years together.

In 2024, my life and faith journey moved me to Nanaimo B.C. where my remaining family lives. My sister was practicing medicine in Michigan and wanted to come back to Canada to practice and be with family.

I am currently serving as interim minister in Sylvan United, while they search for a full-time minister. 🙏

FREDRICK THONDHLANA

I was born on 12 June 1982 in Mutare, located in Manicaland Province of Zimbabwe, Africa. I spent my early years in Mutare, where I completed my foundational education. Driven by a deep passion for ministry, I relocated to Harare to pursue theological training at the United Theological College in 2006. I hold several academic qualifications, including a Diploma in Theology, a Diploma in Religious Studies, a BA Honors in Religious Studies, and an MSc in Peace and Governance.



I began my pastoral journey with the United Church of Christ of Zimbabwe (UCCZ) in 2005 and was ordained in 2011. Over the years, I made impactful contributions to the church and the broader community. My leadership roles included serving as the Director for Children's Ministries and Youth Ministry, Christian Education Director, and Communications Director for UCCZ. In these roles, I focused on nurturing the spiritual growth of younger generations.

In addition to the church work, I have been a strong advocate for social justice through my involvement with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches where I addressed societal challenges affecting vulnerable populations. I am one of the founding members of the Kanyi Redu Development Trust, an initiative focused on supporting the vulnerable in the Chipinge District of Zimbabwe. Through this trust, I implemented programs aimed at empowering and uplifting marginalized communities. I have been actively involved in civic organizations, championing the rights of the less privileged. As a passionate peace practitioner, I consistently spoke out against violence and injustice, advocating for dialogue and community engagement as tools to resolve conflicts and foster a more peaceful society.



I am excited to begin another journey with the United Church of Canada. I view this as an opportunity to continue the mission of serving others and promoting peace and justice. As I embark on this new chapter, I recognize that one of the biggest challenges for leadership in the times ahead will be fostering unity and inclusivity in increasingly diverse and polarized communities. However, I remain committed to addressing these challenges with faith, dialogue, and a spirit of service.

In addition to the ministry and social work, I am an accomplished musician, and have recorded three professional albums. I am married to Juliet Mwafuka who is also a Pastor, and together we have a daughter, Blessing. 🌱

RETIREEES

David Anderson
LeAnn Blackert
Derry Bott
Dianne Collery
Philip Francis
Susan Hayward-Brown
Lynn McGrath
Lori Megley-Best
Barry Morris
Jay Olson
Morgan Ryder
Keith Simmonds
Nancy Talbot
Bethan Theunissen
Jong Chul Woo
Brent Woodard

DAVID ANDERSON RETIRING JULY 1, 2025

I was ordained in 1990 on the shores of Okanagan Lake and then settled to 100 Mile House where I was patiently and graciously trained up by the three congregations I served. After being the first pastor to successfully make it through the five-year shift of power, I stayed there for almost a dozen years. After Laura, an 18-year-old single mother and Antoni, her toddler son were murdered by her boyfriend, I listened to him testify at his trial that he and Laura had been arguing about going to my church not long before he killed her. My heart broke open that day. It had never occurred to me to invite him so he could experience something other than the church he had been brought up in. I didn't feel I had either the courage or the permission. That revelation resulted in my ministry taking a dramatic turn as I began to search for better ways of forming more courageous and passionate Christians.





At 100 Mile, we developed a thriving and impactful small group ministry which empowered participants to discover their own calls for ministry and to be supported in doing so. It was like opening a flood gate as members found their own place in God's work of healing this broken world.

After almost a dozen years in the Cariboo, I was recruited to move back to the Lower Mainland to work with four Presbyteries and ninety congregations in a teaching and consulting capacity. My primary focus was to help them to transition out of the Christendom era and toward a more Christ-centred understanding of the church's purpose. Part of that work involved organizing large scale events (re:Vive) to educate churches about the possibilities for ministry after breaking free from an era that tightly controlled the church's agenda.

While working at BC Conference, my family and I attended Eagle Ridge United in Coquitlam. Not long after our arrival there, the congregation suffered a ruinous eight-month pastoral relationship that literally wiped out the membership. A few years later, when it came time to search for a new minister, I felt the call to lead the now 40-member congregation back to health. Employing a discipleship model, Eagle Ridge grew slowly and steadily over the years, even becoming the fastest growing church in BC for a decade. Focusing on young families, Eagle Ridge had over 100 children and youth right up until COVID-19 hit. Like most churches, most of our young families did not return after the pandemic. However, the church is once again growing and building back its ministries to young families and to a widely diverse community.

My road to retirement has not been an easy one. My plan was to work at least another year and a half until I turned 65. However, a combination of factors like 45 years of chronic headaches, and PTSD from one too many critical incidents in my 28-year career in the volunteer fire service, forced me to take half of 2024 off. Despite my deep love for the people of Eagle Ridge and congregational ministry in general, the passion and the drive have been knocked down to the point where I believe it would be irresponsible for me to continue on – the church means way too much to me to coast any longer than I have been.

As for the biggest challenge to leadership, I think it is to vociferously defend and restore Jesus' tarnished reputation. Since fundamentalism thoroughly hijacked the conservative church some decades ago,



its almost unchallenged presence in media of all sorts and in the political arena has resulted in the public's perception that all Christians think and behave like Christian fundamentalists. Thus, we are all tarred with the broad brush of racism, misogyny, exclusivism, nationalism, hate, fear, and a host of other traits that should never be associated with the body of Christ. Ask any non-churchgoer about the United Church and they'll tell you that we are bigoted, selfish and self-centred, and afraid of anyone and anything that doesn't look like us. Of course, they're wrong. But why wouldn't they be? We haven't done anything to correct that misperception. As the hymn so prophetically points out, "we have stood silently too long".

I believe that what is to blame for our enabling "live and let live" sentiment is a very misguided liberal value. We have long told ourselves that criticizing other churches or denominations is off limits. I would assert that we might very well be even more Gnostic than we already are if the early church had not labeled it and other misguided theologies as heretical. The cost of not calling out theories that, for instance, support domination systems (e.g., substitutionary atonement) is that they poison the well of living water, allow Christians to completely dismiss Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God as unattainable or irrelevant, and provide an alternative to directly opposing injustice.

It is time for us to take the gifts we have received from the affirming movement and apply them to the rest of our faith. We must be public, intentional, and explicit about Jesus' gospel of agape-love. We must serve up that miraculous PIE of unconditional love at the same time we remind ourselves and our neighbours that Jesus died, and the early church was persecuted, because they opposed the domination systems of this world, because that they asserted that God's love is for all of God's beloved children and not just some, because they believed that Jesus came to teach us how to transform ourselves and this world and not to die to pay off some sin-debt that supposedly blocks us from God's love for us, and because they showed that humanity is up to the task of actually changing.

The challenge to all Christian leaders these days is to claim their power and lead their communities of faith back to The Way of agape-love, compassion, justice, and peace. Let's claim our heritage as the denomination that leads the way and get courageous. 🙏

LEANN BLACKERT

RETIRING JUNE 1, 2025

Rev. LeAnn Blackert was imported to Canada to serve Mount Paul United Church (Kamloops) in 2009. In 2019, she heard the call of the wild and, with the help of two friends, planted a Wild Church in Kamloops. Thanks to a grant from PMR, LeAnn was able to focus full-time on this new ministry, and eventually church plants grew up in Kelowna and Sorrento. Since then plants have been nurtured in Penticton, Calgary, Parksville and Armstrong. LeAnn's partner, Rev Ivy Thomas, retired from ministry last year, and the two migrated to Okotoks, AB to be near family and grandchildren.



According to LeAnn, "the biggest change to leadership that I have witnessed is the emergence of what we call 'new expressions' of faith, many of which take place outside of traditional church buildings. The most difficult part of that work is being recognized by many who find their faith fed in more traditional ways. When I would get discouraged by naysayers, I would remember that Jesus began his own ministry preaching in the synagogue and was cast out. From then on his ministry was outside of buildings, out on the land, meeting people where they were and tending to their deepest needs. Bringing new and different ways isn't always an easy road, but the last seven years of my ministry have been my most rewarding." 🌱

DERRY BOTT

RETIRING JULY 1, 2025

I am looking forward to my retirement and getting a weekend off! I have been serving First United Church for the past 14 years and have very much enjoyed my time here. I started my journey in the United Church by being baptised and confirmed as an adult 69 years ago. I spent a lot of time on committees, mostly with pastoral care. In 2014 I was recognized after completing the Designated Lay Minister program in Calling Lakes. I continued my education in the Indigenous Studies program at Vancouver School of Theology graduating with my M. Div. in 2023, being ordained soon after. It was a long journey but worth it.



I love the United Church for being so inclusive and allowing people to come as they are and where they are in their journey, without any pressure to do, be, or believe in any particular way. The church gives us the freedom to be who we are but is there to guide us as we may require or wish. 🙏

DIANNE COLLERY

RETIRING AUGUST 11, 2025

I started to sense a draw to pastoral ministry twenty years ago and, as I began exploring studies in theology and ministry, found myself being called out of my first career and into pastoral ministry. In 2009 I joined the pastoral staff at St. Stephen's in Qualicum Beach as the Youth and Family Minister and served happily in that capacity until 2018, when I was ordained and became that same congregation's Associate Minister. In July 2020 I accepted a call to take over as St. Stephen's Minister and, with that, shifted from serving in team ministry to solo ministry, just as we were all trying to figure out how to "do church" in a pandemic. I will always be grateful for having been called to serve in such a vibrant faithful community of faith, and for the trust they placed in me as we navigated the significant transitions that have come in the past five years.



The wisdom of Eugene Peterson has guided me throughout my time in ministry. He said a pastor should be about three things, studying scripture, being with and caring for their people, and personal and pastoral prayer. He lamented seeing pastors drawn into other tasks, administrative and otherwise, when their flock needed them to be doing those three things. It seems to me that trying to keep those three aspects of our calling central and primary is one of the biggest challenges ministers face in this time when society and our institutions are facing huge transitions. But it is also the work God has called us to be about. 🙏

PHILIP FRANCIS

RETIRED JULY 31, 2024

“It’s never too late, Philip, to become the person God means you to be” – these words from a shelter resident, during a period of chaplaincy at First United Church in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, have had an important influence on my life in recent years. In 2017, in my sixties, I left a career in the investment industry and enrolled as a full-time theology student at VST. Sharing a classroom with thoughtful and engaged students, some 30 or more years younger than me, was a wonderful gift, and gave me an excellent academic training. But it was an extended period of field education in community ministry at First United Church, under the supervision of Jim Hatherly (with thanks to Brenda Fawkes, of blessed memory) that helped me hear more clearly than before, and respond to, God’s call to become a candidate for ministry, later in life than most. No one could have been more surprised than myself.



The long and winding road through the MAPPL and MDiv. programs at VST, the candidacy process, supervised ministry and eventual ordained ministry has been more demanding than I could ever have imagined. There have been sacrifices along the way, particularly for my wife and family, now including six beautiful grandchildren, without whose support this journey would never have been possible. I am also so grateful to my mentors, too many to name, who helped me “unlearn” almost as much from my earlier life in the financial industry, as I have learned during these past eight years. The global pandemic has accelerated many of the challenges affecting the future sustainability of our communities of faith and it is hard work being a minister in times such as these. I therefore give thanks for all who now lead our faith communities and pray that they will have the energy, resilience, and trust in God’s continuing purpose.

Despite the challenges, pastoral leadership has been a blessed experience, one that has also transformed my own life and given me a clearer sense of direction for my retirement years.

I am so grateful for the trust placed in me by the Pacific Mountain Region and the Mountain Candidacy Board; and, particularly, by the faithful people of Tsawwassen United Church and St. David's United Church, West Vancouver, where I completed my Supervised Ministry Education and, at St. David's, who then called me as their Minister. Despite the existential challenges, I have also witnessed abundant gifts in our faith communities, and in the Region, including the generous support and guidance I have experienced as a minister, and I give thanks to God for the opportunity to serve the beloved community, albeit later in life. There could surely be no greater honour. 🙏

SUSAN HAYWARD-BROWN
RETIRED JULY, 2025

No bio submitted.



LYNN MCGRATH

RETIRED MARCH 1, 2025

If God hadn't been persistent in providing signs until I agreed to pursue a career in ministry, I wouldn't be reflecting on my retirement today. My journey toward commissioning as a diaconal minister wasn't without challenges. My belief that God would provide the necessary opportunities and with Jesus as a role model, I was blessed with unwavering support from my life partner,



mentors, the Wild Figs, and others. At Agassiz United Church, I put into practice the experiential learning gained from the Centre for Christian Studies. At AUC our underlying motto was, we are all "a work in progress" as we found ways to make Christ's hands our hands in service inside and outside of the church building. It is a place where we wrestled with scripture, were nourished by weekly worship, and used our spiritual gifts of time, talent, and treasures.

The biggest challenge for leadership in the coming time, is to trust in the process in handing over responsibilities to younger generations. The image of Canada Geese flying in a V formation comes to mind. This pattern helps the birds maintain their energy and improves communication. Each bird flies above the bird in front of them to reduce wind resistance. And being able to see the other birds benefits in overall coordination. When the lead bird gets tired, it moves to the back of the group for a much-deserved rest. We can learn a lot from God's creatures about leadership, we just need to notice. 🐦

LORI MEGLEY-BEST

RETIRED JANUARY 10, 2025

I was born in the late 50's into a large family of Ukrainian homesteaders. We were a devout Ukrainian Orthodox family but when my parents left the farming communities they grew up in, to move to the city- Edmonton- they chose to go to the trendy United Church because they didn't want anyone to know they had Ukrainian heritage. At that time Ukrainians in Canada faced discrimination due to perceptions leftover from the war time internment of Ukrainians and resulting prejudice from Anglo Canadians. I was not allowed to tell anyone at school that I came from a Ukrainian family. My parents would not speak Ukrainian to us because they did not want us to learn their mother tongue.



We, however, attended the family Orthodox Church on the farm for mostly all the high holidays. It was in the Orthodox Church that I learned to love ritual, the haunting harmonies of slavic choirs and the smell of incense during worship. I grew up with a deep reverence and respect for the mysteries of the Holy. I am okay with a God who cannot be explained. I also learned the comfort that comes and the mourning that is made whole in the practices of an open casket, kissing the body and eating on the graves. Presiding at funerals is a favorite part of my role as a minister.

My parents were as devout United Church members as they were Orthodox, we never missed church and I loved it. Church was like a second home to me, the people like a second family.

I grew up in Edmonton and Calgary, went to university in Calgary and received a B.Ed. with a double major in Reading and Special Education. One summer I was on summer staff at Naramata Centre, met Greg and we were married in 1984.

I taught school in Calgary for 8 years, we had 4 sons and in 1993, I got an invitation to apply to be a Staff Associate Minister at my home church to lead Christian Education. That began my vocation as a minister.

I worked at Woodcliff United and McDougall United in Calgary, Westworth United in Winnipeg, Crescent United in Surrey and Ryerson United in Vancouver. During those years I worked on my Masters in Pastoral Counselling through St. Steven's College.

One day, my colleague, Deb Bowman, said "Why have you not got ordained?" So that led me to VST and ordination in 2011. I was called to Cloverdale United Church and served there for 10 years before moving to the shared ministry at Naramata Community Church. I loved being a teacher, loved my short time as a grief counsellor for Surrey Hospice, but I felt most at home and most whole in my vocation as ordained minister. Thank you, Debra- seriously- I am in this place because of your nudge.

I am deeply grateful for how the church has shaped my whole life. And especially for those in the congregations I served who invited me into, sometimes, the most painful and intimate moments of their lives; for the wise UCW women who were the heart and hands of many of the congregations I served, who exemplified 'loving your neighbour' in ways that I could never have imagined by caring for others in truly sacrificial ways; for the faith that was passed on to me by the example of so many deeply committed Christians; and for each congregation I was graced to be part of who became family for me. I have truly loved serving the church and pray that I have been as great a blessing to the church as the church has been for me. 🙏

BARRY MORRIS
RETIRED JUNE 30, 2024

No Bio Submitted.



JAY OLSON

RETIRING JULY 1, 2025

My formal ministry adventure began at graduation (1986) from VST. I was placed in the Associate Minister position at First United Church in Victoria, BC and ordained to Ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care in 1987. It has been one learning adventure after another. I hold dear today that the Church took me into the world through study, and ecumenical engagement.

After studying at SFTS, I served in congregational and executive ministries in the PC(USA). The adventures then continued in Vancouver and Burnaby. What a privilege this adventure has been! I love every community with which I have served and have been blessed by them all including BC Conference and PMRC. I carry in my heart, with gratitude, the indigenous peoples who have seen me, taught me, and helped me grow. Tlingit elders Yeidikook'aa, Kasteew, and Rosie Fay will forever be in my heart. I pray that the Church will welcome the wisdom of our elders and learn from them to act with intelligence, humility, and heart. Gunnalcheesh! (Thank you in Tlingit) 🙏



MORGAN RYDER

RETIRING JUNE 30, 2025

I have been involved in leadership in the church for the last 14 years and was able to add that to having a foster family of 7 children and living on a farm. My work was in the central interior west of Prince George, serving Houston, Burns Lake, Fort Fraser/Fraser Lake, Vanderhoof and Fort St James part time. It involved a lot of travel and thinking of ways to work outside the box. I would say we were often successful. Being Indigenous and Queer has had its advantages and some challenges. But I am grateful for a church that makes room for all of that!



As the church moves forward, I think one of the biggest challenges will be keeping us together as one body. In the north, we are very far apart and resources are few and limited. It is hard for many to feel connected to the wider church. Addressing this need is essential. 🙏

KEITH SIMMONDS

RETIRED FEBRUARY 1, 2025

Ministry has brought my family and I gifts, blessings, and opportunities for change. Many enjoyable in the receiving, some - not so much. Serving in the interior and on the Island and at national and regional levels has taught me much about relationships, curiosity, and understanding. I cannot begin to list or adequately honour the friendships, mentors and guides who have walked with me and I continue to be filled with wonder at the love, generosity, kindness and respect I receive.



I have been most deeply marked by my service in Bethlehem and the change that has wrought. Observing the consequences of racism, colonialism and abandoning life to the vagaries of the Corporate Capitalist System cracked open my unquestioned allegiances. I saw how deeply we, and all our relations, are mired in systems that devalue, dishonour, and discount every living and non-living presence on earth. If we can't provide wealth or serve the needs of wealth then we are debris in the way of 'progress'. 'Profit motive' deriding 'prophetic call to love', as it has since men began writing scripture in their own image, preaching scarcity in the midst of Creator's abundance.

That experience reinforced and cemented in me an insistence on starting with the worth, value and right to exist of 'the other,' the 'not me.' I am called to listen deeply when some are persuaded to see their salvation in the eradication of others. Called to seek the source of fear and pain, to attempt to build common ground while helping to erect effective and transparent boundaries so that one person's fear does not become another being's eradication.

For me that has been and continues to be the heart and soul of the gospel. The existence of G*d is known and experienced in the insistence to love. May we always insist on love. 🙏

NANCY TALBOT

RETIRED MAY 13, 2025

I was baptized in the United Church in Beaconsfield, Quebec as an infant but it was the community of Trinity United Church in Ingersoll, Ontario that raised me in the faith. It was there I attended Sunday School and Youth Groups and sang in the church choir. After graduating from the University of Waterloo, I took a bit of a hiatus from the church during which time I had the opportunity to travel in Southeast Asia. The exposure to poverty I experienced on that trip challenged my comfortable Western upbringing and I had a hard time adjusting when I returned home to Canada. After wandering back into church one Sunday, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the church of my childhood had a lot to say about addressing the inequalities of the world. I quickly became involved at Bedford United in Toronto and it was there one night at a Board meeting that I experienced a call to ministry. I headed off to the Vancouver School of Theology and although I loved my studies, I was pretty reluctant when it came to being ordained. It wasn't until former moderator, Lois Wilson told me at a conference that if I wanted to be taken seriously in ecumenical circles as a woman, I better get the credentials, that I finally gave in. I'm so glad I did. I was ordained in 1995 and settled at Royal Heights United Church in North Delta where I served for 9 years before moving to Mount Seymour United in North Vancouver in the fall of 2004. Serving these two faithful communities and growing with them through many joys and challenges has been the greatest privilege of my life. Involvement in the wider church with Presbytery, Education and Students, Spiritual Care Network and Naramata Center has also been very fulfilling.



Contemplative practices have been a mainstay of my ministry. During the covid lockdown I trained to become a spiritual director and began offering spiritual companionship from time to time at Rivendell Retreat Center. I am looking forward to expanding my practice in retirement.

The biggest challenge for leadership in the coming years will likely be the same as it's been since I was ordained thirty years ago: to courageously and creatively adapt, change, evolve and emerge into the "new thing" God is calling us to be in a post-Christendom world.

With deep gratitude, I offer my prayers for the future of our beloved United Church. 🌱

BETHAN THEUNISSEN, RETIRING JULY 1, 2025

I've spent most of my life being a bridge—across cultures, ideologies, faith traditions, and socio-political divides. Someone once told me that the trouble with being a bridge is that you get stomped on from both sides. It's true, but I wouldn't want to be anything else! I was born and raised in apartheid-era South Africa, where my early ministry unfolded amid political struggle and transformation. As a young adult, I worked alongside others to dismantle systems of racial injustice and walk in solidarity with those living in poverty. That season of life rooted my faith in the practical work of justice, healing, and community-building.



I completed my Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Theology, and African Politics at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in 1991. During that time, I started teaching literacy in Crossroads squatter camp, founded a group called Isaiah 58 Ministries, and moved into a community in Langa township against the law forcing segregation called the Group Areas Act. It was rewarding but exhausting work. Needing rest and perspective, I moved to the United States and studied at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Indiana, where I earned my Master of Divinity in 1994 and began preparing for ordination. It was also during this period that I came out as a lesbian. My partner Naomi and I moved to Winnipeg, and later to the Lower Mainland, where I was one of only a few “out” LGBTQ+ clergy in ordered ministry at the time.

Seeking a spiritual home that welcomed the fullness of who I was, I found myself in the United Church of Canada. I completed my United Church Testamur studies through Vancouver School of Theology in 2001 and have served in United Church ministry now for almost 30 years. I've had the privilege of walking with congregations through renewal and reinvention—cutting my teeth at Augustine United in Winnipeg, supporting an exciting revitalization effort at Shiloh-Sixth Avenue United after my 2002 ordination, and working with a lovely congregation at Trinity United Church in Vancouver where we left our building, worshiped in a community center, and then bought, ran, and met in a café.



Since 2019, I've served Pitt Meadows United Church, supporting a mostly elderly congregation through COVID, governance restructuring, and renewed vision for ministry.

Throughout this time, I've also tried to bridge the divide between academic theology and the lives of congregants, and later between Leadership and Organizational Studies and ministers. I began postgraduate studies in Personality, Religion, and Culture at Garrett Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, in 1995, and completed a PhD in Leadership and Organizational Change at the University of San Diego in 2016. My dissertation—"Intonations of their Own Language"—explored progressive mainline congregations that were able to draw and nurture young adults. I taught leadership courses to undergraduates and co-taught PhD students while at USD, and later taught summer school courses at VST in Leadership and Organizational Change.

At the heart of it all, my theology has been grounded in the belief that Jesus came so that we might all have life, and have it abundantly. That vision of abundance—not for a few, but for all—has shaped how I've ministered, welcomed, and hoped. I've done my best to support those who've been pushed to the margins, and to make space for those who thought they no longer belonged.

I've always believed that ministry is a shared task. My work has only been possible because of the brave, generous people willing to try new things, lean into uncertainty, and follow Jesus toward transformation. I carry deep gratitude for them. It would also not have been possible to live as a bridge through all the stomping without the love, wisdom, and support of my partner and best friend, Naomi, who never fails to both undergird and challenge me simultaneously. She claims that her disliking of change has been my best tutor in how to lead change in congregations and she's right!

Looking ahead, I believe one of the greatest challenges for leadership is staying open-hearted and grounded in a time of accelerating change and socio-political polarization. We can no longer simply write off those who disagree with us as 'haters,' or stupid, or deluded. God loving the whole world means we are called to become bridges, seek to really understand and engage in love, make connections, to help transformation to happen slowly, one heart at a time. The "mission field" is changing and we have to understand and love people, whatever their political perspective.



Staying in our silos is not the way of the gospel. Faithful leadership means making room for grief and joy, tradition and innovation, difference and belonging. And still—perhaps always—it means working towards peace through reconciliation and justice, especially where the way is thorny and fractured.

As I approach retirement, I am going to take some time off, and then remain open to where the Spirit may call me next. I still feel the pull toward learning and teaching, writing and storytelling, and walking alongside others who are working for justice, inclusion, and healing. I'm deeply grateful for the shared journey and thanksgiving to all who've taught me on the way, whether through supporting or stomping... I've learned through you all and am thankful. 🙏

JONG CHUL WOO
RETIRING JUNE 2, 2025

No photo or bio submitted.

BRENT WOODARD

RETIRING AUGUST 1, 2025

To be honest, I'm a little sad writing this biography marking retirement. I remember, back in the 1990's, seeing my retirement date as 2023 (I'm 67), and that seemed like a long way away. How quickly the time has come.



On the one hand I feel like I'm just starting to figure out spirituality. On the other hand, I feel like I will retire (and maybe die) without having quite found the treasure or the pearl of great price. Maybe the search is part of the treasure.

I'm really grateful for the people of Riverside United Church in Calgary who loved me into choosing ministry. I feel honoured that I got to go to Seminary at St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon. I had a lovely Manitoba experience, getting to be a student minister in Minnedosa and Dauphin. Trinity United in Thunder Bay was a great place for internship. It's in Thunder Bay where I met my wife, Sally. We went from there to Vauxhall, Alberta, then to Guelph, Ontario, then to Pincher Creek, Alberta and now I'm/we're serving the Windermere Valley Shared Ministry and St. Andrew's United Church based respectively in Invermere and Golden. I'd like to give a little shoutout to Canyon Church Camp in Waterton, where we were involved for many years. I'd also like to say how blessed we were and are to have our children, Jasper and Amelia, be a part of our journey.

Leadership in the future. Being pastoral will always be welcome. I think of Karen Armstrong's book "The Art of Scripture." Working with scripture, dancing with whoever is on the dance floor, trying to make church experiences nourishing – is all a form of art, and will require leaders be attuned to Spirit and wisdom.

I'd like to reflect upon Brian McLaren's four stages of faith. The last two stages are perplexity and harmony. The first stage is simplicity. The United Church isn't a good place for people in the stage of simplicity. Generally, I think we resonate with those in the stage of perplexity. The challenge will be to further create communities of harmony.



The next challenge will be to keep such communities together, because, potentially, once a person is at the stage of harmony, they don't need organized religion. It could be said then, that if we lead well, we might be assisting people out of organized religion. On the other hand, it may also be true that if we create communities of harmony, people may want to belong for a host of healthy reasons.👤



ANNIVERSARIES

70 Years

Terence Anderson

65 Years

Andrew Owens
Don Waldon
Gordon Rajotte
Richard Delorme

60 Years

Ann Evans
Harold Coward
J. Elderkin Bell
James Hamilton
Lance Woods
Philip Mayfield
Dale Perkins

55 Years

David Sutherland
James Johnson
Norman Wilkinson
Thomas Harding

50 Years

Beverley Milton
David Sparks
Robert Lees

45 Years

Allen Tysick
Bob Brinn
Brad Newcombe
David Parks
Debra Hinksman
Ed Searcy
Keith Howard
Shelagh MacKinnon

40 Years

Bari Castle
Bruce Sanguin
Deborah Laing
Gayle Chouinard
Heather Anderson
Ichiro Noshiro
Jai Hyung Lee
Kenneth Jones
Louise Cummings
Marianna Harris
Yvonne Jordan

35 Years

Dave Anderson
Foster Freed
Jamie Bushell
Louise Skibsted
Ryan Knight

30 Years

Armand Houle
Beverley Tracey
Carolyn Ronald
Cindy Terry
Debra Bowman
Lara Bowditch
Nancy Talbot
Robert Gilbert
Ruth Wright
Terri Scallon

25 Years

Anna Christie
Christine Dudley
Keven Fletcher
Kim Haslebacher
Peggy Jensen
Scott Turnbrook
Wilda Cottam

20 Years

Jennifer Goddard-Sheppard
Moley Mangana
Nancy Monteith
Robin Jacobson
Sarah Bullas
Shannon Mang

15 Years

Aaron Miller
Cathy Cryder
Colleen Blair
Debbie Bentham
Gaye Sharpe
Henri Lock
Jen Cunnings
Maureen Anderson
Min-Goo Kang
Pamela Evans
Patricia Shier
Sandi Parker

10 Years

Anita Spiller
Bruce McAndless-Davis
Greg Glatz
Greg Powell
Jenny Sprong
John Crowdis
Meriel Simpson
Sophia Ducey
Suzanna Bates
Wade Lifton

5 Years

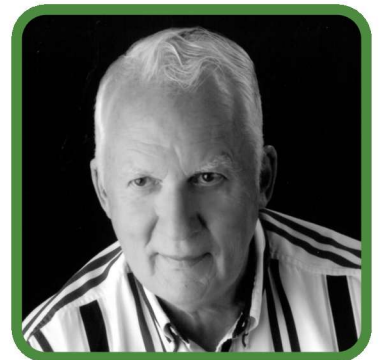
Joseph Kyser
Kim McNaughton
Lydia Ruenzel
M. Robin Pengelly
Murray Pruden
Ryan Chapman
Stevan Mirkovich

MEMORIALS

Douglas Keith Alexander
Wilfred Wesley Carson
Lily Chow (Chin)
Kenneth William Crassweller
Lesley Fairley
Brenda Lynne Fawkes
Wilber James
Frederick Alden Kingston
Jocelyn May Pritchard
Anna Louise Rolston
Marlene Soutar
Maria “Ria” Van Holten
Gordon Verplank
Lois M. Wilson

DOUGLAS KEITH ALEXANDER **AUGUST 8, 1940 ~ NOVEMBER 19, 2024**

It is with deep sorrow and love that we announce the passing of Reverend Douglas Keith Alexander, born on August 8, 1940, in Lethbridge, Alberta, and passed gently on November 19, 2024, in Langley, British Columbia, at the age of 84. Doug grew up in the small community of Cayley, Alberta, just south of High River. His strong sense of community, compassion, and faith were fostered during his childhood years and would remain central to his life's work. After dedicating many years to the service to others, as a X-Ray Technician and Jr. High School Teacher, Doug retired as a Minister in the United Church of Canada, having served congregations across Canada, including in Douglastown, New Brunswick; Edmonton, Alberta; Calgary, Alberta; Langley, British Columbia; New Westminster, British Columbia; and Tsawwassen, British Columbia. His ministry touched countless lives, offering comfort, guidance, and love to all those who crossed his path.





Doug was known for his warmth, incredible sense of humor, and devotion to the people he served. He cherished the friendships he made along the way and was always ready to lend a helping hand or a listening ear. His gentle spirit and unwavering faith were a beacon of light to many.

Doug was predeceased by his nephew Keith Aker, Brothers-In-Law Jim Evans, Austin Aker and Gordon Rasmusen, his sister Jean Aker, Great Nephew Lucas and Great-Great nephew Levi. Doug is survived by his husband Daniel Ariss and will be dearly missed by his sisters Yvonne Evans and Myra Rasmusen, Nieces and Nephews Brenda (Bob) Baker, Colleen Hannah, Carla (Hildor) Ergang, Glen (Wendy) Croft, Cheryl (Bill) Holmes. There are a host of Great Nieces Nephews as well as Great-Great Nieces and Nephews, Ryan, Nya, Kelsey, Jaxson, Jamie, Nicole, Troy, Trevor, Gemma, Tamara, Nathan, Travis, Brittney Oakley, Kingsley, Jason, Krystal, Brooklyn, Ella, Judah, Adele, Julie, Scott, Everly, Lincoln, Bailey, Taylor, Jade, Justin, Addison, Hudson, Beckett, Keara, Nathan, Weston, Aiden, Wrenlee and a host of friends, including Daniel's family, too numerous to mention. He will also live on in the hearts of his very special friends Hallet and Karen Llewellyn, their daughters Jennifer (Blake) and Kristina (Todd), their grandchildren Owen, Elliott, Ethan and Gavin.

A Service of Witness to the Resurrection celebrating Doug's life was held on November 30, 2024, at Cloverdale United Church.

Daniel would like to thank the NP, Nurses, Care Aids and Staff at Langley Lodge for the loving, compassionate and professional care given to Doug over the past three and a half years. 🌻

WILFRED WESLEY CARSON

AUGUST 15, 1937 ~ FEBRUARY 15, 2025

It is with great sadness that the family of Wilfred Wesley Carson announces his passing. Born in Castlederg, Northern Ireland, on August 15, 1937, Wilf was the son of Florence and Frederick Carson. He was raised in a lively household with 9 siblings, and through his early years, he developed a deep love for learning and a strong sense of faith. Wilf earned his degree in Theology, leading him to the ministry where he made an impact on countless lives. Wilf met his beloved wife, Ann, while in the ministry, and the two were married in 1969. Shortly after, Wilf joined the British Navy. The couple's first son, Michael, was born in Belfast, followed by Susan and Julian in Portsmouth, England. In 1975, the family made the bold decision to move to Canada, where they were warmly welcomed by Wilf's sister, Olive, and her family. Wilf and Ann first settled in the small Albertan town of Manville, then moving to Claresholm, Alberta and later moving to Port Coquitlam, British Columbia in 1980. Wilf's life was defined by a passion for connecting with others and helping them become the best person they could be. He spent over 35 years serving in the United Church of Canada. His work with his congregation was a testament to his dedication to community building and his belief in the importance of faith, growth, and connection. Wilf's ministry was not just limited to his work in the church; he was known to engage deeply with his congregation, encouraging hiking groups, supporting youth programs, marriage counselling, potlucks and even Church plays. Sunday church services always had an interesting sermon for the children of the congregation as he loved to sit with the children telling stories that beautifully tied back to the themes of the sermon. Wilf and Ann's three children grew up, married, and began their own families, keeping the Carson family close-knit and connected, no matter the distance. As Wilf and Ann entered retirement, they embraced a life of travel, caring for their grandchildren, and supporting the many extracurricular activities that came with the next generation. Wilf was a man who always put others first, making time for everyone—even when his schedule was packed. He challenged those around him to think critically, embrace opportunities, and seek their own answers. His family lovingly teased him,



calling him the patriarch who never gave a direct answer but always prompted others to find solutions on their own. Wilf's legacy is one of love, wisdom, and service. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and the many lives he touched during his ministry. He leaves behind his wife of 56 years, Ann, their children, Michael (Karen) (Kira and Ethan), Susan (Darryl) (Liam and Sara), and Julian (Cristal) (Welsey, Ben, and Natalie) and extended family. A service to celebrate Wilf's life took place at Eagle Ridge United Church on May 9th, 2025. 🕊️

LILY (CHIN) CHOW

1924 ~ 2024

Lily Chow passed away peacefully at home, deeply missed by her children Terry (Heather), Janice (Mark), Elaine (Hank), and 8 grandchildren. Predeceased by husband, Bill, and son, Donald. Born in rural AB, Lily attended business school and worked as a stenographer for Cominco in Kimberley. Hearing the Lord's call, she enrolled in United Church School at U of T, graduating in 1956 as a deaconess. Bill and Lily worked together to run a successful business. Lily embraced her extended family and community, hosting dinners, teaching Sunday school, and organizing veteran events. Lily will be remembered for her hospitality, kindness, and generosity. A service was held on November 22 at Pacific Spirit United Church. 🕊️



KENNETH WILLIAM CRASSWELLER

MAY 27, 1935 ~ FEBRUARY 14, 2025

Ken Crassweller, born May 27, 1935 in Regina, SK, died February 14, 2025. Predeceased by his parents, Herbert and Josephine; his wife of 60 years, Lesley; daughter, Marnie; and granddaughter, Skye. Survived by his sons, Andrew and Mark.



For 32 years (to 2010) Ken served faithfully as minister with the United Church of Canada in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia in 13 pastoral charges. Prior to his call to ministry, Ken worked as a lineman with Sask Tel; clerk with Hudson's Bay Company; teacher at three First Nations schools in Manitoba and Saskatchewan; Arts and Crafts Development and Liaison Officer with Industry and Development Canada for Northern Affairs in Frobisher Bay and Yellowknife, NWT, and Ottawa. Thanks to the many staff at The Glenshiel and the Royal Jubilee Hospital for their care for Ken. Thanks also for the prayers for Ken from the members of Centennial United Church. A gathering of family and friends to remember Ken's life was held on March 14 at The Glenshiel in Victoria. 🕊️

LESLEY FAIRLEY

JANUARY 26, 1965 ~ DECEMBER 2, 2024

It is with a heavy heart that we share the sad news of the death of Lesley Fairley, Children and Family minister at Golden Ears United Church. Lesley was a cherished member for many years, and before that she was a member at Como Lake United Church. Lesley served faithfully in ministry with children and families for over a decade, shaping the faith journeys of our young and young at heart with her love, dedication, and creativity. She had also served in YAYA ministries with Westminster Presbytery and was involved with Camp Spirit. In more recent years, she brought her gifts of kindness, care, and warmth to the role of office administrator, ensuring the church's daily life ran smoothly while offering a listening ear and a welcoming smile to all. Lesley's life reflected her deep faith, her generous spirit, and her commitment to drawing the circle of God's love wider. Her impact on our community is profound, and her absence will be deeply felt. A service to celebrate Lesley's life took place at Golden Ears United Church on January 25th, 2025. 🕊️



BRENDA LYNNE FAWKES

JUNE 23, 1971 ~ SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

With broken hearts, we announce the sudden and tragic death of Brenda Lynne Fawkes. Brenda died in a motor vehicle accident outside of Dafoe, Saskatchewan while driving home to Vancouver from Winnipeg on Friday, September 20th. She will forever be remembered with love by her partner of almost 30 years, Nancy Talbot and their sons Nathan and Joel, all of whom have been



devastated by her death. Her mother, Sharon, brother Brent, sister-in-law Heidi and nephews Eric and Matthew of whom she was so proud, deeply grieve her loss. She was predeceased by her twin brother, Brian, in May of last year and her father, Jeffrey, in 2021. Her extended family, including her Talbot relatives, as well as Gail Roberts, Joan Ford and a wide circle of “chosen family” will miss her for years to come. Her faithful companion, Georgia, holds vigil at the front window of her house.

Brenda was born in Winnipeg and attended elementary and secondary schools in the Charleswood area. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Winnipeg. The community of Charleswood United Church is responsible for her early formation in the gospel of social justice and unconditional love. With them she preached her first sermon and responded to her call to ordained ministry. A proud Winnipegger whose loyalty to the Blue Bombers ran deep (unless the BC Lions took to the field), she never fully left her prairie roots.

In 1992, Brenda moved to Vancouver to complete a Masters of Divinity at the Vancouver School of Theology. It was there she met her life partner, Nancy, and eventually established a home. First Nathan and then Joel were welcomed and nurtured with a love that knew no bounds.

Brenda served the congregation of Wilson Heights United Church in East Vancouver for many years, followed by Dunbar Heights United. She was the Director of Field Education at the Vancouver School of Theology for over eight years. At the time of her death, she was working for the National Church as the Vocational Minister for the Pacific Mountain and Chinook Winds Regions.



The outpouring of sorrow across the entire church from students, friends and colleagues has been monumental. Of the many tributes that have been expressed, perhaps this one sums up her life in the church the best: “Brenda knew the inner workings of both the human soul and the institutional church like few others. We were blessed that her ministry lived at the intersection of the two.”

Brenda was wise beyond her years, had a wicked sense of humour and a compassionate heart. She was not always easy to get to know but if you did become her friend, you knew what you had found. In addition to her family, she was passionate about gardening, curling, hosting family dinners and Melissa Etheridge, not necessarily in that order.

Her impact on the lives of her family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, students and congregants will be remembered and cherished.

Rest in peace, dear one, in that place where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing but life everlasting. You have left a breach in the landscape of our lives filled only by the grace of God, the love of those who knew you and the memories we will treasure.

Donations in memory of Brenda are gratefully accepted at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/m/43314> Please use the drop-down menu to choose the “Brenda Fawkes Student Bursary Fund” to support Theological Students in the regions she served.

A Memorial Service was held at Mount Seymour United Church on October 14. The service was livestreamed at https://www.youtube.com/live/g8GXt-bv_bc 🗣️

REV. WILBER JAMES

JULY 18, 1930 ~ AUGUST 3, 2024

On August 3, 2024 the world lost an extraordinary man. Rev. Wilber James took his last breath on earth to enter Heaven's gates and join his wife Barbara, who passed away just two months prior.

Wilber Raymond James was born July 18, 1930 in Kamloops and died peacefully surrounded by his children in Penticton, B.C



He will be remembered as an adventurous, intentional, fun-loving Dad by his four children: Rebekah (Trevor) Erga, Deborah (Everett) Baker, Tim (Charlene) James, Marybeth (Vernon) Zelent. His enormous sense of humour made him a playful and generous "PA" to his 11 grandchildren (their spouses) and 14 great grandchildren.

Wilber was ordained in the United Church of Canada and served for over 36 years alongside his wife in remote villages, cities and communities within B.C. His retirement didn't slow him down as he continued to serve within the church on committees, as an archivist, sound technician, and sharing the Gospel with Bible Studies, Alpha, and Nursing Homes.

He loved a good walk in the forest with his dog, or along a beach trail with his brothers. He shared the bounty of his prolific garden with many friends and neighbours. He was a creative handyman, mastering auto mechanics, stained glass, and woodworking. He designed and built two dream homes; one overlooking Departure Bay where he and Barbara could watch the sun set over the sea together.

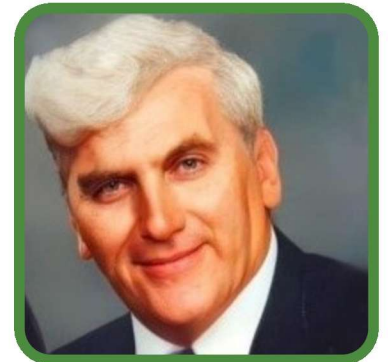
Wilber was a humble and compassionate man, ready to help any one in need. His life of service to Jesus was evident as a pastor, a husband, a mentor, a father, and a friend.

A joint service celebrating Wilber and Barbara's life and dedication to the ministry of the gospel was held at St Andrew's United Church in Nanaimo on November 15. 🕊️

FREDERICK ALDEN KINGSTON

OCTOBER 7, 1934 ~ OCTOBER 2, 2024

It is with deep love and fond memories that we announce the passing of our beloved parents, Rev. Frederick Alden Kingston and Jesse Evelyn Kingston (Radway), who passed away in Coquitlam after 68 years of marriage. Evelyn, aged 88, left us on May 30, 2024, followed by Fred, aged 89, on October 2, 2024. Their lives were full of joy, creativity, and they shared a lifetime of love adventure and devotion to each other.



Fred was born on October 7, 1934, in Vancouver, BC, to Bert and Mable Kingston (Cross). An avid sports enthusiast, Fred enjoyed football and rugby, and he proudly played for Burnaby South Secondary and the Vancouver Blue Bombers. Evelyn, born on June 5, 1935, in Radway, Alberta, to Glen and Daisy Radway (Longstreet), had a passion for music, especially singing, and was a vibrant leader of the church youth choir in Maple Ridge.

The couple's love story began at a United Church youth event in Naramata, BC, and they were married on December 23, 1955. Their partnership was one of creativity, dedication, and shared passions. After trying his hand at several careers, Fred followed his calling and graduated from the Vancouver School of Theology, becoming a minister with the United Church of Canada. Together, they found joy in the arts, spending time with local theatre groups designing, building, painting, and lighting sets.

After Fred's retirement, the couple's creativity blossomed further with the founding of Kingston Design, where they crafted mall displays, parade floats, and props for special events. Their hands were always at work, creating, imagining, and bringing beauty into the world. In their later years, they found joy and friendship through the Vancouver Miniature Club, where they continued their artistic pursuits.

Fred and Evelyn are survived by their four sons, Graeme, Neil, Joel, and Lowell, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

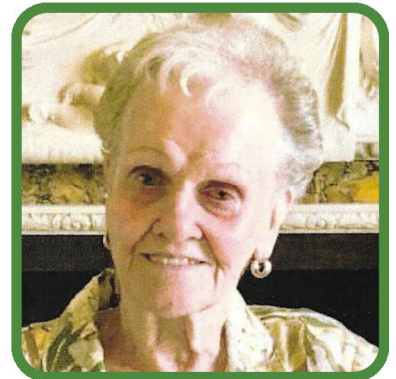
A celebration of their lives will be held in the spring of 2025.

Their hands were always intertwined, their lives a testament to love, creativity, and faith. Their memory will live on in the many lives they touched. 🌻

JOCELYN MAY PRITCHARD

JULY 24, 1928 ~ JULY 26, 2024

Jocelyn May Pritchard (née Rogers) passed away peacefully on her own terms on July 26, 2024, surrounded by family. Predeceased by husband Rev. Blake Pritchard, she is survived by children Margot (Rod), Bob (Janet), Elizabeth, Barbara (John), Edith (Haydn), ten grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.



Born in Yarmouth, N.S., to Rev. Dr. Gerald F. Rogers and Margaret V. Sinclair, Jocelyn attended Queen Elizabeth High (Halifax) and obtained her L. Mus. (Dalhousie U. '47), an AMA ('48), and a BA Music (U. Alberta '51). Married in 1952, she and Blake settled in Strathmore, Alberta, before moving to Edmonton in 1956 where she formed a two-piano duo with Patricia Elliott, performing and recording in Western Canada from 1960 to 1968. In 1961, she founded and directed the Da Camera Singers, which continues as Edmonton's longest-operating chamber choir. In 1963, the family moved to Vernon where she became influential in the Okanagan Valley's musical community. She concertized extensively, founded and directed the Okanagan Symphony Choir, established the Festival Players, worked with the United Church's Naramata Summer Music Program, taught and coached piano, and was an active music resource for others throughout the Valley. In addition, she adjudicated festivals throughout Western Canada, and was an examiner for the Western Board of Music. In 1975, the family moved to Vancouver where she quickly acquired positions with Ecumenical Action and the Cantata Singers, and was a much sought-after accompanist.

She organized numerous choral symposia and workshops with international conductors, as well as Vancouver's first Sing-Along Messiah (1977).

She was organist/choir director at United Churches including Highlands, Shaughnessy, Canadian Memorial, University Hill, and Knox. She founded and directed what is now Jubilate Vocal Ensemble, created the Centre for Church Music in the Arts, and in 1983, she was awarded the prestigious Willan Award for her outstanding service to the BC Choral Federation. In 1998, she was a founding member of The Townships Project, providing micro-loans to women in South Africa. In recent years she was a substitute organist/choir director for many churches in Vancouver, and she thrived on her piano duo work with Margot Ehling. An accomplished knitter, stitcher, and baker, with a love of international travel, she quite enjoyed the company of others, especially family.

A Celebration of Life was held at Shaughnessy Heights United Church in Vancouver on October 5, 2024. 🕯️

ANNA LOUISE ROLSTON

FEBRUARY 8, 1936 ~ AUGUST 13, 2024

ROLSTON, Anna Louise (née WOODS) died Tuesday, August 13, 2024 peacefully and surrounded by loved ones at Columbus Residence after a rich and vibrant life. Louise was predeceased by her husband, Peter Rolston. Much beloved by her children Mark (Charleen) and Karen (Parker) and her grandchildren Kayla, Alex, Joeline, Madeleine and Quincy, as well as her siblings Marion and Ken, and many cousins, nieces, nephews, sister and brothers-in-law in the Rolston and Woods families. Louise lived her life fully, connecting deeply with her community and those she loved. She was a bright, caring, spirited, kind, thoughtful and creative woman who could light up a room with her smile. Louise had a deep love for language and a long history as an educator at every level. She grew up in southern Ontario, then moved to BC where she held teaching and educational leadership roles in Mission, Kamloops and Richmond. In retirement she was active with Vancouver School of Theology in many roles including Chancellor. A memorial service was held on August 23, 2024 at Epiphany Chapel UBC. 🕯️



MARLENE SOUTAR

JUNE 6, 1941 ~ NOVEMBER 9, 2024

With gratitude for her faithful, generous life, we announce the death of Marleen Anne Soutar on Saturday, November 9, 2024 at the Laurel Place Hospice. Marleen gave of her time and skill freely to God's ministry within The United Church of Canada, first at Tsawwassen United Church, where she offered many leadership gifts within the congregation, then as their long-time Presbytery representative, as a member, then chair of the Vancouver-South Presbytery Education and Students Committee, and the Chair of Van-South Presbytery itself. Marleen was deeply fulfilled by more than a decade of supporting the discernment of candidates for ministry, and very proud of the group of ministers (including the current Moderator) who moved through her committee's presence. She was also an accompanier/listener for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission when it was held in Vancouver. As a past volunteer in the Hospice movement, she was a strong supporter of palliative care and hospice work, and knew she would spend her last days in that supportive context.



For the past decade, after a move to South Surrey, Marleen and her partner Rick have worshipped and participated in the life of Crossroads United Church. Marleen has been a thoughtful, fearless and strong member of the Policy Board of Crossroads, and also joined the Social Justice Action Team when it formed during the Covid lockdown. She was faithful in the big things as well as the little ones: setting up book displays, gathering red dresses, engaging in learning, offering a personal reflection about her realization of her own family's colonial activity in a Minute for Ministry. She used her body and her voice to be in solidarity with Palestine, with South Asian grandmothers at a Surrey park, walking in the MMIWG marches in downtown Vancouver, and with the 2SLGBTQIA community in Ladner. Marleen leaves a strong legacy of faithful public witness as well as theologically grounded leadership. We will miss her.

Please pray for her partner Rick, her daughter Megan, her brother Glenn and his partner Virginia, as well as Rick's family as they grieve this loss. A service to celebrate Marleen's life took place at Crossroads United Church on November 30. 🕊️

REV. MARIA "RIA" VAN HOLTEN
FEBRUARY 4, 1937 ~ AUGUST 17, 2024

No obituary available.

A Celebration of Life for Ria Van Holten was held at Trinity United Church, Port Coquitlam on September 14. 🕊️



J. GORDON VERPLANK
JULY 18, 1940 ~ SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

It is with sadness that we announce the death of the Rev. Gordon Verplank of White Rock B.C. Gordon died suddenly yet peacefully on Monday morning, September 30th after living with both Dementia and Kidney disease. Gordon was a Minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA) from 1966 to 1987 when he moved to Canada. He was formally admitted to the United Church in 1989. After serving at Shaughnessy Heights United Church in Vancouver for one year, he moved to the former Sharon United Church in Langley, B.C. for several years. In 1988 he began his ministry at South Arm United Church in Richmond, B.C. Gordon enjoyed many of his volunteer roles in the wider church, including the year he served as President of B.C. Conference. Gordon retired in 2005.



Following on the retirement of his wife, the Rev. Mollie Williams in 2011, they both joined what is now Peninsula United Church in White Rock and South Surrey. In addition to Mollie, Gordon leaves behind his children Megan, Meredith and their families, including 10 beloved grandchildren. He is predeceased by his son Joe who died in 2022. A Memorial Service was held for Gordon at Peninsula United Church on Saturday October 12.

🕊️

REV. DR. LOIS M. WILSON

APRIL 8, 1927 ~ SEPTEMBER 13, 2024

With great sadness, The United Church of Canada announces the death of The Very Rev., The Honourable Dr. Lois M. Wilson, the denomination's 28th Moderator, and the first woman to fill the role. She faithfully served as Moderator from 1979 to 1982. Rev. Wilson died in hospital in Fredericton, NB, on Sept. 13, 2024. She was 97 years old.



Her faith drove her actions, and she remained involved in the work of the Church right to the end.

"I hardly ever had an original idea myself, but I would always respond to what the community called me to do," Wilson told CBC's Sean Foley on [Ideas in February 2024](#). "None of them were my ideas. But I was able to respond to them because I saw that they were in continuity with what I understood as the purposes of God in the world."

Born in Winnipeg, MB, in 1927, Wilson's legacy is one of many firsts: the first woman president of the Canadian Council of Churches in 1976; elected the first woman Moderator of the United Church in 1980, paving the way for many progressive developments in the church; the first Canadian to serve as a president of the World Council of Churches, from 1983 to 1991. In 2000, she led Canada's first parliamentary delegation to North Korea to begin the process of establishing formal diplomatic relations. From 1990 to 2000, Wilson was the Chancellor of [Lakehead University](#). She was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 1998, retiring in 2002.

As an author of 10 books, ranging in topic such as ethics, interpretations of biblical stories, and feminism, Wilson was also a close friend of Canadian novelist Margaret Laurence, appearing in public forums with her, and presiding at [Laurence's funeral](#) in 1986.

For her work in human rights, ecumenism, social justice, and her contributions to the political and cultural landscape, Wilson received 14 honorary degrees, including one from the United States, and also the



following honours and awards: the Queen's 25th Anniversary Medal (1977), The Pearson Peace Medal (1985), Officer of the Order of Canada (1984), Order of Ontario (1991), Companion of the Order of Canada (2003), Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Award for Christian Unity (2010), and the Heart and Vision Award (2011).

Wilson is survived by four children, 12 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. 🌻



BUSINESS

MISSION



The work of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council executive, sub-councils and staff is directed by the Mission and Vision of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council Executive:

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OF FAITH AND MINISTRIES

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

FAITHFUL PUBLIC WITNESS

ABOUT PACIFIC MOUNTAIN REGIONAL COUNCIL

Visit We Are The Church:

PacificMountain.ca/about-pacific-mountain-regional-council



REGIONAL EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

“The Region’s future depends on its ability to balance tradition and innovation—to honour the values that have defined its identity while embracing new ways of being church in a changing world.”

Those were the concluding words of the comprehensive governance review that was completed this year. As the Executive of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council (PMRC), our task is to be constantly discerning how to best do that - how to balance tradition and innovation in order to faithfully position us together towards a vibrant and healthy future.

Broadly, much of our work consists of listening with intention and staying informed about what is going on in communities of faith and in the world we are called to bless. We also focus on shaping and guiding the Region’s direction, and by directing and monitoring the Executive Minister. Simply put, we all serve on the Executive with the common hope to see us, as a collective of communities of faith and ministries, flourish. What we stand for matters, and how we live into it is so, so needed in this world.

You will find below a brief summary of the work that the Executive has been focusing on since our last general meeting in June 2024 at St. Andrew’s-Wesley United Church in Vancouver.

GOVERNANCE REVIEW

One of the most significant undertakings of the last year was the completion of our Governance Review guided by the leadership of Rev. Cameron Trimble and her team at Convergence. The final report, presented to the Executive in February 2025, is a review of the vision, structure, governance, and effectiveness of the PMRC Executive and its work. The report synthesized learnings through Region-wide surveys sent out in June 2024, stakeholder interviews undertaken in the Fall of 2024, and a thorough review of PMRC policies and reports.



The report highlights that, though we are not immune to the societal and demographic shifts around us and to our own internal pressures, we as the PMRC are in a position to strategize for our long-term transformation and growth, and to seize emerging opportunities.

While we look forward to sharing more about the report prepared by Convergence with you during our time together in Nanaimo, here are the report's main recommendations to the Executive:

- Clarify Strategic Priorities
- Build Trust and Strengthen Governance
- Rebuild Connections and Community
- Change The Narratives
- Clarify Roles and Responsibilities
- Strengthen Focus and Energy Management

You can also read the [full report here](#).

We have already begun working towards the implementation of the report's recommendations and will continue to live into them.

STRATEGIC PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

As outlined in the Governance Review report, property issues and questions faced by communities of faith have emerged as one of the most time-consuming and complex areas of governance. To that end, the Executive has been working towards clarifying responsibilities for property strategy and creating the Ends pertaining to property (in other words, what is the good we hope emerges from stewarding the Region's resources, for whom, and at what cost?).

In order to better serve and support communities of faith facing questions around property, we are also working towards establishing and delegating strategy implementation and management to a dedicated group of people. Doing so will ensure that property matters are handled with more intentionality and with the caliber of expertise that these matters require.

Ultimately, by strengthening our approach to property, we hope to be better able to assist communities of faith with better tools to consider what options might be at their disposal, while continuing to faithfully stewards our shared Regional assets with the creativity and diligence required for the vitality of our common work.



STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS

One of the practices the Executive recently implemented as part of its meetings is time spent listening to different communities of faith from around the Region. We listen as they share what they are celebrating, what challenges they are facing, and what we, as the Executive, can be praying for. It is by not only listening, but by hearing well that we are better positioned to discern what God is up to in our Region. Your stories matter.

In addition to these regular times of listening, we were able to convene a conversation for five locals communities of faith during our Executive meeting in Nanaimo this past January. Most invigorating was hearing the stories of new community partnerships flourishing, of new initiatives being developed, and of communities of faith boldly trying new ways of responding to the changing needs of their communities.

There was also a profound shared sense of relief in the room at the realization that their burdens - needing to imagine new ways of being, reallocating finances to focus on areas of priority, reorganizing their ministries around available volunteers - were not unique, but were a reflection of broader shifts in ministry life today.

Within the context of this listening, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the relational disorientation and sense of isolation that many of you have expressed since the ending of Presbytery. How we used to connect, share information, and find mutual support has changed, and the new ways of being are still in their infancy enough to feel unfamiliar. That being said, we are hearing emerging signs of new ways of being the Church together. This work will take time, but it is worthwhile work.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In response to the recommendations in the Governance Review around clarifying strategic priorities, we have been intentional in revisiting the values and questions that guide our work and that support the Region's broader direction. Cameron Trimble of Convergence recently lead the Executive through a follow up exploration of the core values guiding our work. The values that emerged were:

- Collaborative Synergy
- Deep Relational Trust
- Transformative Connection and Belonging
- Purpose-Driven Generosity
- Spirit-led Emergence

We also spent some time revisiting the big questions that fuel our work. Our continued focus on being an anti-racist community, on promoting growth of communities of faith, and in fostering and cultivating relational obligation towards the common good were brought together into one more focused question: as we prepare for the Church of 2035, what's the Region's role in fostering and resourcing communities that empower Spirit-filled discipleship in order to interrupt the trend of decline?



PROPOSALS

Proposals are how we collectively discern how to strengthen the United Church. Four proposals were brought forward at the 2024 Annual meeting, one of which was withdrawn and provided the foundation of a fifth proposal. Four more proposals were subsequently submitted to the Executive.

PMR WF24-01: TRUTH TELLING & RECONCILIATION ACTION

Proposal: that the General Council of The United Church of Canada 1) renew its commitment for reconciliation by issuing a new apology that builds on previous apologies in light of our learnings about Residential Schools, acknowledging that babies, children and others who died and were denied proper funeral ceremonies, incinerated, and never returned to their communities and families, and 2) develop a Truth & Reconciliation process and resources that supports Communities of Faith and Regions in their reconciliation efforts, in consultation with the National Indigenous church to be presented to the 46th General Council (2028). **Carried.**

Current Status: Forwarded to GC45.

PMR WF24-02: EMERGING COMMUNITIES OF FAITH IN THE MANUAL

Proposal: that the General Council of The United Church of Canada 1) develop a definition for “Emerging Communities of Faith” (such as in The Manual 2010, page 39, Bylaws) and add a section to the Manual (B.9) for Emerging Communities of Faith, and 2) that the General Council give authority to Regions to, as appropriate: transfer roles and responsibilities to the Emerging Community as it evolves toward becoming a fully recognized Community of Faith that is a Congregation or Pastoral Charge, provided the Emerging Community reports all relevant information to the Regional Council, and to accept voting delegates from Emerging Communities to the same ratios as established Communities of Faith at such a point as the Regional Council deems the Emerging Community is ready to do so. **Carried.**

Current Status: Forwarded to GC45.

PMR WF24-03: FACING EVERY EMOTIONAL LIMIT (FEEL)

Proposal: that Pacific Mountain Regional Council and the General Council of The United Church of Canada have a conversation and consider ways the church might respond to the ongoing mental health crisis, with an emphasis on people in the First Third of life. **Carried.**

Current Status: Forwarded to GC45.

PMR WF24-04: UNSETTLING GOODS CAMPAIGN REINSTATEMENT

Proposal: that GC45: 1) investigate and make public the reasons why UnSettling Goods Campaign was archived 2) Reinstate the UnSettling Goods Campaign as part of the United Church of Canada's justice work in Solidarity with Palestine 3) Make available again the report UnSettling Goods: Choose Peace in Palestine and Israel 4) upon reinstating the campaign, add Hewlett Packard and its companies to the campaign 5) create a mechanism through which communities of faith may submit requests directly to the campaign to add other companies to the list for boycott and divestment Decision: that no further action be taken. Instead, PMR WF24-05 was provided for consideration. **Decision:** that no further action be taken. Instead, PMR WF24-05 was provided for consideration.

Current Status: No action taken.

PMR WF24-05: NON-VIOLENT ECONOMIC ADVOCACY RESPONSE

Proposal: that Pacific Mountain Regional Council and the General Council of The United Church of Canada 1) in the full acknowledgment of the archiving of the UnSettling Goods Campaign, acknowledge the increasingly urgent call within the United Church for non-violent action in solidarity with Palestine that, among other strategies, includes mechanisms for creating economic pressure to support the end of the occupation of Palestine 2) Develop and make available information to support boycott and divestment actions against products, companies and institutions who support and directly benefit the Palestinian people, and products made by Palestinians 4) In the same forum make readily



available the Just Peace final report as a resource to Communities of Faith with which to build their own justice work in solidarity with Palestine 5) Create a mechanism through which communities of faith may submit requests directly to the campaign to add other companies to the list for boycott and divestment. **Carried.**

Current Status: Forwarded to GC45

PMRE WF24-01: SALARY CONTINUANCE OF ALL EMPLOYEES

Proposal: that the General Council 1) explore fiscal resources that would enable remuneration and benefits (as applicable) to be continued to all staff for a period of 6 months following the death of an active benefits plan member, and 2) remove the current death benefit commitment from The Manual and authorize a change in the benefits plan's design. **Carried.**

Current Status: Forwarded to GC45.

PMRE WF 24-02: DENOMINATIONAL PAY EQUITY

Proposal: that the General Council could: 1) create mandatory pay equity amongst all staff serving The United Church of Canada such that those serving Communities of Faith and those serving The General Council experience the same annual cost of living adjustments, 2) create a policy that would empower the General Council Executive to approve an annual cost of living increase yet limit its authority to establish any pay variance based on employer, 3) provide a one-time lump sum payment to those who did not receive the 0.5% increase effective January 1, 2025, and authorize Regional Councils to fund any future discrepancies in the annual cost of living adjustment amounts. **Carried.**

Current Status: Forwarded to GC45.

PMRE WF 24-03: THE IHRA ANTISEMITISM DEFINITION- A THREAT TO CHARTER RIGHT

Proposal: that General Council take the following actions: 1) formally endorse the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA) definition of antisemitism in preference to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, 2) direct the General Secretary to: (a) communicate this endorsement of the JDA definition in preference to the IHRA definition to governments and government agencies in Canada that have adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism; and (b) communicate with the Canadian government, and urge that the IHRA Handbook and IHRA working definition not be promoted for use in law enforcement, the legal system, education and educational institutions, government programming, work places and civil society, in the manner recommended in the Handbook, because the IHRA working definition does not sufficiently respect the rights of Canadians guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. 3) direct the General Secretary to work with the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI), the Justice for Palestine Network, and other partners and allies to, (a) develop educational resources concerning what is and is not antisemitic, with a particular focus on advocacy on issues related to Palestine and Israel; and (b) develop strategies for using the educational resources together with other tools and resources to increase the understanding of United Church people and their efforts to help end the Israeli military occupation of Palestine and to bring equal rights and justice for all people living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. **Decision:** The Executive voted to dispose of the proposal by taking no further action on the basis that the General Council has already adopted principles for justice ministry, making further proposals in this area unnecessary.

Current Status: No further action taken.



PMRE WF 24-04: DEFINITION FOR ANTI-PALESTINIAN RACISM

Proposal: that the General Council could

A. Study and develop understanding of APR by:

- establishing a working group to develop a United Church definition of APR, drawing on existing frameworks including the ACLA definition and consulting with Palestinian communities,
- creating educational resources to build awareness of APR within the church,
- supporting research and documentation of APR in Canadian and church contexts,
- developing tools to help communities identify and address APR within church spaces, and

B. take concrete action by:

- incorporating APR into church EDI frameworks and policies,
- developing resources and guidelines to help communities address APR, · supporting Palestinian voices and narratives within church spaces, · advocating for the recognition of APR in broader Canadian institutions,
- working with other faith communities to combat APR.

Decision: The Executive voted to dispose of the proposal by taking no further action on the basis that the General Council has already adopted principles for justice ministry, making further proposals in this area unnecessary.

Current Status: No further action taken.

GRATITUDE

I want to end by thanking those Executive Members whose terms are coming to an end, Bob K. Fillier, Laura Hermakin, Jim Angus, and Deborah Richards, as well as Jenny Carter and Ivy Thomas, who stepped down earlier in the year. Each of them has generously given their time to serve the wider Church, all while balancing the demands of leadership in their own communities of faith and in their personal lives.

I also want to thank our Regional Executive Minister, Treena Duncan, as well as the staff who work tirelessly to support the flourishing of our shared vision. I have been astounded in my role as president to see the passion and commitment with which they serve the Church and its people.

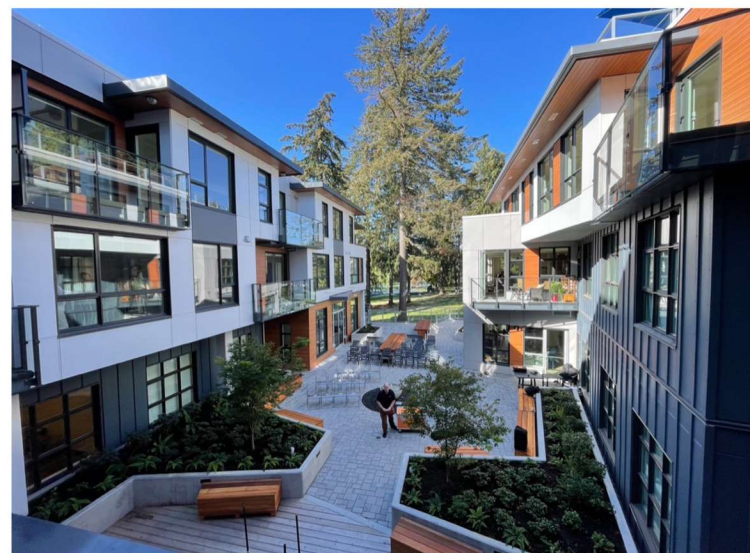
And last but not least, thank you. For the varied ways in which you embody this way of Jesus at the heart of who we are, and for all you do to bring hope and goodness to the neighbourhoods you call home, thank you.

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS (2024-2025)

Jim Angus, Mauricio Araujo (PMRC Assistant to the Executive Minister), Ibi Chuan, Treena Duncan (PMRC Executive Minister), Bob K. Fillier, Laura Hermakin, Joseph Kyser, Simon LeSieur (President), Hati Mvundura, Deborah Richards (Past President), Thea Sheridan-Jonah, Johannes Van Kessel-Crozier

Submitted by
the Rev. Dr. Simon LeSieur
President, Pacific Mountain Regional Council







ENDS POLICY SUMMARY

Ministries of Pacific Mountain Regional Council are effective in fulfilling their call and mission at a cost not to exceed the resources available to the Region.

VALUING HUMAN DIVERSITY

The Pacific Mountain Regional Council will uplift and value the diversity of expression embodied in all of humanity.

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Communities of Faith are effective in fulfilling their call and mission.

LEADERSHIP

Ministry personnel and lay, who are supported, connected, and engaged.

OTHER RECOGNIZED MINISTRIES

Ministries, other than Communities of Faith, that are recognized and in relationship with the Region are supervised and supported at levels appropriate to each.

COVENANTAL MINISTRIES

The diverse covenanted ministries of the Region will receive oversight and support in ways that hold them accountable, while also encouraging partnership and full participation in the life of the church and Region.

COST

The cost of achieving these Ends is not to exceed to resources available to the Region.

PROPERTY

Property and other real assets within the Pacific Mountain Regional Council will be utilized in an equitable manner across The Region to forward the Priorities and Ministry Plan of the Executive.



ENDS POLICY

Ministries of Pacific Mountain Regional Council are effective in fulfilling their call and mission at a cost not to exceed the resources available to the Region.

VALUING HUMAN DIVERSITY

The Pacific Mountain Regional Council will uplift and value the diversity of expression embodied in all of humanity.

- The Region will live out its call of loving neighbour by actively working against racism.
- The Region will only support and enter into covenants and agreements with groups that do not devalue, undermine, limit, or negate a person's identity.

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Communities of Faith are effective in fulfilling their call and mission.

- The Regional Council will support emerging initiatives towards the formation of Communities of Faith and will ensure equitable access for all members of the Region to connect to a Community of Faith which provides the opportunity to deepen their relationship with God and become disciples of Christ.
- Recognized and covenanted Communities of Faith will have equitable access to trained, theologically grounded and accountable leadership.
- The Regional Council will undertake a tri-annual health assessment of all the communities, ministries, and programs within its bounds. The assessment will minimally include areas related to:
 - a. Mission
 - b. Worship and Spirituality
 - c. Leadership
 - d. Evangelism
 - e. Fellowship
 - f. Discipleship
 - g. Outreach and Service
 - h. Organizational Structure
 - i. Stewardship
 - j. Property

- 
- All Communities of Faith are part of a Regional strategy. All real property and financial assets are:
 - a. an asset for ministry and mission;
 - b. protected to avoid unintended loss;
 - c. stewarded to provide benefit for future generations;
 - d. one means to respond to the “Calls to the Church” (2018).
 - Recognized and covenanted Communities of Faith will have equitable access to financial and practical support to develop and connect to clusters.
 - Recognized and covenanted Communities of Faith will be supported equitably in accessing existing and emerging networks.
 - The Regional Council will provide oversight to ensure that recognized and covenanted Communities of Faith are supported in embodying the ethos and articulated faith of The United Church of Canada, and in governing themselves in alignment with United Church of Canada polity.
 - The Regional Council will ensure that all the Responsibilities identified in the Manual section C.2 are executed.
 - Communities of Faith will be informed about matters that allow them to participate fully in the life of the church in the world, and the ministry of the Region and The United Church of Canada, including:
 - a. referral to resources for worship and ministry;
 - b. interpretation and advice on the United Church of Canada Manual;
 - c. advice on governance;
 - d. access to professional archival materials;
 - e. facilitation of connection to information from the wider denomination.
 - The Regional Council will support Communities of Faith in their discernment of becoming an Affirming Ministry within The Regional Council and The United Church of Canada.



LEADERSHIP

To effectively meet the demands of a changing church and world, the Region has leaders, both ministry personnel and lay, who are supported, connected, and engaged.

Ministry personnel are:

- Supported
 - a. Persons are recruited for ministry.
 - b. Ministry Personnel are called, appointed and compensated.
 - c. Ministry Personnel have quick access to professional assistance and support in matters related to ministry.
 - d. Have access to resources related to anti-racism, affirming ministry, and reconciliation.
- Connected
 - a. Ministry Personnel are connected to colleagues and the wider church.
 - b. Ministry Personnel gather for collegueship and cooperation with others in the Region.
 - c. Ministry Personnel have access to a Regional Council Affirming Network.
- Engaged
 - a. Ministry Personnel have ongoing training that provides knowledge and skills for ministry including areas of reconciliation, anti-racism, and Affirming Ministry.
 - b. Ministry Personnel have opportunities for personal spiritual growth.

Other Recognized Ministries:

Ministries, other than Communities of Faith, that are recognized and in relationship with the Region are supervised and supported at levels appropriate to each.

- Societies of the United Church
 - a. follow the policies and practices associated with the Manual C.2.13;
 - b. are able to access the governing structures of the church in an efficient and timely manner.
- All non-incorporated and recognized ministries have access to the Region office for advice and guidance;
- Ministries (other than Communities of Faith) covenanting with the Region receive a level of support determined by the Regional Council Executive.



Regional Ministries

The diverse covenanted ministries of the Region will receive oversight and support in ways that hold them accountable, while also encouraging partnership and full participation in the life of the church and Region.

- Covenantal Ministries will receive quick access to assistance and support via regional staff and communities of faith.
- Covenantal Ministries will receive quick access to assistance and support via regional staff and communities of faith.
 - a. Relationships will be governed by an attitude of reconciliation, as described in the “Calls to the Church” (2018).
 - b. Ministry personnel with appropriate training and abilities are recruited.
- Non-English speaking and intercultural ministries are treated as partners in ministry.
 - a. Cultures, history, and present contexts are respected.
 - b. Ministry personnel with appropriate training and abilities are recruited.
- Children, youth, young adults, and their families will be offered opportunities to be engaged in intentional faith development.
 - a. Ministry and programs will be high quality, Christ centered, and inclusive of a diversity of Christian theologies.
 - b. Ministry personnel/leaders with appropriate training and abilities are recruited.
 - c. Ongoing appropriate training and education is provided to equip people for ministry with children, youth, young adults, and their families.
- Region Camps will be mission-oriented, of high quality, well maintained, and sustainable.
 - a. Programs are high quality, Christ centered, and inclusive of a wide diversity of Christian theologies.
- Justice-oriented ministries and networks will be supported and developed in accordance with the strategic priorities of the Region.
 - a. There is an inclusive environment for safe participation.
 - b. Particular attention will be given to needs related to race, culture, identity, orientation, health, ability, and age.
 - c. An Affirming Ministry Action Plan will be developed and reviewed regularly in consultation with people who are part of the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.

- Ecumenical Shared Ministries will be supported as they live out complex interdenominational relationships with a variety of expectations and requirements.
 - a. Inter-denominational realities will be considered.
 - b. Denominational identities are respected.
- Cost of participation will be equitable.
 - a. Barriers are eliminated.
 - b. Rural and vulnerable communities will not bear disproportionate financial cost of full participation.

Cost:

The cost of achieving these Ends is not to exceed to resources available to the Region.

- The cost to Communities of Faith for supporting the operation of the Region will be 10% of the General Council's Community of Faith assessment;
- Costs of special programs and training will be borne by participants at a rate comparable to, or lower than, rates charged by similar organizations.

PROPERTY

- Property and other real assets within The Pacific Mountain Regional Council will be utilized in an equitable manner across The Region in alignment with the Priorities and Ministry Plan of the Executive:
 - a. The distribution of wealth throughout The Region will be a priority.
 - b. Leases will be in alignment with our values, priorities, and ministry plan.
 - c. New development and re-development will be in alignment with the values, priorities, and ministry plan of The Region.
 - d. Priority will be given to increasing the ministry impact of the Region; and
 - e. Agreements cannot encumber the Region with excessive management requirements.
- The Regional Council will develop a property strategy to ensure an acceptable level of United Church presence and service throughout the region.
- The determination of whether a Community of Faith already has assets equal to or greater than the need identified in its ministry plan will be determined by a Commission of The Executive.

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- The executive delegates its authority to The Property and Assets Commission to exercise its role. (The Manual 2025, G.2.3.2)
 - The Property and Assets Commission will comprise 3 members of The Executive representing a diversity of geographical contexts.
 - In fulfilling its mandate, The Property and Assets Commission will, in addition to other criteria, consider if:
 - a. There is a high degree of potential partnering with other Communities of Faith.
 - b. There is a high potential for program and service duplication in the ministry plan.
 - c. The Community of Faith already has assets equal to or greater than the need identified in its ministry plan.
 - d. The ministry plan of the Community of Faith for the assets does not include: 1) an amount for reconciliation ministry. 2) an amount for regional financial equity and support of the Region's ministry plan.
 - e. There is property that has significant historical, landmark, or geographical importance to The Pacific Mountain Region Council of The United Church of Canada.



GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS PROCEDURES

MOTION

- The mover states the motion.
- A seconder is named.
- The mover has the privilege of speaking at the beginning and end of discussion of their motion.

DISCUSSION

- Start by identifying yourself (name, community of faith).
- All discussion should be directed to the President.
- The correct manner in which to address the President is: “President ...”
- Each person may address the President only once on a motion, except the mover, who may speak both first and last.
- All discussion should be clear and concise and deal only with the motion.
- The time allowed each speaker may be limited to two (2) minutes by the President or the Council.

AMENDMENTS

- An amendment is a recommendation to change a motion by:
 - a. removing words and replacing them with others, or
 - b. adding or deleting words.
- An amendment cannot simply change the intent of the motion.

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT

- A motion to change the amendment.
- Follows the same procedures as a motion when being considered and voted upon.



VOTING PRIORITY

- Amendments (including Amendments to the Amendment) must be voted upon before the original motion.
- Voting shall be carried out by members using Simply Voting (www.simplyvoting.com) an electronic voting system that will send out electronic ballots using the emails voting attendees registered with.
- All those with voting privileges are expected to indicate their vote in favour of or opposed to a motion. Abstentions are not requested nor recorded in the minutes unless requested for conflict-of-interest reasons.
- Those who voted in opposition to a motion may request that their names be recorded in the minutes.
- If there is a tie, the President will cast the deciding vote.

POINT OF ORDER

- A point of order can be made by anyone at any time if the rules of the Council have been or appear to have been broken. It is recommended to check with the Business Committee to confirm a Point of Order.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

- A person may rise at any time during business proceedings to state a personal concern or a concern relating to the whole community, yet only if that concern jeopardizes the good functioning of the Council.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

- To sort and clarify issues when things get bogged down in procedure wrangles or wording problems.
- To deal with changes to agenda during the General Meeting.

PROPOSALS

- See the explanation on Proposals on the next page.

OTHER

- Other Rules of Order are contained in the Appendix in the Manual (2024) and further clarified in Bourinot's Rules of Order. In general, the conduct of business is at the discretion of the President. The President may seek the advice of the Regional Executive Minister or the Business Committee.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE MOTIONS

M/S (Mark Green/G. Brownmiller) that:

- The Roll of the 7th General Meeting of Pacific Mountain Regional Council shall be members arriving prior to 12:00 p.m., Friday, May 30, 2025. (The Manual 2025 C.1.1 and C.1.2.). Those arriving after that time shall not be included on the Roll or entitled to payment of travel expenses.
- Quorum will be set at a minimum of 20 members which must include at least one ministry personnel and one lay member, not including Corresponding Members (The Manual 2025 C.4.3), and that at least five percent (5%) of registered voting delegates at the PMRC Annual Meeting be 30 years of age or younger (PMRC WF23-01).
- The Bounds of The Pacific Mountain Regional Council shall be Vancouver Island Conference Centre, 101 Gordon St, Nanaimo, BC; the Zoom™ digital meeting room assigned and shared with registered members; and any telephone connections established.
- The Business Committee for this General Meeting shall be Mauricio Araujo (Secretary), Mark Green (Chair), Ibi Chuan, Lauren Kirkey, Graham Brownmiller, Treena Duncan (Executive Minister), and Simon LeSieur (President).
- The agenda as posted on www.pacificmountain.ca shall be the order of business, subject to those changes that are recommended by the Business Committee. Revisions will be announced, and an update posted on the website.
- The President shall have the authority to recess the Regional Council when business, as ordered, is completed, until the next order of the day.
- The minutes of the 6th General Meeting of The Pacific Mountain Regional Council held May 30- June 2, 2024 in Vancouver, BC, be received for information.
- The Regional Council Executive Minutes: received for information and included as part of the Record of Proceedings. (The Manual 2025, C.3.1.4)

- The Plenary portions of the agenda will be recorded within the Zoom™ platform and made available on The Pacific Mountain Regional Council website and YouTube Channel.
- In order to facilitate the formulation of motions and discussion of matters raised in business, the President may, at their discretion, suspend the ordinary rules of parliamentary debate and engage in a different process. All final decisions of the council shall follow the rules of debate and order as summarized in the Appendix of The Manual (2025) or Bourinot's Rules of Order.
- At the discretion of the President, speakers can be limited to two minutes each.
- All registered voting members who are online and onsite will vote using the simplyvoting.com. An email will be sent to each voting member using the email provided at registration for each vote.
- All motions having significant budget implications for the Region (defined as \$2,000 or over) shall be considered "in principle only" and, if adopted, be referred to the Executive for consideration within adopted budgetary constraints.
- In accordance with Section C.1.2(b) of The Manual 2025, Regional Executive Minister Treena Duncan be named as member of Pacific Mountain Regional Council with full voting privileges.
- Corresponding Privileges be granted to all invited guests, registered visitors, and staff (other than those who are full voting members of The Region) with voice, yet no voting privileges.
- The Chairperson of the Business Committee or their designate will present proposals. The President will invite prayerful discernment and discussion on the wisdom of the proposal. A speaker from the body making the proposal will be permitted to speak to it. When the President discerns that the sense of the meeting is such that it is ready to hear a motion on the proposal, the President will invite the Chairperson of the Business Committee or their designate to put forward the motion. Once the motion has been moved and seconded, Rules of Debate and Order shall be followed.
- Proposals directed to the General Meeting must be received by the Business Committee prior to Friday, May 15, 2025. The Business Committee may recommend editing or clarification before the Proposal comes to the floor. Proposals dealing with matters not noted on the agenda shall be dealt with in an order as determined by the Business Committee. Similar proposals may be grouped together at the discretion of the Business Committee.

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- If the Pacific Mountain Regional Council does not agree with a proposal where the General Council is the court of action, it will not be sent on to General Council.
 - In the case of limited time for business, items will be dealt with in the following order: Proposals to The General Council, Proposals to Pacific Mountain Regional Council, Reports requiring a decision of the Regional Council, Reports for Information.
 - The procedural and prayer microphones shall be labeled on the floor of the plenary space and the chat box in Zoom. For a procedural point of order members of the council are to show the “Point of Order” card that is on your table as you proceed to the microphone, if onsite or type “Point of Order” at the start of their statement on Zoom™. For a prayer request, members onsite are asked to identify they are making a prayer request. On Zoom® members are asked to use “Prayer:” Members are encouraged to consult with the Business Committee before making a point of order, requesting prayer, or making a point of personal privilege.
 - All unfinished business, including non-General Council proposals, shall be referred to the Regional Council Executive.
 - Verbal and written reports be accepted as presented.
 - Requests to withdraw from the meeting shall be submitted to, considered, and granted by the Business Committee. Members leaving before 5pm on Saturday, May 31st without the consent of the
 - Business Committee shall not be entitled to have travel expenses paid.
 - Payment of member expenses shall be made as specified in the travel claim form. Late claims submitted after July 15, 2025, shall not be paid.
 - Nominations close for (6) vacancies to the Pacific Mountain Regional Council and (1) President Elect at at 9:00 pm (close of day) on Thursday, May 29, 2025



ENABLING MOTIONS

M/S (Mark Green/G. Brownmiller) that:

- The Regional Executive Minister be authorized to edit reports and minutes for the Record of Proceedings of this meeting.
- The Regional Council Executive be authorized to transact all business of the Regional Council until the next General Meeting of the Regional Council, except those matters prohibited by the Constitution and Bylaws of The United Church of Canada.
- All remaining ballots be destroyed – including any digital results.
- The meeting adjourns following the completion of business as ordered and the benediction
- concluding the Celebration of Ministry service, June 1, 2025.

TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

- please email <mailto:pmrcbusiness@gmail.com>, or
- see the business table in The Plenary



PROPOSALS GUIDELINES

PROPOSALS TO PACIFIC MOUNTAIN REGIONAL COUNCIL

We recognize that individual members, Communities of Faith, Covenantal Ministries, Regional Committees/Councils/Groups, and Regional Council Members may want The Pacific Mountain Regional Council or Executive to take action on a specific issue or concern. You desire a conversation about a specific topic. You might want to have some education and conversation about a topic leading towards a decision. A “proposal” is the formal request for any of these.

The Manual (2025), Section F, describes in detail how a proposal may be submitted. The template below also provides a way for creating a proposal.

Proposals must be submitted by May 15th, 2025. Any proposals received after the deadline will be forwarded directly to the PMRC Executive.

All actions resulting from proposals are sent to the Regional Council Executive. That action will be part of subsequent accountability reports from the Executive to the Regional Council.

WHO CAN MAKE A PROPOSAL?

Proposals by Member(s) of a Community of Faith (F.1.2.1).

Any Full-member of The United Church of Canada through their local Community of Faith Governing Body. The governing body has several options to choose from when evaluating a proposal. (See section F.1.2.1 and F.1.3.1)

Proposals by Others (See section F.1.2.2)

A proposal may also be started by:

- a member of the Regional Council; (F.1.3.3)
- a committee or other church body of the Council; (F.1.3.4) or
- the Regional Council. (F.1.3.2)



HOW DO I/WE CRAFT A PROPOSAL?

We are asking you to submit your proposal in a very focused way. Name the solution your proposing up front. This way we can read the rest of the proposal with the solution in mind.

Name the type of proposal.

- Conversation – the major intention is for the Regional Council to discuss a question or concern.
- Decision – the desire is that a decision will be made to take action. You must have a clear outcome or solution including financial implications and linkages to Regional priorities.

Why is this issue important?

Provide the background needed to consider the proposal in two (2) pages or less. What's the issue or challenge or gap being identified? Why is that the case? What ENDS Policy supports the proposal? Is there a need for a revised or new ENDS Policy? Is there a need for a new ministry priority? Why is the region the most effective space to undertake the proposed ministry/action.

What might the cost be?

Estimate the potential cost. Everything we do has a cost. It might be time from staff and volunteers. It might be budgetary. Being mindful of the cost is an important part of every proposal. Proposals that do not include a cost or assume “within existing budget/resources” will automatically be sent back to the person/council or origin for additional discernment.

What's the Priority Level?

There is a limit to what the region can do. Our existing governance, administration, and finances are operating at full capacity. To take on something new means something else must be paused, given a lower priority, or stopped or the capacity of the Regional Council must be increased. You must identify how you propose any new ministry initiative will impact the existing ministry plan.



Why the Regional or General Council?

The United Church of Canada is governed with overlapping spheres of power and authority. Part of any proposal needs to acknowledge why the council of action identified is the most effective place for this proposal. Please give careful consideration as to why the proposal should be enacted by the Regional or General Council, especially given the finite resources available to both Councils. You must provide this rationale as part of your proposal. Any proposal that is missing this information will be sent back for further discernment.

Is there a required format for a proposal?

Yes, to help people engage the topic as easy as possible all proposals must use the found below.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

The Policy Committee of the Executive and the Business Committee are available at the General Meeting to help ensure your proposal is clear and focused enough to achieve the good conversations the meeting wants to have. (PMRCBusiness@gmail.com)

In order to make the best use of the meeting's time, The Policy Committee may also group together Proposals that deal with the same issue or topic, have the same purpose, or desired outcome. The Committee may generate an Omnibus Proposal that address the matter raised. Proposals from individual community of faith members or governance groups must follow the steps in F.3.1.1 and include a copy of the motion to transmit with the proposal.

ONLINE PROPOSAL FORM LINK

<https://form.jotform.com/250834934600253>

PROPOSAL FORM



Pacific Mountain Region - Proposal Form 2025

Submission Deadline: May 15th, 2025

Name of person submitting this proposal *

First Name

Last Name

Email *

example@example.com

Phone Number

Area Code

Phone Number

Proposal Name *

A brief name that identifies your proposal.

What is the issue? Why is it Important? *

B **I** **U**

Font Size... Font Family. Font Format

Briefly describe (approximately four sentences) the issue and its significance. Sample wording: We believe God/Jesus/The Holy Spirit is calling us to: – Do something about... Engage the topic of... Respond to the challenge of...

What is happening now? *

A rich text editor interface with a toolbar at the top containing icons for bold, italic, underline, bulleted list, numbered list, link, and unlink, as well as dropdown menus for Font Size, Font Family, and Font Format. Below the toolbar is a large, empty rectangular text area.

Provide a description of the current practice or policy in question, identifying/citing the source of the information.

Sample Wording:

The Region Could:

A. Study/discuss the issue:

- The Region could be asked to have a conversation about a particular issue as an end in itself without making a policy decision or taking other action.

B. Act on the issue, which could include:

- Region directing a policy/strategy be developed based on specified principles and parameters
- Region adopting a policy position/strategy
- Region encouraging/suggesting action by congregations and other communities of faith on the issue

Suggestions for wording of a policy/strategy could be offered as possibilities for consideration in the decision-making process but not as expectations of a particular outcome

What is the recommendation? *

A rich text editor interface with a toolbar at the top containing icons for bold, italic, underline, bulleted list, numbered list, link, and unlink, as well as dropdown menus for Font Size, Font Family, and Font Format. Below the toolbar is a large, empty rectangular text area.

Describe how the Region might respond to the issue. To avoid being overly prescriptive, please offer multiple options of how the Regional Executive might respond. Commentary may be offered on the project outcome of adopting each option

Background Information *

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Bulleted List, Numbered List, Decrease Indent, Increase Indent, Link, Unlink, Font Size, Font Family, Font Format, and other formatting options. Below the toolbar is a large empty text area for input.

Provide details the Region needs to make an informed decision on the proposal. What is the History of this issue? What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice considerations? What are the principles informing this issue?

Funding Implications *

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Bulleted List, Numbered List, Decrease Indent, Increase Indent, Link, Unlink, Font Size, Font Family, Font Format, and other formatting options. Below the toolbar is a large empty text area for input.

Funding, human resources, space etc.

How does your proposal align with the priorities of the Region?

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Bulleted List, Numbered List, Decrease Indent, Increase Indent, Link, Unlink, Font Size, Font Family, Font Format, and other formatting options. Below the toolbar is a large empty text area for input.

Healthy Communities of Faith and Ministries, Effective Leadership, Faithful Public Witness.

Over the course of several years, General Council has made numerous commitments on equity such as the following:

- adopting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples;
- adopting the [Calls to the Church](#) from the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship;
- welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](#) into full membership and ministry in the church;
- committing to becoming an [intercultural church](#);
- committing to becoming an open, accessible, and barrier-free church, where there is [full participation of people with disabilities](#);
- working towards functional bilingualism and [ensuring that Francophone ministries are an integral part of the church's identity, mission, and vision](#);
- [opposing discrimination](#) of any kind on the basis of identity; and,
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

Who has been consulted in the development of the proposal? Was the proposal developed “with” people, or “on behalf of” people? What might be the impact of this proposal on people and communities? Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this approach?

How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity? *



Describe in broad terms how this proposal engages with the United Church's established principles and position on equity.

Will you be present at the AGM to speak to this proposal? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Confirmation *

- ☐ Proposal is complete and I am ready to submit it.

Submit

 Print Form



NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominations Committee exists to help the Regional Council, its Executive, councils, committees, working and advisory groups to discern fulsome membership. There is active recruitment to seek expressions of interest from within the Region, and we review them with several guiding principles to lead our work.

Throughout the past year we have filled only a few positions as different councils, committees etc. redefined their Terms of Reference.

When we do meet, our discernment of those who are equipped to serve is done prayerfully and strives to meet the church's commitments to becoming an intercultural church, confronting anti-black racism, developing new and young leadership, full inclusion of people with disabilities, and seeking and encouraging indigenous participation recognizing UNDRIP and the Calls to the Church.

The Nominations Committee takes seriously the task before us, and so we ask that when filling in Expressions of Interest, you clearly articulate what it is you feel you bring to the work you're looking to do. The more information we have, the better we can discern who to select and how to develop effective groups.

Currently we are seeking members of the Regional Council who are interested in serving the following appointments:

- Ministry Covenant Support Committee
- Self-Assessment Working Group
- Affirming Ministry Working Group
- Approvals Working Group
- Lay Leadership Support Team
- Ministry Personnel Support Team
- Pastoral Relations Working Group
- Finance Advisory Council
- Community Renewal Society



If you're interested in submitting an expression of interest, please see the website:

<https://pacificmountain.ca/administration/volunteer-with-the-regional-council/>

Thank you for your continued assistance in populating the Region, and helping it to function well, and faithfully.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Marina Lecian or Graham Brownmiller (chair).

Respectfully Submitted by: Graham Brownmiller, on behalf of the Nominations Committee: David Boyd, Jennifer Goddard-Sheppard, and Jane Harding

NOMINEES

PRESIDENT- ELECT

Name of Nominee Thea Sheridan-Jonah

Community of Faith Canadian Memorial

Age (optional): 20-29

Race/Ethnic Identity
(optional): White

Please note if there are
any other identities that
you or the Nominee
holds, that might
diversify and strengthen
the church's leadership:

I am a young person



What spiritual gift
would you bring to the
position of President
(Elect)? (about 500
words)

I am very tempted to say yes when new experiences and opportunities are presented to me, while this is one of my gifts it also means I can be an incredibly busy person.

When I began discerning, I was very intentional about maintaining no as an option. By doing so, I forced myself to discern not just whether I was capable and equipped enough to do this role, but if I was truly being called to it. In the final conversation I had before deciding to put my name forward, I explained that my leadership has always started with listening; I shared that since I am not a minister, I have been imagining the possibilities that opens.

Although it may depend on my capacity, I've been imagining all the opportunities I would have to listen, to hear about the circumstances, the stories, challenges and pride of people across our region. How beautiful would it be to use my term to spend as many Sundays as I could at different congregations, sharing in the ministry they are doing ministry in the chaotic and sometimes devastating yet also beautiful world in 2025. Although that every Sunday plan might not be achievable, to me it being my immediate thought exposes some of my spiritual gifts.

I am someone who listens, but also who is creative and who has initiative, along with being deeply commitment. Beyond those gifts, I am someone who is deeply guided by justice and making the world that we are called to by the Jesus of radical love and hospitality.

I began my ministry in the United Church by leading the affirming committee, and to this day my ministry is my justice work. Both within and beyond the church, my ministry is fighting for better mental health and drug policy especially for young people, it is being a medic for unhoused neighbors and for advocacy actions, fighting for climate justice, and all the other ways we need to change our world as co-creators.

I am also a young person, the church needs young leadership, and I also believe it is ready to embrace it. I am the future of the church, because I love the church so much



that in all the work I do for it, I am thinking about the next 100 years, the next generations who will need these spaces, and also the world we need to create for them. Yet I am not just the future. If it is not clear from my lengthy, for a 22-year-old, tenure in the church, my faith and this church are deeply important to me.

In many of the same ways I am currently doing, if I am elected as President I will bring my care, compassion, strength, curiosity, passion, listening, and rooting in Jesus' radical love to the region.

Please tell us what motivates you to fulfill this position? (about 500 words)

When I was, I think fourteen, I began leading the affirming process at St. Paul's United Church in Oakville Ontario. It was after an about six-month period where I had not gone to church, because I had an experience at an evangelical camp that was not affirming that made me distrust religion and God for the way that people use both to cause harm in our world. My minister's response when I told her I just could not be in a community that was not explicitly inclusive had you heard of the affirming process, and would you like to lead it. It was my first experience chairing a committee, it was also my first experience changing policy.

I found it so empowering to rewrite our baptism policy, to take out the gender exclusionary language, then to edit the contracts for renting our space to explicitly say we are affirming. This was not just my first time working on policy, but my first time experiencing what the United Church has now named in our values as "costly solidarity". People were concerned that we might lose money and rentals if my edits were in our contract and people were concerned that we would lose members if we became affirming, very similar fears to the ones the church at large held in 1988.

I loved the work, and somehow someone got a hold of that information, and I was tapped on the shoulder to join the regional executive of Horsehoe falls. After three years on the executive, I moved to Vancouver to start at UBC. As a first year who was not settled into the region, even before I had explored any of the churches in the area, I emailed Deborah Richards to have a conversation about joining the executive. For me, my faith and my ministry within the United Church has always been connected to its polity, but not because I find it all too inherently interesting but because I love the opportunity to create policy that truly impacts people and our congregations. The only way to do so in a good way though is to listen.

I have been on the General Council Executive for three years, and I have been on the PMRC executive as a voting member for three years, but I am also a young person whose ministry is lived out in leading youth programs like the Climate motivators for two years, and after this summer three youth forum programs. On top of that I have supported the centennial planning committee, the GC45 planning committee, and the Audacious Hope planning committee.

I am a resource to the region as a young person, but also as somehow who seeks to deeply understand and be involved in the life of our church at every level. Putting my name forward for President feels like another way for me to serve the church that I love, am proud of, and work very hard for already.

Discerner Name 1

Rhian Walker

Discerner Name 2

Deborah Laforet

The background of the page is composed of overlapping, organic, and geometric shapes in various shades of green and blue. The top half features a solid dark blue horizontal band. The bottom half contains a mix of green, blue, and purple shapes, with a small pinkish-red shape visible near the bottom right.

FINANCE



FINANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mandate:

The Finance Advisory Council advises and is accountable to the Executive Minister. We normally meet three times a year to advise on finance policies and to monitor financial results and investments. Since the last Region General Meeting the Council has met three times.

Membership:

Ibi Chuan
Treena Duncan, Executive Minister
Ken Fanning, Chair
Jane Harding
Mike McAuley
Houston Mo, Director of Finance and Property
Dennis Riley
Gordon Robinson

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all Council members for their continued dedication and the generous sharing of their time and expertise. On behalf of the Council, I would also like to express special appreciation to the Finance staff—particularly Christina Debruyn, Houston Mo, and Lishia Wang—for their ongoing hard work and ‘wizardry’ in managing the Region’s complex financial operations.

We also want to express our deep gratitude to Katie Bowyer, who completed her term on the Council this past year. Katie brought thoughtful insight and a collaborative spirit to our work. Her contributions will be missed, and we wish her the very best in all that comes next.

As for myself, this will be my final report as Chair, as I step away from the Council. It’s been an honour to serve in this role. I’m delighted to share that Jane Harding will be taking over as Chair going forward, and I know the Council will be in very capable hands.



2024 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024)

The Region ended 2024 in a strong financial position, with net assets increasing to \$54.7 million, up from \$44.8 million the year before. The year saw a substantial surplus of \$9.9 million, driven by strong investment performance and significant grant and contribution revenue—much of it related to property sale proceeds received and allocated through various internally and externally restricted funds.

The Operating Fund posted a surplus of \$361,206 before amortization, a continued improvement that reflects careful financial stewardship and sustained support through grants.

Investment returns were particularly strong in 2024, with a total realized and unrealized gain of \$5.6 million, up from \$3.8 million in 2023. The Region also received a \$5 million forgivable loan, invested in restricted term deposits to support future housing-related initiatives.

The Region's financial statements, prepared by staff in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, received an unqualified ("clean") audit opinion from auditors – Rolfe Benson LLP. No material misstatements, control deficiencies, or legal noncompliance issues were identified.

It's important to highlight that the Region's financial statements are compiled on a non-consolidated basis. According to pertinent accounting standards, the Region holds direct and/or indirect controls over three other organizations: the British Columbia Conference Property Development Council of The United Church of Canada (PDC), the British Columbia Community Renewal Society of The United Church of Canada (CRS), and the Three-Point Housing Society (3PHS). While the Region's non-consolidated financial statements do not incorporate the financial outcomes of these entities, detailed disclosures regarding their total assets, liabilities, revenue, expenses, and cash flows from operating, financing, and investing activities are provided in the Region's notes to non-consolidated financial statements.



LOOKING AHEAD

The Region is fortunate to have strong financial resources, which we continue to steward with care, transparency, and a long-term perspective. These funds support the ongoing life and work of our communities of faith and ministries, while also ensuring stability for the future.

It has been a privilege to serve on the Finance Advisory Council and to work alongside such committed and thoughtful colleagues. As I step down from the role of Chair, I do so with gratitude and confidence in the Council's continued leadership under Jane Harding.

A summary of the Region's financial position and operations is provided below. Complete audited financial statements are available upon request.

We welcome your questions and feedback—please don't hesitate to reach out.

Respectfully Submitted: Ken Fanning, Chair(Retiring)
kfanning@shaw.ca
250.248.2490

Summarized Non-Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

	2024	2023
Assets		
Current	1,162,573	1,393,759
Term deposits	12,000,000	-
Investment	61,528,055	54,754,473
Loans	3,129,913	2,889,066
Due from Community Renewal Society	1,329,204	2,151,078
Capital Assets	9,019,401	9,491,347
TOTAL ASSETS	88,169,146	70,679,723
Liabilities		
Current	261,884	173,055
Loans	5,005,123	-
Funds held in trust	25,251,446	22,988,754
Deferred capital contributions	1,115,934	1,190,331
Due to Property Development Council	1,884,010	1,577,388
TOTAL LIABILITIES	33,518,397	25,929,528
Fund Balances		
Invested in capital assets	7,903,467	8,301,016
Restricted	39,621,374	30,155,930
Unrestricted	7,125,908	6,293,249
TOTAL FUND BALANCES	54,650,749	44,750,195
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES	88,169,146	70,679,723

Summarized Non-Consolidated Statement of Operations

	2024	2023
Revenue		
Grants and contributions	8,684,446	4,198,396
Investment income	2,312,982	1,576,671
Jardine, VanDusen and RM Cherry Funds	1,353,719	1,266,096
General Council Office	613,375	673,375
Loan interest and other	293,014	292,997
Regional assessments	113,520	117,900
Programs	102,492	61,629
TOTAL REVENUE	13,473,548	8,187,064
Expenses		
Grants	1,450,152	3,215,844
Programs and committees	2,371,077	3,024,339
Salaries and benefits	1,862,484	1,694,043
Office and sundry	294,925	258,265
General Meeting	184,286	235,427
Investment fees	196,327	220,274
Professional fees	152,146	32,203
Executive	52,731	20,057
Amortization	713,953	706,631
TOTAL EXPENSES	7,278,081	9,407,083
Surplus (deficit) before the following	6,195,467	(1,220,019)
Change in fair value of investments	3,705,087	2,218,565
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	9,900,554	998,546



PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT & BUILDING MANAGEMENT

BUILDING COMMUNITY

The Property Development Team formed a partnership with BC Housing to finance the redevelopment of a portfolio of congregational properties into mixed-use redevelopments featuring new church space and affordable rental housing. The project was officially launched by Premier John Horgan and Minister Selena Robinson as part of BC Housing's new housing initiatives. BC Housing continues to support affordable housing within the United Church.

THE PORTFOLIO

The Portfolio refers to congregational properties currently being redeveloped by the Region in partnership with BC Housing and/or CMHC. Each of these mixed-use redevelopments will result in custom-designed, multi-purpose church space and purpose-built affordable rental housing. There are currently six projects in the Portfolio.

Como Lake United, Coquitlam- Completed July of 2022

Brechin United, Nanaimo- Completed December 2022

Lakeview United, Vancouver- Projected Construction Start August 2025

United Commons, Victoria- Redevelopment project proposal

Penticton United, Penticton- Redevelopment project proposal

Queens Avenue, New Westminster- Redevelopment project proposal

NEW CHURCH SPACE

Each mixed-use redevelopment will feature customized, multi-purpose church space, designed in consultation with congregational leaders.



PURPOSE-BUILT AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

While it is imperative that we use United Church assets to meet the challenges facing the church today, we also want to provide a benefit to the wider community. In this case, that benefit is the provision of much needed purpose-built rental housing. The projects contribute hundreds of units of rental housing across BC. The purpose of this endeavour is to provide affordable housing for low and moderate-income households. The income from the rental housing will be used to repay the mortgage. The housing will be owned by BC Community Renewal Society, a charitable organization or the Three Point Housing Society, a non-profit organization, both with a direct relationship with the Pacific Mountain Region of The United Church of Canada.

PROJECT UPDATE

Mountain View Suites at Como Lake United and the Residences at Brechin Hill are fully occupied. The Brechin project won an environmental and sustainability award for its passive house design. Construction financing for Lakeview United is expected to be in place by this April with construction start in summer of 2025. The Region is currently looking at proposals for Penticton, Queens Ave (New Westminster) and United Commons (Victoria). The higher interest rates, inflationary pressure on construction costs and the uncertainty of tariff impacts, are currently making it challenging to achieve funding for redevelopment projects. Current government funding programs will likely need to change for new church redevelopment projects to be viable.

STRATEGIC PROPERTY PLAN

The Region is in the process of hiring a Senior Development Manager to provide strategic property guidance to community of faiths in the Region.



PROPERTY SUPPORT

Property support provided in 2024 include Peninsula United (White Rock), First United Church Community Ministry Society (Vancouver), Brechin United (Nanaimo), Como Lake United (Coquitlam) Gladwin Heights (Abbotsford), Canadian Memorial United (Vancouver), St. Stephens United, Queens Avenue United (New Westminster), Knox United (Vancouver), Central Okanagan United (Kelowna), Penticton United (Penticton), Oasis United (Penticton), Knox United (Vancouver), Canadian Memorial United (Vancouver), Trinity United (Vernon), United Commons (Victoria) and St. Andrews United (Nanaimo).

Respectfully Submitted by,
Don Evans, Executive Director
BC Community Renewal Society of the United Church of Canada

PROVISION

There were twenty-five new grants made, totalling \$ 392,485. These included:

- Summerland UC Music Camp (\$2,000)
- St. Andrews UC, Nanaimo Coffee Break Community Ministry (\$10,000)
- Sylvan UC Community Outreach Music (\$6,900)
- Shiloah- 5th Avenue UC Good Vibrations (\$1,000)
- Shaughnessy Heights UC Choir Scholar Program (\$2,440 & \$1,920)
- Camp Spirit (\$95,000)
- Campbell River UC School Hot breakfast Program (\$9,850)
- Alberni Valley UC Reconciliation Next Steps (\$8,000)
- Brechin UC Reconciliation Workshops (\$3,750)
- St. Andrews UC Williams Lake Healing Pathways Workshop (\$2,000)
- St. Johns UC Sunshine Coast Musical Theatre and Digital Training (\$24,475)
- Amazing Grace UC Prayer Ministry (\$25,000)
- Shaughnessy Heights UC Affirm Opportunities (\$6,000)
- Comox UC Caregiver retreat (\$5,000)
- James Bay UC Sunday Children's Music Program (\$7,000)
- Central Saanich UC Community Choir (\$5,975)
- Lakeview Multicultural UC Welcoming Newcomers to Vancouver (\$12,000)
- Canadian Memorial UC Peace Talks (\$4,000)
- Esquimalt UC Contemplative Practices Network (\$5,175)
- Knox UC Parksville, Gathering Place (\$20,000)
- Central Okanagan Intercultural Food & Community program (\$50,000)
- Kamloops UC Welcome Coordinator (\$40,000)
- West Point Grey UC Intercultural Ministries (\$20,000)
- Becoming Church Friends and Family Gatherings (\$25,000)

The financial picture in 2024 was much more positive than the year prior because the Investment Income from its Endowment Account increased substantially year over year. As a result, the Fund was able to meet all the requests to it which met the Fund's criteria. There continues to be \$3,571,315 in the ProVision Fund Endowment Account. Furthermore, it is expected that the Fund will be able to continue into 2025 and 2026 with about the same total amount of new grants in each of those years.

PROVISION FUND CRITERIA AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

The basis for approving grants (the Fund's criteria) were established by BC Conference in 2011 and the Conference and the Pacific Mountain Region have made no changes to the criteria. The committee will continue to use them until changes are proposed, discussed and made by the Region. The Criteria are clearly outlined on the Region's Website.

In assessing Applications for Grants, the committee is guided by the general ProVision Fund reason d'être: for the PM Region to be able to make grants to its Communities of Faith, etc. as they consider launching "new ministry" programs and projects within Communities of Faith and the community for which financial assistance from the wider church is needed and appropriate. The committee carefully assesses all Applications in the light of the stated criteria and procedures (as outlined on the Region's website: [Pacific Mountain Region Provision Grant - 2024](#))

Applying ProVision Fund criteria and procedures has meant that the committee has:

- honoured the priorities of the Region
- not approved requests that would encroach upon other Region program financing, namely: camping, new church plants, leadership programming
- held steadfastly to not funding capital costs. (It is aware that three church roof-replacements or numerous online equipment grants could bankrupt the Fund)
- held steadfastly to not funding on-going ministry costs
- not made grants to individuals
- not funded continuing education, sabbaticals, nor artistic or writing proposals
- has provided many grants for starting programs and ministries
- approved some grants for a program for two or three years running. (There are a few grants that have had more years of funding but these tend to be related to community service ministries which have no hope of other funding and are essential to the wider community)
- made grants to Communities of Faith and Ministries to enable service in the wider community

- required an articulation of: i) plans, ii) strategies of proposals, iii) intended evaluation process of results, iv) the extent to which a proposal relates to the stated ministry and mission of the unit and v) where applicable, the transformative benefit of the proposal
- insisted on support and funding from the applying Community of Faith and has been impressed with Applications which also show financial support from other sources
- appreciated Applications which demonstrate administrative and planning expertise

The committee is diligent in avoiding conflicts of interest in relation to Applications and ensures that the Fund operates with both excellent records and annually audited accounting. It meets three times each year.

In order to guide the committee in to coming years, it recently adopted for its use a rough quota system to ensure funds will be available for three types of programs we have been funding; A. Launching and Establishing New Ministry Programs (70%); B) Community Service and Outreach Programs (20%); C) One-Time Events and Workshops (10%).

The committee noted the concern that following the pandemic years of 2020-2022, Communities of Faith could benefit by learning more about the opportunity offered through the ProVision Fund. Therefore, it created a 22-minute Video which was presented to and appreciated by the 2024 General Meeting of the Region. It is available through the link on the Region's website.

This report is respectfully submitted (March 11, 2025) by the committee's Secretary on behalf of the five committee members: Dr. Michael Caveney, Chair, (Kamloops UC), Beryl Itani (Central Okanagan UC), Sandi Parker (Central Saanich UC), Rev. Sarah Fanning (Oak Bay UC) and Rev. Gordon How, Secretary, (Vancouver)



STEWARDSHIP

Greetings! My name is Vicki Nelson and I serve as the Stewardship Staff person for Pacific Mountain. Throughout 2024 I was blessed by the commitment, time, and love that many stewardship committee members shared with their communities of faith by participating in Stewardship education and programming.

My role is to serve you and your community of faith, and I hope to meet many more of you in the coming months.

If you are concerned about the financial viability of your community of faith, are dreaming about growing your ministry, or are realizing you haven't spoken about money or generosity in worship for a while, I would love to get to know you! My contact info is at the bottom of this report, please feel free to reach out any time, or if you just want to dive in, here are some ongoing programs we offer:

Getting Started in Stewardship— a 90 minute webinar to introduce some stewardship best practices and help participants view generosity as a spiritual practice rather than a unpleasant chore.

Stewardship Best Practices— an in-depth, multi-week, team-based exploration of current stewardship best practices with lots of practical suggestions and customizable resources, and ending with a detailed stewardship plan and ongoing coaching to help communities of faith achieve their goals.

Set Up Your Congregational Giving Program— a 2 Session program that is designed to help communities of faith to plan and carry out a successful stewardship campaign.

Bequests and Estate Giving— Two sessions where participants will learn how to set up a Planned Giving program in their church and learn how to inspire and invite various planned gifts and identify the best ways to express gratitude for these gifts.

You can [read more and register](#) for any of these programs on CHURCHx.

We also offer congregational stewardship resources, digital and paper, in the following areas: [Mission and Service](#), [Congregational Stewardship](#), [United Church Foundation](#) and [Planned Giving](#). Find also sorts of resources using the QR code at the top or our [stewardship worship materials](#).

You are invited to explore these materials and opportunities on your own, or to contact me and we can set a time for a conversation about your community of faith's context. You won't regret taking some time to focus on generosity. One participant provided this program feedback, "This course gave me renewed energy to look at Stewardship more broadly and some tools for doing so. Topics were engaging and thought provoking". Thank you, Pacific Mountain Region friends. I am so grateful for your spirit, creativity, generosity, and thoughtfulness. I look forward to learning together in 2025.

In gratitude,

Vicki Nelson,
Community of Faith Stewardship Support Staff
Pacific Mountain Region
VNelson@united-church.ca
(639) 396-0193



Click [here](#) or use this QR code to discover a free resource kit!



MINISTRY AND MISSION



THE ARCHIVES & HISTORY COMMITTEE

Among the ongoing acquisition and research work of the Archives, 2024 was especially busy as connections grew with individuals, communities, and First Nations. The work of making archival materials accessible continues, in particular through digitization and repatriation projects. This work is made possible thanks to the Bob Stewart Legacy Fund, funding through Indigenous Ministry and Justice, and our community partnerships.

Our steps toward accessibility and discoverability have led to an increased number of individual research requests, and a heartwarming rise in meaningful discoveries.

ACQUISITIONS

The Archives acquired over 35 linear metres of records through transfers and donations in 2024. Nearly half of these boxes came from First Metropolitan (Victoria), as a result of its closure. Along with their records, First Met also generously gave the gift of many archival supplies and even a wire recorder from the 1940s!

RESEARCH SERVICES

During 2024, the Archives responded to 283 research requests and welcomed 26 in-person researchers. The most frequent type of request (and probably the case since the Archives first opened) was for baptism or marriage records; these accounted for 35% of all research requests, and 20% of genealogical research was undertaken by Japanese or Chinese Canadians. Church administration and Indigenous-related requests accounted for about 15%, each.



RECONCILIATION AND DECOLONIZING THE ARCHIVES

Digitization Projects:

Within the scope of the General Council Archives' Bringing the Children Home project, we were able to digitize most of the vital event records from Indigenous communities. We have begun rematriating those records as relationships with communities develop.

The Regional Archives also began digitizing all photographs relating to the communities with whom we have an existing relationship. As one First Nation representative has remarked, "These photographs have become very crucial to our research and of course, spark joy in the community."

That alone is more than enough motivation for this work.

PROJECTS AND SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

Summer Co-op Project – Camping Archives

During the spring and summer of 2024, UBC archives co-op student and VST student, Bailey Bjolin, completed the arrangement and description of 34 boxes of camping archives. She managed to sneak in several personal and ecumenical collections, as well, including the Task Force on Central America fonds, Community of Concern collection, and the personal papers of a few women.

Digital Preservation Plan and Workflow

We were grateful to work with recent UBC Archival Studies alum, Marina de Souza, as she formalized our digital records preservation plan and workflow. Marina brought her experience with UBC's digital collections and digital preservation system, and collaborated with the General Council Archives and IT teams to map our work to the longer-term vision.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Gear Chambers, Chair, Archives and History Committee
Blair Galston, Regional Archivist



Clockwise: 1) Rev. James and Susanna Pan (formerly of Chinese UC, Vancouver) visited the archivist at 312 Main; 2) Bailey and Balie (Bringing the Children Home contractor) soak up some love from therapy dog “Ezra”—one of the benefits of working in an office next to Vancouver Coastal Health; 3) Marina de Souza (digital archives contractor), Blair Galston (Regional Archivist), and Bailey Bjolin (co-op student); 4) Grandchildren and great-granddaughter of former Oriental Home and School resident, Elizabeth Chan, made meaningful discoveries at the Archives last spring.



CAMP SPIRIT

GPS: FINDING OUR WAY

Our Camp Spirit 2024 theme was GPS: Finding our Way. We explored using Grace, Peace and the Holy Spirit to help us travel our days.

Camp Spirit found its way to **21 camp locations**, with **3 camps each week for 7 weeks**. This was the first year of Camp Spirit for 2 communities. Those in their 2nd year saw an increase in camper numbers. Our lower mainland camps continue to draw large numbers, often full to capacity.

We had a total of **503 registrations: 408 campers, and 95 Leaders-in-Training** with 68% of camper spaces filled, and 46% of LIT spaces.

Camp Spirit hired **19 Summer Camp Staff between the ages of 17 and 31, for up to 10 weeks**. We are grateful to the Canada Summer Jobs grant program for partial support of our staffing costs. Many of these youth and young adults have been connected with Camp Spirit for a long time - several started out as campers as young as 6 years old! They continue to be connected to the United Church as youth group members, as attendees to youth and young adult retreats put on by the Pacific Mountain Region, and working as Children Ministry leaders. Rounding out our Summer Staff was a Summer Administrator who was in the office May through August, as well as a food coordinator who served amazing food at 5 sites throughout the province.

Camp Spirit also had **51 volunteer YouthCrew, filling 97 spots throughout the summer**. These youth, aged 14-17, support our Summer Staff in all aspects of keeping camp safe and fun. Our hope is always that some of these amazing youth will continue their leadership journey with Camp Spirit and apply to be Summer Staff once they are old enough. Camp Spirit appreciates all the volunteers from the communities of faith that support each week of camp. Community volunteers are vital for our time in every location for their many ways of support. We thank God for all of you.



AMAZING WORDS FROM SOME CAMPERS

"A feels like himself at Camp Spirit..."

"All the kindness."

"My daughter has claimed this week was her favourite summer camp and she has had a great variety. The leadership and positive energy that they shared were impressive! Thank you!"

"S came home singing every day."

"It's always a really inclusive week with excellent leaders and a great theme"

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR SITE COORDINATORS

"I really loved the theme and the worship times...the leadership was great and the stories and theme were relevant and meaningful."

"...how excited the children were to come to camp. The campers who were returning again to Camp Spirit were especially excited and also helped children who hadn't attended before join in."

"Directors and Coordinators were well prepared and led camp beautifully. They are so capable and imaginative and generous".

We are grateful for the support of the 21 communities of faith we visited in 2024, the financial support of Gilmore Park United Church, Tai Kong United Church, and the Communities of Faith and individuals who have donated to the Camp Spirit Bursary Fund and the Pacific Mountain Regional staff for their work to support us.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Munro, Camp Spirit Coordinator
Cathy Cryder, Regional Minister, Camp Spirit





CAMPING MINISTRY

Greetings dear friends of Pacific Mountain Region. I'm delighted to share news about the region's camping ministry. I continue to believe that a week-long experience of overnight camping has been the church's most authentic relationship with children, youth and young adults, with lots to teach the church about ministry with children and youth. This year was no exception.

LOCATIONS

There are seven camps within the bounds of the region, operated by a non-profit societies that are Category One Incorporated Ministries of the United Church.

Camp Fircom serves the lower mainland from its home on Gambier Island in Howe Sound, about a 25-minute water taxi from Horseshoe Bay.

Camp Koolaree is 17 kilometres east of Nelson, on the south shore of Kootenay Lake also only accessible by boat.

Camp Grafton is 100 kilometres east of Kamloops on Shuswap Lake. MacKenzie Camp serves the Okanagan Valley from its location 35 kilometres east of Enderby.

Camp Pringle serves all of Vancouver Island from its location on West Shawnigan Lake Road, in Shawnigan Lake, 30 kilometres south of Duncan.

Rock Lake Camp serves the east Kootenay region from its location 63 kilometres southeast of Cranbrook.

Braeburn Lake Christian Camp serves four denominations, including Whitehorse United Church, from its location 100 kilometres north of Whitehorse.

Each is an integral part of the First Third Ministry, offering a myriad of camping and retreat experiences for children and youth.



SPECIAL PROJECTS

Four significant projects were undertaken on behalf of the Region's camping ministry this past year.

Decolonization is a Community Act

April of 2025, spearheaded by Terra MacKenzie, Camp Fircom's Executive Director, the Region's First Third Ministry (Rev. Pamela Evans) and Leadershift (Rev. Michelle Slater), together with Indigenous Ministries (Rev. Teri Meyer) worked together to create a learning retreat for United Church leaders. This retreat brought Squamish Elders and Knowledge Keepers into a process entitled "[Gathering Our Medicine](#)" for four days of community building and culture sharing. Entitled "Decolonization is a Community Act" this retreat provided a framework and philosophy for our ongoing work of building relationships between the camps and congregations and communities of faith in our shared sacred work of reconciliation.

Beyond S'mores

For the first time in 20 years, the Region had a conversation with congregations and communities of faith about their impressions, experiences, and hopes with respect to the role camping ministry has in their own relationships with children and youth. A survey was distributed, focus groups were conducted, and one-to-one conversations with key leaders were held by the Beyond S'mores Research team – comprising Rev. Kerry Child, Rev. Jen Cunnings, Rev. Ibi Chuan, and Deborah Richards. The Beyond S'Mores research report, authored by Rev. Andria Irwin is available [here](#).

Depreciation Reports

The Region contracted with two engineering firms to conduct an independent analysis and provide depreciation reports on the site and facilities at three of the region-owned camp properties - Camp Fircom, Camp Pringle and Camp Koolaree. These reports have provided excellent support to those societies in the development of long-range site and facilities maintenance schedules and cash flow projections.



Camps Learning and Networking Event

The Region hosted a retreat and learning event for the seven camps in November at Camp Pringle. In addition to the opportunity to network with one another, share information and resources about all aspects of the ministry, guest speakers and workshop leaders offered learning on a number of topics – The Spiritual Lives of Young People, Relationship management and Fund Development, Duty of Care, Governance and Good Decision Making. In addition, the Camp societies received the final report from the Beyond S'mores Research Project.

MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING

The seven societies are managed by volunteer boards operating with varying degrees of organizational capacity. While each society will report the lived experience of transformation that campers have at their locations, each society struggles with many of the issues the church is facing. Increased regulatory expectations, reduced numbers of volunteers, immediate and pressing priorities hampering long range strategic planning, relationship management for the purposes of fund development, aging infrastructures. However, the camp boards are beginning to see themselves as part of a larger whole, and are thinking about ways to cooperate, coordinate and consult.

The Region's support to Camping Ministry is funded by the Camping Ministry Fund created by the sale of Camp Kwomais in 2007 and Camp Moorecroft in 2011. Initial funds were used to support the capital redevelopment of two of the Region's Camping properties: Camp Fircom and Camp Pringle. With the restructuring of the church, this fund is now used to support all of the camps in the region. In 2024, First Third Ministry used \$825,000 from the camping ministry fund for operating grants, capital projects grants, property depreciation reports, the research project and retreat event, as well as staff support to the boards.

I feel privileged to be serving the region in this role on behalf of the children, youth and young adults seeking safe places to be themselves and to nurture their spirits.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Blair Odney, Regional Camp Coordinator, First Third Ministry, PMRC



CAMPUS MINISTRY

CAMPUS UNITED, UVIC

As I reflect on this past year of ministry at the University of Victoria, I am deeply grateful for the ways in which students have come together to build meaningful community. Through food, shared experiences, and intentional programs, we have fostered spaces of belonging, care, and spiritual growth.

One of the most heartwarming aspects of this year has been the leadership of students in our Belonging Dinners. These gatherings were more than just meals—they became opportunities for students to share traditional foods passed down through generations, honouring their cultural heritage and family histories. The kitchen became a sacred space of connection, where laughter, storytelling, and even tears (some from onions, others from heartfelt moments) were shared. Over 50 students participated, creating a welcoming dining community rooted in mutual learning and care.

Our community continued to grow through Global Kitchen, a large gathering attended by over 80 students. As part of the UVSS Global Village event, this initiative featured three student chefs who prepared Egyptian, Indian, and Korean cuisine. More than just providing nourishment, these meals served as an avenue for cultural exchange, as students shared the histories and significance of their dishes. This event was a powerful reminder that breaking bread together can also break barriers and build understanding.

Collaboration has been at the heart of my ministry, strengthening connections both within and beyond the university community. This year, I partnered with Ruth Dantzer (Anglican Spiritual Care Provider) and Student Wellness Centre counsellors Dawn Schell and Adam Tran to co-facilitate Mindful Mashup, a program integrating mindfulness, spiritual reflection, and wellness practices. One student, who attended every session, shared: “I hope this program continues so more students’ lives can be touched.” This feedback highlights the importance of offering holistic support for students navigating the challenges of university life.

Another exciting development was the work of our Community Connectors, Jia Rui and Irena, two students hired by the United Church of Canada to engage their peers in new ways. Through their creativity and leadership, they launched programs such as dance classes and poetry workshops, which attracted students who had never before engaged with Multifaith programming. Their contributions have been invaluable in expanding our reach and deepening our impact.

Through all these initiatives, I have witnessed firsthand the power of hospitality, creativity, and collaboration in ministry. In an increasingly diverse and complex world, students are longing for spaces where they feel seen, valued, and supported. By offering programs that nurture both body and soul, we are responding to this deep need and embodying the compassionate presence of Christ in the university setting.

I am grateful for the ongoing support of the United Church of Canada and our wider church community, whose commitment to campus ministry makes this work possible. As we move forward, I pray that we continue to be a source of encouragement and inspiration to students, walking alongside them in their journey of faith, learning, and belonging.

Respectfully submitted,
Min-Goo Kang
Campus Minister, University of Victoria





CAMPUS UNITED, UBC

The UBC Campus Ministry plays an essential role in the lives of students by fostering connection with spirituality, promoting important conversations about social justice, and building a supportive community. It offers a space where students can deepen and explore their faith, engage with social justice issues, and connect with others in meaningful ways.

FORMATION

At the core of UBC Campus Ministry is formation, helping students grow spiritually and emotionally. With practices like prayer and bullet journaling encouraging personal reflection and mindfulness, giving tools to students to stay grounded amidst the pressures of university life and coming of age in the challenging world and times we are in. Bullet journaling, in particular, is a tool we are sharing with students to encourage them to track their spiritual journey, set and reflect on intentions, experiences, emotions, as well as engage with their creativity. Additionally, the Sanctuary Mental Health Course provides students with tools to care for their mental health, ask for support, and connect with God during any challenging times in a way that is de-stigmatizing mental health care, in a supportive environment.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The ministry hosts weekly community dinners, offering a welcoming space for students to connect while addressing important issues of food insecurity. Consistently providing students with a lovingly prepared meal and community support once a week. We also provide students with surplus oven-baked quality bread, and often extra food from the dinner leftovers or surplus ingredients, directly addressing the need for basic sustenance and creating a culture of care, connection, and justice. These initiatives not only provide resources but also encourage students to engage with their faith through acts of service and compassion.

Additionally, we make sure our spaces are affirming through encouraging open conversations about socio-political issues that concern students and harm communities, often the LGBTQ2S+ community. Listening to our community members and making them feel seen and heard is a big part of how we are building community as well as trust with students on campus. We want them to know that our ministry can be a safe place to be themselves, especially with the increasingly alarming political climate and discrimination seen so close to Canada.



SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality at UBC Campus Ministry is shaped through a variety of practices and discussions. Our partnership with Rev. Alesha who leads the Anglican Chaplaincy offers students guidance and support and encourages interfaith within the Christian tradition. While our opportunity to attend an ecumenical worship service by Rev. Sumarme Goble provided a shared space for prayer and reflection across different Christian traditions. These experiences, along with ongoing discussions about faith and spirituality, help students explore and deepen their connection to their beliefs as well as each other.

COMMUNITY

One of the most significant aspects of UBC Campus Ministry is its emphasis on community. Through shared activities like cooking together (sometimes even requested or cultural dishes), pumpkin carving, and gingerbread house-making, students build strong friendships and create lasting memories. The ministry also fosters connection through the Sanctuary Mental Health course, where students come together to support one another. We have begun to see that for many, especially the exchange students who joined us (which was a wonderful surprise), it becomes a home away from home—a place to share experiences, hear about each other's weeks, and build a support network.

CONCLUSION

UBC Campus Ministry is an integral part of UBC student life, offering opportunities for spiritual growth, social justice engagement, and deep and spiritual community connections. It provides students with the tools to grow emotionally and spiritually while creating a compassionate and inclusive environment where everyone can belong. In this way, the ministry helps students navigate university life with purpose and support, making it an invaluable resource for the UBC community. As we continue to lay down roots, we are hopeful and are excited for what is to come.

Submitted by Lavender Mendez, UBC Community Connector



CAMPUS UNITED, UNBC

The 2024/25 academic year has been fruitful, exciting and fulfilling for UNBC Campus United Ministry.

Our community connectors, Amaan Hingora and Kiyenret Tenshak worked together to support our campus community in spiritual practice, community care and justice actions, as well as to help build a sense of togetherness and connection. Our most well-received ministry, Jam-making as EcoJustice and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through honouring of Key'oh, was a hit again this year. Saskatoons, raspberries, and rhubarb picked, grown and foraged from Lheidli T'enneh Key'oh in Prince George were made into 36 jars of delicious jam by 27 UNBC students, staff and faculty. This is a wonderful way to connect to the land and to one another in the midst of the demands of university life.

We held two very successful interfaith food drives in the fall and spring terms, filling the UNBC Northern Undergraduate Student Society Food Bank with food offered from the Christian Ecumenical, Muslim, Sikh, Bah'ai, and Animist communities, as well as some UNBC academic departments. Monthly Wild Church, Interfaith labyrinth meditation, and community soup meals nourished our Campus United Team, and our wider collective.

We had three film showings, partnered with the Northern Women's Centre, with the wider Interfaith Spiritual Care Centre as part of the UN Interfaith Harmony Week, and with the UNBC First Nations Student Centre; FI screening events were a regular and very well received stressbuster, and our "Walking with the Spirit" and "Community Hiking" ministries thrived.

As well, our UNBC Team participated in Palestine Solidarity actions such as Arms Embargo post-card campaigns, Anti-Poverty and Anti-Racist justice campaigns investigating and advocating possible ways to decrease expenses for international students at UNBC, co-hosting the UNBC ISCC Coldest Night of the Year fundraising walk for anti-poverty initiatives, and we have begun an EcoJustice and Anti-Poverty campaign in collaboration with the UNBC Sustainability office to improve BC Transit services in Prince George with increased service, more accessible pricing, and improved safety on BC Transit property.



Our connection with the local congregation, Trinity United in Prince George, was strengthened through support of the local hosting of Camp Spirit, co-hosting booths and marching groups at the local Pride Festival and Pride Picnic, and through supporting Trinity Youth for Justice initiatives such as facilitating the youth fundraising team for the Coldest Night of the Year. We are looking forward to another year of community, welcome, connection and nourishing minds, bodies and spirit in 2025/2026.



CAMPUS UNITED, SFU

The ministry at Simon Fraser University continues to grow and expand! We are so grateful to be here on campus, getting to know students, creating deep connections, and expanding the presence of the United Church of Canada among young people.

Fall 2024 marked the start of the third year of Campus United at SFU. We are still a young ministry and in our early stages, but this year has also felt like there's been a shift. More and more students are getting to know who we are and what we stand for. They know us as a place of **generosity** and **selflessness** through our (now) monthly Pop-Up Pantries where we see anywhere from 50 to almost 70 students accessing groceries each month. They know us as a community of **radical love** and **inclusiveness** through our work with Out on Campus and hosting Faith and Queer Identity Discussion Groups. They know us as students who love to **discuss meaningful topics** and **have fun** (!!!) through our movie night discussions and various forms of "Conversations that Matter." They know us as a group **dedicated to our faith** and **spirituality** through monthly worship and weekly meditative practices.

The growth is slow but the impact is exponential and I truly believe God is calling us, the United Church, to be here at SFU, to show Jesus's love to students, to explore faith in ways that are full of openness and curiosity, and to follow the Spirit at work on Burnaby Mountain.

I don't do this work alone, not in the slightest. There are several SFU students who consistently help with events, pop-up pantries, and spreading the word about who we are. Two of those students are hired as Community Connectors to support Campus United, build connections on campus, and keep their ears to the ground about what students are looking for and needing from a faith group. The two Community Connectors at SFU are Nina Nguyen and Andrew Kim; this is their third year in this role and they've both been exceptional in helping me get caught up to speed and growing this ministry.

I also want to thank those that have contributed to the ministry over the last year and have been a huge part of its success: Inlet United Church, Como Lake United Church, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, the Multifaith Centre at SFU, the Global Student Centre, the Women's Centre, and Out on Campus. We are so pleased to be partnered with these churches, organizations, and groups and look forward to continued partnership and growing partnerships with others.

And, finally, big thanks to:

- 1.the Pacific Mountain Regional Council for their continued support and encouragement in this relatively new ministry and initiative;
- 2.Rev. Pamela Evans for her determination and leadership;
- 3.and, finally, the other Campus United Ministers (Rev. Min-Goo Kang, Rev. Aaron Miller, Rev. Kendra Mitchell-Foster, Rev. Robyn Pengelly, Jess Andrews, and Aleesha Neal) for their advice and friendship.

Thank you for the absolute blessing it is to be the Campus Minister at SFU.
Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Lydia Ruenzel





FIRST THIRD MINISTRY

As this season arrives once again, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude on the work I have the privilege to do. This past year has been a testament to the power of community, collaboration, and faithful imagination.

- I am grateful to witness the ways our First Third Ministry team continues to live into the vision of partnering with communities of faith to inspire those in the first third of life to live Christlike lives of justice, hope, and compassion in the world.
- I am thankful for the capacity of our team to resource camping and campus ministries, which so often serve as the first point of connection to The United Church of Canada for young people and their families. It is heartening to see communities of faith extending that connection beyond a week at camp or a Campus United event, nurturing lasting relationships.
- I celebrate the creation of resources like the Faith@Home magazine and our camping curriculum, and the generous sharing of tools and wisdom among community of faith leaders as they live into their callings.
- I am deeply appreciative of the many volunteer leaders who along with our staff, offer their gifts to events like YouthTrek, Re:Unite Young Adult Retreat, and Imagine Children's Retreat—spaces that continue to embody the Kingdom of God in vibrant and transformative ways.
- And most of all, I am thankful for our First Third Ministry team—for your energy, intention, and faithful work. You inspire me every day.

With deep gratitude,
Pamela Evans
First Third Ministry Team Lead



SARAH PROVAN, ANIMATOR

This year as an Animator was full of meaningful moments, learning, and connection. The Children's Retreat was a definite highlight—some of the kids from the island took the ferry for the first time, and it was beautiful to watch them explore creation with a sense of wonder and curiosity. The Anti-Racism Conference was another powerful experience, as we learned from The Rev. Tony Snow, The Rev. Hyuk Cho, Becca Whitla, Adele Halliday and Handel Kashope Wright. We moved beyond conversation into real action, setting personal goals and being introduced to the "I Am a Changemaker" curriculum, which equips kids, youth and leaders of all ages to engage in justice work with courage and purpose. I also had the chance to experience Camp Spirit first-hand. With 21 sites, 3 travelling teams, and 7 full weeks of programming, it was a whirlwind of laughter, learning, and faith—truly a miracle in motion. I'm grateful for all the ways I've been stretched and inspired this year.

NIK SLOAT, ANIMATOR

A lot has happened since the 2024 AGM. The first event I helped lead was the family retreat at Camp Pringle. Families were able to come and spend some time of Sabbath; resting, playing, and existing with one another in a truly beautiful part of creation. Next, we were onto Youth Trek. We lined up with the atmospheric river but thankfully we avoided the worst of the floods. Teenagers from all across the region came together to play pickleball, learn about our sacred stories, and of course sleep on a church floor. After that I took point on running the Lower Mainland's children's retreat at Sasamat Outdoor Centre. We worshipped together, created together, arranged flowers together, and even got the chance to play some Korean board games together. The food was, the leaders, the trees, the community, and for one brave leader (early March by the way) the lake was great.



ALEXANDRA BARR, ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR

I was fortunate enough to be one of 70+ young adults from across BC, the Yukon & Southern Alberta, all gathered at Camp Fircom for Re:unite, our Young Adult Retreat, this past November. It was such a wonderful experience: deepening friendships, and finding new ones among the attendees, marveling at the beauty that is Gambier Island. We went deep on social justice, taught by the National Church's Sarah Williams, sang songs and learned fun camp games, and wrapped up our time together with a Rock-themed (The musical genre! Gemstones! The actor & professional wrestler!) dinner, complete with mocktails and costumes – truly a highlight of my year.

TASHA WHITNEY, REGIONAL MINISTER

The Children's Retreats were an incredible way to be welcomed into the First Third Ministry team! These retreats were special times where children and leaders grew together in faith, built new friendships, and experienced God's love. We gathered at the sacred spaces of Camp Pringle and Camp Sasamat where we experienced beautiful sunshine, hikes in the forest, wide games, and I even had a chilly dip in the lake! It was truly a blessing to be part of both wonderful experiences with children and incredible leaders!

The retreat to Camp Fircom for the Decolonization is a Community Act event was truly remarkable. I was honoured and grateful to have been part of this powerful event that was absolutely transformative to my practice and work. The Gathering our Medicine team led by Denise Findlay welcomed us with incredible trust, and I was humbled and so deeply grateful for the opportunity to be part of this experience. It was an intensive week of enlivened learning, where we engaged in a truly relational way to deepen our work in decolonization and inclusion.



YOUTH COUNCIL AND YOUTH FORUM RETREAT 2025

In February 2025 Youth Council members, Youth Forum members, and young adult commissioners from Chinook Winds and Pacific Mountain Regional Councils gathered at Camp Fircom on Gambier Island for a three-day leadership retreat in advance of the regional AGMs and General Council 45 Youth Forum. We were joined virtually by Executive Minister Treena Duncan and GC45 Business Chair Kenji Marui. Over the weekend 18 young leaders engaged in learning, leadership development and future planning based on the GC45 Theme of Visions and Dreams. Over the coming year our Youth Councils and Youth Forum members will be meeting regularly to develop their leaders' strategies and proposals, as well as dreaming the church of the next 100 years in advance of General Council 45.



INDIGENOUS MINISTRY

For the PM Indigenous Ministries, it has been a year of reconnection, relationship building, rediscovery, research, healing and, yes, reconciliation. And, I discovered that “reconciliation” is a word, an idea, a concept of a plan that, in some circles and communities, no longer holds meaning. For a growing number of communities, it is a word that ‘colonizers use to feel good about themselves’, but it holds no weight, no power...unless it is backed up with “action and intention.”

For example, when I visited Skidegate United Church, over June’s “Indigenous Peoples’ Day” weekend, and found myself at a presentation by Haida woman and PhD student, Michaela McGuire, on *“To Tell the Truth: A discussion on the interconnected processes of genocide, colonialism, and racism”* in the Gina Guu Aahljuu Naay: Performance House at the Haida Heritage Centre (if you’ve never been, you must go at least once), I made connections I didn’t expect to make; and had someone unpack the word, “reconciliation” in an unexpected way.

During the Q&A portion of the gathering, a Skidegate resident rose to say, “I don’t like the word, ‘reconciliation’. Think about it,” she went on, “‘Recon’ is a military term (short for ‘reconnaissance’). It means to go in and figure out how to gain the advantage; how to defeat your enemy. And ‘conciliation’ means to placate people; to do just enough to get people to start acting the way you want them to act.” Many heads in the crowd nodded in understanding and agreement.

Yet, Healing and Reconciliation are what the United Church has been about for a very long time. Travel plans changed on my way to the PMIM AGM, hosted by the Cape Mudge United Church and the We Wai Kai Nation of Quadra Island, October 3-6, 2024. With a few days free before the meeting was to begin, I made my way to Port Alberni, to Alberni Valley United Church, and to a recommended special presentation at the local Museum, put on by the AIRS Survivors Art and Education Society. Children’s paintings, repatriated in 2013, were on display. “Orange Shirt Day”, or, “The National Day for Truth & Reconciliation” was just a couple days away. It was time to hear the stories behind these paintings and get a glimpse of the healing work Alberni Valley UC has been about.



Sunday, I would return to experience Sacred time outside before worship inside. After meeting members of their “Road to Reconciliation” monthly gathering, I was given directions to the site of the infamous Alberni Indian Residential School which was run by the United Church until 1969 (the year I was born) and taken over by the Department of Indian Affairs, finally closing in 1973. I lived in Port Alberni as a toddler, and came back for Nursery School through Grade 3. That Museum was part of the complex where I learned to swim, next to the library where I learned to love to read. And I had no inkling of the residential school’s existence; neither did my parents. So, I drove to the site – with its one original building still standing with a big sign upon its outer wall: “To Be Demolished”.

Since that unplanned visit last fall, I have been able to more directly support Alberni Valley UC’s reconciliation ministry, and, in April of this year, was invited back to experience being part of the “Road to Reconciliation” gathering; and, to offer the message on Sunday morning. I thank the Revs. Ed Lewis and Rob Shearer, (RtR) founder Nora Martin, and the congregation of Alberni Valley UC for their hospitality, their ongoing and faithful ministry of reconciliation, and their courageous truth telling and listening.

So many Communities of Faith within our region have been doing amazing things in the ministry of healing, reconciliation, truth telling, and education around residential schools and their ongoing legacy. For the many creative, collective and individual efforts to support one another, to continue to educate, to change hearts and minds, to heal relationships, your PMIM Executive Council thanks you. There are too many stories to share here – and they are all significant.

In the last year, I have visited Bella Coola (April 2024), Skidegate & Prince Rupert’s First United Church (June 2024), Longhouse Council (Feb. 2024 & 2025), Bella Bella (March 2025), Anspayaxw (many times through 2024-25); Gitsegukla (multiple times); Haisla UC (many times); Cape Mudge (Oct 2024). I have been in contact with Lax Kw’alaams, but have been unable to make a personal visit. I am making contacts with folks in Hartley Bay and hope to make it into the village this summer.



CHALLENGES

There are many issues facing our ministry including, lack of ministry personnel; aging and/or unusable buildings; collective and compounded grief due to many deaths – some villages experiencing more loss than is conceivable; disconnect with young people – without active ministries and people on the ground to engage youth and young adults, and to inspire interest in ministry leadership the UCC's presence will be a challenge. Some of the communities with buildings but no Minister have the challenge of Pentecostal ministries seeking to take over buildings.

Where there are usable UC buildings that communities can still access there is still some connection – affiliation with the UCC. People wistfully share memories of the Thomas Crosby Mission Ship and, Presbytery gatherings. They miss the connection with the wider church. Where there are ministers on the ground, making connections, building relationships, offering pastoral care and inspiring worship, keeping people connected with the wider United Church (the Region and the National Indigenous UC), there is active, intentional ministry happening; growing in trust and in engagement. No building; no ministry personnel...fading United Church presence, purpose, efficacy.

LEADERSHIP

The PM Indigenous Ministry was excited to welcome Rev. Tif Bradford McNaughton, serving the Hazelton PC (Gitsegukla & Mountain View UCs) since the fall. We are thankful for Mimi Smienk's continuing ministry with Cape Mudge; and Rev. Nancy Walker's faithful presence in Bella Coola. Last June, 2024, we marked Rev. Barry Morris' retirement from the Longhouse after 35 years – and, we currently have been working with a potential shared ministry. At the end of June 2025, we will honour Rev. Derry Bott in his retirement from First United in Prince Rupert, the "Indigenous Cathedral" along the north coast.

Anspayaxw's Pierce Memorial UC & Skidegate UC are both actively searching for ministry personnel having had changes in ministry leadership through 2024. Bella Bella's Darby Memorial UC is looking at local options along with Kitamaat Village's Haisla United Church. Hartley Bay UC has a building and is working on lay leadership – at least for funerals and memorials.



Our PM IM Executive Council has been busy, especially with all of the uncertainty and changes at the National Indigenous Elders Council level. They are exploring creative ways to bring ministry personnel into the communities that need ministers; and working with the national church to find ways to make safe and usable our church structures. At our in-person meeting January 2025, we created “Terms of Reference” for the Executive Membership – a good and significant piece of work for its members, including those newly elected by the PMIM AGM in October.

Your PMIM Executive Council includes:

Ray Jones – Gitsegukla (Co-Chair)
Keetah Levac – Cape Mudge (Co-Chair)
Mimi Smienk – Cape Mudge
Nancy Walker – Bella Coola
Alisia Henkel – Cape Mudge
David Clellamin – Bella Bella
Brady Bolton – Gitsegukla.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve with the dedicated members of the PMIM. My priorities in this Acting Indigenous Minister position continue to be in re-establishing and building relationship; opening communications; offering pastoral care and ministry leadership; supporting administration pieces; connecting communities to the work of the Regional Indigenous UC and informed about the transitions happening at the National level.

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

In February, I was invited to **Anspayaxw** (Kispiox) by Jim & Doreen Angus to come share in a community meal where we could discuss the future of **Pierce Memorial UC** – closed for at least 4 years due to significant structural issues. First question needing to be answered: Does the community still want the United Church; is there still a place and purpose for the church? Short but powerful answer: Yes!

It was discovered (thank you, Blair Galston – PMRC Archivist) that the current building replaced the original church structure, in 1949, after it burned down in 1946. The pivotal question asked and answered, now, how do we fix the building and its iconic bell tower?



Expressed options included: 1) Renovate & repair the current building, lifting it off its foundation if necessary (bell tower, plumbing, electrical, foundation), estimated cost - one million dollars; 2) Tear down what is there, saving, restoring and repurposing as much of the old building as possible (many aunties, uncles and grandparents worked on specific items in and on the church), and rebuild a new colonial styled church on the same site; 3) repurpose items, but build a completely new, multiuse, culturally sensitive and reflective building, in which sacred, healing and communal space is centred for the village.

PMIM is working with the National IUCC and the community, seeking both direction and funding sources.

Bella Bella: GE Darby Memorial UC: March 28-30, 2025, I was able to fly into the community, accompanying the Vancouver School of Theology's (VST) Ray Aldred, so that he could share with them the virtues and possibilities offered through the travelling "Teaching House." The two of us met with (8) members of the Church Board, including retired ministry personnel, Gilbert Jackson, and PMIM Exec Member, David Clellamin. The building, as I was told last year, is not 'condemned', but, the bell tower is a concern, and there are other structural issues being looked at.

Bella Coola PC: Emmanuel & Augsburg-Mackenzie UCs: Both congregations are well served by Rev. Nancy Walker who was ordained at last year's PMRC AGM. My scheduled visit with them, set for April 26-29 ended up being a little longer – thank you Nancy and community members for the extended bit of hospitality; and for the tour of the petroglyphs.

Graham Island: Skidegate UC: Russ Jones – Board Chair. Unofficial Lutheran Supply ended June 2024. June 22-24, participated in worship. They are seeking a FT Minister. In the news of late, two drug houses, immediately next door to the UC Manse were torn down by the community. I have reached out to the Skidegate UC for follow up. Will connect with Band Council.

Hartley Bay: Emmanuel UC - building but no official lay or ministry personnel in place.



Hazelton PC: Gitsegukla & Mountainview UCs: Welcome to Rev Tif Bradford-McNaughton. And, thank you to the Rev. Peter Newbery – serving faithfully for a few years now between Calls and Appointments.

Kitamaat Village: Haisla UC – Contacts, Minnie Rosso (former Lay Minister, Bill Wilson’s daughter) & Roberta Grant. Minnie and Bobbie have regularly attended PMRC-IM meetings, and the two most recent National Spiritual Gathering in Edmonton (2023); Winnipeg (2024). Will be hosting the upcoming 2025 PMIM AGM, Oct. 2-5, 2025.

Klemtu: no building – torn down, no leadership; contacts unknown. (on the ‘inactive’ list)

Lax Kw’alaams: Grace UC: - building burned down a few years ago. Andrew Tait, Board/Council Chair. Foundation for the new church has been poured. Waiting for more funding and construction materials.

Quadra Island: Cape Mudge UC: Mimi Smienk, (in process for Ordination...; appointment paperwork in process) Hosted the PMRC-IM AGM, October 3-6/2024

Vancouver: Longhouse Council of Native Ministry: student minister, (ACC) Steven Seegert; in conversation with VST and the ISP.

Prince Rupert: First United Church – Rev. Derry Bott, set to retire 2025.

GRATITUDE

Once again, I want to offer a word of encouragement and gratitude to the members of the Communities of Faith within the PMRC for all you do, for the faith and love you live out loud every day. For all they do, “Thank you” to the members of the Indigenous Ministries Executive: Co-Chairs: Ray Jones & Keetah Levac, members: David Clellamin & Mimi Smienk, and not so new members: Nancy Walker, Alisia Henkel & Brady Bolton.



Joining the PMIM Team last year, a huge ‘thank you’ to Meghan Kirk, our direct Admin Support at the Burnaby office, alongside Marina Lecian. Between Meghan, Marina and Mauricio Araujo, travel, food and accommodations for our representatives attending the PMRC and the PMIM AGMs through 2024 were looked after brilliantly.

What would I have done without our National UCC Tech Support, Salem Shaik, and our PMRC Finance specialists, Lixin Wang & Houston Mo? And, gratitude to Treena Duncan, Executive Minister and Victoria Andrews, Regional Minister, for their commitment to the well-being of the Indigenous Ministries in PMRC during such a pivotal time on our collective healing journey.

Thank you and blessings to everyone who has supported, what was formerly BC Native Ministries and is now, PMRC Indigenous Ministries over the years.

Submitted by Teri Meyer, Acting Indigenous Minister



JUSTICE

Joyous spring and summer blessings to you all, and we hope this report finds you well and in great company. As you are reading this, we are about to jump into Pride Season and, of course, we are about to receive the vibrant and sacred blessings of celebration, protest, advocacy and connection through this time.

The 2024/25 year has been a rich and full season for PMR Justice Ministry, and we are thrilled to provide this brief update. As you read through the following story of the journey of this past year, do so knowing that all of us in the Pacific Mountain Region (PMR) are part of reflecting into our own communities and the wider world, the healing glory of God's peace through justice – that we all would flourish in freedom, solidarity, mutual support, love and sanctifying relationship with one another and with the entirety of creation.

AFFIRMING MINISTRY

Since our last AGM, four CoFs achieved Affirming status from Affirm United (AU): Shaughnessy Heights United Church in Vancouver on 16 June 2024, United Churches of Langley on 30 June 2024, Gordon United Church in Victoria on 30 June 2024, and Houston First United Church in Houston on 29 September 2024. Congratulations to you all!

Pride season last year was marked by Communities of Faith (CoF) all around PMR taking part in pride marches, picnics, festivals and events and making connections in community. In 2024, we began the “Pride Pack” initiative where we assembled 25 kits for CoFs looking to host a booth at pride events in their communities. We very quickly ran out of packs, with many CoFs asking how to get more... so we are proud to announce that this May we have created 50 Pride Packs and are looking forward to seeing the effects of Affirming Ministry nourishing community.

Following the nourishment and energy of the Pride Season, PMR Affirming began a program series of quarterly gatherings to provide resources and check in on advocacy initiatives within and amongst our CoFs.



Our September check-in “Pride is Over, Now What?” was an orientation to planning such initiatives using resources that we already have, and thinking of short-, medium- and longer-term strategies. Quarterly live-streamed Queer/Affirming Worship also began in 2024, with an extra worship service for Queer Xmas. These recorded worship services provide worship outlines, tools and resources for those interested in crafting their own Affirming Worship within their CoFs.

In our partnership with Affirming Connections (AC) we co-facilitated an October/November workshop series helping to prepare CoFs to screen the short AC film “What The Hell?” as a step into education and advocacy with 2SLGBTQIA+ people. This series was a success, received with enthusiasm. Our February 25th “Get Ready for PIE” event was a great way for folks to get together and share ideas for their own PIE events, and to connect with the PMR “PIE to Pride” initiative around PIE Day. Queer/Affirming worship on March 9th, PIE Day screenings of Mama Bears across the region throughout the month of March, and the regional virtual screening of Mama Bears on May 21st before our AGM. This helps us recognize that PIE Day is important not just as an occasion/event to mark, but as a gateway to a season of solidarity, advocacy and faithful action.

PMR Affirming also re-initiated monthly Affirming Ministry connection time to keep momentum going and energy flowing. We are looking forward to a wonderful pride season, and increased collective support for trans advocacy. Our Affirming Ministry night invites everyone into this important ministry; come and connect, find out more and vision your way forward!

GUARANTEED LIVABLE INCOME (GLI)

Our PMR Guaranteed Livable Income Working Group is gaining momentum and developing new strategies post-election. Our monthly PMR GLI meeting connects with the regular National GLI meeting on the second Tuesday each month. Our GLI ministry put forward a Lenten study focused on anti-poverty measures and solidarity with those struggling at, around, or under the poverty line. We continue to develop a municipal/provincial letter writing campaign to solidify legal and political support for implementing a National GLI program.



CLIMATE JUSTICE

Our Pacific Mountain Region Climate Audit is ongoing, and we are pleased to share that we are shifting into the second phase of the audit and analysis. We have partnered with the Green Action Centre to engage in a holistic climate audit, fulfilling the youth council proposal put forward at the 2023 AGM. The ongoing audit considers the area of impact: buildings and energy usage, transportation and travel, waste and waste management, food and catering, water usage and green infrastructure. We anticipate the release of the first phase report in Fall 2025

SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE

Many groups and CoFs in the PMR are working tirelessly to ensure that solidarity with Palestine does not waver. Monthly Palestine Solidarity calls shifted into quarterly calls, with strong connections to PalNet and UNJPPI (United for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel) have seen education and advocacy grow. With the National United Church's call to the Canadian Government for a two-way Arms Embargo on June 11, 2024, postcard days of action through Arms Embargo Now (armsembargonow.ca). PMR Justice is part of a national working group for developing strategy, education, and actions to strengthen UCC solidarity with Palestine. With the new federal government, we look forward to further actions based on UCC Justice principles, calling for peace and justice in Palestine.

ANTI-RACISM

Over the past year PMR Justice has been part of a working group including Regional Justice Ministers, working to develop a region-oriented Anti-Racism perspective for regional-level work, facilitation and training for UCC staff.



REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

PMR Justice is working to develop resources and networks to revive at the regional level: action, education, networking, and support for refugee sponsorship. Looking forward to the 2025/26 year, we are actively reconnecting to this ministry at the regional level in partnership with the United Church of Canada Refugee Program.

We offer this work and the work of our communities to God, knowing that through faithful and just offerings of self, energy, attention and love bring God's kin-dom on earth to life.

Blessings,
Kendra



LEADERSHIFT

Courageous, Christian, Called: Leadership Development for Those Who Lead & Tend Communities of Faith • Proudly #UCCan #Affirming
LeaderSHIFT is an initiative of the Chinook Winds and Pacific Mountain Regional Councils, of the United Church of Canada.

Our ongoing work is the discernment, offering and sponsoring of leadership formation resources, for ministry personnel and lay leaders alike. We offer these resources through...

RETREAT & RENEWAL

- Spiritual retreats in small, professional cohorts
- Combines personal reflection and professional growth
- Encourages development of peer-accountability
- Intentional post-retreat integration skills building
- Like Ministry Personnel Retreats in both PM and CW regions, and “Deep Dive for Ministry Personnel: a Pre-CW AGM gathering”

DEEP LEARNING

- Conferences featuring leading theologians, educators, authors
- Workshops engaging provoking topics, current church issues
- Training days for practical skills building
- Intentional post-event integration & follow up
- Like “Rural Ministry Conference”, “Guatemala: A Pilgrimage for Ministry Leaders”, and “Retreats for Boards/Councils and Their Ministry Personnel”
- Like “Decolonization is a Community Act”, and “TheArt/s of Worship”

SUSTAINING PRESENCE

- Connecting church leaders with coaches and mentors who are firmly grounded in progressive Christian, United Church of Canada contexts
- Liaising with Regional ministers and staff
- Networking, online learning
- Providing resource and support materials

- 
- Like “the Theological Banquet”, an inspiring, video-based Workshop Series for communities of faith and their leaders that fosters language, identity and understanding in your church community, with Rev. Janet Gear
 - Like “Advent Longings”, a free study guide for Advent provided by The Prayer Bench, sponsored by LeaderShift

INTENTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Sponsoring, supporting and amplifying the offerings of partners
- Offering seed funding for new initiatives
- Like “Living Generously: A Stewardship Webinar Series” with Stewardship Support

OUR COMMITMENTS

We learn and promote learning.

We take time to apply learning within LeaderSHIFT and promote opportunities to equip and transform leaders in Pacific Mountain and Chinook Winds Regional Councils. We make mistakes. We are committed to growing and changing along with all leaders in our Regions.

We believe in the wisdom of diverse voices in leadership.

We commit ourselves to giving profile to resource leaders who have been underrepresented or systemically marginalised. This includes increasing the numbers of black, indigenous, people of colour, and gender diverse resource people in our line up in the coming year.

We remove barriers to participation.

We use our resources to promote more equitable access to LeaderSHIFT experiences across the Regions we serve, by subsidizing workshop costs, using online platforms, increasing our financial support for travel, and hosting events in different geographical locations.

We are rooted in the diversity of theological identities and perspectives.

We offer experiences grounded in a spectrum of theological identities and perspectives, within the banquet of United Church of Canada faith and spiritual expression. The Theological Banquet developed by Janet Gear is an important lens for our planning.



We support transformation in leadership habits.

We promote initiatives that support leaders to make actual changes in leadership behaviour and practice through integrative and applied learning. We are committed to good content paired with strong support for applied learning using coaches, learning circles, and team learning.

We work with partners.

We develop program experiences in partnership with others in our Regions to strengthen the interlinked ecology of ministries and leadership. We give thanks for the First Third ministry team, for Indigenous Ministry and Justice Ministry colleagues, and for national and international leadership learning partners.

Our current focus at LeaderShift has been on creating opportunities for ministry leaders to gather for encouragement, renewal, and community-building as we learn together; and on equipping lay leaders of communities of faith in their leadership in governance, strategic ministry planning, and reaching out to their neighbourhoods. We've done this through a group travel experience, retreats, a pre-AGM gathering, and through Board/Council retreats. What other ways could LeaderShift help enliven and support you in ministry?

LeaderShift has also taken on responsibility for online lay leadership training offered through the online Sage platform (www.sageonlinepmrc.ca). What areas of congregational leadership are you needing some training in?

We would love to hear from you! How do you see LeaderSHIFT connecting with your work? Email us (leaderSHIFT@united-church.ca) to connect with ways we can support your learning and growth in leadership, for this time and in your place.

The LeaderShift team:

Rev. Michelle Slater (she/her)- Regional Minister for LeaderShift
Jes Beckerley (she/her)- Administrative Assistance & Registration
Rev. Rob Shearer (he/him)- New Communities / Church Planting Project
Tressa Brotsky (she/her they/them)- Communications (on leave)



LEADERSHIP CHURCH PLANTING PROJECT

SABBATICAL AND KINEO

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus beloved Region! This report is slightly shorter than usual due to me being on sabbatical for over 3 months this past year – ending, quite recently, on April 1. I’m deeply grateful to the other Regional Ministers covering my desk during that time.

During the sabbatical, I engaged in the Sabbatical Pathway from the Kineo Center, which is physically located in the mountains of rural Puerto Rico. This included regular virtual mentoring, and a one-week visit to their center. Kineo was started by Tonya and Dan White, Jr. after Dan experienced nerve damage resulting from church planting. They have hosted over 500 church leaders in their stated goal of fostering “renewal for weary and wounded church leaders”. Treena Duncan, Karen Medland and the late Brenda Fawkes have visited the centre in the past - and there are plans for others in the Region to attend in early 2026.

Having said that, I’m back – and the work continues! Here’s an update:

NEW PLANTS

Fall 2024 saw the start of Becoming Church, located at our former Queen’s Avenue United Church site (Becoming Church share that site with our other plant Sanctuary on 6th). Becoming Church has already built a strong leadership team under lead planter (and soon-to-be-Rev) Daniel Martin and they meet for worship on Friday evenings and at other times - with a stated purpose to ‘call people to live the Jesus Way, together.’ I’d describe them as classically (albeit freshly) Methodist in their ethos. They are discerning starting a second family worship on Sunday mornings.



2024 also had us post a position for a church planter to begin work in Pemberton BC, a position and plant facilitated from designated funds from the 2017 sale of the former UCC building there. I'm excited to announce that we now at a late phase in the process of calling a planter, with a hopeful start of a Pemberton Church Plant by late 2025.

DIASPORIC / MIGRANT PLANTS

There have been continuing conversations with Korean, Chinese and Filipino United Church planters to begin new communities in the region. I've been working alongside Emo Yango of the national (General Council Office) Growth initiative in these conversations - and they are beginning to bear much fruit.

We are in a very active conversations about a new inclusive Chinese plant as well as a new Filipino plant; both of which could be Regional-National partnerships.

As noted in last year's report, this area is where I see a great deal of energy for growth, diversification and transformation within The United Church of Canada and the Pacific Mountain Region - and I will continue to hold this as a priority in my work.

The GCO is holding a gathering of Migrant Church leaders in August in Montreal, and I am hoping to attend.

TRANSITIONING PLANTS

2025 saw a transition of our O'man's Nam'a plant in Port Hardy. Though the important ministry continues, the funding cycle has ended, and the original vision of a church plant has organically transitioned into a beautiful and continuing 'outreach' presence with and within Indigenous communities. I had good closure visit with staff/clergy including a moving visit to the morning drop-in - and am excited to see this work continue.



Feast and Fallow Café has moved away from their initially proposed “Commons Supper Church” model into being an outreach / social enterprise (rather than church plant). I and the other Regional Ministers are working with various parties to ensure that this amazing ministry can continue the good work it does under an umbrella other than the Regional Council’s Church Planting initiative.

In both cases, there is some sense of loss as these plants move out of our planting network, but also a consolation in the goodness in the nimbleness of the planters and communities in pivoting to different models of ministry as these communities take on new life.

As I often say, in God’s reign / ecology, nothing is lost.

In another type of transition, both Weird Church and AbbeyChurch have established and continue to refine local governance structures. Each worked with the Region to begin to develop designated local governance.

AbbeyChurch (and the Emmaus Community, who are one entity) is the first of our plants to take on its own Canada Revenue Agency charitable status (it’s taken 10 years to get there!) and Weird Church is organically headed in that direction as well. Weird Church’s “God Squad” and AbbeyChurch’s council are leading the way in how our plants can evolve toward their own localized governance aligned with UCC polity and ethos.

Finally, Rev. LeAnn Blackert is retiring in May – and Wild Church BC – which now has 3 geographical expressions; 2 in the interior and 1 on Vancouver Island - is transitioning beyond its seed-granting stage and continuing with a new localized leadership model under the supervision of a UCC minister. I’m excited to see how they are pivoting and creating a sustainable and grassroots ‘organic’ structure, and leadership model to continue this plant well into the future!



REGIONALLY-HELD CHURCH SPACES

Church planting offers a different approach to the once-favoured strategy of amalgamation and subsequent sale of property. Even as the post-Christendom reality shifts quite rapidly in Canada, leading to a dominant narrative of decline - it is my deepening belief that, alongside inevitable downsizing, closures and amalgamations, we need to intentionally hold onto strategic locations for the re-planting of new kinds of UCC and ecumenical communities. We, as a region, are doing that.

Given market realities, it is my conviction that once these historic / inherited locations are sold, it becomes very difficult to re-enter a context. I hold up church planting as one strategy to 're-seed' UCC presence in a way different than inherited congregations are sometimes able to do. Again, we as a region are doing that.

With all of this, I'm excited to note that we now have church plants in three (!) former United Churches in buildings that are held by the Region's Property Development Council including Sanctuary on 6th and Becoming Church at the former Queens Ave. site, Weird Church on the former Cumberland United Church site - where they have been receiving grants to upgrade the building! It also includes AbbeyChurch at the former First Met UC site in Victoria - now re-branded as The United Commons. Along with AbbeyChurch, The United Commons also now hosts Fairfield United Church and the affirming non-denominational evangelical church The Place Community - meaning that up to 200 folk worship God in diverse ways in affirming communities on site on a given Sunday! Thanks be to God. The Emmaus Community, an intentional community who founded AbbeyChurch and also do weekday prayer on site 4 days a week dream of how a model of intentional community might also be part of the United Commons site redevelopment.

Part of my role is to ensure that our church plants (and their local neighbourhood partners and other ecumenical communities of faith) are well represented in these conversations. It's good and sometimes challenging work to accompany church planters as they navigate the relationship with the Region as we all seek to articulate and align our values and practices to prioritize the work of the Church in this Affirming Region. I'm grateful to Treena for supporting me this work and for everyone's patience in what is sometimes messy.



Speaking of affirming evangelical communities, I mentioned above that The Place are now renters in our United Commons site. A similar act of hospitality recently happened with Timothy Eaton United in Toronto - when they intentionally welcomed the thriving [Free Church Toronto](#) into their space. (I encourage a look at the Rev. Jason Byassee's blog about this [here](#) which gives some interesting analysis around this.)

In both of these cases instances (Free Church and The Place), there were few church locations willing to rent to a fully affirming non-denominational or evangelical church. Just too evangelical for the mainline, too queer/affirming for the conservatives. I'm grateful to Treena and the Property Development Council for taking a risk here in this region. I believe that these acts of hospitality are affirming a General Council decision to support what their motion called "evangelicals-at-risk".

I believe that these thriving, larger and (generally speaking) younger affirming evangelical / post-evangelical communities have much to offer us in the United Church of Canada in terms of mutually beneficial partnership – and these relationships are already leading to important collaborations on the ground and the bolstering of our own Communities of Faith.

THE GOOD TABLE

Speaking of all of this, I've been excited to a part of the [Good Table network](#) – a group of over 200+ mostly evangelical folk who have at risk due to their movement towards being affirming – and either losing their denominational affiliations and/or their ordination / credentialing. The Good Table BC folk will be gathering at the United Commons in June, after several of our UCC communities join with others to host a conference on faith deconstruction and reconstruction.

RECONCILIATION

I've mentioned in previous reports that I've supported the work of our [Courageous Community](#) plant in Port Alberni in their and also Alberni Valley United Churches work on reconciliation, including the request from Residential School survivors for a more explicit and timely apology.



Though the timing and wording in a written apology which was requested from the survivors by the General Council has not yet happened, I'm excited to note that the General Secretary and Moderator will soon be visiting Port Alberni to make an apology to the survivors - and I see this as a good and important step toward the survivors' requests. Given my own workload, I am handing over some of my regular presence at the monthly ?aps ciik cha chim hiy ap group to the other Regional Minister and Indigenous Ministries staff, even as I hope to continue important relational connections made in this work. I hold up this work as an excellent model for relational reconciliation that any congregation can engage with.

RE-ENGAGED METHODISM?

I'll conclude, with a brief suggestion as we enter our centenary as the United Church of Canada.

I've been asked to write a piece for an upcoming Touchstone Journal – and have chosen to write about my belief that the next 100 years of the UCC must be about reclaiming our Methodist roots; that is in (re)engaging the 'lost' jewels of revivalism, connexionalism and 'mystical' sacramentalism (I think we already have the justice side of Methodism down relatively ok – so lets hold onto that too!). Undoubtedly, this would look quite different than the 19th century expressions our forebears, but is, nonetheless, bubbling beneath the surface of our dominant ethos in both our diasporic and migrant communities as well as in other church plants.

I believe that many of our new communities of faith are already engaging in this project, albeit in their diverse styles of ministry, complimenting the important and enduring work of our inherited and established communities as we, together, engage what it means to be Jesus followers in the United Church of Canada for our next 100 years.

I'm excited about what the Holy Spirit is birthing anew in the United Church of Canada!

Et Omnes Unum Sint!

The Rev. Rob Shearer

Regional Minister for Church Planting





MINISTRY COVENANT SUPPORT COMMITTEE

What's this- a new committee in the Region? No, not a new committee but rather a new name for what was known as the 'Community of Faith and Pastoral Relations Council'. When PMR formed in 2019 there was a Community of Faith Council and a Pastoral Relations Council. After a couple of years into our new structure we realized that because of the significant overlap in the work of these two councils, it would be good to come together to support our communities of faith, ministers and lay leaders in a more coordinated fashion. That amalgamation has gone well but the name "CoFPR Council" was too cumbersome. After many months of discussing (it is the church after all) we finally landed on "Ministry Covenant Support Committee" or MCSC.

MCSC met 3 times since the rise of the last general meeting of PMR: A 2 day in-person meeting last October at Jubilee UC in Burnaby, followed by Zoom meetings in February and April.

Our Executive Minister, Treena Duncan, Regional Ministers Victoria Andrews and Kathy Davies, and Recording Secretary and all around helper, Marina Lecian, are invaluable participants in our meetings helping us explore faithful and practical ways to support the ends policies of the region. Kathy recently offered this metaphor for how the Executive and our committee work together: the Executive through its ends policies sets the destination for the journey we are on together and the MCSC builds the route, offers maps, supplies fuel and checks in along the way to see if we are on track.

Working with that metaphor, one way that the MCSC checks in is by regularly reviewing PRM Ends policies that pertain to ministers and communities of faith. We spent significant time this past year examining the General Council requirements for Congregational Designated Ministers (CDM) in order to provide recommendations to PMR's Executive Policy Committee for their work of creating regional policy for CDM's.



In addition, we thoroughly reviewed the following policies and sent recommendations to the Executive Policy Committee for their consideration:

- Pastoral Charge Supervision
- Disengagement Policy (for retired ministry personnel and those who have undergone a change in pastoral relationship)
- Formal Association Policy
- Licensed Lay Worship Leader
- Recognized Ministries

Over the past months we have been focussing on how to better support rural and small-town communities of faith. To that end we have listened to ministers in the field and have been gaining more understanding about what part-time ministry and lay ministry looks like throughout the region. We are now moving into exploring various forms of collaboration and how that might offer sustainable and faithful ways of offering ministry in our region.

The MCSC is the coordination hub for a variety of support teams and working groups who do the practical hands-on work. One of our challenges is remembering the many acronyms for the various teams and groups under the umbrella of the MCSC. Here is a brief snapshot of these groups with their acronyms. We LOVE acronyms at the MCSC!

THE PASTORAL RELATIONS WORKING GROUP (PRWG)

The PRWG, chaired by Shannon Tennant- meets weekly to review and approve vacancies, ministry position descriptions, calls and appointments, supervised ministry education (SME) sites and appointments, Voluntary Associate Minister relationships and leaves of absence.

Over the past year the PRWG has been noticing and/or wondering about:

- whether communities of faith take the cost of living in their area into account when determining whether to offer a percentage or amount above minimum and how much they offer;
- whether hours are being allocated for self-care and what kinds of activities are considered in this category; and
- what is generally expected to be paid for under the "telephone" umbrella.



Additionally, the PRWG continues to pay attention to how position descriptions adapt to reductions in hours, especially given the growing number of part time positions. The group is beginning to work with some innovative models of ministry as well.

Enormous thanks and appreciation are extended to all those who are committed to this work, and especially to Martha Ashbaugh, who resigned from the PRWG, having been involved with its work since its inception.

THE APPROVALS WORKING GROUP (AWG)

The AWG, chaired by Michael Hare, meets once or twice a month, depending on the number of requests received for sales, leases, renovations of church buildings and any other property related matters.

Some statistics since the rise of the last Regional Council AGM:

- Approval of Leases 7
- Approval of Renovations 2
- Property Sales 2
- Other 11 (This includes permission to access capital funds, approval of alternate congregational constitutions, property transactions that aren't sales or purchases, disbanding/closing congregations)

The AWG notes that most lease requests are for Day Care spaces. They wonder about potential ramifications for Communities of Faith if municipalities decide to remove property tax exemptions for churches.

If CoF's are considering sales, renovations, rentals, or loans, guidelines for these transactions are available from Michael and our Regional Ministers. For those who are interested in this type of detailed work there is room for more volunteers on the AWG.



THE MINISTRY PERSONNEL SUPPORT TEAM (MPST)

The MPST, chaired by Karen Millard and Lori Megley-Best, offers spiritual and pastoral support to Ministry Personnel in the region, including retired ministry personnel and those on long-term disability. They welcome and help orient new ministry personnel to the region. MPST has organized a monthly clergy prayer circle on Zoom as well as Advent and Lenten devotions for ministry personnel. In collaboration with LeaderShift, a clergy rest and renewal retreat was offered last October. MPST also supports periodic gatherings of the 4th Quarter as well as another annual retreat this spring for retired ministers and the annual Pensioners Christmas Luncheon.

THE LAY LEADERSHIP WORKING GROUP (LLWG)

The LLWG, chaired by Linda Ervin, deals with practices and procedures for licensing Lay Worship Leaders, Sacrament Elders, Designated Lay Ministers, and Congregational Designated Ministers. Policies and procedures for these Lay Leaders are in the process of being developed by the MCSC.

THE SELF-ASSESSMENTS WORKING GROUP

The Self-Assessments Working Group receives, reviews and responds to each community of faith that completes their triennial congregational self-assessment. Over the next three years the self-assessments will be done by Jotform.



We are grateful for all the folk who walk with us on this journey of supporting healthy communities of faith and ministries by mapping out routes, creating new procedures and plans to get us where we want to be going, and offering resources and encouragement for the way ahead.

Over these past six years I've been amazed and inspired by the diverse, creative and faithful ways that CoF's and leaders are serving and sharing God's love in their various contexts. It's been a privilege to learn from and work with the MCSC and Staff.

Simone Carrodus and I will be stepping down after serving on this committee for the past six years. It would be great to have two to four more folks join the Ministry Covenant Support Committee, even better if some of those folks come from outside the Greater Vancouver area.

Blessings,

Janice Youngon behalf of the MCSC: Shannon Tennant, Keith Simmonds, Laura Turnbull, Heather Clarke, Simone Carrodus, Maggie Watts-Hammond, Joseph Kyser, Treena Duncan, Kathy Davies, Victoria Andrews, Marian Lecian



OFFICE OF VOCATION

Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, Daring Justice

Greetings in Christ from your new Vocational Minister!

It is with gratitude that I share this report with the Pacific Mountain Regional Council, the work of the Office of Vocation in BC and Southern Alberta throughout 2024 (to the best of my knowledge, since I started on March 17, 2025).

Our Office of Vocation is dedicated to nurturing effective, faithful, and accountable ministry formation and leadership. By doing so, we help our leaders embrace the call to Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice. This sacred ministry is lovingly supported by volunteers who serve with unwavering dedication on the Candidacy Board, the Admissions Board, the Board of Vocation, and the Response and Remedial Committees. The tireless effort of these board members blesses our clergy, lay leaders, and communities of faith across the nation. Their gifts of discernment and commitment are truly a testament to their faith.

In my new role as Vocational Minister, I have the privilege of serving as the staff resource for the Mountain Candidacy Board. This board walks alongside, oversees, and assesses those discerning and preparing for ministry. I am also here to support candidates and applicants at various stages of their ministry formation.

The year 2024 was a tragic one for our Candidacy Board, who lost my predecessor, the Rev. Brenda Fawkes suddenly to a motor vehicle collision in September. Their brave carrying of that sad news to all candidates, and their responsiveness to the appointment of the Rev. Lillian Roberts in the interim shows their faithfulness, their compassion, and their commitment to our community of candidates and this work of discernment. And still, carrying that burden of sorrow, with deep thanks to Lillian for her excellent bridging and faithful service, the work of the Candidacy Board carried on. As 2025 began, the Mountain Candidacy Board had 32 candidates and inquirers in various stages of their journey along the pathway.

At the two annual meetings of Chinook Winds and Pacific Mountain regions, we will have recognized 1 candidate as a DLM, commissioned 3 to Diaconal



Ministry, and ordained 5 to the ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care. At the same time, I am constantly fielding inquiries from those interested in exploring their call to ministry, and so I anticipate next year, giving you an even larger number in this report.

It is this candidacy related work that claimed my attention as I began the position half-time in March. Regarding Supervised Ministry Education, a vital component of the Candidacy Pathway for those in the Ordained or Designated Lay Ministry Streams, I am learning to collaborate closely with the Pastoral Relations (Regional Ministers) team, with gratitude. Candidates are encouraged to find their own Supervised Ministry Appointment through Church Hub, where their profiles can be matched with Communities of Faith approved as learning sites. Once Pastoral Relations approves the appointment, I provide training to the Community of Faith Connection group and recommend the appointment of an Educational Supervisor to the Candidacy Board. I am always available to answer any questions about the Supervised Ministry Education process, and learn more as I go, myself.

All requests by ministry personnel in BC and Southern Alberta, including candidates and retired clergy, to be made available for new ministry opportunities are directed to me for approval through Church Hub. If approval is not possible, I communicate what is needed in the minister's profile. Often, it is the submission of the Annual Declaration or the completion of a Boundaries Refresher course, which is required every five years for all ministry personnel, including those who have retired but continue to serve. Additionally, I provide letters of Good Standing to ministry personnel upon request.

Recently, the former Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Response Policy and the Sexual Misconduct Response Policy and Procedures have been combined into a new policy document called the "Creating Safe and Respectful Environments Policy." This revised policy can be found on The United Church of Canada website under the Leadership and Handbook and Guidelines tabs.

As my onboarding continues, I will next learn what is involved in making myself available to any ministry personnel who have questions or become involved in a complaint process. This work continues to support effective, faithful, and accountable ministry formation and leadership, in alignment with our denomination's vision of Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice.

In Christ's peace,
Rev. Cari Copeman-Haynes Vocational Minister
BC and Southern Alberta



WESTERN INTERCULTURAL MINISTRY NETWORK

The Western Intercultural Network is a relatively 'young' network of communities in the United Church of Canada committed to a fully inclusive and intercultural church, covering the five Western Regional Councils.

The network holds gatherings, educational events and online conversations that focus on intercultural discussions and dialogue. Network members are engaging in and promoting action in their regions towards living out the UCC's vision of being an intercultural church ([Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church | The United Church of Canada](#)). An executive composed of representatives from the five Western Regional Councils of the United Church offers us leadership.

Our vision of becoming an intercultural United Church encompasses:

- Racialized people and communities, which includes ethnic churches within the United Church, racialized lay leaders, and ministry personnel, and more.
- Indigenous people and communities, within the United Church and beyond, of all traditions.
- People with disabilities.
- LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people and communities.
- The privileged, yet broken, who are seeking wholeness and justice.

We are each worthy individuals and numerous cultural groups, and richer for our diversity. And we are at the same time engaged in a common pursuit of caring for each other and the planet. We honour our identities, and the spaces where they intersect. Our ministry includes courageous (and awkward!) conversations about our diversity, and about the social privilege and history that hinder right relationships. We believe the Good News of Jesus Christ calls us into such conversations, right relationship, and mutual transformation.



2023-2024 ACTIVITIES

- Throughout the past year the Executive continued discussions on how well the network is addressing its Mandate and TOR. The discussions confirm that education on intercultural vision is key work of the network. This education focus is delivered through continuing Coffee Chai events and in person events, when possible.
- The network held two Coffee Chai sessions in the past year:
 1. September 19, 2024 - We Sing Our Faith: A conversation on the evolution of intercultural music in the United Church of Canada, led by Rev OhWang Kwon, Rev Dr Lisa Waites, and Dr Becca Whitla
 2. November 14, 2024 – Leadership Counts presentation by GCO staff (Diane Bosman, Adele Halliday, Adam Hanley)
- The Executive has been asked from time to time throughout the year to disseminate information to the network about opportunities to serve on UCC committees or working groups and to encourage persons in the network to discern their involvement and submit nominations to these groups.
- The WIMN Executive continues to actively participate in activities and meetings of the Ethno-cultural Network Leads group. The group comprises the leaders of several ethno-cultural networks within the UCC, in discussions that contribute to the strategic plan development. The network is happy to contribute to this work. The group meets quarterly online and met in person in Toronto in October 2024.

ANNUAL MEETING

WIMN hosted its Annual meeting on November 14, 2024 online, after its Coffee Chai session. The current TOR can be reviewed [here](#).

The Executive for 2024-25 comprises:

Co-Chairs: Kathy Yamashita (Chinook Winds) and Deborah Richards (Pacific Mountain)

Secretary: Rev. Chelsea Masterman (Northern Spirit)

Pacific Mountain: vacant

Chinook Winds: Rev. Dr. OhWang Kwon

Northern Spirit: Dorcas Muketha

Living Skies: Mathias Ross, Salesi Takau

Prairie to Pine: Damber Khadka



There are two vacancies on the Executive occasioned by the fact that long-time members, Rev. Alwyn Mahben and Rev. Bill Millar, have stepped down from the Executive in the past 12 – 18 months. We thank them both for their long service and support of the vision and work of the WIMN.

Staff support: Julie Graham (Living Skies, Prairie to Pine and Northern Spirit Regions).

In early 2024 the Executive changed the frequency of their meetings. The Executive now meets bi-monthly for 90 minutes, with other planning discussions for events occurring as needed in between meetings. This provides an opportunity for us to connect about activities in our regions.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Executive will continue to build on its ongoing discussions on how the Network will engage in supporting and living out the call within our regions to be an Intercultural Church. The Network is also continuing to engage with other Ethnocultural groups within the UCC via the Ethnocultural Network Leads group.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Coffee/Chai time series will continue in 2025 in September and November (in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting). 2025 dates are: April 10, 2025, September 25, 2025, November 20, 2025.

CONTACT US

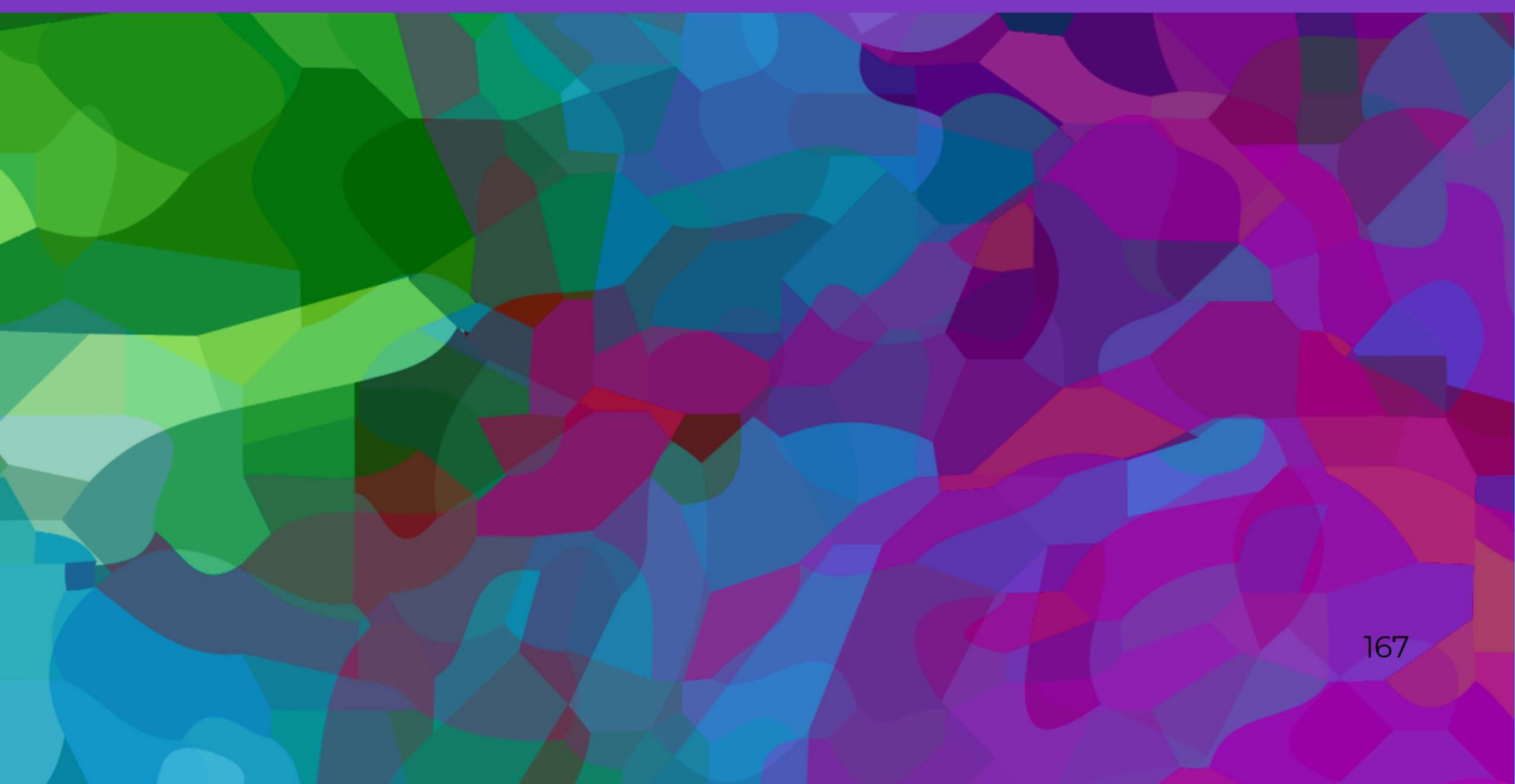
If you would like to be contacted about WIMN events you can sign up for occasional updates [here](#); you can unsubscribe at any time, and we don't share your information with anyone else.

Respectfully Submitted by
Kathy Yamashita and Deborah Richards
Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Executive of the Western Intercultural Ministries Network



CENTRES OF EDUCATION



NARAMATA CENTRE

INTRODUCTION

2024 was a year of steady stewardship and revitalization at Naramata Centre. Building on the momentum of our 75th anniversary in 2023, the Centre focused on ambitious infrastructure upgrades, staff development, and fiscally responsible programming, while continuing to expand our Program Partnerships to offer a safe, inclusive, sacred space for spiritual growth, connection, and community.

A CLEAR FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

2024 marked the first full year of implementation of the Centre's 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, with Phase One focused on Organizational Sustainability.





In support of the plan's three strategic pillars—People, Site, and Finances—the Centre undertook the following:

People: Expanded staffing capacity with new hires in operations and programming. Preliminary work began to create structured HR and administrative systems that better support staff culture and performance.

Site: Completed four major capital improvements, including full utility replacements in East and South Campgrounds, providing The Loft with services independent from McLaren Hall, and significant upgrades to The Commons and Lyle House, with a focus of creating a 'Heart of the Centre' - an intergenerational program space and new Children's House (Lyle).

Finances: Developed cost-centre analysis by source and season, and tested a seasonal break-even budget model to stabilize operations. Operating Deficits were reduced by Conducted detailed grant research to diversify revenue, resourced a new year-round registration system, and began laying the groundwork for long-term fundraising, including a future capital campaign.

These investments position Naramata Centre to enter the second phase of the strategic plan, Revitalization, with clarity, confidence, and strong alignment between operations and mission.

PROGRAMMING

In keeping with our identity and values, the Naramata Centre seeks Collaboration with our community's program leaders, and partner organizations which promote awareness of:

- Indigenous and First Nations
- Environment, Habitat and Climate Change
- Health and Wellness
- Christian Leadership
- Spiritual practices
- Community Development
- Youth and Young Adult Leadership Development
- The Arts in all their forms
- Providing our community with publicly accessible education and amenities



SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

- Queer and Transgender - Queer Family Retreat
- Neurodiverse Individuals and Families - Watermelon Sessions
- Indigenous peoples - IndiginEYES and KinShift programs and Anona Kempe led summer programming
- Under-represented minorities - Partnering with South Okanagan Immigrant Settlement Services and programming weekend samplers for Newcomers
- Those within the United Church faith community - Clergy Wellness Retreats, weekly worship, morning music, hymns in the chapel
- Those with varying levels of mobility and disability - Needing development and site accessibility improvements
- Those seeking spiritual exploration, growth and transformation - Sacred Pause, Navigating Life, Spiritual Direction, Healing Pathway, many registered Programs
- Those seeking community, contribution and belonging - Hearts & Hands, Music and Gospel week, all Community Life Programming and many Registered Programs
- Youth and young adults - Sylx youth programs, Ignite! Youth Leadership Development, Summer Program Staff development, Youth Programming
- All socio-economic backgrounds - Heartwood Bursary available for all program fees

PROGRAM DELIVERY STREAMS

The Naramata Centre currently offers 7 streams of program delivery. Four program streams are offered during six NCS summer program weeks.

INDIGENOUS-LED LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & PROGRAMMING

Anona Kempe opened each program week with her take on acknowledging this land we call Naramata Centre. Anona opens each Welcome Circle with this and then teaches us the Okanagan Song, offering Learning from the Land, and Indigenous Storytelling throughout the summer weeks. These offerings are central to the Centre's ongoing commitment to truth, reconciliation, and respectful engagement with Sylx territory.



COMMUNITY LIFE PROGRAMMING

Community Life programming remains the connective tissue of our summer gatherings. Starting with early morning meditation, a labyrinth walk, or yoga and Morning Music, through the afternoon Learning from the Land, Waterslides, Picnic n' Play and Worship in the Chapel, to the early evening with Drum Circles, Concerts on Columbia Lawn, Breathwork, Sound baths, Sacred Pause through to our closing Gratitude Circle and Community Potluck.

CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Guided by the principle “follow the child,” these programs emphasized creativity, connection, and inclusion. In 2024, our Child & Youth Programs registered 231 participants across nine weeks of summer: The launch of a Junior Leadership initiative invited teens to support younger participants, fostering intergenerational learning and creating succession into leadership.

REGISTERED ONSITE (ADULT) PROGRAMMING

Adult offerings continued to nurture creativity, spiritual growth, and community. New programs such as Epicurean Week and Gospel Week were well-received, joining established favourites like Wild Church, Let Flow Watercolours, Seeing Life through Poetry, SoulCollage, Lift Every Voice, and Navigating A Life. In total, the Centre saw 237 adults register over nine summer weeks of programs.

HEALING HOUSE PROGRAMMING

With the return of the Healing House, 2024 saw the return of Healing Pathway offering of Healing Touch throughout the summer program weeks. Cranial-Sacral therapeutic sessions were also on offer. Pacific Jubilee graduates offered Spiritual Direction and Nurture once again in the ‘Cottage’. The Healing House has truly returned to its long-standing purpose to provide healing and spiritual nurture to all.



PARTNER-LED PROGRAMS & VALUE-ALIGNED ORGANIZATIONS

Partner-led programming is offered both in early and late summer, including programming such as:

Partner-led Summer Programs

- *Watermelon Sessions' Neurodiverse Family Camp,*
- *Wild Church and*
- *Queer Family Retreat.*

Multiple other value-aligned organizations run programs at the Centre throughout the spring and fall shoulder seasons, including:

Spiritual Well-being

- *Pacific Jubilee: SoulGuiding Spiritual Direction & Contemplative Silent Retreat*
- *UCC LeaderShift: Clergy Rest & Renewal Retreat*
- *Walk Together Fiercely: Soul Retreat*

Indigenous-Led Programming

- 13 Moons: Indigenous Women's Retreat + Leadership Program
- IndigenEYEZ: Syilx Youth Entrepreneur Weekend
- Salmon Warrior Gathering

Education & Leadership Development

- Solution Keepers: Working Sessions
- Systems Thinking & Design Symposium
- Junior Leadership Development Program
- Selkirk College: Environmental Planning Student Residency
- Ortho-Bionomy Residential Retreat

Health, Wellness & The Arts

- Odyssey Yoga Retreat
- BC Mountain Bike Tourism Symposium (MTBBC)
- Jane Ritchie Art Retreat



Civic & Community Events

- Regional District (RDOS) Community Consultations and Events
- Naramata Yacht Club Fundraiser & Dance
- Naramata Harvest Supper
- Naramata Pickleball Association (in Columbia Gym over Winter Fallow)

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS (HEARTS & HANDS)

Hearts & Hands is our flagship volunteer event held each spring and fall. Over 40 people lend their efforts to repair decks, repaint buildings, weed gardens, build picnic tables and just about anything else that needs doing. But it's not all work. After each morning's work, staff and volunteers gather for a communal lunch, enjoy an afternoon of soaking up the Naramata sun and end with a campfire down at Centre Beach. The volunteers who attend Hearts & Hands care so deeply for the Center and offer so much. And always lots and lots of laughter.

ONLINE PROGRAMS

Our online community is composed of thoughtful seekers and creatives that bring their wisdom and meaningful questions. Through partnership with exceptional leaders and aligned organizations we create offerings that speak to the hearts of our online community through poetry, artistic practices, qigong, sage-ing circles and spiritual nurture.

In 2024, we offered 33 online programs and were joined by 269 unique participants, some of which joined us more than once or twice or eight times! In February of 2024 we had the extraordinary privilege to have Jan Richardson join us in partnership with Oasis United for the virtual event Beloved is where we begin: a conversation with Jan Richardson. It was the most well attended paid program we have offered to date with participants joining us from across Canada, the United States, Europe, Australia and even the Bahamas! Our time together was deeply moving and cherished by participants. The possibilities for online programs are wide open and we look forward to continuing the journey with this vibrant community.



RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

As part of the Naramata Centre's Strategic Priorities, the Board of Directors and staff have set out to repair, renew and revitalize the Centre's facilities, accommodations, campsites, program spaces and tree canopy.

In 2024, much was accomplished:

- Engineering study on the continued feasibility of Columbia Hall (yes, its continued use is feasible)
- Significant upgrade to pathways, gardens and the Common's
- Lyle House repainted, deck replaced
- Orchard Courts sanded and restained
- Three separate sections of septic line replaced
- Robson's House (Children's Playhouse) demolished and sold to a value-aligned development partner
- Underutilized accommodations (Maple Court 300) was leased to the Naramata Inn for their seasonal staff accommodation
- The Healing House saw repairs and upgrades
- Southside and Eastside Campgrounds saw all utilities replaced and upgraded, preparing the way for flush toilets and showers to come
- Nine new trees planted as part of our *Tree Canopy Succession Plan*

RENEWING OUR MINISTRY

This Easter, the Cross was returned to Columbia Hall, now backlit with adjustable lighting. It stands as a beacon of progressive Christianity—shifting its colour to honour Pride Month, Truth & Reconciliation Day, and moments of shared reflection.

The Centre continues to live out its United Church roots through radical Christian hospitality, a commitment to social and environmental justice, and the cultivation of sacred space for spiritual discernment, connection, and healing.

For more information, visit www.naramatacentresociety.org.



VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Thoughtful, Engaged and Generous Christian Leaders

VST is called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged, and generous Christian leaders for the church and the world in respectful collaboration with the Indigenous Church and other faith traditions. Preparing leaders in the church requires attention to religious pluralism and the legacy of residential schools with attention to Truth and Reconciliation. Our graduates are thoughtful people, reflective about how to interact with the large issues of our time out of the deep resources of faith. Our students are engaged, willing to get involved in the world, not just wait for the next one. Our theological ethos nurtures practitioners who give their lives for God and the gospel. Our graduates are generous, able to find friends with whom to collaborate for the love of God and the good of the world. We go deep with God in Christ and so wide with the world God loves.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The academic year 2024-2025 required our best efforts. We saw record enrollment in both fall and spring semesters, reviewed all staff, renewed five faculty contracts and hired a new Director of Interreligious Studies to begin in the summer of 2025. We learned a great deal from these review processes and will use the information for perpetual improvement as a workplace that strives for excellence and is humane to all who work at VST.

We continue to run balanced budgets with allocations for capital purchases and building maintenance. Our commitment to student support remains high, up to 70% of tuition for students with demonstrated need. Through our buddy, housing inventory and tutoring programs, we continue to welcome international students and provide them with support for success.



Through a generous grant from the Lilly Foundation, we have developed in-house field education programming to provide students with experience that will be relevant for building community and initiating worshipping communities. Our chapel building, Epiphany, has been completely renovated, including the installation of a stained-glass window. The building is now more efficient, well lit and provides for streaming events. Air conditioning will be installed in our Somerville building before our summer programs begin in 2025.

Our partnerships with Durham and Pretoria Universities for Ph.D. programs have twelve students enrolled, six in each program. VST has made a strong commitment to “students first” in new hires for student support and services and in robust financial support to our students. The numbers of students enrolled in our programs is an all time high – both head count and credit hour enrollment. Over 60% of course registrations are in the M.Div. program. We have strong enrollment from Asia, Africa, the US, as well as from across Canada. We have students from every continent, but Antarctica – we are working on it. Online technology enables the participation of students who could not be a part of theological education without it. We are committed to first rate and up-to-date technology and pedagogy for online students so that their classroom experience is participatory and excellent. This summer, we complete the second iteration of online classroom technology renewal in the past six years, with dual screens in classrooms rather than projectors. We have a work plan to renew some classrooms and facilities every year in our buildings. Most pastoral courses are still taught in an intensive in-person format. Housing expenses for those occasions are underwritten by VST to fifty percent of costs through the generosity of donors.

FACULTY/UNITED CHURCH FACULTY

Our United Church faculty includes The Rev. Dr. Hyuk Cho, Professor of United Church Studies and Formation, The Rev. Mary Nichol, Director of Theological Field Education, The Rev. Dr. Steven Chambers, Director the Lilly Project. Professor Hyuk Cho was granted a three-year renewal of his appointment at VST after a very positive review this year.



Faculty are productive as scholars and pastors, regularly publishing significant monographs and articles for the life of the church now. A book launch of nine books, published in the past two years was held in March. All our faculty are regular preachers across the country and around the world. Rabbi Prof. Laura Duhan Kaplan will retire in June of 2025 after an extraordinary tenure as our Director of Interreligious Studies. After a North American wide search, Dr. Casey Collins was appointed the next Director of Interreligious Studies at VST effective July 2025. He is an accomplished scholar with a stellar track record and strong ties to UBC. VST has committed itself to holding a course every semester taught by an Indigenous instructor.

VST BOARD

Bishop David Lehmann is the Chair of the VST Board. The Rev. Dr. Jean Morris is Vice-Chair of the Board. Ms. Catherine Evans is the Chancellor at VST. We are well served by their excellent leadership. We are a theological school preparing Christian leaders for the Anglican, United, Presbyterian and a widening variety of other churches. Our Board membership reflects this ecumenical composition. In addition to Chancellor Evans, The Rev. Michelle Slater, The Rev. Ryan Slifka and the Rev. Dr. Doug Goodwin serve on the VST board. We are grateful to them.

PARTNERSHIPS

VST extends its reach and magnifies its impact through strategic partnerships. In addition to our core relationships with our Affiliate (Anglican and United) and Associate (Presbyterian) denominations, we work with other Canadian and international churches, UBC, the Sauder School of Business, Huron College at Western University, Durham University in the UK, St. Mark's College and Regent at UBC, Centre for Christian Studies, Multiple BC Health Authorities, The Canadian Chinese School of Theology in Vancouver, and the University of Pretoria to deliver educational programs ranging from certificate to Ph.D. levels. Our relationships with Jakarta Theological Seminary, Indonesia, and St. Andrew's, Quezon City, Philippines, provide opportunities for the development of intercultural competencies and global awareness of the life of the Church of Jesus Christ.



GRANTS/FINANCES/ADVANCEMENT

Vancouver School of Theology has achieved a balanced operating budget for eleven years in a row. Annual donations in the past three years average around two million dollars, including special projects. We have allocated annual surpluses to capital expenses and maintenance. Our employees have received increases in each of the past ten years based on COLA, equity and performance standards. Mr. Eduard Gutierrez is our diligent Director of Finance. He works closely with our Audit and Finance subcommittee of the Board, chaired by Mr. Rob Dickson. The Rev. Dr. Doug Goodwin chairs the VST Foundation Board, where Dr. Joyce Begley, Mr. Patrick Reynolds and Mr. Rudy Kerklann are also UCC Directors. The Foundation provides a significant revenue stream for the operations of the school drawn at 5% in keeping with federal legislation.

We have undertaken to provide more student support, in addition to current scholarships, in the form of bursaries of up to 70% for students with financial need for the past and next academic years. In the academic year 2023-2024, VST provided students with over a half million dollars in bursaries, scholarships and awards. We anticipate that significant additions to our endowment will be required to support the mission of VST – to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders - in the coming years. We do not want to borrow against the future, but to set up those who follow for success in the work of theological education. A campaign – **“Hope and Vitality: A Plan to Flourish Together”** has begun and some significant gifts have been received.

The Indigenous Studies program, through the Teaching House that Moves Around, the Indigenous Summer School and deliberate programming at VST continues to embody VST's commitment to the Indigenous church for over thirty-five years. The Indigenous Studies Program, under the direction of The Rev. Dr. Ray Aldred, and supported by Mr. Hubert Barton, is unique in the country drawing Indigenous scholars who teach Indigenous students using Indigenous methodology and practice. Funding for the Teaching House through the Anglican and United Churches results in significant opportunity for theological education and support delivered in the context of Indigenous communities.



VST has received substantial gifts in the recent past through the robust efforts of our Advancement team. Our new Director, Ms. Kate Miller, has taken over the work from Tom Berekoff who served us with wisdom, cheerfulness and effectiveness for seven years. The Lilly Endowment awarded the school a \$1 million (US) phase-two grant in 2023 to retool and revitalize Field Education. New field education experiences, two conferences and stipends for students have been a part of this work. We will make a final report to Lilly at the end of 2025.

Our Sauder School of Business program is completely endowed through the Bob & Judy Hager Scholarships for Leadership Excellence so that students can learn finance, adaptive leadership, leading in times of transition, coaching and mentoring, excellence in administration in addition to their theological education. They receive the Sauder Certificate in Leadership Excellence through the completion of this program. We want to expand this program to include more students in the light of research that shows how crucial it is to pastoral leadership now.

VST continues to receive gifts for the endowed O'Driscoll Forum in Preaching and the Arts. This program, named in honour of The Rev. Herbert and Paula O'Driscoll, takes place each summer at VST in conjunction with the Summer School program. It gives preachers and liturgical leaders a chance to “workshop” with each other under the direction of a master preacher and liturgical artist. This summer the Forum will be facilitated by The Rev. Dr. Joni Sancken, VST Professor of Homiletics, and Mr. Thomas Roach, textile artist, on the theme of “Rending and Repair—Preaching and the Arts on Conflict Transformation.” The Anglican Foundation made a significant donation for start up costs for this program (\$15,000.00). <https://vst.edu/odriscollforum/>

The 2025 Interreligious Conference, on the theme of “Compassion: Thoughtful, Engaged and Generous, a multifaith, multidisciplinary conference for academics and activists” took place May 27-29. It was an important conference which addressed the challenging state of the world in the light of compassion – “which can bridge social divisions, uplift people in distress, inspire collective action, and create resilient communities.” This event is funded by VST and through a series of generous donors and foundations.



VST has won a Canadian Christian Communicators Award two years in a row – 2023 (first place), 2024 (second place) – for the general excellence of perspectives our Institutional magazine.

ACADEMIC ENROLMENT

The headcount at VST for spring 2025 is two hundred and thirty- this includes students in all VST academic programs. Our enrollment is extraordinarily strong, the highest in the last twenty years and up six percent from last year. The largest area of growth at the school in recent years is the number of students doing research degrees and students preparing as Spiritual Care Workers. M.Div. students are still the largest cohort (seventy-seven students) with the highest number of course registrations - followed by MAPPL, MATS, Ph.D. and TH.M. students. The core of our work and the mandate of the school is to prepare leaders for congregational ministry.

The largest cohorts of students at VST are Anglican/Episcopal Church, Christians otherwise affiliated, United Church, Presbyterian and Catholic. VST continues to expand its ecumenical bandwidth, in keeping with the vision of its founders. Students at VST come from many denominations, including Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Baptist, Orthodox, Alliance, Mennonite, international Reformed and Quaker. We have new certificate/ diploma programs for training deacons and lay leaders for engagement in the church, with specialization in pastoral care, youth and children's ministry and preaching. VST has a joint BA-M.Div. program with St Mark's College. This combined program reduces the overall time to complete both degrees by one year. Two students are registered in this program.

VST has a robust online recruitment program, engages online international recruitment services, holds a VST Sunday once a year, in which over fifty churches across Canada participate, and hosts an Explorers Weekend at the school where students experience life as a student for a few days. Our Coordinator of Recruitment, Mr. Sam Andri, provides outstanding leadership. We are grateful to congregations where our students and faculty are welcomed. We are experiencing a solid influx of applications for the 2025-2026 academic year. We face a challenge due to federal restrictions on the number of international students who will be allocated study permits.



VST has taken a “Students First” approach to the application process and is working hard at minimizing steps and supporting applications, including providing online seminars with legal and immigration experts.

SPECIAL LECTURES/SUMMER SCHOOL 2024-2025

Vancouver School of Theology welcomes a series of outstanding lecturers in 2024 and 2025.

- Rev. Dr. Lakeesha Walrond, past president of New York Theological Seminary, lead the Somerville lecture/retreat in September of 2024. She gave a lecture and workshop entitled, “An Invitation to Stretch: Reconstructing our Theological Assumptions.”
- Prof. Carolyn Muessig, Chair of Christian Thought, University of Calgary, was our G. Peter Kaye Lecturer on the topic of “Preaching under the Radar: The Creative World of Female Preaching in Late Medieval Europe.”
- Our Visiting Distinguished Scholar for July of 2025 will be Prof. George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary, who will teach a summer school course and offer a lecture (July 22) on the Radical Politics of Karl Barth.

These lectures are fully funded through generous gifts held in the VST Foundation. All the lectures are recorded and available through our YouTube channel.

Summer School 2025 will be held July 14-25 in hybrid format and in air conditioned comfort with VST welcoming outstanding scholars, church leaders and students from around the world, including Rabbi Prof. Laura Duhan Kaplan, Prof. George Hunsinger, Mr. Julian Davis Reid, Archbishop Melissa Skelton, Prof. Dwight Friesen and more - <https://vst.edu/vst-summer-school/>. Participation in these courses is possible both in person and through zoom.

In partnership with St. Andrew’s Hall, VST is bringing The Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell from the Atlantic School of Theology for the 2025 Cork Lecture/Workshop, Friday, August 8 and Saturday, August 9 – “The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life” is the topic.



CONVOCATION 2025

On May 13 we conferred degrees and certificates on thirty-six students. Our convocation was held at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver. Six students received the Sauder School of Business Certificate in Leadership Excellence. We presented the President's TEG (thoughtful, engaged and generous) Christian Leader Award to the Rev. Amanda Ruston, a VST alumni. This award of at least \$2,000.00 is to encourage excellent leadership by clergy in the earlier years of ministry. VST awarded honorary doctorates to Mr. Philip Murray and Mr. Bruce W. L. Curtis. Prof. John Swinton, Professor of Practical Theology at the University of Aberdeen and Chaplain to King Charles III, was our convocation speaker. Vancouver School of Theology is thankful of its relationship to the Region. We pray that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit will be with and among you at your 2025 meetings.

Prof. Richard Topping, President



FINAL PAGES



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- **Kathy Davies**, Regional Minister: Pastoral Relations & Community of Faith Support, KDavies@united-church.ca, 236-607-0332
- **Shauna Getz**, Regional Minister: Pastoral Relations & Community of Faith Support, SGetz@united-church.ca, 236-607-0346
- **Maggie Enwright**, Temporary Regional Minister: Pastoral Relations & Community of Faith Support, MEnwright@united-church.ca, 236-607-0337
- **Michelle Slater**, Regional Minister: LeaderSHIFT, MSlater@united-church.ca, 604-431-0434
- **Marc Coulombe**, Regional Minister: Pastoral Relations & Community of Faith Support, MCoulombe@united-church.ca, 778-655-6081
- **Teri Meyer**, Acting Indigenous Minister, TMeyer@united-church.ca, 236-607-0353
- **Marina Lecian**, Office Manager; Pastoral Relations Coordinator, MLecian@united-church.ca, 236-607-0350
- **Meghan Kirk**, Reception and Program Support for Indigenous Ministry and Justice Ministry, PacificMountain@united-church.ca, 236-607-0347
- **Pamela Evans**, Chinook Winds and Pacific Mountain First Third Ministry Team Lead, PEvans@united-church.ca, 778-655-5685

- **Tasha Whitney**, First Third Ministry Regional Minister, TWhitney@united-church.ca, 604-431-0434
- **Blair Odney**, Camping Ministry Consultant, BOdney@united-church.ca, 236-607-0355
- **Nik Sloat**, First Third Ministry Animator, NSloat@united-church.ca, 604-431-0434
- **Sarah Provan**, First Third Ministry Animator, SProvan@united-church.ca, 604-431-0434
- **Cathy Cryder**, Regional Minister: Camp Spirit, CCryder@united-church.ca, 236-607-0244
- **Lisa Munro**, Camp Spirit Coordinator, LMunro@united-church.ca, 236-607-0353
- **Alexandra Barr**, Administration & Communications Coordinator, abarr@united-church.ca, 236-607-0218
- **Rob Shearer**, Regional Minister: Church Planting Project / New Ministries Initiatives, RShearer@united-church.ca, 778-977-7562
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- **Cari Copeman-Haynes**, Office of Vocation Minister for BC, Yukon, and Southern Alberta, CCopeman-Haynes@united-church.ca, 236-607-0359
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- **Kimberly Spice**, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director, BC Community Renewal Society, kspice@bccrs.ca, 727-307-1104
- **Scott Reynolds**, Growth Animator- Mountain, SReynolds@united-church.ca 800-268-3781
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DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PRMC 2024 AGM

**Minutes of the Sixth General Meeting
Pacific Mountain Regional Council
The United Church of Canada
St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church, Vancouver, BC, and Zoom
May 30 – June 2, 2024**

FIRST SESSION, 4:00 P.M. THURSDAY MAY 30, 2024

Gathering

Music brought the Council together.

Welcome

The President, Deborah Richards, called members of the Council both in-person and online through Whova and Zoom™ to recognize how we are connecting, collaborating, and cultivating in the church and in the world.

Authority

Pursuant to the authority of the fifth General Meeting of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council of The United Church of Canada (2023), the sixth General Meeting of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council convened at St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church, Vancouver BC, as well as on the online platforms Whova and Zoom™ and was declared open to conduct the business properly before it by President Deborah Richards. A quorum was present.

Whova and Zoom™ are online platforms which allow members online to communicate with one another at the same time and to communicate with the business table present in Vancouver, BC.

Introductions

The President welcomed Dan Chambers from St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church to orient the members of the Council to this space.



Indigenous Relations Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the buildings and ministries of The United Church of Canada from coast to coast to coast are on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples. St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church respectfully acknowledges that it gathers on the unceded lands of the x̱məθkwə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. For thousands of years, First Nations people have walked on this land and their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. As a church, and settlers on these shores, we have a life-long responsibility to unlearn our misunderstandings of history, territory, and identity through critical reflection, acknowledgement, and listening.

The President introduced Tsawaysia from Skwxwú7mesh to offer a dynamic teaching and welcome to this land. The President offered thanks and a gift to Tsawaysia.

Moderator Video

The President welcomed a video from the 44th Moderator, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne. In it, the Moderator

City of Vancouver Welcome

The President welcomed Councillor (and United Church Minister) Christine Boyle from the City of Vancouver to offer words of welcome.

Other Guests

The President also acknowledged other guests for the meeting who were in the court: Patty Krawec, our keynote speaker for the meeting and author of "Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining our Future," The Rev. Dr. Japhet Nghlovu, Executive Minister for the Church in Mission unit of the General Council Office, Sarah Charters the director of Philanthropy and The United Church Foundation.

The President recognised former Moderator, The Very Rev. Gary Paterson who was in the court. She also named other deployed General Council staff: Scott Reynolds, Growth Animator, Vicki Nelson, Stewardship, and Brenda Fawkes, Office of Vocation.



Holy Manners

The President invited members of the Council to remember that we are Siblings in Christ, we are in relationship (kin) with each other, and that relationship asks that we interact with each other in ways that honour each of us as individuals and reminds us that we are all God's children.

Affirming Commitment, Seven Sacred Teachings and Equity Aspirations

There were commitments made at our fourth general meeting (2022) to be an Affirming region and Council was reminded of those commitments. Further, Council was asked to hold Holy Manners, Seven Sacred Teachings and Equity Aspirations at the core of how we do business; and to hold each other accountable for these behaviours.

Introduction to Business

Mark Green, chair of the Business Committee, highlighted a few items of business: nominations to close at end of day, and that a committee of Past Presidents will put together the Commissioner slate with attention to equity requirements.

Mark also explained the Proposal Learning phase: an introduction of the proposal by the author and questions for clarification (not discussion), then a discussion phase, and a decision phase.

He offered orientation to voting with SimplyVoting and the Youth Council provided a sample proposal.

Business Committee Motions

Mark gave an overview of the Business Committee Motions and the Enabling motions; these motions offered guidelines by way of which business, including proposals, would be conducted.

M/S (M. Green/G. Brownmiller) that:

1) The Roll of the 6th General Meeting of Pacific Mountain Regional Council shall include members registered prior to 12:00 p.m., Friday May 31, 2024. (The Manual 2024 C.1.1 and C.1.2.) Those arriving after that time shall not be included on the Roll or entitled to payment of travel expenses.



2) *Quorum will be set at a minimum of 20 members which must include at least one ministry personnel and one lay member, not including Corresponding Members. (The Manual 2024 C.4.3), and that at least five percent (5%) of registered voting delegates at the PMRC Annual Meeting be 30 years of age or younger (PMRC WF23-01).*

3) *The Bounds of The Pacific Mountain Regional Council shall be St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church, 1022 Nelson St., Vancouver, BC; the Zoom digital meeting room assigned and shared with registered members; and any telephone connections established.*

4) *The Business Committee for this General Meeting shall be Mauricio Araujo (Secretary), Mark Green (Chair), Ibi Chuan, Lauren Kirkey, Graham Brownmiller, Treena Duncan (Executive Minister), and Deborah Richards (President).*

5) *The agenda as posted on www.pacificmountain.ca shall be the order of business, subject to those changes that are recommended by the Business Committee. Revisions will be announced, and an update posted on the website.*

6) *The President shall have the authority to recess the Regional Council when business, as ordered, is completed, until the next order of the day.*

7) *The minutes of the 5th General Meeting of The Pacific Mountain Regional Council held June 1– 4, 2023 in Abbotsford, BC, be received for information.*

8) *The Regional Council Executive Minutes be received for information and included as part of the Record of Proceedings. (The Manual 2024, C.3.1.4)*

9) *The Plenary portions of the agenda will be recorded within the Zoom™ platform and made available on The Pacific Mountain Regional Council website and YouTube Channel.*



10) In order to facilitate the formulation of motions and discussion of matters raised in business, the President may, at their discretion, suspend the ordinary rules of parliamentary debate and engage in a different process. All final decisions of the Council shall follow the rules of debate and order as summarized in the Appendix of The Manual (2024) or Bourinot's Rules of Order.

11) At the discretion of the President, speakers can be limited to two minutes each.

12) All registered voting members who are online and onsite will vote using the simplyvoting.com. An email will be sent to each voting member using the email provided at registration for each vote.

13) All motions having significant budget implications for the Region (defined as \$2,000 or over) shall be considered "in principle only" and, if adopted, be referred to the Executive for consideration within adopted budgetary constraints.

14) In accordance with Section C.1.2(b) of The Manual 2024, Regional Executive Minister Treena Duncan be named as member of Pacific Mountain Regional Council with full voting privileges.

15) Corresponding Privileges be granted to all invited quests, registered visitors, and staff (other than those who are full voting members of The Region) with voice, yet no voting privileges.

16) The Chairperson of the Business Committee or their designate will present proposals. The President will invite prayerful discernment and discussion on the wisdom of the proposal. A speaker from the body making the proposal will be permitted to speak to it. When the President discerns that the sense of the meeting is such that it is ready to hear a motion on the proposal, the President will invite the Chairperson of the Business Committee or their designate to put the motion. Once the motion has been moved and seconded, Rules of Debate and Order shall be followed.



17) *Proposals directed to the General Meeting must be received by the Business Committee prior to Friday, May 17, 2024. The Business Committee may recommend editing or clarification before the Proposal comes to the floor. Proposals dealing with matters not noted on the agenda shall be dealt with in an order as determined by the Business Committee. Similar proposals may be grouped together at the discretion of the Business Committee.*

18) *If The Pacific Mountain Regional Council does not agree with a proposal where the General Council is the court of action, it will not be sent on to General Council.*

19) *In the case of limited time for business, items will be dealt with in the following order: Proposals to The General Council, Proposals to Pacific Mountain Regional Council, Reports requiring a decision of the Regional Council, Reports for Information.*

20) *The procedural and prayer microphone shall be labeled on the floor of the plenary space and the chat box in Zoom. For a procedural point of order members of the council are to show the "Point of Order" card that is on your table as you proceed to the microphone, if onsite or type "Point of Order" at the start of their statement on Zoom™. For prayer requests, members onsite are asked to identify they are making a prayer request. On Zoom™ members are asked to use "Prayer." Members are encouraged to consult with the Business Committee before making a point of order, requesting prayer, or making a point of personal privilege.*

21) *All unfinished business, including non-General Council proposals, shall be referred to the Regional Council Executive.*

22) *Verbal and written reports be accepted as presented.*

23) *Requests to withdraw from the meeting shall be submitted to, considered, and granted by the Business Committee. Members leaving before 5pm on Saturday, June 1st without the consent of the Business Committee shall not be entitled to have travel expenses paid.*

24) *Payment of member expenses shall be made as specified in the travel claim form. Late claims submitted after July 15, 2024 shall not be paid.*



25) *Nominations for Commissioners to General Council 45 and two (2) vacancies on The Pacific Mountain Regional Council Executive close at 9:00 pm (close of day) on Thursday, May 30, 2024.*

Carried

Enabling Motions

Further

M/S (M. Green/G. Brownmiller) that

1) The Regional Executive Minister be authorized to edit reports and minutes for the Record of Proceedings of this meeting.

2) The Regional Council Executive be authorized to transact all business of the Regional Council until the next General Meeting of the Region Regional, except those matters prohibited by the Constitution and Bylaws of The United Church of Canada.

3) All remaining ballots be destroyed – including the digital results.

4) The meeting adjourns following the completion of business as ordered and the benediction concluding the Celebration of Ministry service, June 2, 2024.

Carried

Announcements

Brief announcements were made regarding meals, and grace was offered.

Adjournment

The Council adjourned for dinner.



SECOND SESSION, 6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2024

Gathering

The Council gathered with music prior to the opening of the session.

Theme & Worship

The President introduced the Theme & Worship team co-chaired by Dan Chambers and Jenny Carter and including Shadia Qubti, Deborah Walker, Pamela Evans, Executive Minister Treena Duncan and President Deborah Richards. led worship, with a
Worship included a focus on the scripture Ecclesiastes 12.4; Japhet Ndhlovu preached a dynamic opening sermon. The theme time included community building and table group time.

Memorials

A tribute was observed a beautiful for those from the Region who have died.

Sending Out & Adjournment

The Council was sent out with some announcements and adjourned until the following session.

THIRD SESSION, 9:00 A.M. FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2024

Gathering

The Council gathered in music prior to the opening of the session.

Welcome

The President welcomed the Council.

Retirees

Throughout the meeting, those retiring from Ministry were highlighted in video testimony: David Boyd, Elise Feltrin, Robert Gilbert, Daniel Kirkegaard, Brenda Miller, and Ivy Thomas.

Worship

Min Goo Kang and Shadia Qubti led an intercultural worship with a focus on Ezekiel 37.1-14.



Theme #1 – Creation

The President introduced our theme speaker Patty Krawec.

Patty Krawec shared three (3) creation stories: Anishinaabe, Genesis 1 & 2 and highlighted some of the similarities and differences. She concluded that humans are not the pinnacle of creation, we are simply the world that is now. Our responsibility in the world is to share in care with what is already here and to be ready for whatever comes next.

ProVision

The President took time to thank the ProVision Committee. Over the coming year, the Executive will be working with the committee to evaluate the fund criteria and ensure it meets the current needs of the Region, especially since many changes have occurred since its inception. She introduced a video presentation about the fund and highlighted that the significant support given to support Camp Spirit was not included. Camp Spirit is now a thriving ministry, supporting the next generation of United Church of Canada members. This and other First Third ministries cannot be self-funding so it is an important part of how the Region leans into its priority for First Third Ministry. This is a proud accomplishment of the fund.

Proposals – Learning

Mark Green reminded the Council of our process for dealing with proposals in a 3-stage process: learning, discussion (in small groups) and decision. Once discussion notes were received by the Business Committee, “way forward” proposals were presented to the Council for decision.

The President invited forward the authors of proposals to share, in brief, the proposal and direction they were desiring.

The four (4) proposals coming to this Regional Gathering for which we engaged in learning:

- PMR 24-01: Truth Telling and Reconciliation Action
- PMR 24-02: Emerging Communities of Faith in The Manual
- PMR 24-03: Facing Every Emotional Limit (FEEL)
- PMR 24-04: Unsettling Goods Campaign Reinstatement



PMR24-01: Truth Telling and Reconciliation Action

1. The General Council of The United Church of Canada undertake an appropriate process to update the 1986 and 1998 Apologies in light of the Tk'emlups te Secwépemc First Nation discoveries and subsequent similar discoveries at other locations. The update is to include an acknowledgement of the babies and children who died and were denied proper funeral ceremonies, incinerated, and never returned home to their communities and families.

2. The General Council of The United Church of Canada in partnership with The Autonomous Indigenous Organization design, communicate, and implement a coordinated Truth and Reconciliation ministry plan for Communities of Faith and Regions to be presented to The General Council in 2028.

PMR24-02: Emerging Communities of Faith in the Manual

The Pacific Mountain Regional Council proposes that the General Council draw upon the category of 'mission' found in the 2010 Manual (page 39, Bylaws) into future editions of The Manual, amending the potentially problematic term 'Mission' to 'Emerging Community' and updating the language of the courts of the church. The amended definition would read:

"Emerging Communities of Faith" mean one (1) or more groups of people that are a part of The United Church and that meet for public worship, but not fully constituted as a Community of Faith that is a Pastoral Charge or a Congregation by the Regional Council.

"The Pacific Mountain Regional Council proposes that the General Council add a section to the manual (B.9) for Emerging Communities of Faith with these or similar terms:

- An Emerging Community will exist as a ministry or expression of the Regional Council through a covenant with the ministry personnel and/or a wider group of leadership in the Emerging Community.
- The Regional Council will be responsible for the care, administration, and oversight of the Emerging Community.



As an Emerging Community gains capacity, the Regional Council will have the authority to gradually transfer roles and responsibilities to the Emerging Community as it evolves toward becoming a fully recognized Community of Faith that is a Congregation or Pastoral Charge, provided the Emerging Community reports all relevant information to the Regional Council.

- The Regional Council will have the authority to accept voting delegates from Emerging Communities to the same ratios as established Communities of Faith at such a point as the Regional Council deems the Emerging Community is ready to do so.

PMR24-03: Facing Every Emotional Feel (FEEL)

The Youth Council of Pacific Mountain Regional Council, in partnership with the Youth Council of Chinook Winds Regional Council, recommends that the Pacific Mountain Regional Council and the General Council of the United Church of Canada have a conversation about ways the church might respond to the ongoing mental health crisis.

PMR24-04: Unsettling Goods Campaign Reinstatement

We recommend that GC45:

1. investigate and make public the reasons why UnSettling Goods Campaign was archived
2. Reinstatement the UnSettling Goods Campaign as part of the United Church of Canada's justice work in Solidarity with Palestine
3. Make available again the report UnSettling Goods: Choose Peace in Palestine and Israel
4. upon reinstating the campaign, add Hewlett Packard and its companies to the campaign
5. create a mechanism through which communities of faith may submit requests directly to the campaign to add other companies to the list for boycott and divestment

Adjournment

Following grace, the Council adjourned for lunch.



FOURTH SESSION, 1:15 P.M. FRIDAY JUNE 2, 2023

Gathering

The Council gathered in music prior to the opening of the session.

Welcome

The President welcomed the Council back.

General Council Guest

Executive Minister Treena Duncan introduced the Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu to share about his work with the General Council. Japhet was born and educated in Zambia, Ireland and South Africa, and now resides in Toronto. He currently serves as Executive Minister for the Church in Mission Unit of the General Council office of the United Church of Canada.

Japhet recently served as a Global Program Coordinator for global partnerships in Church and mission Unit responsible for the Philippines, India, Angola, Zimbabwe and Zambia. He previously served as an Ordained Minister for the Epworth Pastoral Charge in Newfoundland, and as General Secretary for the Council of Churches in Zambia, was Executive staff at the All Africa Conference of Churches based in Nairobi, Senior lecturer and Head of Theology Department at the Presbyterian University of East Africa, and National Moderator of the Reformed Church in Zambia among other senior managerial positions.

Japhet holds a PhD in Practical Theology from the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. His personal vision is to be a transformative agent and a facilitator by building bridges that liberate and unite voices of sacred defiance. While transforming history, he seeks to share his Christian faith by actively getting engaged in transforming history and working to end oppression by instigating, inspiring, and participating in acts of justice. He believes in life before death.

Japhet shared about his work and the places in the world where The United Church is cultivating, connecting, and collaborating.

Nominations

Cari Copeman-Haynes, Jenny Carter and Jay Olson, former presidents of BC Conference and Pacific Mountain Regional Council, gathered to discern commissioners to the 45th General Council.



This team took into consideration the challenge of the Moderator in her welcome video as well as other equity aspirations that the Region has named in years previous. President Simon LeSieur will go *ex-officio*.

Because of these priorities and equity aspirations, the following slate was presented:

M/S (C. Copeman-Haynes/J. Carter) that PMRC elect the following as Commissioners to the 45th General Council

- *Nia Bentayen*
- *Katherine Brittain*
- *Ingrid Brown*
- *Sophia Chuan*
- *Don Emerson*
- *Sherri Fowler*
- *Susan Johnsen*
- *Sarah Kirwin*
- *Joseph Kyser*
- *Hati Mvundura*
- *Lauren Palmer*
- *Anna Paton*
- *Kath Silversides*
- *Will Sparks*

Cari shared that they had also named alternate commissioners who may be called on in the case of vacancy.

- *Grant Vaughn*
- *Laura Hermakin*
- *Margo Pritchard*
- *Bob Fillier*
- *Gillian McLeod*
- *Marlena Squash*

Carried

Proposals – Discussion

The Council engaged in discussion on the four (4) proposals and submitted their conversation notes to the Business Table. Those comments and feedback will be reflected in the “way forward” proposals which came back to the Council on Saturday.



General Council Deployed Staff

The President introduced deployed General Council staff Vicki Nelson who serves five (5) Western Regions of The United Church of Canada as Stewardship Support person. Vicki thanked those who contribute to Mission & Service (M&S) and those who share the stories of Mission & Service in communities of faith.

Stewardship & Gifts

Vicki shared an M&S Service story and also shared a story about someone she met at another Regional Council who shared about the financial literacy they learned but more importantly how it made them feel. Vicki wanted the Council to know that she is available to help facilitate conversations regarding monies and other financial questions. She shared about “Called to be the Church: The Journey” and the program that helps communities of faith encourage deeper generosity.

Vicki has been working with LeaderShift to create and offer “Living Generously.” Vicki invite members of the Council to join the conversation. Vicki has a digital filling cabinet full of materials and she encouraged folks to take advantage of them.

The Work of the Region

First Third Ministries are a priority of the Region and Pamela Evans was invited to share about the work of First Third Ministry within the Pacific Mountain Regional Council.

First Third Ministry

Pamela had the court play a game to highlight some of the issues that youth aged 13 – 17 face. She reminded us that it is important to engage in the lives of youth people so they know the love of God through our actions.

Pamela highlighted some Regional and National Youth and Young Adult events. Audacious hope happens in July 2024, there are Youth Leadership Animator positions and Climate Motivator positions available. Pamela spoke about camps in PMRC and throughout the country. Pamela highlighted that there would be a package of resources about First Third ministry for each community of faith. There are First Third staff to assist and serve communities of faith.



Blessing the Retirees

Michelle Slater, LeaderShift, supports Fourth Quarter ministry personnel who gather to offer support, community and prayer. Michelle invited the Retirees who were in the court to be respected and honoured by the Council, and a blessing offered by Levi Miller. Gifts were offered on behalf of the church.

Theme #2 – Returning to Ourselves

Patty Krawec returned to share with the Council. She shared stories about how lives are impacted by each other, and how rebuilding relationship is important. She called us to return to ourselves and remember who, and whose, we are.

Special Guest

Executive Minister Treena Duncan introduced The Hon. Peter Milliken, 34th Speaker of the House of Commons who joined the Council for dinner and evening activities. The longest serving Speaker of the House and a life-long United Church member, Speaker Milliken offered some words to our gathering, with thanks for community.

Adjournment

Following grace, the Council adjourned for dinner.

FIFTH SESSION, 6:30 P.M. FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2023

Justice Ministry

The President called the Council to order and invited Kendra Mitchell-Foster to share about some Affirming activities happening in the Region: quarterly live-streamed affirming worship services will be offered; there were a small number of pride booth packs available but they were quickly requested; and new educational resources are available.

Affirming Connections

Pam Rocker and Miranda Martini shared about Affirming Connections and resources that are available. “What the Hell?” is a short film about eternity and it comes with an in-depth study guide. There is a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about Drag. A Queer Interfaith Coalition began in November 2023.



There were resources available for P.I.E. (Public, Intentional, and Explicit) Day; she announced that there is a theme for 2025 “Sing Out Proud.” Further, there are resources available to help understand changes to Government Policies across Canada. Postcards are available to send to the Office of the Prime Minister advocating for safe access for Queer and Trans youth. There is a rural connections conference and an Affirming Media Conference both happening in the fall.

Rainbow Chorus

Kendra introduced the Rainbow Chorus from New Westminster, a ministry of Sanctuary on 6th, who offered us the gift of music.

Film Screening: “1946: The Mistranslation that Shifted Culture”

Pam introduced the film “1946: The Mistranslation that Shifted Culture” a documentary film that follows the story of tireless researchers who trace the origins of the anti-gay movement among Christians to a grave mistranslation of the Bible in 1946. It chronicles the discovery of never-before-seen archives at Yale University which unveil astonishing new revelations, and casts significant doubt on any biblical basis for LGBTQIA+ prejudice. 1946 is at once challenging, enlightening, and inspiring. The late Rev. David Fearon, who was living in Pacific Mountain Regional Council at his death was the one, who in 1946 wrote the committee responsible for translation and is featured in the film.

Adjournment

Following announcements and a blessing, the Council adjourned for the evening.

SIXTH SESSION, 9:00 A.M. SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2024

Gathering

The Council gathered with music and a welcome was offered along with some announcements.

Worship

Worship was led by the children and youth program supported by First Third Staff; the focus scripture was Luke 17:20-21.



Theme #3 – A Path Forward

Patty Krawac spoke with the Council again. She shared about active healing of fractured families and communities, asking the question of who has been neglected and what kinds of world we have built in which some people are not considered people, and are left behind and lost. We have the responsibility to decide how we will live.

General Council Deployed Staff – Growth Animator

Scott Reynolds, Growth Animator for Chinook Winds and Pacific Mountain Regional Councils, shared about his work. The Growth Animator Team comes from the National Strategic Plan of the United Church of Canada which emerged from a proposal from BC Conference. Growth is the leading priority of the Strategic Plan.

The role of the Growth Animators are to accompany communities of faith in three areas: renewal, creation, and invitation. Describing these three areas, Scott invited members of the Region to engage him and this faithful work.

Executive Accountability Report

Past President Jay Olson took the chair so that President Deborah could offer her address and participate in the Executive Accountability Report. The President provided a brief highlight of the work of the Executive and explained that Regional Minister Kathy Davies would also share key findings of the first round of Community of Faith Assessments.

Executive Update

Feedback from the Community of Faith Assessments and outcomes of the Governance Review work to support strategic planning. In terms of proposals from 2022 and 2023, where there were actions required by the Executive or Staff, through the Executive Minister, actions have been completed or are in progress.

An ongoing area of concern and focus for the Executive continues to be how to faithfully support decision-making about, and provide direction and support to the Executive Minister, on property issues. The Executive agrees that there is a need for the Region to provide a service to assist Communities of Faith with options about their property, that fits their context and which may not always focus on or support housing options. There is a need to articulate a strategic framework to more clearly address how we deal with property issues moving forward.



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The tension continues to be how to balance the needs of Communities of Faith, regional priorities, and the Executive's fiduciary responsibilities as a board. The discussions for that strategic framework are underway. The President acknowledged members of the Executive and the Council showed their appreciation.

Listening to the Ownership – Self-Assessment

Regional Minister Kathy Davies provided a summary of the key findings of the Community of Faith Assessment reports which have been in process over the past 3 years; a 3-year cycle of self-assessments in January were completed.

The self-assessment tool was designed for communities of faith to support them in their ministry and to support regular self-reflection; feedback received was that it was a helpful process and conversation to engage in communities of faith. It was also intended to foster communication between the Region and communities of faith. It has been a valuable tool for the Executive and Regional staff to hear stories and have a deeper understanding of the context in which ministry is happening in the Region.

There were one hundred and forty seven (147) self-assessment questionnaires distributed and one hundred and nine (109) were completed. Some of the barriers to completion included lack of capacity, being too busy, timing conflicts, recent completion of transitional and Interim ministry or Ministry Profiles. The report provides a snapshot of what was heard over the 3 years.

Some of the strengths that were found include:

- Resiliency and adaptability
- Commitment to:
- Worship and Spirituality
- Outreach and Service
- Diversity and Inclusivity
- Strong Community Bonds
- Financial Sustainability



Some challenges that were noted include:

- Ministerial vacancies
- Governance and organizational structure
- Intergenerational/intercultural relevance
- Navigating change and conflict
- Financial sustainability
- Technological Limitations

Yet, the Spirit is a work all around us. Ministry priorities that emerged:

- Innovation in Ministry Practices
- Expanded Worship Experiences
- Connecting with Youth and Families
- Intercultural Ministry
- Reconciliation and Justice Initiatives
- Community Outreach
- Inclusivity and Diversity

Organizational Priorities that emerged:

- Vision and Strategic Planning
- Leadership Development and Succession Planning
- Financial Stewardship
- Conflict Resolution
- Network Opportunities

There were some requests that were made through the self-assessments:

- Ministerial Support
- Leadership Development Programs
- Financial Assistance
- Technological Resources and Training
- Technical Support
- Collaboration and Networking among United Churches
- Social Enterprise Development
- Community Engagement Initiatives

Trends that emerged:

- Renewed focus on vision and purpose
- Innovation in worship and outreach
- Renewed focus on spiritual formation practices
- Increased digital engagement
- Adaptive leadership and collaborative ministry

- 
- Greater emphasis on stewardship of resources and financial planning
 - Increased commitment to social justice and inclusion
 - Emphasis on Community Care and Support

Kathy shared some statistics about changes and trends in our Region

- 14 closures and 7 amalgamations (17 communities of faith)
- 11 church plants in 14 locations
- 12 Indigenous Communities of Faith
- 36 Affirming Communities of Faith
- 12 Ecumenical Shared Ministries in 17 locations
- 23-25 Lay Led Congregations

Kathy left us with questions for creating ministry plans: who are you, who is your neighbour, where is God calling your community of faith and where is God calling the Region? There is a new resource available from Regional Ministers to engage with Ministry Plans.

360 Governance Review

There is an organizational governance review being undertaken with a focus on the Executive's work and how the current structure is supporting the Region's goals and priorities. There is a framework for the review and a reviewer was chosen through an RFP process. Interviews and wider survey with stakeholders will be taking place. The information received will be collated and analyzed and will assist in the completion of the organizational review. Once it is finished, it along with the key findings of the Assessments will help engage in strategic planning.

President's Remarks

The President reflected on her term as President. In her remarks she also thanked the staff of the Region, and in particular, Executive Minister Treena Duncan. She expressed her appreciation for the support of the Council and encouraged continued support for incoming President Simon LeSieur.

Past President Jay Olson thanked President Deborah for her ministry and the Council showed their appreciation.

Adjournment

Following announcements and a blessing, the Council adjourned for lunch.



SEVENTH SESSION, 1:15 P.M., SATURDAY JUNE 1, 2024

Gathering

The Council gathered prior to the opening of the session.

Archives

Katherine Gear-Chambers (Chair of the Archives Committee) introduced Elizabeth Schaffer to the Council. Elizabeth is the former Executive Director of the Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (RSHDC), currently an Assistant Professor at UBC teaching archival studies, and has worked with the Archives Committee over the past seven years.

The Archives Committee has been working closely with the RSHDC for a number of years and is committed through this work to responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls for Action for archives, including by implementing UNDRIP.

The Archives Committee is also strengthening relationships with the Chinese Canadian Museum and the Chinatown Storytelling Centre. The Work of the Archives is working towards centering relationships and collaborations, particularly as it engages in decolonial processes.

Executive Minister Report

The President invited Executive Minister Treena Duncan to share with the Council. Treena shared some of the glimpses of the kingdom of God that she witnesses within the Region. She spoke about the people of Pacific Mountain Regional Council and the commitment and relationships where she finds hope for the future. She sees glimpses of God in the staff and in First Third ministries. She believes that motivated by a good love of the church, we are thriving; Pacific Mountain Region is doing really well.

General Council

Treena shared that our sister Region, Chinook Winds RC, is hosting the 45th General Council and she is participating as Executive Minister in the local arrangements, business committee and Agenda and Planning.

As part of her work she also serves on the Restructuring Review Task Group.



Centennial

Treena shared about this coming year of commemoration of the Centennial of The United Church of Canada that begins with a kickoff on June 9th. There will be a number of events throughout the year and a centennial newsletter that folks can sign up for. All of this will culminate in a big worship service next June and then the 45th General Council will kick off the future.

Staff Introductions

Treena thanked the staff of the Pacific Mountain Region for all they do and how they show up in their ministry. Members of Council showed appreciation for all staff who serve the Region.

General Council Deployed Staff - Office of Vocation

The President introduced deployed General Council staff Brenda Fawkes, the Office of Vocation Minister serving Mountain Candidacy Board, Pacific Mountain Regional Council and Chinook Winds Regional Council.

Brenda has just returned from sabbatical and one of the tasks she completed during that time was to focus on her area of responsibility in the Strategic Plan: Invigorating Leadership. One of the areas that she staffs is the development of a mentorship program for ministry leaders. Brenda shared about the Leadership Counts identity survey which has given a solid snapshot of where ministry leaders are and what the needs are across the country; it highlighted the structural racism that we know.

Also this information helped an understanding that the 5th to 7th years of ministry were the highest exodus; there is a development of a mentorship for that 5-7 year mark and what the needs are to prevent isolation and exodus. It also has some focus on developing of pastoral supervision – a focus mentorship – for those in the remedial process. It will also be consolidated within the Candidacy pathway so that a solid mentorship can continue following ordering.

The Office of Vocation came into existence in January 2019; at the 5-year mark there was a review of all ministry personnel who had had formal complaints against them. The Remedial process is about returning ministry personnel to effectiveness when things go off the rails and support wasn't available.



In those 5 years there were 53 complaints which resulted in restorative care, long term disability and directed programs. The most common age of these complaints was 50-75, which isn't surprising knowing the average age of our ministry personnel. These formal complaints cost the church \$1,132,000.

Brenda shared about the admissions process and a new placement program that is being initiated trying to address systemic racism in lines with the antiracist and social justice work. The matching program is to match highly equipped Ministry Personnel who were approved but now waiting on a list waiting for a job.

Brenda spoke about the decision of the General Council to direct the Credentialing Committee to test Designated Lay Ministers for Testamur. While there has been some controversy within the church about this decision, this work has brought about a way to acknowledge life-long calls to Ministry. In 2024 there are 99 individuals being ordered; the last time that occurred was 1951.

The Office of Vocation and its staff hold as their purpose: Faithful, Well-Equipped Ministry Personnel. There are many who serve on the Board of Vocation and its committees.

There are thirty-seven (37) candidates that the Mountain Candidacy Board has under its supervision: twenty-seven (27) from PMRC and ten (10) from Chinook Winds.

The President offered thanks to Brenda Fawkes, and offered blessings on the work she does.

Candidates

A video was shown highlighting the candidates who will be received into ministry during the Celebration of Ministry. Rob Shearer will be admitted; Kerry Child and Kendra Mitchell-Foster will be Commissioned; Hilary Bitten, Colleen Blair, Mini Choi, Cathy Cryder, Jennifer Cummings, Anne Ellis, Pamela Evans, Elizabeth Parsons, Marie Paul, Rhonda Thorndale, Nancy Walker, and Shelly Worthington will be ordained.



Proposals – Decision Session

The Business Committee considered all of the feedback received from the time of discussion. They brought forward *Way Forward* proposals for the Council to consider. In addition, the Business Committee is recommending no further action on one of the proposals and, instead, has provided another proposal for consideration.

PMR WF24-01: Truth Telling and Reconciliation Action

M/S (M. Green / G. Brownmiller)

that the General Council of The United Church of Canada

- renew its commitment for reconciliation by issuing a new apology that builds on previous apologies in light of our learnings about Residential Schools, acknowledging that babies, children and others who died and were denied proper funeral ceremonies, incinerated, and never returned to their communities and families, and
- develop a Truth & Reconciliation process and resources that supports Communities of Faith and Regions in their reconciliation efforts, in consultation with the National Indigenous church to be presented to the 46th General Council (2028)

Carried

PMR WF24-02: Emerging Communities of Faith in the Manual

M/S (M. Green / G. Brownmiller)

that the General Council of The United Church of Canada

- develop a definition for “Emerging Communities of Faith” (such as in The Manual 2010, page 39, Bylaws)
 1. some suggested wording is one (1) or more groups of people that are a part of The United Church and that meet for public worship, but not fully constituted as a Community of Faith that is a Pastoral Charge or a Congregation by the Regional Council.
- Add a section to the Manual (B.9) for Emerging Communities of Faith with these or similar terms:
 1. An Emerging Community will exist as a ministry or expression of the Regional Council through a covenant with the ministry personnel and/or a wider group of leadership in the Emerging Community.
 2. The Regional Council will be responsible for the care, administration, and oversight of the Emerging Community.



And that the General Council give authority to Regions to, as appropriate,

- transfer roles and responsibilities to the Emerging Community as it evolves toward becoming a fully recognized Community of Faith that is a Congregation or Pastoral Charge, provided the Emerging Community reports all relevant information to the Regional Council.
- to accept voting delegates from Emerging Communities to the same ratios as established Communities of Faith at such a point as the Regional Council deems the Emerging Community is ready to do so.

Carried

PMR WF24-03: Facing Every Emotional Limit (FEEL)

M/S (M. Green / G. Brownmiller)

that Pacific Mountain Regional Council and the General Council of The United Church of Canada have a conversation and consider ways the church might respond to the ongoing mental health crisis, with an emphasis on people in the First Third of life.

Carried

PMR WF24-04: Unsettling Goods Campaign Reinstatement

We recommend that we take no further action.

PMR WF24-05: Non-Violent Economic Advocacy Response

M/S (M. Green / G. Brownmiller)

that Pacific Mountain Regional Council and the General Council of The United Church of Canada

1. in the full acknowledgment of the archiving of the UnSettling Goods Campaign, acknowledge the increasingly urgent call within the United Church for non-violent action in solidarity with Palestine that, among other strategies, includes mechanisms for creating economic pressure to support the end of the occupation of Palestine
2. Develop and make available information to support boycott and divestment actions against products, companies and institutions who profit from or derive benefit from the occupation of Palestine
3. Develop and make available in the same forum information to support positive economic action to support products, companies and institutions who support and directly benefit the Palestinian people, and products made by Palestinians
4. In the same forum make readily available the Just Peace final report as a resource to Communities of Faith with which to build their own justice work in solidarity with Palestine

- 
1. Create a mechanism through which communities of faith may submit requests directly to the campaign to add other companies to the list for boycott and divestment.

Carried

Mark Green thanked the Council for their diligence and for their attendance to this process so that we could make it through the business before us. Mark thanked the Business Committee, and ended with prayer.

Save the Date – PMR GM 2025

The seventh (7th) General Meeting of Pacific Mountain Regional Council will take place May 29-June 1, 2025 at the Vancouver Island Convention Centre in Nanaimo, BC.

Theme #4 – Connecting, Collaborating, Cultivating

Patty Krawac wrapped up her time with us speaking about a new world in which the inhabitants of this world must work together to care for what comes next. We must remember our place within creation rather than above it, we must consider how we read ourselves into the stories about ourselves and our histories: what relationships have we forgotten about? And who have we cut ourselves off from in order to justify what we have? She encouraged us to rethink power dynamics and our place in them and how we work with vulnerable communities meeting the criteria of mutual aid: meeting people's material needs and working together to address the structures that create those needs.

The President thanked Patty for her time with us over this weekend, and the Council expressed their appreciation for her.

Worship

Worship was led by Jenny Carter and Dan Chambers; President-Elect Simon LeSieur offered Prayer of Confession and the children and youth program demonstrated the theme scripture Ecclesiastes 4.12. We heard from some collaborative ministries throughout the Region, including Prince George, the University of Victoria and First Community, Salmon Arm.



Gratitudes

In worship, gratitude was expressed to those who have helped to make this General Meeting happen. Our keynote speaker Patty Krawec for her wisdom and insights, for our General Council guest and Preacher Japhet Ndhovu, our President Deborah Richards, and our Executive Minister Treena Duncan.

For the Business Committee: Mark Green, Graham Brownmiller, Lauren Kirkey and Ibi Chuan and the Theme & Worship Team: Dan Chambers and Jenny Carter, Shania Qubti, Min-Goo Kang, Deb Walker, Pamela Evans. Gratitude to the Regional Staff, particularly those who have gone above and beyond to make this meeting happen: Marina, Mauricio, Meghan, and Tressa; the entire First Third and Finance Teams. Michelle Slater from LeaderShift for hosting the online portion of the meeting and Jes Beckerley.

All the volunteers that make the meeting possible – the people who made and served the food. The members and Staff of St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church, especially the Teach Team, caretakers and hospitality. For Robin, Tom, George, Arman, Diane, Nicole and Allan Buckingham. Daniel Martin in charge of local arrangements.

Thanks to Kendra Mitchell-Foster for organizing the affirming evening, along with Pam Rocker and Miranda Martini. And gratitude for all of the gifted musicians who have accompanied the meeting over these days that we have been gathered.

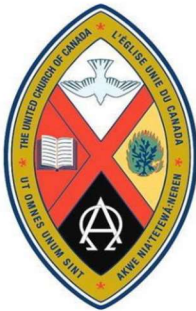
Adjournment

Being blessed to our meal, the Council adjourned. There was an optional evening event that members of Council were invited to attend.

SEVENTH SESSION, SUNDAY JUNE 4, 2023

Celebration of Ministry

The Regional Council gathered in worship and provided access for communities of faith to stream. This Celebration of Ministry worship saw the admission of one (1) minister, the commissioning of two (2) ministers and the ordination of twelve (12) ministers. The Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu preached a sermon on Nehemiah 4.4-15 and the Sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated. Following the installation of The Rev. Dr. Simon LeSieur as President, he offered a blessing and commissioning, at which point the meeting was adjourned.



Pacific Mountain Regional Council

Ms. Deborah Richards, President

Ms. Treena Duncan, Executive Minister

PROPOSALS RECEIVED

PMR 25-01 Apartheid Free Community



Thursday, May 8, 2025

Pacific Mountain Region - Proposal Form 2025

Submission Deadline: May 15th, 2025

Name of person submitting this proposal

Keith and Shadia Simmonds and Qubti

Email

diakeithcru@gmail.com

Phone Number

(250) 202 9960

Proposal Name

Apartheid Free Community

What is the issue? Why is it Important?

We believe Love is insisting on a direct response to the ongoing discrimination, occupation, brutal repression, violence and genocide being carried out in Israel and Palestine by Western Powers through the agency of the Government of Israel. Repression and discrimination now being mirrored in Canada and other Western nations. Signing onto the Apartheid Free Communities Pledge will help our region take responsibility and adopt a focused, measured, coordinated response that will pressure Western Governments, Western Corporate Entities and the Government of Israel

n this we are informed and advised by the witness and insistence of Indigenous Palestinians and the Indigenous Christian Churches in Palestine. Extending from the Kairos Document authored in 2009, <https://www.kairospalestine.ps/>, Kairos Palestine in "A Call for Repentance: An Open Letter from Palestinian Christians to Western Church Leaders and Theologian" calls upon the Western Church to "Learn to do right; seek justice; defend the oppressed" (Isa 1:17). https://www.kairospalestine.ps/images/A_Call_for_Repentance_An_Open_Letter_from_Palestinian_Christians_1.pdf That statement, written in the early stages of the genocide details the suffering of Palestinians and the complicity of the western world, including Western Churches.

What is happening now?

Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestine do not enjoy equal rights with their Jewish-Israeli counterparts and are regularly humiliated, abused, imprisoned, wounded and killed by direct attack and through the employment of starvation and denial of medical services. Thousands of Palestinians are imprisoned by the government of Israel while tens of thousands have been killed, and hundreds of thousands (millions since 1948) have been displaced from their homes. The government of Israel has announced its intention to remove Palestinians from Gaza, has blockaded Gaza, destroying its infrastructure, including hospitals, sewer, water and food resources. Recently sending drones to attack the "Freedom Flotilla" directing its forces against a ship moored in international waters off of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea to ensure no food or aid brings relief to Palestinians starving to death in Gaza. In British Columbia, Palestinian citizens and their allies have undergone discrimination for speaking out against the Apartheid regime in Israel, have been arrested for demonstrating and protesting, have been fired from their jobs and threatened with expulsion.



Aided and abetted by governments and corporations in the west, including Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, the Government of Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. Palestinians living in Israeli occupied Palestine have experienced a sharp increase in land loss, home demolitions, imprisonment and death. Palestinians living in Israel do not have equal rights with other citizens and suffer great restrictions under the state of Israel. Palestinians and Jewish-Israeli peace activists plead for our help. All of this has been well documented by B'tselem; The Red Cross; The Red Crescent; Defense of Children International; Amnesty International; Human Rights Watch; The United Nations; The International Criminal Courts and hundreds of independent observers, including United Church of Canada Ecumenical Accompaniers.

Sample Wording:

The Region Could:

A. Study/discuss the issue:

- The Region could be asked to have a conversation about a particular issue as an end in itself without making a policy decision or taking other action.

B. Act on the issue, which could include:

- Region directing a policy/strategy be developed based on specified principles and parameters
- Region adopting a policy position/strategy
- Region encouraging/suggesting action by congregations and other communities of faith on the issue

Suggestions for wording of a policy/strategy could be offered as possibilities for consideration in the decision-making process but not as expectations of a particular outcome

What is the recommendation?

That Pacific Mountain Region:

A.

Promote study/discussion of the issue throughout the region by supplying links to existing studies already developed by communion partners and others, including the Presbyterian Church USA, the Society of Friends, the United Church of Christ USA and by Kairos Palestine. Provide links to resources made available by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Ecumenical Accompaniers for the World Council of Churches, The United Nations, B'tselem, Breaking the Silence, Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, the United Network For Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, and/or other human rights based, fact sharing organizations in Israel, Palestine and the World.

B.

Action on the issue. This includes:

Pacific Mountain Region (PMR)

becoming a signatory body to the Apartheid Free Community Campaign at <https://apartheid-free.org>



Background Information

Most recently, the Government of Israel has announced its intention to eradicate the Palestinian population of Gaza, as it continues the eradication of Palestine itself. Bombing relief ships in the waters of the Mediterranean as well as carrying out attacks in Syria and Lebanon, the unrestrained Israeli Cabinet now threatens further action in Iran. Israeli ministers calling for the extermination of all Palestinians have been charged with war crimes at the International Criminal Court, but continue to act with impunity. Are, in fact applauded by Western Governments who continue to fund and supply armaments and destructive capacity, enriching Western Corporations at the expense of Palestinian and Israeli lives.

The Apartheid Free pledge is in line with and is supported by existing United Church of Canada policy and was affirmed as a valid response to the genocide, forced displacement, wrongful imprisonment, discrimination and illegal occupation carried out by the government of Israel in Israel and Palestine by General Council 43. General Council confirmed this step in light of the "Principles Based Approach" and the General Secretary affirmed that any body of the United Church of Canada could take this (and other actions) based on that approach.

The pledge to become Apartheid free is aspirational in nature and fits well within the context of a church seeking to become decolonized. By signing the pledge, we commit to the process of becoming Apartheid Free both in respect of the actions of the Government of Israel towards Indigenous Palestinians and the actions of our denomination and governments towards the people who are Indigenous to the land some know as Turtle Island. An example of an aspirational statement on becoming Apartheid Free drafted by the intersectional justice approach taken at Vancouver's Trinity Grace United Church can be found on their website:

<https://www.tgucvan.com/apartheidfree>

A thoughtful exploration of life under Apartheid in Israel and North America in the context of decolonizing hope authored for Apartheid Free Communities by United Church Community Ministry worker Shadia Qubti can be found here:

<https://apartheid-free.org/between-fear-and-peace-decolonizing-hope-in-times-of-uncertainty>.

Funding Implications

Entirely up to the Region to decide. Existing staff resources could support Regional and National organizations like PalNet Pacific or the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel where work is already being carried out to support and expand existing policy. Those organizations could act as supports to faith communities and others seeking to implement the proposal.

How does your proposal align with the priorities of the Region?

The proposal aligns most readily with Faithful Public Witness, as we see the community around us grappling with how best to halt the genocide in Gaza and provide safety for all Palestinians as well as the people of Israel. It supports the outreach/justice ministries of many United Church Faith Communities who are offering what support they can to Palestinians and Israelis.

We have prioritized listening to the voices of Indigenous peoples and Palestinians are Indigenous to their land.



Over the course of several years, General Council has made numerous commitments on equity such as the following:

- adopting [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) as the framework for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples;
- adopting the [Calls to the Church](#) from the Caretakers of our Indigenous Circle as the basis for a new relationship;
- welcoming [people of all sexual orientations and gender identities](#) into full membership and ministry in the church;
- committing to becoming an [intercultural church](#);
- committing to becoming an open, accessible, and barrier-free church, where there is [full participation of people with disabilities](#);
- working towards functional bilingualism and [ensuring that Francophone ministries are an integral part of the church's identity, mission, and vision](#);
- [opposing discrimination](#) of any kind on the basis of identity; and,
- developing an anti-racism policy and committing to becoming an [anti-racist denomination](#).

Who has been consulted in the development of the proposal? Was the proposal developed “with” people, or “on behalf of” people? What might be the impact of this proposal on people and communities? Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this approach?

How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

Choosing from the list of General Council commitments on

Equity:

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as Palestinians are Indigenous to Palestine; a commitment to becoming intercultural (especially with people from Middle Eastern cultures); opposing discrimination, (rampant in Israel, Palestine and in Canada) against Indigenous Palestinians; working against anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim racism all come to mind. The church is already specifically committed to anti-Semitism and this action (declaring Israel to be an Apartheid Country) is supported on the website of Independent Jewish Voices.

I have worked and consulted with Shadia Qubti, who works in Community Ministry for the United Church of Canada at Grace United Church in Vancouver. A Palestinian woman who grew up in Nazareth, she is a graduate of the Vancouver School of Theology and has a depth and breadth of wisdom, experience and theological understanding that I can only hope to emulate in some small part. I am also guided by Palestinian and Jewish Israeli peace activists, human rights workers and theologians.

I know this is 'our problem' (the Western Church and the Western world's) to address as it has been created in large part by our worldview and actions, but we must be informed by and learn from the experiences of those who are victimized by that worldview and those actions.

Will you be present at the AGM to speak to this proposal?

Yes

Confirmation

Proposal is complete and I am ready to submit it.