

North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry

Report on the Work of our Denominations

Our Representatives

The Rev. Bruce Chalmers is the clergy representative to all three denominations. For the Church of St Paul, the Rev. Keith Peterson is the lay representative to the Territory of the People; Glenn Andrews, BC Synod; and Leslie Stirling, the Pacific Mountain Regional Council. Leslie Ross is the lay representative from Trinity Shared Ministry to all three. Leslie Ross has graciously presented the following report on behalf of all the representatives.

There are many events, issues, and situations on which all three denominations have commented or taken action.

- There have been messages in the way of pastoral letters and videos for Easter and Earth Day.
- National on-line worship services have been held through Holy Week.
- Letters have been written to the Canadian government opposing evictions and demolitions of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem and expressing concerns about human rights violations in the Philippines.
- They have encouraged financial donations to assist with the COVID crisis in India and relief work in Haiti.
- They have expressed concern about the escalating violence in the West Bank and Gaza and encouraged support of our partners located there.
- They responded in a variety of ways to the discovery of unmarked graves on the lands of Indian Residential Schools.
- They shared information that would assist in approaching the decision making process for the federal election.
- They have regularly updated guidelines and provided advice to assist decisions in navigating the effects of COVID-19.
- They all responded in a variety of ways to the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation from encouragement to wear an orange shirt to reflections to an online worship service.
- Each denomination has online catalogues of gift ideas.
- They all had pastoral and practical responses to the natural disaster of floods and landslides that devastated southwest British Columbia. The pastoral included letters, prayers, and an online vigil. The practical was providing information for making donations to assist in relief efforts.
- There were prayers, reflections, and links to services and information for The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.
- A variety of Advent and Christmas messages, devotionals, and services were shared.

Anglican Church of Canada

The Territory of the People now has three deaneries. Our Parish is part of the Kamloops Deanery. Rev. Ken Gray was the Dean until his retirement. The Kamloops Deanery last met on December 2, 2020.

The Bishop has resigned. As a result, Archbishop Lynne McNaughton is now the presiding bishop for the Territory of the People. She has put in place an Interim Steering Committee to act as interim leadership until an episcopal electoral process can begin. The Coordinator is the Rev. Canon Len Fraser. Other members are Bishops Gordon Light and Barbara Andrews; Regional Deans, the Rev. Angus Muir and the Rev. Jo Ann Hinter; Pastoral Elder Ernie Michell; The Rev. Barbara Liotskos; Melissa Green, who will provide administrative assistance; and Margaret Mitchell who will come out of retirement to continue her role as Territory Office Coordinator. The Archbishop and the two Bishops will provide oversight in episcopal matters. Archbishop Lynne McNaughton appointed the Rev. Canon Len Fraser as Administrator for the Territory of the People. He will work with the Bishop's Circle (Bishop Barbara Andrews, Bishop Gordon Light, and Archbishop Lynne McNaughton) providing oversight for all things Episcopal, the Financial Committee, and current administration, to provide leadership to the Territory during its time of transition.

The Territory is still in the process of putting together a Financial Team with the retirement of volunteer Dwight Oatway.

Good news was reported in an article posted to the Territory's website on August 19th. "After weeks of wondering, we have now heard from the insurance adjuster that the St. Barnabas Church, hall, and rectory remain standing with surprisingly minor damage to the outside. We have not yet been into the building to assess the condition. Still, we can report that the local congregation will now be working with local officials to determine the best use of one of the few gathering places left standing in Lytton."

The plan was to hold the Annual Assembly from October 15th to 17th in Lytton. With the wildfire that devastated Lytton, the Territory needed to change that plan. Although there had been a desire to still meet in person, the decision was made for the Coordinating Council to meet via zoom in the evening of October 15th to conduct the business of the Territory as required by the BC Societies Act. That meeting would be considered to be the Annual General Meeting of the Territory of the People. At it, the following Directors were elected: Bishop – Archbishop Lynne McNaughton; Financial Officer – The Rev. Canon Len Fraser; Clergy Secretary – The Rev. Jo Ann Hinter; Lay Secretary – Denise Boulanger; Director – Pastoral Elder Amy Charlie.

For the "non-business" part of the Annual Assembly, on Saturday, October 16th, three Regional Gatherings were held. This way, delegates could gather following public health regulations and small group discussions could occur. Participants gathered in Ashcroft, Quesnel, and Kamloops as well as via Zoom. Bruce Chalmers, Keith Peterson, and Leslie Ross attended at St. Paul's Cathedral in Kamloops. The theme was "Come and Find a Quiet Centre". The Territory broadcast a live stream of the proceeding from St. Paul's Cathedral. For those not at one of the

Regional Gatherings, Zoom video meeting allowed participants to participate in small group discussions throughout the day.

Archbishop Lynne McNaughton provided leadership. Guest speakers included National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald and Bishop Mary Irwin Gibson from the Territory's companion Diocese of Montreal. The day began with a service of morning prayer based on the Gospel of the Day, Luke 12: 8-12, which centres on discipleship. During the Archbishop's presentation, she spoke of the liminality of this time asking us to consider how we lament in a time of dislocation. She reminded us that God has been with us in the past times of dislocation and is with us now even though it is sometimes difficult to recognize that. She remarked that this is a time to focus on mission rather than strategic plans.

Questions given to small groups included

- Who are we
- What have we learned from this experience?
- What reshaping or changing do we need to work on as the Territory because of what we have learned?
- What are our next steps? What does God call us to do now?

Reports from the small group discussions were shared in the plenary and will be used to help inform the leadership of the Territory as it determines its next steps.

The Territory of the People held its Clergy Conference in the last week of October. The Rev. Bruce Chalmers attended parts of it.

Initial steps have been put in place in the process of determining whether an Episcopal Election will be held. At the November 20th Coordinating Council meeting, it directed Archbishop Lynne McNaughton to appoint an Assistant Bishop as an interim until the election of a new bishop for the Territory of the People.

The Territory has also been applying for the Federal Wage Subsidy. Each month our three treasurers submit our income for each week. For 2021, we have received \$5,043.05 from the Territory. The Parish Council Treasurer has distributed the majority of these funds to the congregational treasurers, with each receiving \$1981.61.

As a result of the Province's COVID restrictions announced on December 22nd and the events of the previous week, the Territory of the People decided, in consultation with Archbishop Lynne McNaughton, to cancel all in person services in the Territory until further notice. With the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, the decision was made to keep everyone safe by returning to on-line services only for the time being.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada

Bishop Greg Mohr has announced that he will be retiring at the end of this year. As a result, the election of a new bishop will take place during the BC Synod Convention in October.

BC Synod has regular meetings via zoom for lay leaders and for rostered ministers. They always send out notes from the meetings for the lay leaders.

The BC Synod Convention was held on-line from October 21st to October 24th. The theme was "Journey. Together: Liminal Space". Leslie Ross and the Rev. Bruce Chalmers attended. The Learning Day component with Susan Beaumont was titled "*What Is God Up To? – How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You are Going*" and was held on the Saturday. Others besides the delegates could register for this session. Follow-up sessions to the Learning Day will be held.

There were several online workshops prior to the Convention to help delegates prepare for different parts of the Convention business. Since they were recorded, there was an opportunity to watch them at a later time if one could not attend the workshop.

The Rev. Bruce Chalmers participated in the opening worship of the Convention and Sunday morning worship via pre-recorded videos. Leslie Ross was appointed to the Complaint Handling Committee. Fortunately, there was no work for this Committee.

A major piece of business was to elect the next Bishop as Bishop Greg Mohr was retiring on December 31st. The Rev. Kathy Martin, currently BC Synod's Assistant to the Bishop for Mission Renewal and Congregational Support, was elected Bishop on the third ballot. She will assume office on January 1, 2022. Her ordination will be on January 6, 2022 at 4 pm at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Surrey. The service will be available via Zoom.

The BC Synod in Convention elected the following Synod Council Members:

- Bishop-Elect: Pastor Kathy Martin
- Chairperson: Pastor Eric Krushel
- Secretary: Tarynn McKenzie
- Treasurer: Jerry Nieman
- Lower Mainland Rostered: Pastor Aneeta Saroop
- Vancouver Island Lay: Lisbeth Scott
- Southern Interior Rostered: Pastor Jane Gingrich
- North Lay: Robin Dielissen
- At Large Lay: Karen Lee
- At Large Lay: Cathy Preibisch
- At Large Rostered: Pastor Kristen Steele
- At Large Rostered: Pastor Brenda Nestegaard Paul

Decisions that were made include

- BC Synod in Convention directs the BC Synod Council to reduce the travel-generated carbon footprint of the BC Synod's work and ministry.

- BC Synod in Convention directs the BC Synod Council to plan Synod Conventions and synodically-sponsored in-person gatherings, working toward the goal of zero landfill waste.
- BC Synod in Convention directs the BC Synod Council to develop an action plan to assist all part of the BC Synod to eliminate the use of single-use plastics in their ministry and work.
- BC Synod in Convention directs the Bishop on behalf of the Synod to sign the Lutheran World Federation's petition in regards to the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26 and the climate action needed now.
- BC Synod in Convention directs Synod staff to encourage its member congregations that are preparing to disband to dispose of their property or liquid assets in a way that benefits the local First Nation or Métis community on whose land they have been worshipping.
- BC Synod in Convention encourages its member congregations to make connections with their local First Nations or Métis communities with a view to respecting Indigenous protocol, along with financial commitments, as well as building long-term relationships of respect and care.
- BC Synod in Convention directs the BC Synod Council to exercise initiatives to build a relationship with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

Due to time, some of the business was referred to the BC Synod Council for discussion and decision. More information and the recorded sessions are available on the BC Synod website.

The Southern Interior Region met via zoom on January 23, 2021. At that time, they carried forward with the idea from the meeting in the fall to have each parish twin with another congregation. Our twin is Christ Evangelical Lutheran in Kelowna.

The Southern Interior Region recorded another joint service with participation from all parishes in the Region. This year, the service was for Trinity Sunday.

Some members of the Southern Interior Region met via zoom on October 17, 2021. It was an opportunity to meet some the people from the Region who would be attending the BC Synod Convention.

The BC Synod held its Annual General Meeting on Saturday, November 27th via Zoom.

On Friday, January 7th, 2022 at 8:00 pm, BC Synod will gather online to give thanks to God for Bishop Greg's ministry to our synod and offer our blessings as he begins his retirement.

The United Church of Canada

The Pacific Mountain Regional Council holds regular town hall meetings via zoom. Quite often they have guests to provide information or lead us in some reflection.

Leslie Ross attended the Leadershift Workshop, “Calls to the Church: Listening to the Wisdom of the Elders” that was held over four evenings from June 1st to 4th. Rev. John Snow, Tony Snow, and Alison Rennie led the sessions.

Leslie Ross attended the Finance Forum on June 3rd, which was an opportunity to receive a financial update prior to the General Meeting. Information was provided about the 2020 audited financial statements, investments, and property. An Investment Advisory Council is being formed. Communities of faith are able to have funds invested with the PMRC. There is no minimum. Currently the lowest amount invested is \$40,000.

The Pacific Mountain Regional Council held its General Meeting on-line the afternoon and evening of June 11th, the morning and afternoon of June 12th and on Sunday morning for the Celebration of Ministry Service. Leslie Ross, Leslie Stirling, and the Rev. Bruce Chalmers attended. The theme was “With Hope and Abundance”. The keynote speakers were Nadia Bolz-Weber and Cameron Trimble.

Deborah Richards was acclaimed as President-Elect of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council to be installed as President at the 4th General Meeting in Prince George. Thirteen people were elected to be commissioners to the 44th General Council. A Youth Forum Pilgrim still needs to be named.

The PMRC had been discerning whether to become an affirming regional council. The threshold for the affirm vote was set at 75%. The following motion passed with 97% in favour. The Pacific Mountain Regional Council affirm the priority of continuing to become an Affirming Regional Council, endorse the Affirming Ministry Regional Statement, direct the Executive and Regional Executive Minister to complete the process of accreditation with Affirm United, and plan a public, intentional and explicit celebration for the 2022 General Meeting.

Over the course of the meeting seven proposals were considered. Four were proposals requesting action of General Council 44. They all were carried with the direction that the PMRC transmit them to GC44 with concurrence.

- 21-01 “A Living Commitment to the KAIROS Palestine ‘Cry for Hope’”
- 21-02 “A Task Group on Pension Equity for United Church Pension Plan Members”
- 21-04 “Making it Right: Alberni Indian Residential Schools Bringing Lost Children Home”
- 21-07 “Jubilee in a Land Now Their Own: Forgiveness of Refugee Travel Debt”

Two proposals requesting action by the PMRC also passed.

- 21-03 “Jubilee in a Land Now Their Own: Forgiveness of Refugee Travel Debt”
- 21-05 “Making it Right: Alberni Indian Residential Schools Bringing Lost Children Home”

One proposal was forwarded to the Regional Executive Minister for consideration.

- 21-06 “Active Bystander Witness training”

One of most impactful Town Hall Meeting was held on September 29th, the day before the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The special guest was Elder Alberta Billy who had attended the 1981 General Council Meeting at which she asked the United Church to apologize for its involvement with residential schools. During the Town Hall Meeting, she speaks about how that came to pass and the United Church’s response, the relationship of indigenous peoples and creation, the need for reconciliation with creation, the impact of residential schools, how the broken relationships between the church and indigenous people could be repaired, her reasons for staying with the United Church, and her reaction to there now being a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The November 3rd Town Hall began with a brief presentation from Erik Mathiesen, Executive Minister of Finance at General Council. The remainder of the meeting centred on reports from the Justice Network providing background and new initiatives coming out of the proposal passed at the 2020 Pacific Mountain Regional Council AGM requesting that the Canadian government appoint a special envoy to monitor and report on the human rights of children in occupied Palestine. Recently the Israeli government declared six organizations that are standing up for Palestinians as terrorists. More information can be found in the Justice Network section on the PMRC website.