

Denominational News
Reported to the Parish Council Meeting on June 21, 2022

All Three Denominations

- The pastoral leaders of all three denominations issued video messages for Easter.
- The United Church of Canada is participating in a worldwide petition calling for an end to the Korean War. It is a response to an urgent invitation of the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK), a long-time Mission & Service partner. In April, both the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada endorsed this Appeal.
- With other denominations and charitable organizations, our three denominations signed a statement urging the Government of Canada to amend the Budget Implementation Act so that the wording would be more in line with what had been announced in the 2022 Federal Budget regarding how charities work with non-qualified donees. The specific wording in the legislation would actually be harmful to the intention of the budget commitment to allow charitable and nonprofit organizations to better cooperate, particularly in the area of international development and relief, and in supporting communities in Canada.
- Prayers and reflections were provided following the Buffalo grocery store and Uvalde school shootings. Resources and public comments were made available for themed months and days, such as Asian Heritage Month, World Refugee Day, and National Indigenous Day of Prayer.

Anglican

- National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald resigned as of April 20, 2022. Pastoral letters concerning this resignation have been shared via e-mail, at worship, and on the Parish's website.
- The Most Rev. Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury visited Canada from April 29th to May 3rd. The following is from a statement he made prior to his visit: "The visit will be an opportunity to listen, to lament and to pray for justice, healing and transformation in the relationship between the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island and the Arctic, and the See of Canterbury and the Church of England." During his visit, he will meet with Anglican Indigenous people and Indigenous leaders in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario; and in Toronto, Ontario. The Parish's website has two posts from his visit: a report on his visit originally published in the *Anglican Journal* and a copy of the text of his apology delivered at an Indigenous gathering in Prince Albert on May 4th.
- **The Territory of the People Assembly** was held at St. Paul's Cathedral in Kamloops from May 27th to 29th. The theme, "Come and See!", based on Isaiah 43: 19 grounded the work of the Assembly. The weekend was filled with worship, reports, community building,

conversation, discussion, decisions, elections, challenges, and meals. There were definitely times for individuals and parishes to reconnect after having a long interlude when in person meetings were not possible. Our Parish's representatives were the Rev. Bruce Chalmers, the Rev. Keith Peterson from the Church of St Paul, and Leslie Ross from Trinity Shared Ministry. The Rev. Chalmers chaired the Resolutions Committee, and Leslie Ross served on it.

On Friday evening, Assisting Bishop Jane Alexander addressed the Assembly, presenting her Charge to the Territory. In it, she provided her observations of the current situation in the Territory and, through questions and suggested aspirations, challenged the Assembly representatives to consider future actions of themselves, their parishes, and the Territory. She considers these to be the "big" questions to be addressed now:

1. Are we ready to have an Episcopal election for a bishop who will the Territory into this new time?
2. Are we ready to invest our time and talents and treasure to grow leaders, lay and ordained, to help the church rise to meet the challenges before us?
3. Are we willing to keep walking with humility and asking our pastoral elders to give us guidance into reconciled relationships throughout the Territory of the People?
4. Are we ready to undertake a season of invitation, particularly to families and young children?

Bishop Jane spoke about increasing the number of those regularly involved in our parishes by ten per cent. She felt that was totally doable in that in smaller congregations that would just be one or two people.

During Saturday morning, Archbishop Lynne McNaughton gave a report on the work of the Anglican Province of BC and Yukon as well as the national church. In preparing for the Lambeth Conference, the Bishops are engaged in Bible study with Bishops in other parts of the world. Two of the Bishops with whom Archbishop Lynne is studying are from Australia. They regularly ask her about the situation in Lytton as they are well aware of the results of wildfire. She spoke about shared ministries with the understanding that there is a need to understand how to keep a Christian identity, not necessarily how to keep an Anglican identity. The importance of supporting rural ministries and what those in rural are able to offer to the wider church was also discussed.

Isabel Healy-Morrow and Angus Muir reported for the Nicola Valley Flood Committee and the Lytton Fire Committee. To get a sense of the damage in Merritt and the Nicola Valley, Isabel Healy-Morrow presented a slide show of pictures she had taken. Clean up is still occurring. In March, there were still 900 people displaced. Angus Muir reported that one of the difficulties for those affected by the wildfires is that they are all scattered; they are unable to be in community. Therefore, a Facebook group was created so that songs and prayers could be shared. Others joined Angus Muir in his reporting. One talked about the need to breathe in a spiritual way and to pray for their spirits to come back to their bodies so that they can become whole again.

In the afternoon, five resolutions were presented. All passed. They were

1. Develop a living wage policy for lay employees, recognizing that a living wage reflects the actual costs of living in a community, including rent, food, child care, travel costs.

2. Ask the Assisting Bishop and the Ministry Committee to begin the process of creating an “Anglican House of Studies”, and appropriate curriculum, to form and train locally-raised clergy and specialized lay ministries.

3. Ask the Coordinating Council to provide an honorarium/remuneration to the webmaster of the Territory website.

4. Charge the Coordinating Council, as part of our ongoing review of sexual misconduct practices, with finding ways to improve transparency in such proceedings, to ensure that the Territory as a whole can feel confident that any corrective actions taken are appropriate both for the victims, the offender, and the health of the church. – *Note that this resolution had a friendly amendment so the wording is not exactly what passed.*

5. Ask the Lytton Wildfire Fund Committee to open up the surplus funds so that people affected by the Lytton fire can apply for additional funds.

Group discussions to explore whether it was now time for the Territory to elect a new bishop were held. Most felt that we were not yet ready to do so. Elections took place for the Coordinating Council and for clergy representatives to General Synod. There was a longish break in the afternoon so that clergy and worship leaders could rehearse for Sunday’s worship.

After dinner, the election results were announced. The meeting divided into its regional deaneries to select two members each to also serve on the Coordinating Council. Those members of the Coordinating Council who were present then met to elect the Administration Committee members.

Prior to Sunday morning service, Archbishop Lynne McNaughton responded to the Assisting Bishop’s address and what she had heard throughout the Assembly. Her comments included

- That it was good that the agenda gave us space and time to gather and get to know each other.
- One of the challenges for the new Coordinating Council as well as the rest of us is the need for youth involvement
- There is a need to continue slowly putting the spirit back into our bodies.
- That when the Coordinating Council meets in November, it will revisit our readiness to move forward with the election of a new bishop. We are coming out of a numbness and collectively still healing and lamenting. There is still a need to listen noting that grief cannot be rushed. She noted that with aging, there is a need to enlarge our capacity for sadness. She reminded us the declaration made years ago that we are “yeast not toast”.
- With the demographic challenges, we should be aspiring for that ten percent growth always considering what is the new thing that God is up to.
- How do we move from maintenance/survival mode to discipleship?
- Consider climate change. Perhaps during the seasons of creation, parishes could take a local pilgrimage to flag ecological issues. What small “doable” could be done? Listen to

your neighbourhood. The earth is also our neighbour and is usually voiceless and marginalized.

- ecumenical partnerships
- As a result of what happened in Lytton, the Nicola Valley and the Fraser Valley, the Anglican Province of British Columbia and Yukon is developing emergency response toolkits for congregations.

During Sunday morning worship, the ordination of Linda LaGroix took place. She is now working part time in Ashcroft. Pastoral elders Pauline Michell, Ernie Michell, and Ursula Drynock were also installed.

Pictures are available on the Parish's and St. Paul's Cathedral's websites.

- The Territory of the People is still accepting donations for the Lytton Fire Fund and the Nicola Valley Flood Fund.

Evangelical Lutheran

- Canadian Lutheran World Relief donated archival material to Laurier Archives that will provide information for researchers on refugee resettlement and humanitarian programmes around the world.
- The 2022 National Convention will be held online from July 15th to 16th with the theme "Let There Be Greening".
- The BC Synod continues hosting a short Prayer Vigil for Peace for Ukraine and the World via zoom on Friday evenings at 7 pm. From June 10th and throughout the summer, it will be held every other week.
- The BC Synod is continuing to hold online meetings for lay leaders as well as the more regular online gatherings for rostered ministers. At the May meeting, we participated in one of the sections of the Learning Anti-Racism Toolkit developed by the Victoria Multifaith Society. There are eight sections with each one consisting of a two hour workshop. There is a thirty page workbook. More information can be found at <https://victoriamultifaith.com/> with the specific details under "Resources". The plan for June was to hear from the Climate Justice Group.
- For the third summer in the row, ELCIC Bishops and Assistants to the Bishops are providing a series of sermons available for congregational use from June to September, 2022.

Anglican and Evangelical Lutheran

- ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson, Anglican Church of Canada Archbishop Linda Nicholls, and Anglican Church of Canada National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald shared a joint Earth Day message with the two denominations.
- The ELCIC and the Anglican Church of Canada recognized the Seventh Sunday of Easter, May 29th, as Jerusalem and Holy Land Sunday.

United Church

- The United Church of Canada has written two letters to the Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada. The letters urge Canada to work with like-minded countries to hold the government of Israel accountable for violations of international law and specifically to
 - denounce the government of Israel's plan to forcibly expel the villagers of Masafer Yatta and press the government of Israel to rescind this decision; and
 - denounce the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh and call for an immediate independent investigation into her killing that holds those responsible accountable.
- The Moderator broadcast a video message for Pentecost and published a reflection on the work and experiences of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis during the last year.
- On Wednesday, April 27th, the Pacific Mountain Regional Council held a Financial Forum via zoom to present a financial update and provide information about the 2021 audited financial statements, investments, and property. Leslie Ross attended it.
- **The Pacific Mountain Regional Council Annual Meeting** was a hybrid meeting held from June 9th to 12th with representatives attending in person at the Prince George Conference and Civic Centre and as visitors on the land of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and online using the Whova Platform and Zoom. The Rev. Bruce Chalmers and Leslie Ross (representing Trinity Shared Ministry) attended the PMRC meeting in person, with Leslie Stirling (representing Church of St Paul) attending remotely. For those attending in person, there certainly was much joy in greeting those not seen in some time.

A bit of good-natured fun was had so that those with the right to vote could practice the process. The motion was that in order to celebrate becoming an Affirming Region, the President would colour his beard like a rainbow. It passed overwhelmingly. President Blair Odney appeared the next morning with a rainbow coloured beard!

The theme was "Rooted and Grounded in Love" from Ephesians 3: 14-21. Worship and music was interwoven throughout the meeting. The musicians were from Weird Church in Cumberland. Each time of worship centred on different verses from the theme scripture. Saturday morning's worship included the memorials. As well, other scripture relating to the theme was told in story form using "Godly Play" when participants from the Children, Middle School, and Youth at General Meeting 2022 programme were present.

Keynote speaker was Jeff Chu, who gave four addresses: “Hopes, Dreams, Aspirations”, “What Does the Church Need to Repent of?”, “Who do you want to be in the world?”, and “Blessing”. He used his experiences attending Farminary, a programme of Princeton Theological Seminary where theological education is integrated with small-scale regenerative agriculture to train faith leaders who are conversant in the areas of ecology, sustainability, and food justice to enter into the theme “Rooted and Grounded in Love”. We were asked what soils formed us. We learned about the theology of compost and the importance of earthworms. He talked about cultivating seed. As well as using the metaphor of gardening, he used quilting to add further depth. He told us our work was to cultivate hope. A practice for deep listening is simply to ask a person to “tell me more”.

Throughout the meeting videos providing insight from retirees and others describing what becoming an Affirming Region would mean were shown. Business sessions giving information about the work of the PMRC and General Council were interspersed through the meeting. These included the President’s Address, a time for Executive Council accountability, policy development, First Third Ministry, Leadershift, Office of Vocation, Indigenous Ministry, and development at First United in Vancouver.

The Rev. Michael Blair began his report on the work of General Council by reading the church section of the *Song of Faith*. Laughter was the result of his statement that because of the format of General Council 44, it will take longer than the Council of Nicaea. He described the work of becoming an antiracial denomination, explained the development of the strategic plan, thanked us for our generosity in supporting the Mission and Service Fund, and commented on The United Church commitment to addressing climate change, mentioning the Faithful Footprints programme.

When Vicki Nelson presented her stewardship information, she asked us to think about the following:

- Who taught you to pray?
 - How did you learn to be in worship?
 - What was an early memory of injustice that you witnessed and did something about?
- Who taught you to engage?
- Do you remember a moment when you learned to be generous?

Five proposals were presented. There were three times in the agenda for dealing with them. At the first occasion, the proposals were introduced with the presenter giving information about the purpose of the resolution. The second session was an opportunity for clarification so that the proposal would be fully understood. During the final time, the Chair of the Business Committee had the proposal turned into a motion with a mover and seconder that included who or what body would deal with the proposal. Further discussion on the motion took place prior to the vote. The five proposals were

1. Recognizing Ecumenical Shared Ministry Specific Circumstances –This was the proposal submitted by the North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry. Leslie Ross presented the proposal and responded to the questions asked for clarification. In it the NTESM was asking that the PMRC Ends Policy be revised to ensure the nature and needs of ecumenical shared ministries are included and supported. The need and support for this

proposal was affirmed by comments made publically and in private conversation including by those serving on the Executive.

2. Support for Faith Communities – This proposal came from Keith Simmonds of Duncan United Church and asks that the PMRC determine appropriate responses to difficulties faced by faith communities including day to day operations and maintaining ministry personnel and that an outline of those responses be made available to the Region with a request for further resources if needed.

3. Encouraging Climate Conversations within Communities of Faith – This proposal came from Janet Gray and members of First Metropolitan United Church. In it, they ask that every community of faith in the Region have climate conversations through volunteer efforts and using available online resources (e.g. www.fortheloveofcreation.ca endorsed by the United Church of Canada) to engage thoughtful action and advocacy in response to the climate emergency.

4. Gathering As One – This proposal came from the Executive. It states that for the next triennium (until 2025) that the PMRC meet each year in a hybrid format (online and onsite) at locations yet to be determined. There is an understanding that an evaluative component of the style and frequency of the meeting will be part of a report and recommendation from the Executive in 2025.

5. The Body of Christ as an Essential Antidote to The Opioid Crisis – This proposal did not arrive on the floor of the Court until the final time of working with proposals. Therefore the presentation and clarification occurred once the motion had been made. After discussion, the motion was withdrawn so that a new motion could be presented taking into account the concerns raised in the discussion. The new motion used the term drug toxicity.

All five motions passed.

Group discussions revolved around the question “What does a healthy, flourishing community of faith look like?” Notes were taken. Based on the notes, President-Elect Deborah Richards reported on the themes that appeared in the discussion.

The Nominating Committee, chaired by the Rev. Graham Brownmiller, presented a slate for the Executive Council. Excepting one, all members of the current Executive remain the same with terms ending from 2023 to 2025. Ivy Thomas was elected to replace the one member who is not continuing. Deborah Richards is now President; Blair Odney is Past President.

To celebrate becoming an Affirming Region, an outdoor dinner barbeque was held with locals invited to the meal.

The Celebration of Ministry Service was held on Sunday morning. It was live streamed and is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr1hxPZljiI>. The Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary of the United Church of Canada, preached. The Rev. Jonah Lin was admitted to the United Church of Canada from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Melanie Ihmels was commissioned as a diaconal minister. Philip Frances was ordained. Deborah Richards was installed as President of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council.

Pictures taken during the PMRC Annual Meeting are available on the Parish's website.

- The 44th General Council opened on February 14th. It is being held virtually with a number of sessions between then and when it closes on August 7, 2022. Information is being continually updated on the website: <https://generalcouncil44.ca/> The United Church hosted two online events (May 12th and June 1st) featuring Global and Ecumenical Partners to discuss urgent current and compelling issues for people of faith including the climate crisis, increasing inequities, injustice, and deepening polarizations. Information and links can be found on the Parish's website. On June 17 at 2 p.m. EDT, nominations closed for 44th Moderator of The United Church of Canada. At that time there was only one nominee, the Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, who had been nominated by the Pacific Mountain Regional Council. The United Church of Canada requires an election process for Moderator. That election will happen on July 23, and the individual elected at that time will be installed on August 7, 2022.
- The Pacific Mountain Regional Council continues to hold online Town Hall meetings.