

Denominational News
Reported to the NTESM Parish Council Meeting on April 20, 2023

All Three Denominations

- Resources were made available for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity held from January 18th to 25th.
- Following the desecration of a Christian cemetery on Mt. Zion, National Bishop Susan Johnson and The Anglican Church of Canada Primate Linda Nicholls wrote to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau noting concerns for the safety and dignity of Christians in the Holy Land. Several Canadian ecumenical leaders also endorsed the letter including Moderator Carmen Lansdowne.
- All three relief and development agencies accepted donations to help with relief efforts in Türkiye and Syria.
- Rev. Prof. Dr. Jerry Pillay was installed as the ninth general secretary of the World Council of Churches on February 17th. Pillay is from the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.
- Statements were made for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that has been observed around the world every year on March 21 since 1966.
- Joining with other denominations and faith-based organizations, our three denominations are encouraging communities of faith to celebrate “Together for the Love of Creation” during Earth Week from April 16 – April 23, 2023.
- The United Church of Canada, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, and Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund are among over 90 non-governmental organizations, representing a wide-range of development, humanitarian, environmental and advocacy groups, who expressed disappointment at the failure of the 2023 Federal Budget to commit new resources for international development in a press release dated March 28th.
- For Easter, two video messages were released: one from the Moderator of The United Church of Canada; the other, a joint message from the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.
- On April 27th, there will be a panel discussion on “New Developments in Israel-Palestine and the Role of Churches” at Saint Paul University in Ottawa. Anglican, Lutheran, United, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic leaders will lead a conversation about how churches in Canada are involved in advocating for and with partners in Palestine, and what next steps may be needed in a context of new developments in a deteriorating situation.

Anglican

- Archbishop and Primate Linda Nicholl’s New Year’s Day Sermon from the Diocese of Ottawa was made available.
- The Territory of the People postponed its Electoral Assembly to choose a new Bishop from March 31st to April 2nd, 2023 until the weekend of September 15th to 17th. This webpage, <https://www.territoryofthepeople.ca/collections/profile>, on the Territory of the People’s website provides information. The application deadline is now June 15th. From July 25th through August

8th, the Nominations Committee will meet to determine the suitability of the applicants, create a list of final candidates, and share the list and candidate materials with the Metropolitan for circulation to the BC House of Bishops prior to circulation to delegates. On August 9th, the candidate information packages will be sent to Assembly delegates and the list of candidates will be published.

- St. Paul's Cathedral in Kamloops offered weekly Lenten lectures on Thursdays that explored the intersections between religion and our lives.
- Archbishop and Primate Linda Nicholls attended the United Society Partners International Consultation — Set my People Free: The Call of the Church against Human Trafficking — attended by 15 Primates and 29 delegates representing member churches from across the Anglican Communion. It was held in Dar Es Salaam and hosted by the Anglican Church of Tanzania in early February.
- Freedom Sunday was held on February 19th. It is a global movement of prayer, worship, and action to address the crime of human trafficking. In the Anglican Church of Canada, Freedom Sunday shines light on the connections between human trafficking, labour exploitation, and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ persons.
- Archbishop and Primate Linda Nicholls published a statement on the anniversary of the start of the war in Ukraine.
- The Council of the General Synod met from March 2nd to 5th in Toronto and via Zoom. The Rev. Louise Peters was present in her role of chaplain to the Council of the General Synod. Highlights of the meeting will be found on the Anglican Church of Canada's website and on our Parish's website in this post: <https://norththompsonpc.ca/2023/03/council-of-general-synod-met/>.
- The Territory of the People is still accepting donations for the Lytton Fire Fund and the Nicola Valley Flood Fund.
- The Church of England has published a book of daily prayers in preparation for the coronation of King Charles III.

Evangelical Lutheran

- The Rev. Sally Azar was ordained in Jerusalem on January 22nd. She is the first Palestinian woman to be ordained in the Holy Land. National Bishop Susan Johnson, BC Synod Bishop Kathy Martin, and other ELCIC Bishops attended the service as well as being part of a twelve day informational tour in the region.
- The Southern Interior Region of the BC Synod has held gatherings for clergy in the region.
- BC Synod continues to have monthly online meetings for lay leaders. At the February meeting, Bishop Kathy Martin shared information about her trip to the Holy Land.
- Lutherans Connect's on-line Lent and Holy Week devotions had the theme "Before the Cross".
- The BC Synod is hosting a series of eight ninety-minute webinars led by the Rev. Susan Beaumont that focus on deepening group discernment practices.

- The BC Synod hosted an online Ukraine prayer vigil for peace in the evening of February 24th. There were about 45 participants.
- In the morning on March 25th, the Southern Interior Region (SIR) of the BC Synod held an on-line gathering for all the congregations in the SIR.
- The ELCIC posted a statement for International Transgender Day of Visibility held on March 31st.

Anglican and Evangelical Lutheran

- The Primate and National Bishop wrote to the Prime Minister following the shooting in a Jewish synagogue in East Jerusalem on January 27th. In it, they “implore you and your government to continue to advocate with the current Israeli government to promote de-escalation through a reversal of increasingly inflammatory rhetoric and policies, and to encourage similar commitments from the Palestinian Authority to advancing safety for all. Canada must live up to the entirety of its existing policies on peace in Israel and Palestine and take a more active role in the international community in affirming the necessary conditions for peace and security for both Israeli and Palestinian citizens.”
- The two denominations shared information about the World Council of Church’s Week of Prayer for Overcoming Racism and Xenophobia held from March 19th to 25th. The week included March 21st, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which recognizes the injustices and prejudices fuelled by racial discrimination that take place every day, as well as March 25th, International Day for the Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.
- The Anglican Church of Canada’s General Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada’s National Convention will be a joint gathering at the University of Calgary. The National Convention runs from June 28th to July 2nd; the General Synod, from June 27th to July 2nd.

United Church

- The United Church of Canada shared a prayer following mass shootings in California.
- The United Church of Canada joined with 250 organizations from 29 countries to call on the Salvadoran government to drop charges against leading Water Defenders arrested January 11th and to advocate for their release. The human rights and environment defenders were among leaders of the historic and successful campaign that convinced the Salvadoran legislature to unanimously pass a ban on metals mining in 2017 to save that nation’s rivers. The government is reportedly considering overturning the mining ban and allowing environmentally destructive mining.
- The General Council Executive met online from February 10th to 11th.
- Treena Duncan, Executive Minister of the PMRC has returned from a sabbatical taken from January through March 2023.
- The PMRC continues to hold online Town Hall meetings. The January meeting included a report on campus ministries. The guest of the March meeting was the Rev. Tony Snow, Chinook Winds Indigenous Minister. The Rev. Michelle Slater led a time of worship and reflection in the April Holy Week meeting.

- The United Church of Canada has responded to the Phase One Findings at the Alberni Residential Institution. The Moderator has shared prayers appropriate for indigenous and non-indigenous people.
- The United Church of Canada has thanked the people of the United Church who contributed to the Mission and Service Fund and to the work of the church in 2022. The contributions totalled \$24.5 million, including Mission & Service givings totalling \$21.1 million, bequests and other planned gifts totalling \$1.8 million, and over \$1.5 million for the people of Ukraine.
- The United Church of Canada hosted a consultation in Manila in February 2023 to share stories and plan new steps to overcome religious-based homophobia and transphobia. Participants were LGBTQIA+ people and allies from The United Church of Canada and its partners in the Philippines, India, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Indonesia.
- An ecumenical accompanier shared the plight of Palestinians in a post on The United Church of Canada's website.
- The 44th General Council authorized a remit to test the will of the church regarding the removal of structural barriers so that the Indigenous Church can determine its place and structure within the United Church of Canada. The remit requires a vote by every regional council and each pastoral charge's governing body. Information about the remit, as well as voting cards, were sent to every regional council and each pastoral charge on March 10th, either through email or Canada Post. Voting will take place between March 15, 2023, and March 31, 2024. Abstentions are considered a vote against the remit. The results will be reported to the Annual Meeting of the General Council of the United Church in October 2024.
- On April 4th, National Refugee Rights Day, The United Church of Canada issued a statement on the closure of the Roxham Road border crossing in which it urged the Canadian government to fulfill its legal obligations to uphold refugees' right to protection, under international human rights law.
- The General Meeting of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council will be held from June 1st to 4th at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford and online. The theme is "Refining Fire. Living Stones". The keynote presenter is the Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis.