

Denominational News
Reported to the NTESM Parish Council Meeting on September 19, 2023

All Three Denominations

- On April 27th, there was 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 led a conversation about how churches in Canada are involved in advocating for and with partners in Palestine, and what next steps might be needed in a context of new developments in a deteriorating situation.
- On April 27th, the Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada; The Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, Moderator of The United Church of Canada and The Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, Principal Emerita, Knox College, The Presbyterian Church in Canada met with government and opposition MPs to urge Canada to further advocate for a just and lasting peace in Palestine and Israel and to discuss several requests regarding the treatment of Palestinian children and human rights abuses in the conflict.
- On their Facebook feeds, all three churches recognize the celebrations of other faiths as well as national and international days, weeks, months that raise various heritages, celebrations, and concerns.
- For World Refugee Day on June 20th, The United Church of Canada released a written statement. The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and The Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada released a joint video message.
- All three denominations have made statements or provided resources for Pride Month.
- All three denominations have provided information and resources for the Season of Creation that is held from September 1st to October 4th.
- On Tuesday, September 5, The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, Moderator of the United Church, The Rev. Mary Fontaine, Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, The Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, The Most Rev. Chris Harper, National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, and The Rev. Canon Dr. Murray Still, Co-Chair of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, visited Camp Morgan, at the Brady Landfill outside Winnipeg, in solidarity with those calling for justice and an end to the violence against Indigenous women, children, and Two-Spirit people.

United Church and Anglican

- On June 20th, Moderator Carmen Lansdowne and National Indigenous Council Co-chair Leeann Shimoda, together with Presbyterian Moderator Mary Fontaine, Anglican Primate

Linda Nicholls, National Anglican Indigenous Archbishop Chris Harper and Roman Catholic Archbishop of Ottawa Marcel Damphousse met with former TRC Commissioner Dr. Marie Wilson at the ceremony today announcing the site of the National Residential School Memorial. With the agreement of the Algonquin nation, the memorial will be on the West terrace beside the west block at Parliament Hill.

Anglican

- The Territory of the People held its Electoral Assembly on September 16th at St. Paul's Cathedral in Kamloops to choose a new Bishop. The Rev. Bruce Chalmers, Keith Peterson, and Leslie Ross represented our parish. Information about the process and the candidate is found on this page, <https://www.territoryofthepeople.ca/collections/profile>, on the Territory of the People's website.

As there was only one candidate, the twenty-seven lay and thirteen clergy Assembly delegates discerned whether this candidate was called to be the next Bishop of the Territory of the People or if the Territory was being called to begin a new Electoral Process.

The Ven. Clara Plamondon was elected with the unanimous concurrence of the Provincial House of Bishops. She is currently the Incumbent at St. Paul Anglican Church, Nanaimo BC where she has served since June of 2018 in the Diocese of BC, Islands and Inlets. She was ordained Deacon and Priest in the Diocese of BC and holds a Master of Divinity from Vancouver School of Theology. Clara is currently the Prolocutor of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC and Yukon. The date for Bishop-Elect Clara Plamondon's Consecration service is still to be scheduled.

- The Anglican Church of Canada shared an appeal to support the Ahli Hospital in Gaza by the Most Rev. Hosam E. Naoum, Archbishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, as a result of overburdened hospitals in the region, stemming from a recent eruption of violence.
- The 11th Sacred Circle, the national gathering and decision-making body for Indigenous Anglicans in Canada, met from May 28th to June 2nd. Archbishop Christopher A. Harper was installed as the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop and Presiding Elder of Sacred Circle, with pastoral oversight over all Indigenous Anglicans. The founding documents, *Covenant and Our Way of Life*, for the self-determining Indigenous church within the Anglican Church of Canada were ratified.
- On August 6th, the Anglican Church of Canada acknowledged the 30th anniversary of the Apology offered by Archbishop and Primate Michael Geoffrey Peers to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada for the church's actions in the residential schools.
- The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund is establishing a fund specifically for in-Canada emergency response. The new fund will allow them to respond quickly when a diocese asks us for support, rather than wait to raise funds for individual disasters.

- On August 27th, Archbishop and Primate Linda Nicholls led an online prayer vigil for those affected by recent wildfires — evacuees, first responders, caregivers — especially those in the Northwest Territories and British Columbia.

Evangelical Lutheran

- BC Synod returned to having monthly online meetings for lay leaders following the summer.
- The Bulletin of Reports for the ELCIC’s National Convention was available under *Information for Delegates* on the Assembly 2023 website at: <https://www.anglicanlutheran.ca/assembly/> .
- For the fourth summer in a row, ELCIC Bishops and Assistants to the Bishops provided a series of sermons available for congregational use from June to September, 2023.
- On the 24th day of every month, the ELCIC joins people around the world in praying for peace in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. More information can be found here: actpalestineforum.org/apf-ecumenical-prayer-vigil/
- On Saturday, May 20th, the BC Synod held a service of confession and reconciliation at Hope Lutheran Church in Nanaimo to publicly apologize to Rev. William (Bill) Fehr, his family and friends. Over 33 years ago, Rev. Fehr was serving as a pastor when the church decided that it was inappropriate for gay persons to serve as ordained clergy. He chose to resign. Bishop Jason Zinko (MNO Synod) and Bishop Kathy Martin will offer a public apology. Retired National Bishop Raymond Schultz preached. Pastor Bill Fehr, now reinstated to the roster, presided at Holy Communion.
- From July 22nd to August 6th, Lutherans Connect provided online devotionals with the theme “Healing for the Spirit”.
- The 2023 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Assembly took place September 13 to 19 in Krakow, Poland. The theme for the Thirteenth LWF Assembly is One Body, One Spirit, One Hope which serves as a reminder that in a fragmented world, there is a call to unity in the one body of Christ. The theme is from Ephesians 4:4 (NRSV): “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling.” Sixteen members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada attended in a variety of capacities.

Anglican and Evangelical Lutheran

- The Most Rev. Chris Harper (National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop), the Rev. Susan Johnson (National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada), and the Most Rev. Linda Nicholls (Archbishop and Primate, Anglican Church of Canada) posted a message for Earth Day.

- Canada Lutheran World Relief and the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund are both accepting donations for relief efforts in East Africa. Climate change and conflict are contributing to the crisis.
- On June 20th, the Rev. Susan Johnson (National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) and the Most Rev. Linda Nicholls (Archbishop and Primate, Anglican Church of Canada) wrote the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, to ask the Government of Canada to introduce a just and comprehensive regularization program for undocumented persons in Canada.
- On May 1st, the Most Rev. Chris Harper (National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop), the Rev. Susan Johnson (National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada), and the Most Rev. Linda Nicholls (Archbishop and Primate, Anglican Church of Canada) wrote Senator Kutcher to express the churches’ support for *Bill S-251: An Act to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code*. It presents an opportunity to end the use of corporal punishment in Canada. This bill is in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s call to action number 6.
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada lift up the seventh Sunday of Easter as Jerusalem and the Holy Land Sunday.
- For World Refugee Day on June 20th, National Bishop Susan Johnson (ELCIC) and Karin Achtelstetter (CLWR) presented a video message.
- For June 21st, the National Indigenous Day of Prayer, the Most Rev. Chris Harper (National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop), the Rev. Susan Johnson (National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada), and the Most Rev. Linda Nicholls (Archbishop and Primate, Anglican Church of Canada) wrote a letter to recognize and celebrate the history, heritage, resilience and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples across Canada; to acknowledge the painful history of which churches shared in the colonization and destruction of Indigenous spirituality and culture; and to note the commitment to the long road toward reconciliation.
- The Anglican Church of Canada’s General Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada’s National Convention was a joint gathering at the University of Calgary. The National Convention ran from June 28th to July 2nd; the General Synod, from June 27th to July 2nd. The theme is “Let there be greening”. Both denominations published information and pictures on their Facebook pages. The Moravian Church Northern Province, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Anglican Church of Canada at their respective synods and assemblies unanimously approved a full communion relationship.
- The Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering met from August 10th to 13th in Waterloo, Ontario with the theme, “Ashes and Embers”.

United Church

- The Pacific Mountain Regional Council returned to holding monthly online Town Hall meetings following the summer.
- The United Church of Canada recognized April 24th as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.
- The General Council Executive met virtually May 12–13, 2023.
- 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 May 29th, The United Church of Canada released a statement in which it joined with other civil society organizations in Canada to denounce the anti-LGBTQIA+ bill that passed recently in Uganda.
- The United Church of Canada celebrated its 98th Anniversary on June 10, 2023.
- In a statement, The United Church of Canada lamented the Supreme Court's decision that failed to decisively rule that the Safe Third Country Agreement violates refugees' rights. Refugees and their allies, including Canadian churches and ecumenical groups, have long advocated for an end to this agreement because the United States is not a safe country for all refugees.
- Moderator Carmen Lansdowne released a video statement for National Indigenous Peoples Day held on June 21st in which she suggests many ways individuals and communities of faith could celebrate or recognize the day.
- Prior to the 5th Annual General Meeting of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council, a Financial Forum was held via zoom on May 25, 2023. Leslie Ross attended. The purpose of the forum was to present the 2022 Audited Financial Statements, provide information on investments, give a property update, and answer questions.

Pacific Mountain Regional Council Annual General Meeting Report

5th Annual General Meeting
from June 1st to 4th
at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford
Theme: Refining Fire, Living Stones

Our Parish's representatives: The Rev. Bruce Chalmers, Leslie Ross (Trinity Shared Ministry), and Leslie Stirling (Church of St Paul)

There are many pictures in a post on our website that will give you a sense of the meeting.

The keynote presenter was the Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis. She spoke each day with the addresses being titled: "Forged in the Fire: Tools for Living in these Days", "Unfinished Business?", and "A Bold New Thing on Earth: Can you See it?".

Worship and opportunities for singing occurred throughout the meeting. Opening worship on Thursday included communion. Friday night worship began with a quiet time of reflection as portraits for the memorials were projected. Then, we moved into a service of lament in which the traumatic legacy of Residential Schools was recognized, specifically acknowledging the unmarked graves confirmed at the Port Alberni Residential School earlier this year. Stuffed toys and children's shoes were brought forward as part of the liturgy. Saturday morning worship was story told through a music sing-a-long. Saturday's closing worship centred on the theme "Behold, I am doing a new thing!"

Reports were received. In the Regional Executive Accountability Report found in the Agenda and Reports Book, the actions on the proposals brought forward during the 2022 Annual General Meeting were provided. Our Parish had presented a proposal to have ecumenical shared ministries be represented in the Ends Policies of the Executive. The result was that the Executive voted to add a new statement - as #7, under Regional Ministry: "Ecumenical Shared Ministries will be supported as they live out complex inter- denominational relationships with a variety of expectations and requirements.

- a. Inter-denominational realities will be considered.
- b. Denominational identities are respected

As well as the reports in the Agenda and Reports Book, over the course of the meeting, reports from the following were heard: First Third Ministry, Stewardship, Executive, Office of Vocation, LeaderSHIFT, Naramata Centre, and Indigenous Ministry.

The Rev. Dr. Simon LeSieur (West Vancouver United Church) was elected President-Elect by acclamation. Two positions on the Executive were filled by the Rev. Dr. Joseph Kyser (Deer Lake United Church, Burnaby) and Johannes VanKessel-Crozier (Weird Church, Cumberland).

Discussion on six proposals and the Remit "Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization" were held on Friday. The proposals were titled:

- 23-01 Supporting Leadership of Adolescents & Youth
- 23-02 Get Rid of Greenhouse Gases
- 23-03 A Regional Staff Position for Senior's Ministry
- 23-04 Sabbatical Fund Relief
- 23-05 UnSettling Hewlett Packard
- 23-06 Advocacy & Action for Guaranteed Livable Income

On Saturday, time was taken to make decisions. The Remit was supported. Communities of faith will also need to vote on this remit by next March. A decision was made that at least 5

percent of registered representatives to the Regional Council's Annual General Meeting needed to be 30 years of age or younger. 23-02 and 23-03 were referred to the Executive because they had budget implications. The decision for 23-04 was to take no action. Time ran out so 23-05 and 23-06 were referred to the Executive.

The Celebration of Ministry service was held on Sunday morning. It is available to watch on the PMRC's YouTube channel. The link is in the post on our website. During the service, John Helps was commissioned to diaconal ministry, and Derry Bott and Francis Kitson were ordained.

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- On July 29th, the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering voted “yes” on the remit to establish an autonomous Indigenous church within the United Church of Canada.
- On Sunday, August 6, the Black Clergy Network of The United Church of Canada conducted their third annual Emancipation Day panel discussion.
- The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne has been appointed to the new tenure-track position of Assistant Professor of United Church Studies at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto. Effective December 1, 2025, she will direct the College's Master of Divinity (MDiv) program and teach courses related to The United Church of Canada.
- Deborah Richards, President of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council sent a pastoral letter via email on August 19th as a response to the effects and devastation of the wildfires that have impacted BC for yet another summer.
- On September 18th, the Pacific Mountain Region posted information from Affirming Connections, a Calgary-based organization committed to “providing education, resources, and beams of God-Love supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ children, youth and adults”. Affirming Connections was sharing information about and ideas for responding to the plan by anti-2SLGBTQIA+ activists to rally at legislatures, city halls, and school board offices across the country under the “1 Million March 4 Children” banner on September 20th. The post is found here: <https://pacificmountain.ca/urgent-notice-protect-trans-kids-protect-non-binary-kids>.