Denominational News
Reported to the NTESM Parish Council Meeting on April 16, 2024

All Three Denominations

- Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Toronto, which has members from our three denominations, presented a webinar on January 28, 2024 in which Dr. Amy-Jill Levine offered a webinar on Antisemitism in Biblical Interpetation.

- Our three denominations have written to Prime Minister Trudeau to indicate their support of the International Court of Justice's ruling in the case brought forward by South Africa regarding Israel's actions in its war with Hamas to ask the government to urge Israel to comply with the Court's provisional measures. The Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary of The United Church of Canada's letter was written on January 26th, the day of the International Court of Justice's ruling. 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 wrote a joint letter on February 1, 2024. Both letters are found in posts on the Parish's website.

- All three of our denominations have signed an open letter dated February 5, 2024 to Minister for Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly urging Canada to stop arms transfers to Israel. The letter is found in a post on the Parish's website.

- All three denominations provided resources or statements for Black History Month.

- All three denominations provided resources, devotionals, and statements for Lent.

- Canadian Lutheran World Relief, the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, and The United Church of Canada joined one hundred Canadian civil society organizations in signing an open letter to Prime Minister Trudeau *asking the Government of Canada to include support for international assistance in the 2024 budget*. In it, they call on Canada to play a principled role in a deeply insecure world by committing tangible support for human rights, protracted emergencies, and climate justice.

- All three denominations supported involvement in World Day of Prayer.

- In marking the second anniversary of the war in Ukraine, all three denominations shared information about the humanitarian aid that has been provided.

- All three denominations recognized International Women's Day on March 8th.

- On March 7th, 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; and The Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, Moderator of The United Church of Canada wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau to extend their appreciation for the government's decision to reinstate funding to UNRWA with its critical role in the region, and again to urge the

government of Canada to act wherever possible to facilitate an end to the large-scale violence in Gaza, the release of the hostages and Palestinian political prisoners and detainees, and to provide humanitarian relief to civilians trapped in Gaza.

- All three denominations provided Easter messages.

- All three denominations are involved with the Together for the Love of Creation initiative in support of Earth Week that occurs from April 21st to 28th. One of the events is an online Earth Day Prayer Circle on April 22nd, United Nations International Mother Earth Day, being led by Indigenous Minister Rev. Tony Snow and others.

Anglican

- The Territory of the People held the consecration service for Bishop-Elect Clara Plamondon on January 25, 2024. The Most Rev. Dr. Lynne McNaughton, Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of B.C. and Yukon ordained The Venerable Clara Plamondon a Bishop in the Church of God in St. Paul's Cathedral in Kamloops. The service was live-streamed from the St. Paul's Cathedral Facebook page. The Revs. Bruce Chalmers, Keith Peterson, and Louise Peters attended in person.

- The Primate's World Relief and Develop Fund provided a Lenten resource titled "Seeding Health: Lenten Meditations on Climate Crisis and Well-being". Each day of Lent, there was a daily email with a reflection from Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat, on what health, well-being and good living require of us in our lives and our relationships with one another, with creation, and with God.

- Bishop Clara Plamondon provided a weekly Lenten study via Zoom on Tuesdays beginning February 20, 2024 titled "Practicing Forgiveness With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind."

- The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada wrote a letter dated February 22, 2024 in which she reflects on the second anniversary of the war in Ukraine.

- The Anglican Church of Canada celebrated the 30th anniversary of women's ordination as bishops.

- On March 21st, the Archbishop of Canterbury issued a statement about the risk of famine in Gaza.

- On Good Friday, Primate Linda Nicholls joined Archbishop Lynne McNaughton at Okanagan Anglican Camp near Kelowna – which had been burned out last summer in the BC fires. They did a stations of the cross walk, planted a tree as a sign of hope for the rebuilding, and blessed a surviving canoe.

- The Territory of the People will be holding its Assembly at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Williams Lake from May 24th to 26th. The theme of the Assembly is "Sing a new Song" and it will be the first Assembly with Bishop Clara Plamondon. The Rev. Bruce Chalmers and Leslie Ross will be attending.

- Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, has announced that she will step down from her role as Primate on September 15, 2024. The canons of the Anglican Church of Canada require primates to retire upon reaching their 70th birthday. Archbishop Nicholls will reach mandatory retirement age in October. Until a new primate is elected by General Synod in 2025, Archbishop Anne Germond, who is Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario and the senior Provincial Metropolitan by virtue of having the longest current term of office, will serve as acting primate. More information will be found on the Parish's website.

Evangelical Lutheran

- BC Synod continues to have monthly online meetings for lay leaders. In February, since there was not a meeting in January, there was an opportunity to share Advent/Christmas experiences. Bishop Kathy Martin gave an update on a variety of happenings. Currently, there are four candidates for ministry. During this year, there will be three elections for bishops as a result of retirements. National Bishop Susan Johnson will retire next year. Some time was spent discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the BC Synod as well as opportunities or possibilities that may exist. Rather than the usual meeting in March, the Climate Justice Action Group of the BC Synod hosted a webinar about electric vehicles. There will not be a meeting in April.

- In a letter dated March 15, 2024 to the Ministers of Health, Justice, and Mental Health and Addictions, National Bishop Susan Johnson expressed support for just and universal access for all to dignified, quality mental health care service and urged the Government of Canada to increase its efforts to help meet this need.

- BC Synod will be holding its Triennial Convention from June 20th to 23rd at Walter Gage Residence on the UBC campus in Vancouver. The theme of the convention is "*One Body, One Spirit, One Hope*." This was the theme of the 2023 LWF Assembly in Krakow, Poland. The Rev. Bruce Chalmers and Leslie Ross will be attending.

Anglican and Lutheran

- ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson and Anglican Church of Canada Primate and Archbishop Linda Nicholls invited people to a day of prayer and fasting for Israel/Gaza and Ukraine on Friday, February 16, 2024. To conclude the day, they held a 30-minute prayer service on Facebook Live at 7:00 p.m. ET.

- ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson and Anglican Church of Canada Primate and Archbishop Linda Nicholls issued a joint statement on March 21, 2024 calling on all to take a stand against antisemitism.

United

- The Pacific Mountain Regional Council continues to hold monthly online Town Hall meetings.
    - In January, the Rev. Scott Reynolds, Growth Animator for the Pacific Mountain and Chinook Regions from the National Staff was introduced. Kendra Mitchell-Foster, Regional Minister for Justice, and University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) Campus Minister provided information about affirming ministries.
    - In February, the Rev. Scott Reynolds, Growth Animator for the Pacific Mountain and Chinook Regions from the National Staff provided information about his work.
    - In March, the theme was 'Spreading the Joy – Building teams for Pastoral Care', with guest The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Simmins, from Chinook Winds region. The Rev. Tony Snow provided opening worship. There was an update from Campus Ministries.
    - In April, the focus was on the process for proposals to the PMRC Annual General Meeting and to General Council 45.

- On February 15th, the United Church of Canada joined 245 international organizations from 31 countries who delivered a petition demanding that the Salvadoran Attorney General drop the politically-motivated charges against five prominent Water Defenders arrested on January 11, 2023.

- The General Council Executive met from February 23rd to 24th.

- On February 24th, First United Church in Vancouver hosted a Coldest Night of the Year event to raise funds for its work in the Downtown Eastside. The individuals, communities of faith, and other organizations who participated have raised over $114,000, which is more than the goal that was set. Nationally, the goal was also exceeded with over $13,800,000 having been raised in 190 locations.

- Information and statements about National Affirming / PIE Day on March 14th were shared.

- The United Church of Canada marked the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21st, by providing suggestions for working towards anti-racisim.

- The Moderator released a video message for Earth Week, which is from April 21st to 28th.

- On April 9th, the United Church of Canada announced that Remit 1 had passed. All sixteen regional councils, the National Indigenous Council, and eighty percent of pastoral charges in The United Church of Canada participated in the vote on Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization. One more procedure is necessary. At the 44th General Council Meeting on October 19, 2024, it will be asked to enact the remit.

- The Pacific Mountain Regional Council Annual General Meeting will be held virtually and in person in Vancouver from Thursday, May 30th to Sunday, June 2nd. Our representatives, the Rev. Bruce Chalmers, Leslie Stirling (Church of St Paul) and Leslie Ross (Trinity Shared Ministry), have chosen to attend virtually. The theme is "Connecting, Collaborating, Cultivating". The keynote speaker is Patty Krawec, an Anishinaabe/Ukrainian writer and speaker belonging to Lac Seul First Nation in Treaty 3 territory and residing in Niagara Falls.