Denominational News
Reported to the NTESM Parish Council Meeting on August 27, 2024

All Three Denominations

- All three denominations shared information about the Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage. This ecumenical initiative invited local faith communities and leaders to walk as a way of praying for a ceasefire and a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. National church leaders took part in the final leg of the pilgrimage, which converged on Parliament Hill on May 22nd.

- All three denominations provided resources, statements, and prayers for National Indigenous History Month, National Indigenous Day of Prayer, and/or National Indigenous Peoples Day.

- Our three denominations joined over 60 faith traditions and institutions in signing a statement titled "Standing Together Against Hate Based on Religious Identity".

- The Canadian Council of Churches has announced that The Rev. Amanda Currie (Presbyterian Church in Canada) has been elected and installed by the Governing Board as President of The Canadian Council of Churches for a 3-year term running to 2027.

- All three denominations shared prayers for those impacted by wildfires, fire fighters, and all who provide hospitality and support for evacuees.

Anglican

- Senior leaders of the churches of the Anglican Communion met in Rome for the 2024 Primates' Meeting (April 29-May 3), which is conceived as a pilgrimage. They will pray and study Scripture together, visit holy sites in Rome, and reflect together about the mission and witness of the Church in the world.

- Bishop Clara Plamondon visited the North Thompson Ecumenical Shared Ministry on May 5th, the Sixth Sunday of Easter. She worshiped, including giving the sermon, and enjoyed fellowship time with both congregations.

- Archbishop Chris Harper, National Indigenous Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, shared a Pentecost prayer for courage and bravery.

- At its Provincial Synod held May 23rd to 26th in Calgary, the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land changed its name to the Province of Northern Lights effective June 1, 2024.

- The Territory of the People held its Assembly at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Williams Lake from May 24th to 26th. The theme of the Assembly was "Sing a New Song". It was the first Assembly with Bishop Clara Plamondon. The Rev. Bruce Chalmers attended. His overall sense of the Assembly using one word was "hope". For over one quarter of the delegates, this was their first Assembly. The one resolution that was approved was for St. Paul Cathedral to become a member of the Community of the Cross of Nails through Coventry Cathedral in Coventry UK. In the Bishop's Charge, Bishop Clara reflected on her response when the pastoral elders led the procession to her ordination as Bishop with drumming. She thought "One heartbeat, one people". She has already incorporated part of the response to the Charge made by two delegates, one being Rev. Chalmers, in the latest *Territory Bulletin* in which she reports on the Assembly and concludes

with "As we come away from Assembly, my hope is that we will continue walking together, learning, growing and finding ways to collaborate, and share in life and ministry. We will be stronger together! One Heartbeat, One People, God's People." There are pictures on the Territory's website.

- The Council of the General Synod (CoGS) held its spring meeting from May 31st to June 2nd at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ontario. Highlights of the meeting will be found on the Parish's website. Of particular interest, on the Saturday, The Rev. Canon Dr. Scott Sharman spoke about proposed new guidelines for confirmation in shared ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Anglican Church of Canada, who are full communion partners. In a resolution, CoGS approved the guidelines for Anglican and Lutheran bishops, priests and pastors regarding confirmations in shared ministry congregations for use where permitted by the ordinary.

- The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, bishop of Northwest Pennsylvania and bishop provisional of Western New York, was elected and confirmed June 26th at the 81st General Convention to serve as the 28th presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church. The House of Bishops elected Rowe on the first ballot with a unanimous majority. He will be succeeding Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, whose term ends on October 31, 2024. Bishop Rowe's nine-year term begins November 1st.

- A service of thanksgiving and deconsecration for St. George's Anglican Church in Kamloops was held on July 2nd. It was an opportunity to celebrate and honour the legacy of this congregation and their building.

- The Anglican Primates of the Americas gathered in Panama City from August 13th to 15th. At the meeting, they renewed their fellowship, shared news from their Provinces, and engaged in discussions on shared concerns, including theological education, migration, and climate change. They elected the Most Rev. Marinez Rosa Dos Santos Bassoto, primate of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil and bishop of the Diocese of the Amazon, as their regional primate, and the Most Rev. Juan David Alvarado Melgar, primate of the Anglican Church of Central America and bishop of El Salvador, as their alternate primate. Each will serve a preliminary three-year term.

- The Diocese of Edmonton is receiving donations for the St. Mary & St. George Anglican Church congregation who lost its building in the wildfire in Jasper. The PWRDF has provided the Diocese of Edmonton with a solidarity grant of $5,000 to assist with support for Jasper evacuees in Edmonton.

Evangelical Lutheran

- BC Synod continued to have monthly online meetings for lay leaders. At the May 2nd meeting, Bishop Kathy Martin reported that three bishops are retiring or not choosing in continuing in the position of bishop. Combined, these three have fifty-four years of experience. Most of the meeting consisted of hearing the results of the feedback regarding the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats gathered earlier in the year and having some discussion regarding the report. Rather than a meeting on June 6th, there was an opportunity to attend the carbon footprint webinar at 7 pm.

- From April 15-19, delegates from North America, the Caribbean and Latin America met for the annual Leadership Conference of the Americas in São Leopoldo, Brazil. Participants met under the theme *'Fear not! There is good news!'* A bringing together of church leaders, youth, council members, partners and women, the conference was hosted by the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IELCB) in honour of 200 years of Lutheran worship in Brazil. In

attendance to represent the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada was National Bishop Susan Johnson.

- The Global Christian Forum (GCF) held its 4th global gathering on April 15-20 in Accra, Ghana. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada's Bishop Larry Kochendorfer attended, representing the LWF North America region and presented one of the Bible studies.

- For the fifth summer in a row, ELCIC Bishops and Assistants to the Bishops are coming together to provide a series of sermons available for congregational use from May to September 2024.

- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has announced its new logo and tagline, inspired by a new vision statement which was developed through extensive consultation with members across the church. Our Parish's website has a post that provides an explanation of the imagery in the logo.

- Delegates to the Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod, held from May 24th to 26th, re-elected Rev. Jason Zinko as Synod Bishop on the first ballot.

- On Friday, May 31st, the Saskatchewan Synod elected the Rev. Dr. Ali Tote as the new Bishop. Bishop-elect Ali has formerly been serving as an Assistant to the Bishop. He will be taking over from Bishop Sid Haugen.

- BC Synod held its Triennial Convention from June 20th to 23rd at Walter Gage Residence on the UBC campus in Vancouver. The theme of the convention was "*One Body, One Spirit, One Hope*." This was the theme of the 2023 LWF Assembly in Krakow, Poland. There were fifty-six delegates in attendance with pastors and congregation members representing forty-seven congregations.

  Our Parish delegates were the Rev. Bruce Chalmers and Leslie Ross. Bishop Kathy Martin appointed Leslie Ross to the Committee on Reference and Counsel. This Committee reviews petitions submitted to the Convention, ensures that they are clearly and properly worded, and determines how they will be presented to the Convention. Leslie Ross also led the "sending" in Saturday evening's closing worship.

  During the Business sessions, reports were heard from Bishop Kathy, the National Bishop, various BC Synod and national committees, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon, and Group Services Incorporated. The Treasurer presented the financial statements and budgets for 2025 and 2026. Balanced budgets were approved for both years. Elections were held for BC Synod Council, Lutheran Theological Seminary Board, and delegates for the 2025 National Convention. Pastor Erik Krushel will continue as the Chairperson of the BC Synod Council. There was also a report from the Committee on the Report of the Bishop.

  A highlight of the Convention was the presentations of three young adults who attended the 2023 Lutheran World Federation 13th Assembly "One Body, One Spirit, One Hope" held last September in Krakow, Poland. Each spoke to one of the three themes as they reflected on their experience of being with Lutherans from all over the world. The positivity and encouragement that they experienced was clear.

  Two petitions and motions to amend the budget were presented.
  - Suggest that BC Synod Council form a task force of four to six Synod members to consider the relationship of benevolence gifts and the Synod.
    The rationale was that contributions from congregations to the Synod have decreased since the Synod began giving grants to congregations during COVID.

- Striving as a BC Synod to support congregations through Reconciling in Christ processes financially, with other supports, and mutual connection.
  Part of the rationale was hearing the need for youth and young adults to be aware of safe spaces for the inclusion of people of 2SLBGTQIA+ expressions in congregations and campus ministries.
- The budget amendment that passed was to increase the support for campus ministry from $25,000 to $100,000 in the 2026 budget.

The Convention had a good flow of work, reports, worship, conversation, expressions of gratitude, and sufficient breaks to have time to re-energize.

- Delegates to the Eastern Synod Assembly, held from June 20th to 22nd in Toronto, elected the Rev. Carla Blakley as Synod Bishop on the fifth ballot.

- Delegates to the Synod of Alberta and the Territories Assembly, held from June 22nd to 24th in Edmonton, elected the Rev. Trish Schmermund as Synod Bishop on the fifth ballot.

- For World Refugee Day on June 20th, Canadian Lutheran World Relief made a statement encouraging prayer for those who have had to flee their homes and those working for justice and peace for refugees and displaced families around the world.

- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has released its 2023 Annual Report. A link to it is found on our Parish's website.

Anglican and United

- The United, Anglican, and Presbyterian churches have signed leases to share national office space at the redeveloped site of Bloor Street United Church at 300 Bloor St. West in Toronto.

Anglican and Lutheran

- In a statement dated April 16, 2024, the Most Rev. Chris Harper (National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, Anglican Church of Canada), the Rev. Susan Johnson (National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada), and the Most Rev. Linda Nicholls (Archbishop and Primate, Anglican Church of Canada) pointed out that both denominations had passed resolutions in 2023 calling on members to continue to take action on the climate crisis. They urged that "this year for Earth Day, and throughout the rest of the year, we invite you to consider how you, your congregation, your synod or diocese, and your national church structures can take concrete steps to live into these commitments made last year."

- The two denominations hosted a webinar on May 7th on the theme of church engagement for social and ecological justice work: from discernment to action.

United Church

- Rather than the Pacific Mountain Regional Council's online Town Hall meeting in May, they held a Lay Leadership online gathering. The purpose of this gathering was for the PMRC Lay Leadership Support Team to share information about its work and purpose, for lay leaders to talk and connect with others, and for hearing more about the work and experiences of lay leaders across

the region. There was no Town Hall meeting in June.

- Moderator Carmen Lansdowne shared video messages for both Pentecost and Pride Month.

- Prior to the PMRC's Annual General Meeting, a Financial Forum was held via Zoom. Leslie Ross attended it. Information about the 2023 Audited Financial Statements, investments, and property development was presented. The conclusion is that the PMRC is in a healthy financial position in which assets increased, investment performance improved, and 2023 ended with an operating fund surplus.

- The Pacific Mountain Regional Council Annual General Meeting was held virtually and in person at St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church in Vancouver from Thursday, May 30th to Sunday, June 2nd. Our representatives, Leslie Stirling (Church of St Paul) and Leslie Ross (Trinity Shared Ministry) attended virtually. The theme was "Connecting, Collaborating, Cultivating" based on Ecclesiastes 4: 12. In *The Message*, it reads "By yourself you're unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third? A three-stranded rope isn't easily snapped."

  The keynote speaker was Patty Krawec, an Anishinaabe/Ukrainian writer and speaker belonging to Lac Seul First Nation in Treaty 3 Territory and residing in Niagara Falls. Through Friday and Saturday, she made four presentations. The Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu, Executive Minister for the Church in Mission Unit of the General Council Office of the United Church of Canada, preached at the opening worship on Thursday night, presented a report from General Council on Friday afternoon, and presided at the Celebration of Ministry service on Sunday.

  Four proposals came to a vote. All passed.
  - PMR WF24-01: Truth Telling and Reconciliation Action
  - PMR WF24-02: Emerging Communities of Faith in The Manual
  - PMR WF24-03: Facing Every Emotional Limit (FEEL)
  - PMR WF24-05: Non-Violent Economic Advocacy Responses

  The meeting concluded with Sunday morning's Celebration of Ministry worship. During the service, The Rev. Simon LeSieur was installed as President of the PMRC. It is available to watch on the PMRC's YouTube channel.

  The next Annual General Meeting will be held in Nanaimo from May 29th to June 1st.

- There was a worship service on June 9th to start a year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of The United Church of Canada. The 100th Anniversary kick-off service was held at Metropolitan United Church in Toronto at 4:00 pm EDT and was also live streamed.

- The United Church of Canada released its first report of the General Council Office's 2023–2025 strategic plan.

- The United Church of Canada has made several statements and written to the Prime Minister and other leaders in the Government of Canada on numerous occasions concerning situations in the Middle East.

- On July 17, The United Church of Canada sent a letter to urge the Prime Minister to speed up delivery on promises to regularize undocumented workers in Canada.

- Two representatives from The United Church of Canada attended the 22nd World Methodist Conference which was held in Gothenburg, Sweden from August 13th to 18th. Every five years, the World Methodist Conference meets as a global gathering of the Methodist-Wesleyan family.

- Northern Spirit Regional Council is receiving donations for the Jasper United congregation who lost its church in the Jasper wildfire.

- Pacific Mountain Regional Council has established a Wildfire Relief Fund for Turner-Zion United Church in New Denver-Silverton.

- On August 13th, an electrical fire broke out at Kamloops United Church, destroying the sanctuary. The church hall, industrial kitchen, nursery school, and lower level sustained major smoke and water damage. The offices (other than reception), upper meeting rooms and Thrift Shop are okay thanks to the firewall. Worship services will be held at the North Shore Location. A Fire Recovery Fund has been established.

- A Shared Ministries Network has been launched. Lay and ordered leaders from shared ministries in the PMRC / Kootenay Diocese / Territory of the People / and Diocese of British Columbia have been invited to gather for support and networking. A zoom meeting will be held on September 16th.