2024 Report on the Work of our Denominations
The Highlights of the Highlights
as gathered by Leslie Ross

Written reports on the work of our denominations are presented to congregational board and Parish Council meetings. These are then posted on the Denominational News page of the Parish's website (https://norththompsonpc.ca/about-us/denominational-news/). This report is taking the highlights or giving briefer descriptions of what is provided in those reports. Many of the actions included in this report as well as copies of most of letters and statements mentioned in this report are on the Parish's website in individual posts.

Our Representatives

Until retirement, the Rev. Bruce Chalmers was the clergy representative to all three denominations. The lay representatives to the Pacific Mountain Regional Council are Leslie Stirling from the Church of St Paul and Leslie Ross from Trinity Shared Ministry. Leslie Ross is the Parish's lay representative to the BC Synod and the Territory of the People.

All Three Denominations

All three denominations have commented or taken action on many events, issues, and situations.

All three denominations have provided resources, messages, and statements for the various seasons and Holy Days of the Christian year such as Lent, Easter, the Season of Creation, Advent, and Christmas.

Resources and public comments were made available for themed months and days, such as Black History Month, World Day of Prayer, International Women's Day, Earth Week, World Refugee Day, Pride Month, National Indigenous Day of Prayer, and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

All three denominations shared prayers for those impacted by a variety of natural disasters with them including first responders and those who provided hospitality and support for evacuees.

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

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.

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.

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

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 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.

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

All three denominations published new gift catalogues in the fall.

As part of its 80th anniversary, the Canadian Council of Churches hosted a conversation at Trinity College in Toronto (and online) on the ecumenical movement in Canada and the world. Themes of unity, faith, justice, peace, and reconciliation were featured. The Rev. Prof. Dr. Jerry Pillay, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and Moderator Carmen Lansdowne were two of the speakers. All three denominations were involved in this event or in others while the General Secretary visited Canada.

On their Facebook feeds, all three churches recognized the celebrations of other faiths as well as national and international days, weeks, and months that raise various heritages, celebrations, and concerns.

The Anglican Church of Canada

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".

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.

Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, announced that she would 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.

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.

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.”

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.

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 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.

In the fall, the Rev. Dr. Kyle Norman, Rector of St. Paul’s Cathedral in Kamloops and Dean of the Territory of the People led a weekly on-line study of the Gospel of Matthew.

The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund chose a new name: Alongside Hope. Full implementation of the change will not occur until March 2025.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

BC Synod continues to have monthly online meetings for lay leaders.

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.

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 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.

Through the spring, Bishops were elected at meetings of four of the synods. Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod re-elected Rev. Jason Zinko as Synod Bishop. The Saskatchewan Synod elected the Rev. Dr. Ali Tote as the new Bishop. He will take over from Bishop Sid Haugen. The Eastern Synod Assembly elected the Rev. Carla Blakley as Synod Bishop. The Synod of Alberta and the Territories Assembly elected the Rev. Trish Schmermund as Synod Bishop.

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

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.

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

After eighteen years of service leading the ELCIC as National Bishop, Rev. Susan Johnson announced that she would retire at the conclusion of her current term, which coincides with the 2025 National Convention.

The National Church Council of the ELCIC has determined a discernment process in the lead up to the election of the new National Bishop.

Anglican and Lutheran

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.

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.

As a result of the continued violence in the Middle East, ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson and Anglican Church of Canada Acting Primate Anne Germond wrote the Prime Minister of Canada on

October 21, 2024 indicating their continued call for a full and sustained ceasefire, for the release of all captives, for the immediate flow of life-saving food, water, aid, fuel and humanitarian assistance for the millions of Gazans suffering at this time, for an end to all arms transfers to Israel, and the end of occupation. They expressed disappointment that Canada abstained from the September 18, 2024 United Nations motion calling on Israel to end its "unlawful presence" in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank. They called on the Government of Canada to diligently support all provisions of international law and a rules-based world order.

Anglican and United Church

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.

The United Church of Canada

The Pacific Mountain Regional Council continues to hold monthly online Town Hall meetings.

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

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 raised over $114,000, which was more than the goal that was set. Nationally, the goal was also exceeded with over $13,800,000 being raised in 190 locations.

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.

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 was 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.

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, 2025.

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 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 made several statements and wrote 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.

The United Church of Canada's 44th General Council held its annual meeting on October 19th. At it, General Council enacted Remit 1 to establish an Autonomous Indigenous Church within The United Church of Canada.

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 online for support and networking. Meetings are being held monthly. Leslie Ross and Leslie Stirling have attended.