Denominational News
Reported to the NTESM Parish Council Meeting on June 25, 2025

All Three Denominations

- All three denominations continue to respond with statements and information about the conflict and humanitarian disaster in the Middle East. They have all called for a just and lasting peace.

- All three denominations expressed concern for and solidarity with the Filipino-Canadian community following the violent attack on the Lapu Lapu Day Block Party in Vancouver on April 26th.

- All three denominations made statements regarding the May 5th National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People also known as Red Dress Day.

- Our three denominations joined other denominations and ecumenical groups in signing a letter to Prime Minister Mark Carney, dated May 22, 2025, in which they call for an immediate, enduring and sustained ceasefire; immediate flow of life-saving food, water, aid, fuel and humanitarian assistance; release of all captives; a comprehensive, binding two-way arms embargo on Israel, including closing loopholes (i.e. Canadian arms exports to Israel via the United States); and ending Israel's deepening military occupation and annexation of Palestine so a just peace can begin.

Anglican

- On June 5, 2025, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem issued a statement condemning the attack by Israeli forces on the Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City.

- For the National Indigenous Day of Prayer on June 21st, the Most Rev. Chris Harper (National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop) provided a brief video message explaining the smudging rite followed by a prayer. It was posted on the Anglican Church of Canada's Facebook page. As well, he gave a message that will be found on the Anglican Church of Canada's website at https://www.anglican.ca/news/a-message-for-the-national-indigenous-day-of-prayer-june-21/30048633/.

- The 44th session of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada will be held from June 23rd to 29th, 2025 in London, Ontario. The theme is "They will soar on wings like eagles". The election of the 15th Primate will be held on Thursday, June 26th. Information will be found at https://gs2025.anglican.ca/. Some of meeting will be live-streamed. The live-streaming will be found at https://gs2025.anglican.ca/live/.

- The Territory of the People publishes a Monthly Bulletin that includes a message from the Bishop, her upcoming schedule, events in the territory, and many pictures. It is available for download from the Anglican page on the Parish website and the Territory or the People's website.

Evangelical Lutheran

- BC Synod continued to have monthly online meetings for lay leaders.

- The Lutheran World Federation Council met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from June 11th to 16th.

- On June 16, 2025, National Bishop Susan Johnson wrote to the church to invite it to hold their partners in the Evangelical Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in prayer. In her letter, she referenced two letters written in June by Bishop Dr. Sani Ibrahim Azar, Bishop of the ELCJHL about the deteriorating situation in the Middle East

- The Voices for Justice group that was formed during the BC Synod "We Are One Body" gathering in March is planning a mid-August picnic at Peace Arch Park with the aim of building bridges with and providing encouragement to ELCA congregations in Washington State.

- The ELCIC National Convention will be held from July 10th to 13th in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The theme is "Rejoicing in Hope". There will be an election for a new National Bishop. Information can be found at https://elcic.ca/national-convention/. There will be live-streaming.

- Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future is a newly formed steering committee that will help the ELCIC with a three year engagement project to determine how the ELCIC might be transformed, restructured, and reorganized.

- ELCIC Bishops and Assistants to the Bishops will provide a series of sermons available for congregational use from May to September 2025.

Anglican and Lutheran

- The Rev. Susan Johnson (National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada), The Most Rev. Chris Harper (National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop), and the Most Rev. Anne Germond (Acting Primate, Anglican Church of Canada) wrote a letter dated April 29, 2025 to Prime Minister Mark Carney congratulating him on his election as Prime Minister. In it, they explain that Anglicans and Lutherans believe that social and ecological justice are integral parts of God's mission, mentioning specifically reconciliation and renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; climate crisis and the need for climate justice; and how racism and white supremacy, human trafficking and modern slavery, and poverty deny dignity for all people. They comment on their churches long-standing relationships with partner churches in Palestine and Israel and the need for an enduring and sustained ceasefire, humanitarian assistance, the release of all captives, an end of all arms transfers to Israel, and an end of occupation.

- On May 12, 2025, the Rev. Susan Johnson (National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) and the Most Rev. Anne Germond (Acting Primate, Anglican Church of Canada) wrote the Prime Minister regarding Israel's ongoing attacks on the Palestinian people. Both leaders called on the Canadian government to provide urgent humanitarian aid. Their call for peace is rooted in the relationship with their partner churches, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

- On May 13, 2025, the Rev. Susan Johnson (National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) and the Most Rev. Anne Germond (Acting Primate, Anglican Church of Canada) published an open letter to the church to mark International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia on May 17, 2025.

- On Sunday, June 1, 2025, the seventh Sunday of Easter, the two denominations observed Jerusalem and Holy Land Sunday.

United Church

- Prior to the PMRC's Annual General Meeting, a Financial Forum was held on Friday, May 23rd via Zoom.

- On May 30th, Moderator Carmen Lansdowne, and General Secretary Michael Blair wrote to Prime Minister Mark Carney to outline The United Church of Canada's justice priorities and to request a meeting with him at his earliest convenience.

- The Pacific Mountain Regional Council Annual General Meeting was held virtually and in person at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre in Nanaimo from Thursday, May 29th to Sunday, June 1st. Our representatives, Leslie Stirling (Church of St Paul) and Leslie Ross (Trinity Shared Ministry) attended in person. The theme was "Cracked Open" using Mark 14: 3-9, the story of the woman who cracked open a jar of very costly ointment and poured the ointment on Jesus' head.

  The Rev. Canon Dr. Stephanie Spellers was the theme speaker. Her three sessions were titled: "We Are the Church Cracked Open", "Losing Our Lives to Gain Real Life", and "The Future of Faith". During the last session, she shared some of her recent research with those she called "nones" or "dones" to determine what they could teach us about the future of faith. The responses she got to "What would you tell the church/organized religion if it were listening?" included "Will the real Christians please stand up?"; "Stop making idols of your institutions, buildings, rules, and dogma."; "Go meet the God who is waiting outside."; and "Form loving, embodied communities that welcome our whole, authentic selves."

  The Business Committee and Youth Council demonstrated the process for dealing with proposals using a sample proposal that each community of faith purchase at minimum one emotional support bunny. That process was then followed with the one proposal that had been made: PMRWF25-01: Apartheid Free Community: Study & Action. It was carried. The motion had been modified by the Business Committee based on the discussion and feedback that occurred through the meeting. They introduced the motion with the following:

  We heard general consensus of approval for the direction that this proposal is going.
  We heard that folks were quite concerned that whatever we do, it not be antisemitic and that we be clear about who we are naming as those committing atrocities, that we don't de ne for a task group what we want them to do, but they would have the background information and original motion as part of their work.
  There was appreciation for both study and action.

  The motion:

  That Pacific Mountain Regional Council standing in love and support with our Palestinian siblings as well as our Jewish siblings who are also affected by of the ongoing discrimination, occupation, brutal repression, violence and genocide being carried out in Israel and Palestine by Western Powers through the agency of the Government of Israel, promote study/discussion of the issue by supplying resources/links to existing studies developed by partners and others; and
  That Pacific Mountain Regional Council take action on the issue by:
  a. becoming a signatory body to the Apartheid Free Community Campaign;
  b. directingtheExecutivetocreateataskgroupwhowillrecommendeffectivenextsteps; and
  c. encourage communities of faith to become informed on the issue and take appropriate action.

  Elections were held for President-Elect and members of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council Executive. Thea Sheridan-Jonah was elected to be President-Elect by acclamation. The following are the new members of the Council Executive: Robin Jacobson, Sarah Kirwin, Dave Moors, Val Nielsen, Shakshi Paul, Robin Pengelly, and Morgan Ryder.

  Throughout the meeting there were short videos from most of the retirees in which they answered

the question "What do you want the United Church to not lose in the next 100 years?" As well, heritage moments appeared several times.

Saturday evening was dedicated to a centennial celebration. Following the cutting of the anniversary cake, there was a time of historical trivia and singing of hymns through the decades. Some wore costumes representing a different decades.

During the Celebration of Ministry service on Sunday, Nancy Painter was recognized as a designated lay minister; Lynda Dickson and Cheryl Perry were commissioned to diaconal ministry; and Lauren Kirkey, Daniel Martin, Alexandra "Sandi" Parker, and Keri Wehlander were ordained.

The 2026 Annual General Meeting of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council will be held from June 4 to 7, 2026 at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops.

- On June 4th, Moderator Carmen Lansdowne wrote a pastoral letter to communities of faith affected by wildfires.

- On June 8th, there was a special National Centennial worship service held at Gower Street United Church, 99 Queens Rd, St. John's, NL. The service was live-streamed on the United Church's YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/live/bh4sW1kdpWo.

- In 2024, a retreat for 23 northern ministers and their spouses of Manitoba and Ontario was held to offer healing and respite to those offering spiritual care in Northern communities, where their ministry is crucial. Mental health and addiction issues in their communities are leading to increasing numbers of deaths among the youth. This year, the wildfires are adding to the stress. There is a desire to hold a similar retreat in the fall of 2025. The United Church is looking for donations to make this possible. If you are able to help, donations can be made at https://united-church.ca/donate/2025npr.

- The 45th General Council (GC45) will take place on virtually on June 22nd and 28th and both in-person and online from August 7th to 11th in Calgary, Alberta. The theme is "Visions and Dreams". Information about GC45 will be found at https://generalcouncil.ca/councils/gc45. At its June 22nd meeting, it approved the motion to elect seven new members to the General Council Executive to begin serving at the rise of GC45. It appointed or reappointed members to four committees and the Board of Vocation. Since there were no other nominations for Moderator, five nominees will stand for election by the Commissioners of General Council 45 on August 9th. They are
    - Rev. Dr. Samuel V. Dansokho (he/him), nominated by Nakonha:ka Regional Council
    - Rev. Dr. John Pentland (he/him), nominated by Chinook Winds Regional Council
    - Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo CM (she/her), nominated by Shining Waters Regional Council
    - Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath (she/her), nominated by Eastern Ontario Outaouais Regional Council
    - Rev. Sungmin Jung (he/him), nominated by Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

  Some time was spent in virtual discussion groups so Commissioners and corresponding members could get to know one another.
  At the June 28th meeting, learning and discussion sessions for commissioners will take place. This will be the only time to discuss a list of 13 proposals, since the Way Forward committee may adjust these proposals for General Council in August, based on the discussion in this session.

- On June 23rd, the United Church of Canada issued a statement condemning the United States' attack on Iran. In it, prays for the people already killed in Israel's attacks on Iran and by Iran's retaliatory missile attacks on Israel are expressed. It calls on Canada to immediately and unequivocally condemn the Trump Administration's attack on Iran. The statement will be found at https://united-church.ca/news/united-church-canada-condemns-united-states-attack-iran.