Denominational News

Reported to the NTESM Parish Council Meeting on September 30, 2025

All Three Denominations

- On July 9th, the Most Rev. Shane Parker, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada; the Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; and the Rev. Michael Blair, General Secretary of The United Church of Canada along with other ecumenical partners, joined the interfaith call of the Canadian Council of Imams to Prime Minister Carney for direct and immediate action toward the full and sustained access of Gazans to humanitarian aid, for public challenge to the use of starvation, siege, and collective punishment as weapons of war, and support for a permanent ceasefire.

- All three denominations post statements and prayers when major natural disasters and trauma-filled events occur. They also recognize major celebrations in other denominations and religions.

- All three denominations provided information and resources for the Season of Creation, which is held from September 1st to October 4th.

- The World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel, an annual event of the World Council of Churches held during the third week of September, was supported in a variety of ways by all three denominations.

- All three denominations made statements and provided information and resources for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation held on September 30th.

- The Shared Ministry Network met via zoom on September 23rd. Leslie Ross and Leslie Stirling attended. There were a few new people. Time was taken to introduce ourselves. Following a reflection, we shared signs of hope. There was some general sharing of ideas as well as making suggestions on what we might focus over the coming months.

Anglican

- The 44th session of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada was held from June 23rd to 29th, 2025 in London, Ontario. The theme was "They will soar on wings like eagles". The election of the 15th Primate was held during the General Synod. Archbishop Shane Parker was elected and installed on June 29, 2025, at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario. The website for the General Synod (https://gs2025.anglican.ca/) contains news, photos, reports, and resolutions. For a brief report see the August 2025 issue of the Territory of the People *Bulletin.*

- On July 24th, Primate Shane Parker wrote the Prime Minister of Canada urging action to help end the ongoing devastation in Gaza. Within the letter, he wrote

  At the recent meeting of our General Synod, members of our youth delegation brought forward this resolution, which was resoundingly adopted:

Request the Primate to publicly write to the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs calling on the Canadian government to uphold their moral responsibilities and impose full and immediate arms embargo on Israel.

- On July 27th, the Black Anglicans of Canada faith community hosted an Emancipation Day Sunday Service online by way of Zoom.

- The 12th Indigenous Anglican Sacred Circle met from August 4th to 10th at the University of Calgary on Treaty 7 territory, the traditional lands of the Blackfoot peoples.

- Alongside Hope has been promoting a campaign to raise funds for solar suitcases for Mozambique and Madagascar that will safely support births in places where there is no electricity.

- On September 8th, the World Religions Conference held its 20th annual conference at St. Michael and all Angels Church in Prince George. A panel presentation delivered by Indigenous, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Ba'hai, and Buddhist speakers shared some of their faith traditions perspectives on the topic of "Pathways of Peace".

- On September 18th, Bishop Clara Plamondon wrote a letter to be shared in the Territory of the People's parishes in honour or the tenth anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report. She spoke of the Primate's invitation to Anglican Cathedrals to place a Survivors' Flag in a prominent place as a remembrance in honour of all residential school survivors, their families, and communities who have been deeply impacted. She also requested that parishes take some time to read through the 94 Calls to Action, paying particular attention to the calls directed to churches. She asked that each parish have a conversation about how it is responding to the Calls to Action and to identify one thing that it could do to address one of the Calls to Action.

- 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 of the People's website.

Evangelical Lutheran

- After a summer break, the BC Synod returned to having monthly online meetings for lay leaders. The September meeting focused on reports from those who attended the National Convention.

- The Voices for Justice group that was formed during the BC Synod "We Are One Body" gathering in March is continuing to plan to a have picnic at Peace Arch Park with the aim of building bridges with and providing encouragement to ELCA congregations in Washington State. Finding a date in August was not successful, so sometime in the spring is now the plan. Bishop Kathy Martin has been in contact with the Northwest Washington Synod Bishop. She reports that the Bishop, the Dean of the Whatcom County Conference, and their pastors all like the idea.

- The ELCIC National Convention was held from July 10th to 13th in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The theme was "Rejoicing in Hope". At the opening worship service, the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women was celebrated. Delegates elected Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer to serve as its fifth National Bishop. He will be installed as National Bishop on September 27th. For information and reports go to the National Convention webpage (https://elcic.ca/national-convention/).

- In July, the ELCIC National Office and Eastern Synod launched an appeal to support the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

- On July 18th, National Bishop Susan Johnson wrote a letter to The Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning attacks by Israeli settlers on the Christian community of Taybeh in the West Bank.

- On August 17th, Bishop Kathy Martin of the BC Synod participated in worship at the Church of St Paul as the 50th anniversary of the Rev. Keith Peterson's ordination was celebrated.

- To mark the Season of Creation, Lutherans Connect offered a ten-day devotional titled "Radiant Earth, Sacred Calling" starting on September 17th, the feast day of Hildegard of Bingen. The devotions can be accessed on the Lutherans Connect Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/lutherans.connect) or its blog (https://radiantearthsacredcalling.blogspot.com/).

- On September 19th, National Bishop-elect Larry Kochendorfer wrote to the church expressing deep concerns over the escalating military operations in Gaza and the immense suffering being faced by civilians in Palestine and Israel. He joins the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in calling for an urgent global action, and encourages members of the ELCIC to advocate for peace, an end to violence, and protection for human life.

- On September 22nd, Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) issued a statement welcoming Canada's formal recognition of the state of Palestine, aligning with a broad international consensus on a solution based on international law and human dignity. CLWR has been partnering with Palestinian institutions and the Government of Canada in the West Bank for years to work for human rights and economic empowerment. It believes that this recognition is an important next step, noting that every step that affirms the equal dignity, rights, and security of Palestinians and Israelis is a step toward a just peace.

- The National Church Council met in Winnipeg from September 25th to 27th.

Anglican and Lutheran

- The Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering met in Saskatoon from August 21st to 24th. The theme was Rooted and Rising.

United Church

- The Pacific Mountain Region is developing a new format for its Town Hall Meetings and will now meet in the fall, winter, and spring.

- The 45th General Council (GC45) met in-person and online from August 7th to 11th in Calgary, Alberta. The theme was "Visions and Dreams". Information about GC45 will be found at https://generalcouncil.ca/councils/gc45. The Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath was elected to be the 45th Moderator. Her installation as Moderator took place during worship on the last day of the General Council August meeting.

- On August 8th, as part of the GC45 meeting, The United Church of Canada offered an historic apology for ways in which the denomination has hurt and harmed 2S and LGBTQIA+ communities within and beyond The United Church. The apology took place during a special live-streamed worship service.

- On Saturday, September 13th, members of the 45th General Council held a recall meeting gathering online to complete the cycle of business from when they met in August. Several proposals dealing with Palestine and Israel received overwhelming support.

- On September 22nd, the United Church held a cross-country check-in via zoom. This town hall was an opportunity to meet the new Moderator and the General Council Executive.

- On September 23rd, the United Church issued a statement in response to Prime Minister Carney's announcement of Canada's conditional recognition of a Palestinian State on September 21, 2025. This recognition "is a small, long-delayed but nevertheless welcome action".

- On September 25th, the United Church reported that on September 24th, the presiding tribunal in San Vicente, El Salvador, found five prominent water defenders from Santa Marta, known as the Santa Marta Five, not guilty of charges of murder, kidnapping, and illicit association. The United Church of Canada joined international organizations in celebrating the not guilty verdict for the Santa Marta Five. The United Church, as a member of International Allies against Mining in El Salvador, echoes the call for the Salvadoran Attorney General to abstain from further legal action and demands that all civil liabilities are dropped. The leaders, originally arrested on January 11, 2023, represent staff and community members of Association for Economic and Social Development (ADES), a United Church of Canada Mission and Service global partner. The United Church has partnered with ADES throughout the organization's 30-year history.

- The United Church of Canada's 40 Days of Engagement on Anti-Racism will begin October 14, 2025. This annual campaign features study and worship resources and live webinars to engage churches and communities in anti-racism activities and is an important part of the ongoing work toward becoming an anti-racist church.