Denominational News

Reported to the Church of St Paul Board March 2, 2026 Board Meeting

All Three Denominations

- All three denominations or their global partners responded to the United States' actions in Venezuela. See the January 9th post on the Parish's website for statements from the World Council of Churches, The United Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Lutheran World Federation, The Episcopal Church, and the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

- Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay, General Secretary, World Council of Churches, issued a statement on January 19th expressing deep concern about measures by the state of Israel that restrict the ability of international humanitarian and faith-based organisations to operate in the occupied Palestinian territory.

- At both regional and national levels, all three denominations responded to the Tumbler Ridge tragedy with prayers and statements of concern, compassion, and lament. Each denomination hosted online prayer vigils. All three responded to the vitriol directed at trans, nonbinary, genderqueer, or gender-fluid people. The responses were similar to the Pacific Mountain Region's statement: "We affirm clearly and without hesitation that one person's actions never define an entire community, and that trans and nonbinary people are beloved, bearing sacred worth, and deserving of safety, dignity, and inclusion—always."

- All three denominations made statements, provided information and resources, and/or held events for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Black History Month, the World Day of Prayer, and Thursdays in Black, which is form of peaceful protest against rape and gender-based violence started by the World Council of Churches in the 1980s.

- All three denominations recognize major celebrations in other denominations and religions.

- The Shared Ministry Network met via zoom on January 27th and February 24th. Leslie Ross and Leslie Stirling attended. The January meeting focused on sharing news from our communities of faith, especially experiences over the Advent and Christmas seasons. Bishop Lynne McNaughton announced that she was working on providing a worship service with a video sermon prepared by an indigenous colleague for National Indigenous Day in June. She is willing to make it available beyond the Diocese of the Kootenay. The February meeting focused on the annual judicatory statistical forms.

- All three of our denominations and/or their international partners have expressed concern for the situation in the Middle East as a result of the military attacks carried out by the United States and Israel against Iran and the subsequent retaliatory escalation. There was a call for the cessation of military actions, protection of civilian populations and infrastructure, and resumption of diplomatic engagement. Prayers were offered. Both Primate Hosam Naoum of the Episcopal Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East and Bishop Dr. Imad Haddad of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land have written statements describing what is being experienced as a result of this military conflict and requesting that the global church pray for the people of the Middle East and to

intercede on their behalf with the powers engaged in this conflict. Internationally, the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, and the World Communion of Reformed Churches have all issued statements.

Anglican

- Primate Shane Parker gave the homily for the people, clergy, and bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada at the New Year's Day Eucharist at Christ Church Cathedral in Ottawa.

- On the Feast of the Epiphany, Primate Hosam Elias Naoum of the Episcopal Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East issued a pastoral letter marking the 50th anniversary of this Province of the Anglican Communion.

- In the Confirmation of Election Service on January 28th at St. Paul's Cathedral, the Most Revd and Most Hon Sarah Mullally DBE legally became the first woman Archbishop of Canterbury. She will be installed as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury on March 25th.

- On January 28th, Bishop Clara Plamondon issued a letter in which she provides a pastoral response to the rise of denialism of the Indian Residential School system.

- On February 6th, Primate Shane Parker wrote the Most Rev. Sean Rowe, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, to express concern for what is occurring in many communities in the United States, to acknowledge the courageous words and actions of members of the Episcopal Church, and to assure him that prayers for protection, courage, and peace are being offered across the Anglican Church of Canada.

- Alongside Hope is hosting a daily Lenten devotional written by Martha Jarvis, the Anglican Communion's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. This devotional titled "Wild Paths of Peace" is sent out by email after registering to receive it.

- The Rev. Darren Bell who serves St. Andrew's / St Mary's in Lillooet has been appointed the Southern Region Regional Dean of the Territory of the People as of March 1st. He is succeeding the Rev. Angus Muir.

- At the Sunday service on March 1st at the St. Paul Cathedral, the Territory of the People will receive their Cross of Nails from the Coventry Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN). This is the result of the decision at Assembly 2024 to become a CCN partner, sharing a common commitment to work and pray for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

Evangelical Lutheran

- This year, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada will be celebrating the 40th year of its formation.

- Bishop Kathy Martin will be on sabbatical from January 1st until mid to late May. During the sabbatical, leadership will be shared by Rev. Matthew Senf, who will serve as the Bishop's commissary; Rev. Elina Singh; Rev. Eric Krushel; and Rev. Aneeta Saroop.

- The lay leaders gatherings continue in the evening on the first Thursday of the month via zoom. Leslie Ross usually attends them.

- On January 16th, National Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, along with Lutheran church leaders from the United States and Denmark issued a message of support for the people of Greenland, affirming their right to independence, dignity, and self-determination.

- On January 20th, National Bishop Larry Kochendorfer wrote a letter to the church expressing solidarity with the people of Minnesota. He also asked members of the church to reflect on their call to stand for the rights of refugees and migrants in Canada.

- Bishop Dr. Imad Haddad of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land issued a statement on January 26th that provides details of an Israeli settler attack on the village of Berzeit near Ramallah.

- On January 31st, Canadian Lutheran World Relief held an online event with Sophie Gebreyes, the Lutheran World Federation's Ethiopia Country Representative. She spoke about the impact of nature-based solutions in Ethiopia, Chad, and Cameroon.

- Since 2018, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has recognized Global Mission Sunday on the first Sunday of February. Its purpose is to lift up and reflect on the many relationships that connect the ELCIC with Lutherans around the world.

- Lutherans Connect will provide online Lenten devotionals starting on Ash Wednesday. "From Dust, Still Holy" will run from February 18th to April 8th, daily except for Sundays.

- Each Tuesday evening during Lent from 5:00-5:30 pm PT, the ELCIC and its synods are hosting a *Prayer Vigil for Climate Justice.* The registration link is https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/8Wcj-ZfXRNqf2c-jx1kb8g#/registration.

- Canadian Lutheran World Relief is hosting a Lenten study that can be done individually or in small groups. The weekly themes are Hunger, Safety, Well-Being, Identity, Loss, Community, Nature, and Faith. The study can be found on the CLWR website at http://www.clwr.org/lenten-journey.

- In the ELCIC email newsletter, there was a report that in the last year, the Consultation on Common Texts guidance on addressing anti-Judaism proposed alternate readings for Palm/Passion Sunday and Good Friday, along with revisions to the lectionary for the season of Easter and the time after Pentecost. This provisional update to the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) is now commended to the churches for a three-year trial period, beginning in Advent of 2025. ELCIC worship leaders are invited to integrate these revisions into worship planning.

- Sunday, February 22nd was Diaconal Ministry Sunday in the ELCIC. This annual day of emphasis lifts up the ministry of service - *diakonia* - and honours the ministry of diaconal ministers, who share Christ's love through service, compassion, and justice in the world.

- On Sunday, February 22nd, the ELCIC held its second online Conversations Across the Church. The next one will be held on May 24th, Pentecost Sunday.

- The Voices for Justice group of the BC Synod, of which Leslie Ross is a member, has been working on holding a Across the Border Friendship Gathering with members of the Northwest Washington Synod. There is now a joint planning group. It will be held on Sunday, June 14th from 2 – 5 pm at the Campbell Valley Regional Park in Langley.

Anglican and Lutheran

- Primate Shane Parker and National Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, along with Eastern Synod Bishop Carla Blakeley, attended the consecration of Bishop Imad Haddad on January 11th in Jerusalem. Bishop Haddad will be the fifth Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). As well, Primate Shane Parker connected with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, visiting many of the ministries of the Diocese and participating in the worship service recognizing the 50th Anniversary of autonomous Indigenous governance of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. National Bishop Larry Kochendorfer and Bishop Carla Blakely joined with bishops from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as part of a solidarity visit with people of the ELCJHL.

- The Lutheran-Anglican-Moravian Commission hosted two Ecumenical Shared Ministry Education sessions in February. The first was an introduction for congregations considering becoming an ecumenical shared ministry. The second was a networking session for existing ecumenical shared ministries. Both sessions were recorded and will be available for viewing. Leslie Ross and Leslie Stirling attended the second session.

United Church

- On January 6th, The United Church of Canada held an online Town Hall that included Moderator Kimberly Heath's New Year's address.

- More resources are becoming available for looking at the Toward 2035 strategic vision of The United Church of Canada. This webpage (https://united-church.ca/toward2035) is a source of information.

- The Right Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath, Moderator of the United Church of Canada, published a blog on The United Church of Canada website on January 15th, expressing alarm at the escalation of the ICE raids and violence in the United States. She wrote about how people may be tempted to respond with fear, hiding, or fighting. She reminded us that the Christian response is to love and to follow a path of peace and healing.

- Two letters written by Moderator Kimberly Heath on January 23rd were highlighted in a January 27th post on The United Church of Canada website. The first was written to Biskop Paneeraq Siegstad Munk, Kalaallit Nunaanni Ilagiit (Lutheran Church of Greenland) expressing solidarity and prayers as Greenland faced the focus of a more virulent attempt at colonization and conquest from the current United States administration. The second letter was written to Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, General Minister and President, United Church of Christ USA, and Rev. Terri Hord Owens, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the

United States and Canada. This letter both expressed appreciation for the two denominations support of Canada at their general assemblies last summer and offered solidarity as they lead their faith communities through a time of chaos, fear, and evil.

- The Pacific Mountain Region held its first Town Hall of 2026 on January 27th. Members of the Regional Executive and staff provided updates and answered questions.

- On February 2nd, a statement of solidarity with the people of Cuba as a result of actions of the United States was published. See https://united-church.ca/news/new-us-tariffs-target-cuba-united-church-offers-solidarity-cuban-people for information and a link to a petition that could be signed.

- The United Church of Canada is actively advocating for the passing of the No More Loopholes Act (Bill C-233), which is designed to close gaps in Canada's arms export laws that allow military goods to be transferred to conflict zones, specifically Israel, via the United States.

- On Sunday, February 15th, Kitchissippi United Church, in Ottawa, celebrated a historical moment of growth when they welcomed 105 new community members to join The United Church of Canada.

- Through Lent, Moderator Kimberley Heath will be hosting a six-part video series titled "Kitchen Conversations with the Moderator". The videos are available on the Kitchen Conversations with the Moderator page on The United Church of Canada's website and on The United Church of Canada's YouTube channel.

- The General Council Executive met online on February 20th and 21st. At this meeting, it was learned that the General Secretary the Rev. Michael Blair, who is currently on sabbatical, is planning to retire.

- The United Church of Canada held an online Cross Country Check-In on February 25th. Members of the General Council Executive and the acting General Secretary provided information and answered questions.

- LeaderShift will be hosting Festival of Faith North from April 17th to 19th at Trinity United Church in Prince George. The theme "Stronger Together: Cooperative Ministry" will be explored through keynote sessions, workshops, and worship.