Denominational News

Reported to the Trinity Shared Ministry June 16, 2026 Board Meeting

All Three Denominations

- All three denominations made statements, provided information and resources, and/or held events for Earth Week, National Day of Awareness for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit People (Red Dress Day), the Moose Hide campaign, National Indigenous History Month, Pride Month, International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, World Refugee Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day, and National Indigenous Day of Prayer,

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

- The Shared Ministry Network met via zoom on April 28th and May 26th. Leslie Ross and Leslie Stirling attended. The April meeting centred on judicatory general meetings with a focus on the benefits of attending while recognizing some of the complexities for congregations and clergy such as costs, finding representatives, and time commitments. It was noted that not all of these meetings occur annually. Some conversation occurred regarding the need for judicatories to look at the polity regarding voice and vote for representatives, both lay and clergy, from shared ministries. The May meeting provided an opportunity to share our "roses, buds, and thorns". The next meeting will be in September.

Anglican

- Bishop Clara Plamondon led worship at Trinity Shared Ministry on Sunday, May 3rd.

Territory of the People Assembly 2026 – Quesnel, BC – May 29-31, 2026

The Territory of the People held its biennial Assembly from May 29th to 31st in Quesnel. The theme was "We Thrive for the Glory of God". Leslie Ross was the Parish's delegate and Assembly member.

On Friday evening and Sunday, members of the Assembly gathered in the church and hall of St. John the Divine. The Saturday sessions were held in the Conference Centre of the Billy Barker Casino Hotel.

Friday evening began with passing a series of motions to get the business started; to appoint committee members, the Lay Secretary, and the Clergy Secretary; and to ratify the Coordinating Council's appointment for Financial Officer. Proposed constitution and bylaw changes were presented. Most were wording changes so that there would be consistency throughout and to have the constitution and bylaws align with the BC Societies Act. A more significant change was to reduce the number of members required for the Coordinating Council. The changes were accepted with the required two-thirds majority.

Following this business, the Assembly moved into Evening Prayer, which included Bishop Clara Plamondon giving the Bishop's Charge. She began with sharing gratitude and presenting some recollections of her first two years as Bishop, including how the metaphor of yeast

became a symbol for the Territory. She then used the theme to name characteristics of what is needed to be a thriving community: praying community, life-long learners, servant leadership, stewardship, community and relationships, willingness to try new things, and outward looking. These characteristics are building blocks for being and becoming a thriving community. Bishop Clara encouraged parishes to reflect on these as they considered their own situation. After the conclusion of Evening Prayer, the Assembly moved to the Hall for a time of socializing at the Bishop's Reception.

Saturday morning began with Morning Prayer that included table group conversations on the Gospel reading John 17: 6-19. Reports were received. Policy changes were received following their presentation and a time for discussion. After an explanation from the financial reviewer, the 2025 reviewed financial statements were approved. There were two presentations in the morning. Su McLeod from Alongside Hope provided a glimpse of some of the work including projects in Kenya, the current push to raise funds for 407 solar panels for St. Luke's Hospital in the West Bank, and work with indigenous communities in Canada. Bishop Victor-David Mbuyi Bipungu and Archdeacon Deborah Meister brought greetings from the Diocese of Montreal, the Territory's companion diocese. The Archdeacon provided some of the history that has led to a complex cultural and religious dynamic in the region of this Diocese. There are layers of what she referred to as "unbelonging" that has shaped three generations.

After lunch, there was table group discussion about the frequency of Assembly meetings so that the Coordinating Council would have information to help determine whether there needed to be a constitutional change. There seemed to be a consensus to maintain the biennial in-person meetings. Michael Shapcott, Executive Director of Sorrento Centre, gave a presentation about the Centre and its programming. There is an expectation that there will be about 1,100 guests this year. Bishop Clara sought feedback for determining the Territory's needs for life-long learning in the context of our faith. Time was set aside to hear indigenous perspectives from both the pastoral elders and others. The information and experiences that were shared were profound and emotional.

After a break, nominations closed and elections by ballot took place for positions on the Coordinating Council, Provincial Synod, and the General Synod. The fourth presentation concerned the Provincial School for Congregational Development which is a two-year programme. Karen Rooke, Shantel Windt, and Bishop Clara reported that the programme included both in-person and zoom sessions. They were impressed with the quality of instruction. Topics included change, transition, facilitation skills, data gathering, self-development, trust development, and conflict resolution. Then, the Rev. Linda LaGroix and Paulet Rice spoke about the development of St. Hilda's in Spences Bridge. After beginning with two people regularly attending St. Alban's in Ashcroft and with them bringing a few more, the Rev. Linda LaGroix's husband encouraged her to arrange with the folk from Spences Bridge to hold a service there. In time, St. Hilda's Mission formed, and there are now services held once a month. The afternoon session closed with Evening Prayer.

Following dinner, the results of the elections were given. Then, time was spent in table groups imagining a logo for the Territory. Bishop Clara explained the rationale for using a circle shape rather than a shield which has often been used for Anglican crests and logos. A couple of examples were shared to spark discussion. When the table groups reported to the plenary,

one group identified the need for some simplicity in the design so that it can be more easily used in a variety of contexts. Dean Kyle Norman provided some information on stewardship, challenging us to think of it more broadly than the usual first impressions when hearing the word. We then moved into regional caucuses to each elect one person to join the Coordinating Council. Just before the final motions of thanksgiving and adjournment, we heard the Response to the Bishop's Charge given by the Rev. Jo Ann Hinter and Marie Hay.

The Assembly joined St. John the Divine Parish for Sunday morning worship. The Rt. Rev. Clara Plamondon was the presider. The Rt. Rev. Victor-David Mbuyi Bipungu preached. During the service, South Rivers Regional Dean, the Rev. Darren Bell, and the new Coordinating Council were commissioned. Following the service, lunch was provided in the Hall to sustain us for our journey home.

- On June 1st, the Primate Shane Parker and the Presiding Elder of the Sacred Circle, the Most Reverend Chris Harper, wrote to the church providing reflection about the work of reconciliation as the National Indigenous Day of Prayer approaches on June 21st.

- The Council of General Synod met in Mississauga from June 12th – 14th.

Evangelical Lutheran

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

- Bishop Kathy Martin's first full day back in the office following her sabbatical was May 20th.

- The Voices for Justice group of the BC Synod, of which Leslie Ross is a member, worked on holding a Across the Border Friendship Gathering with members of the Northwest Washington Synod. It was held on Sunday, June 14th from 2 – 5 pm at the Campbell Valley Regional Park in Langley. Over one hundred people were registered with about equal numbers from both countries.

- Bishops and Assistants to the Bishops will be offering weekly sermons for congregational use, available from May through October.

- As part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada's 40th anniversary, the ELCIC held a Day of Action on May 31st. Congregations across the ELCIC were invited to step beyond their church walls and engage in acts of service in their communities. Many reports and pictures of events were posted to the ELCIC Facebook page.

- In a June 3rd letter to the church, Bishop Kochendorfer shared the concerns of Bishop Dr. Imad Haddad of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land regarding Natalie Abuddayeh, a youth member of the ELCJHL, who was detained alongside three other women from her student apartment in Birzeit. Abuddayeh is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Beit Jala, a graduate of Talitha Kumi Lutheran School, and a media and journalism student at Birzeit University.

On June 15th, Bishop Haddad posted an update, thanking individuals who have prayed and advocated for her safety and release. She still has not been released. He reported that they have been informed that she had a court appearance on June 14th with proceedings to continue in ten days. The other three women who were detained with Natalie also remain in prison. They are deeply concerned about their continued detention and that these proceedings are being held in Israeli military court where administrative detention can be extended without official charge or trial.

- BC Synod held "We Are One Body – Part 2" from June 5th to 7th at the King of Life Lutheran Church in Coquitlam. This was a follow-up gathering from the one held last year. As well as reviewing the work that has taken place since the first gathering, the participants considered future directions. Discussions included what it means to be One Body and how work could be done together across the Synod. The facilitator was Charles Holmes. Alex McGilvery attended. He reported that when discussing the types of churches based on size (corporate, programme, pastoral, and family), he suggested that "tiny" churches should also be considered as real options. Ministry is more important than size, and a church that is having fun is very likely to be creating fun ministries.

Anglican and Lutheran

- May 17th was Jerusalem and Holy Land Sunday. The Seventh Sunday of Easter is observed by the two denominations as a time to stand in partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land. Leading up to Jerusalem and Holy Land Sunday, National Bishop Larry Kochendorfer wrote to the church expressing concern over continued violence in Gaza and the West Bank, including attacks and intimidation in Taybeh, the last remaining Christian town in the occupied West Bank. As well, the ELCIC Conference of Bishops has written the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Anita Anand about the ongoing violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. Primate Shane Parked shared correspondence he had with Archbishop of Jerusalem Hosam Naoum as a result of Jerusalem and Holy Land Sunday.

- Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) Gathering will be happening from August 19 – 22, 2027 at Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo.

United Church

- Treena Duncan and Kathy Davies hosted regional meetings as well as an online one to explore The United Church of Canada's "Toward 2035" vision.

- The Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu Executive Minister, Church in Mission Unit of The United Church of Canada wrote Minister Anand on April 24th to convey The United Church's "serious concern regarding reports of Philippine military operations carried out by the 79th Infantry Battalion on Negros Island on April 19, 2026, which are reported to have resulted in the loss of 19 lives and the displacement of 653 residents from 168 households in peasant communities. These developments raise significant questions with respect to adherence to international human rights standards." In questioning the Status of Visiting Forces Agreement, four requests for action by the Government of Canada were made.

- Camping Sunday was celebrated on April 26th. In the United Church of Canada, Camping Sunday is traditionally celebrated on the fourth Sunday in April. The special Sunday lifts up the church's outdoor/camping ministries and draws attention to local United Church camps, helping people recall their memories and experiences of church camping.

- The United Church of Canada released its 2025 Strategic Plan Report on April 30, 2026. It highlights the global and local work the church is doing, and overall progress on the church's strategic objectives. For more information and to download the report, go to https://united-church.ca/news/strategic-plan-report-highlights-united-churchs-dedication-justice-growth.

- The 45th General Council Executive met online on May 8th and 9th.

- On May 13th, The United Church of Canada held another Cross Country Check-in. This was an opportunity to spend time with members of the General Council Executive in a "town hall".

- The United Church of Canada General Council Executive and the United Methodist Council of Bishops, at separate meetings this spring, each approved an interim covenant that mutually affirms both denominations' clergy and opens the door to greater cooperation across national borders. The covenant also declares the leaders' intention to propose a formal relationship between the two denominations to their top policymaking bodies — the United Methodist General Conference and the Canadian church's General Council. Both assemblies are next set to meet in 2028. The denominations' leaders see the interim agreement as a crucial step toward full communion between the two denominations.

- In May, Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu, Executive Minister, Church in Mission, visited Maputo, Mozambique for the Faith Beyond Borders consultation on Human Sexuality and Gender Diversity in the African church context.

Pacific Mountain Regional Council Annual General Meeting
June 4 – 7, 2026 at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops

The Annual General Meeting of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council was held from June 4th to 7th at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops. The theme was "The Shape of Hope". The special guest speaker was the Rev. Dr. Anna Carter Florence, an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Leslie Ross and Leslie Stirling attended.

Worship was integral to the gathering. It was named as an agenda item seven times, including the Celebration of Ministry Worship Service on Sunday. There were also other times of music and prayer. A presentation from Kamloops Pride Choir began Thursday evening's session. Each worship time was about a half hour and included prayer, scripture, song, and reflection. The reflections centred on the work of progammes of and communities of faith within the Region. They were partially report, but were often framed within story and spoke of the shape of hope within their ministries. We heard from Intracultural Ministry, the Sanctuary Community, Wild Church, Affirming Ministry, and First United. The first time of worship included the memorials. The children and youth were part of Saturday morning's worship which began with

contemplative silence and moved to wondering about the shape of hope in a protest sign with the children and youth entering with protest signs. We were asked "what would you put on your protest sign for hope?" and given a small piece of cardstock and a popsicle stick so we could make our own.

The Rev. Dr. Anna Carter Florence made three presentations and was the preacher for the Celebration of Ministry Worship Service. She is the Peter Marshall Professor of Preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary. Originally, each of the presentations were framed as the Shape of Hope in a Storm, using storms in scripture as the basis. However, she changed the second presentation to being based on family storms. The first was based on Acts 27 in which Paul sails for Rome, there is a storm at sea, and a shipwreck. In the theology of shipwreck, staying together and running aground were themes. The second presentation was based on Matthew 1 which gives the account of the genealogy of Jesus. The stories of the four women included in that genealogy were presented, identifying the chaos in which they lived and the blessings that arose from their actions. The third presentation was based on the Book of Jonah. She spoke of the Bible as being trauma literature. The Book of Jonah is used during Jewish Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. There were four parts to the presentation: Jonah for grown-ups; Jonah in word and image (much artwork was shown); Jonah and his sea of stories; and Jonah's story and ours. The story of Jonah breaks the rules about prophets and God (or what we thought we knew) in scripture. Her concluding questions were

- What question do you think God might be asking you, us, in this moment? How could it open up a new story?
- What cargo or whales (or Nineveh or Tarshish) might be involved?
- What stories from here do you want to take home?

In the President's Address, the Rev. Dr. Simon LeSieur spoke of three practices for renewal in the church: declutter (keep the main thing the main thing); pray hard (pray the future church into existence); and just (go) do it (Do the Jesus stuff no one else is!).

Throughout the meeting, reports were made.

- The Rev. Teri Meyer, Regional Minister Indigenous Ministry, shared the work and life of Indigenous ministries in both word and photos. We paused in memory of Jim Angus. In honour of him, funds are being raised to restore the Pierce Memorial United Church in Kispiox. On June 30th, there will be prayer and ceremony in Bella Coola to help with continued healing from the bear attack that occurred last November.
- Houston Mo, Director of Finance and Property, introduced impact investing that the PMRC has begun doing with Genus Capital Management on a limited scale as a result of the experiences of the United Church Foundation.
- There was a report from Naramata Centre.
- Various staff from First Third Ministry gave reports on their programmes.
- The Rev. Kendra Mitchell-Foster, Regional Minister Justice Ministry, provided information on Affirming Ministry and Peace Team Training. A play/reading from Iridesce: the Living Apology Project was presented by the Kamloops Players.

- In the Executive Minister Report, Treena Duncan provided information about the climate audit which was the result of a Youth Council proposal. The final report will be released in the fall of 2026.
- The Rev. Cari Copeman Haynes, Office of Vocation Minister for BC, Yukon, and Southern Alberta, reported. She spoke about the Brenda Fawkes Bursary Fund.
- Harri Li, Executive Minister, Pension & Finance, from the General Council Office gave greetings from General Council, offered some financial updates, and presented information about the feedback about the Towards 2035 strategic plan. He explained how resources from the operating budget are being dedicated to the six areas of the strategic plan. There were over 3,000 respondents to the survey about Towards 2035. Lay, clergy, and staff from every Regional Council were represented. 91% supported the ten-year direction. Reasons for the support, emotional responses, skepticism, and the lack of support were reported.
- Sarah Giles, Community of Faith Stewardship Support, gave an energetic and engaging report on stewardship.

There were three proposals. Each went through the process of listening for clarification, asking questions and commenting, and debate. Questions and comments were captured in table groups and provided to the Business Committee who then worked the proposal into the motion that would come forward for debate. The proposals were The AC Forrest Prophetic Ministry Award, Kairos II, and Supporting DRIPA.

Some time was spent in engagement with the Executive. After providing an introduction, report, and a brief primer on the work of the Executive (primary functions: listening, guiding, and monitoring), Thea Sheridan-Jonah reported on her experiences travelling throughout the Region. Because she had completed her university studies in December, she gifted the Region with her time by visiting communities of faith and attending events. In table groups, we spent time discussing three questions and reporting them to the executive.

- Whether you are ordered or lay, tell a story about a moment in your church/ministry when you thought, “this is why we do what we do”. What happened?
- What is your bold hope for your church?
- What would make the biggest difference in helping your church move toward that bold hope?

The Annual General Meeting concluded on Sunday with the Celebration of Ministry Worship Service. Two people were ordained: Leslie Buerschaper and Brian Pankratz. Two who were already ordained in other denominations were received into the United Church of Canada: Martha Juillert and Frederick Thondhlana. Thea Sheridan-Jonah was commissioned to be the President of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council. Leslie Ross and Leslie Stirling attended this service via live stream from Leslie Stirling’s basement because the highway had been closed at McLure.

- Moderator Kimberly Heath published a video message for Pride Month.

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- Kathy Davies, our Regional Minister, is on sabbatical from June 8th to September 8th. The Rev. Ibi Chuan, who is the Regional Minister for the Kootenays and the North, will be covering for her as our Regional Minister during this time.

- The General Secretary position for The United Church of Canada has been posted. Applications will be accepted until June 28, 2026.

- Collective 2026 is being held August 12 – 15, 2026. Sponsored by The United Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church in Canada, it is a gathering for youth, young adults, and leaders. It will be held at Brock University in St. Catherines, Ontario.