

REPORTS –PROGRAM STAFF

Erin Acland
Keeper of the Archives



While researching reference requests, I frequently access past ROPs. They offer great snapshots of the activities and the ethos of yesteryear. The topics that dominated conversation and business for years, if not decades, can be pretty inspiring and interesting and embarrassing and shameful. As I write my third pandemic-era staff report, I'm struck by the reality that in one hundred years an archivist, knowledge keeper, or researcher, may very well come across this ROP and say, "huh, Covid, that was still a thing?" Yes, future reader, it very much is still going on.

Every year that I've worked for the Church has been a busy year, and this year is no different. For much of the year, I worked both on-site at the University of Winnipeg and from home. There were long stretches where UW's Covid Policy limited my access to the Archives to only one or two days a week, and a few months where I had nearly unlimited access. I can do much of my job sitting in front of a computer, but many central aspects of my work require me to physically access the records. My days on-site were particularly eventful as I rushed to get done everything that could only be done on-site.

In-person research was extremely limited all year, and only two people accessed the Archives in-person. It was exciting to have them there. While I have constant requests coming in via email and phone, it was lovely to see actual people dive into the records. It was a good reminder of one of the reasons why I love this job. These records matter. They help people tell their story.

Reference and Archival Accessions

In 2021, I received 315 archival requests. While I received fewer requests than in pre-Covid times, reference continues to take up the majority of my time. Balancing the needs of users with the other functions required in my work continues to be a struggle. 248 requests were for reference assistance, and 67 requests were for records management help or discussions about donations and transfers of records to the Archives.

I continued to discourage most archival donations this year unless the records were in danger. I have a backlog of accessioning to do for the last two years.

University of Winnipeg

My UW update is virtually unchanged from last year. Discussions continue with the University of Winnipeg about the future management and stewardship of the Archives. A Stewardship Agreement has

been drafted and was reviewed by leadership within the Church, and is currently under review by the UW.

Work continues on the UW Library and Archive's massive revitalization and remodeling project.

The staff of the UW Archives and myself have biweekly staff meetings to stay connected professionally and socially during this time of mostly being apart.

Grants

The Archives received \$10,000 from the Department of Canadian Heritage: Reopening Fund for Heritage Organizations under the Museums Assistance Program.

DUCC

I am a part of the Diakonia of the United Church of Canada's Archives Committee. It is an active committee, we've co-hosted Archives webinars for DUCC members and friends, while continuing to co-create the DUCC Archives.

Indigenous Collections Research Guide

As part of our on-going work to make our records more known and accessible to Indigenous communities and people, I created a Research Guide. This guide briefly lists and describes all 139 archival collections that were created by, or about, Indigenous communities and peoples. Communities and geographic areas named in records were listed in the guide, as well as some keywords and subject areas.

*Respectfully submitted,
Erin Acland, Keeper of the Archives*



Julie Graham
Regional Minister: Justice and Communications



It is a gift to be in continued community with the people and ministries of Prairie to Pine, after another year of meeting and greeting you virtually. I still long for that happy day when I can meet many more of you in person. Please don't ever hesitate to be in touch: jgraham@united-church.ca and via my home office- please ask the office for that number.

Many of you will remember that as we gathered at last year's annual meeting, news came from the Tk'emlúpsenc First Nation in Kamloops that confirmation of unmarked burials at the residential "school" had been announced. That confirmation of decades of survivor testimony was both devastating and a moment for renewed commitment to the Calls to Action, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Church Apologies, the Caretakers' Calls to the Church, and more. Those commitments have shaped a lot of my work over the past year, and I have been grateful to work alongside many in these Regional Council and beyond as we try to renew and live into our responsibilities.

Right relations ([Click here for the web page](#)).

Throughout the year I have tried to hold priority on promoting any Indigenous-led learning spaces. Orange Shirt Day was a top priority and kept us very busy with resources, news, and events, as it will again in 2022. June, Indigenous History Month, against faced the limitations of COVID.

I continue to follow up with cemetery and unmarked burials working groups, notably Brandon, and thankful to them for all they've taught me.

A significant piece for elder Grant Queskekapow, co chairs Diane Dwarka and Pat Bird, right relations advocate Irene Greenwood, and myself has been the request for a Survivors Circle Norway House, MB. Elder Grant has given us instructions, support, and guidance as we put together a group of people who will be ready to attend in person or online listening circles for the survivors of the residential school the United Church ran in Norway House. I thank this group, and those we approached, for their patient and persistent work as we try to discern how to carry a number of sacred responsibilities.

This has also pushed us to begin identifying who in the Region is interested in working on right relations generally, and to look at some of the blocks to the work created unintentionally in the restructuring. This conversation might lead us into looking at right relations governance and better connection with Clusters (and more encouragement for them to form.) This all remains a pressing and complex need.

Finally, I want to deeply thank the circle that brought the Region to a new land recognition. [Please see our new\(ish\) resource page](#). I continue to work with others on offering land acknowledgement learning spaces for all our communities of faith.

Affirming ([Click here for the web page](#)).

I am staff support to the Equity and Diversity Committee. In November we held what seems to be the first (in recent memory) Affirming ministries support gathering. Currently the committee is planning to take leadership for a session in Affirm United/ S'affirmer Ensemble's Kitchen Sink series. And of course, last year 500 people gathered on YouTube for our Affirming celebration, followed by rainbow dessert and coffee on Zoom. See below for another Equity and Diversity project. Special thanks to past co-chair Ken DeLisle and to chair Jamie Miller for all their persistent guidance, humour, and commitment to radical hospitality, and to the entire committee.

Intercultural ([Click here for the web page](#)). The Western Intercultural Network continues its work, which includes Damber Khadka and Bill Millar as Prairie to Pine members on the executive. More P2P people are always welcome! The Network will not hold a fall 2022 event, instead taking another break from big online events. However, it will continue with at least quarterly open, 90 minute intercultural “coffee/ chai” learning and conversation events. I maintain the Network list and send out occasional updates, and feel privileged to be part of this vibrant and diverse group of leaders. I also presented on this network at a national staff gathering.

Anti-racism: This is a denomination-wide commitment that will soon have a public action plan in which we can all join. I continue to be part of discussion with national staff about coordinating anti-racism networking with Regional Councils, and accessing lists of people who have done Sessions 3 and 4 of the national training and could be leaders for us. I am part of the facilitation team for the national training, and am supporting the Equity and Diversity Committee as we begin some exciting discernment and planning about the possibility of a Regionally contextual racial justice training for our whole Regional Council.

Other justice networking: Housing as a human right; Guaranteed Livable Income; Palestine; Faithful Footprints and For the Love of Creation, both climate change related: these are all areas in which PtoP people are active. In March we held a three-Region refugee supporters and sponsors check in concerning the national refugee sponsorship program, with national staff Khwaka Kukubo. This included a focus on COVID impacts; Afghanistan; and LGBTQ refugees. From time to time I am also drawn in to General Council related justice work and network conversations and projects.



Community-building: Snow and Ice Art. ([Click here for the web page](#)).

This COVID winter we launched a three-Region Love Your Neighbour ice art and snow sculpture initiative. The Committee on Community of Faith Support gave its blessing and off we went, with a good number of Prairie to Pine Communities of Faith joining in with sculpting, ice art, media coverage, and lots of great photos. My follow up has not been as extensive as I’d like; I am hoping to be in touch with all registrants to see if we should do this again, and to thank them for brightening a hard winter. (Left: Rosser, Waskada, Fort Garry, and St Mary’s Rd United Churches!)

Networks and Clusters ([Click here for the web page](#)).

A summary of all known Networks and Clusters in each Regional Council is posted, thanks to lots of shared work and sleuthing. This area of work is a COVID and restructuring related struggle for many across the church, and Clusters especially continue to have a hard time getting up and running. Conversations with justice-focused Clusters have raised the concern that many find our governance confusing, and don't know who is allowed or encouraged to speak for the church.

Nominating Committee support: It has been a privilege to work more closely with this dynamic group, and to see again and again how to they respond to the challenging reality of communications networks that were seriously disrupted by the restructuring. We have focused on regular newsletter and [website communication](#), and on job descriptions, invitations, two renewed forms for expressions of interest and evaluation, and other tools that help explain the wide range of needs and opportunities available to the people of this Region. The committee has also developed a form that allows more detailed self or other nominations, and an impressive tracking system. I remain in awe of the scope and detail of their work.

Communications

Newsletters: This continues to be a lot of vital weekly work, especially for fearless editor Cherry Abad, who works with the mountain of content that comes in, maintains the website archive, and works with new subscribers. I am so grateful for her work. This year, we began an experiment that will run through June and will give our 1,000 plus subscribers a chance to evaluate: We split the newsletter into alternating News and Events, in an effort to narrow down the focus and both the amount and scope of the content. Thank you to the meeting of ministry personnel who gave me some good advice on what works and doesn't, and to others who have written in with constructive feedback; we welcome this as we continue to adapt to our new structures.

Events: For two years we have all set sail on a sea of online events that occasionally builds to a tidal wave. This is both amazing and occasionally overwhelming for everyone. I have prioritised working with the newsletters team (Cherry, Bev and Kathy) to promote events and workshops that: have Indigenous leadership/ are focused on right relations; are Affirming; or intercultural; or anti-racism focused; focus on anti-poverty or climate justice; or reflect Regional initiatives and concerns such as housing. Generally we priority-promote first Regional, and then General Council, ecumenical, and national/ regional KAIROS events. Please remember that community of faith events has a dedicated calendar and event posting form- click here to see it.

Website troubleshooting and development are always ongoing, and the Prairie to Pine site in particular has had a number of systemic problems. As of February 2022 these have been mostly resolved, which I hardly dare write. Keeping the site up to date is a priority for Cherry and me, and having a look at the homepage or [main newsfeed](#) regularly is good for your health. Many thanks to Cherry and to YAAY-er extraordinaire Elizabeth Kenyon for all their posting.

Media: Lots of community coverage that I track and post to our Facebook page. I have worked with Brenda Suderman at the Free Press on a couple of items, as has Shannon. Thank you to those who sit on the Free Press interfaith advisory group and try to keep faith-based reporting front of mind.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Graham, Regional Minister: Justice and Communications for Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils.



Judy Hare
Pastoral Relations Minister

On the internet you can google “word of the year” with varying results. For me the word describing this past year would be “pivoting” or “adapting” (hard to choose one). It seemed we all reached a point where we didn’t dare plan too far ahead because when we even tried, something happen that required modification or major change. But despite the constant state of flux we found ourselves in, the volunteers on the committees and commission that work with on a regular basis, the Ministry Personnel, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and Sacraments Elders who support ministry with members and adherents within the roughly 160 pastoral charges in Prairie to Pine Regional Council, never gave up hope. There were times of low energy and activity, when breaks were needed and taken, and times of creativity when new way of doing and of being were tolerated or even embraced. We changed our patterns and means of communicating, bridging distances in through technology and the Regional Council changed its physical location in December 2021, moving to share space with the staff at the Centre for Christian Studies at Woodsworth House on Maryland Street in Winnipeg.

This past year has been one where I have continued to connect with colleagues in the Regional Councils and General Council staff doing work in the area of pastoral relations and/or community of faith support every month or two, way more frequently than in pre-pandemic times. All staff including all those working through the General Council Office or one of the sixteen Regional Council Offices are invited into ZOOM meetings a few times per year so that we can become more familiar with one another’s work and the overall work of the denomination and get to put faces to names of people we have occasion to talk with for work purposes. This is something we would not have had the opportunity to do pre-

pandemic. Our tri-regional council pastoral relations/office of vocation staff met monthly online and the full staff complement of Northern Spirit, Living Skies and Prairie to Pine Regional Council met a few times per year.

Some things are swinging back slowly toward the ways they used to be pre-pandemic, but just like the reality that this virus will be something we learn to live with, some things may never return to the way they were, having discovered options that can inform the ways we go ahead. Timely communications still remain one of the significant challenges in this “connected” world and church where not everyone has the same access to technology and its many platforms and mediums. To that end, as the Regional Council moved to more focused presentation of Weekly News (one week focused exclusively on events and the next on news), I introduced an email bulletin called “*Crucial Clips*” to be sent quarterly to active Ministry Personnel and Pastoral Charge Supervisors with information necessary for the functioning of communities of faith and ministry personnel and updates on the work of the various committees and commissions.

As communities of faith/pastoral charges begin to take stock of what ministry will look like going forward, the Pastoral Relations Commission hosted a zoom conversation on January 29, 2022 about the need for and nature of collaborative ministry at this juncture in our history. There was a level of excitement as people were encouraged to think about different potential partners that might enable and enrich mission and ministry and their part in it, especially in places where only part time or no ordered ministry leadership has been accessible and more has been desired. It was our hope that that conversation was the beginning of many more conversations sparked locally, but the Pastoral Relations Commission, the Committee on Community of Faith Support and I continue to discern the role we would play in initiating, facilitating and supporting those next step conversations. I would be happy to share the resources from that January event with anyone who was not able to be present or discuss the next steps. Some decisions before the Commissioners at General Council 44 may impact the flexibility in the ministry options that we have going forward.

The Regional Council Annual meeting this year is a bit earlier than usual and pastoral relations was not able to “pivot” or “adapt” some of our processes and timelines to enable the provision of some information or reports that you might usually have as part of the Annual Meeting or the Workbook. In the absence of the Pastoral Relations Commission Status update, I offer the following comments for your consideration:

- 66 non-Indigenous Communities of Faith representing 53 different Pastoral Charges have Pastoral Charge Supervisors: six communities of faith representing five of those pastoral charges have supervisors because they have Candidates under appointment (Atikokan; Oak Lake-Griswold; Roblin; Keewatin: St. Andrew’s & Lake of the Woods Chapel, Sioux Narrows) three pastoral charge have supervisors because they have ministers from other denominations in the Admissions process under appointment (Rock Lake; Fort Frances-Knox: Pembina Parish) and of those eight communities of faith, seven pastoral charges have supervisors as part of a Collaborative Ministry Arrangements with another pastoral charge (Service Agreement: Rainy River -Stratton; Alexander; Minto; Brookdale; Dugald; Ninette; Gilbert Plains).
- There are four pastoral charges with retired ministry personnel under appointment in 2021-2022 while they are in the profile/search process (Steinbach, Niverville; Roland; Miami); eighteen communities of faith representing 15 pastoral charges with retired ministers

in appointment **renewed regularly who are NOT currently in a search process** (Flin Flon; Lakeside: Ste. Rose; Hillsideview; Forrest; Reston-Pipestone; Souris; Central-Brandon; Graysville; Broadway Disciples ; Cartwright; Prairie Vision; Clandeboye-Winnipeg Beach; Glenboro; Little Britain; Warren-Meadow Lea).

- **There are 36 communities of faith representing 27 pastoral charges who are completely reliant on lay volunteers (including sacraments elders) and rotational pulpit supply with the support of pastoral charge supervisor who are NOT currently in a profile/search process (Lay-Led by the definition): Anola; Birtle-Miniota; Cadurcis; Circle Marsh (3);** Cloverdale; Cromer-Hargrave; Rossendale; Southwest Interlake(3); The Pas: Northminster; Treherne-Rathwell; Vermillion Bay; Wallace; West Hawk Lake; Winnipeg: Chinese United Church; Newdale-Cardale; Northwest Interlake (2); Oak River; Ochre River; Pine Falls; Pine River; Elgin; Elkhorn; Ethelbert; Kenton-Shiloh; Thompson Lutheran United; Snow Lake Anglican United; Red Lake Anglican United).
- There are a few pastoral charges with pastoral charge **supervisors reliant on local or rotational leadership** who have been in **profile/search process for less than a year** (Kenora; McKenzie-Portage; Wawanesa- Brandon Hills; Gordon King Memorial United Church; Hartney-Lauder) or longer than a year (Rivers; Swan River: St. Andrew's; Valley (3); MacGregor; Manitou-La Riviere; Gladstone; Holland).
- On July 01, 2021, Prairie to Pine had **163 non-Indigenous Communities of faith organized into 140 Pastoral Charges**; 18 or 19 Indigenous Communities of Faith/Outreach Ministries.
- Since July 1, 2021, there have been two communities of faith disbanded and seven in conversations around disbanding or amalgamations.
- **Non- Indigenous Ministry Statistics:** We currently have 50 Ministry Personnel in Fulltime equivalent Calls/Appointments (five of those through Collaborative Ministry Arrangement with more than one charge; four Ministers from other denominations in the Admissions process or other; three Ministers from other denominations serving in Ecumenical Shared Ministry settings (Pinawa; Morris; Neepawa).
- We have 34 Ministry Personnel in part-time appointments serving 39 Pastoral Charges (of those 5 are Candidates for ministry and 20 are retired Ministry Personnel).
- The 84 Ministry Personnel in all Calls/appointments include people with the following designations: 1 Candidate for Diaconal ministry; 2 candidates for Designated Lay Ministry; 2 Candidates for Ordained Ministry; six Designated Lay Ministers (some re-engaged pensioners); 9 Diaconal Ministers (some re-engaged pensioners); 57 Ordained UCC Ministers (some re-engaged pensioners) and seven ministers from other denominations. These numbers may be off by one or two.

- We currently have eight pastoral charges with one or more positions approved for Congregational Designated Ministers working in team with ministers in Call/appointment (Winnipeg: United Church in Meadowood; Westminster; Transcona Memorial; Trinity; Dryden: First United; Roland United Church; Trinity: Portage La Prairie; Kenora; Knox).
- We currently have around 55 non-Indigenous Ministry Personnel who are collecting United Church Pension or are not appointed in pastoral charge who are in **formal association relationships** with communities of faith/pastoral charges enabling them to exercise the functions of ministry throughout the Regional Council.

Our statistics related to Indigenous Ministries and Ministers are not currently as accurate as they could or maybe should be, hampered by the absence of a staff person in the role of Community Capacity Development Coordinator for Keewatin Circle. Our thanks to Gloria Cook and Rick Hebert who held this position at various times this past year and our prayers that the search currently underway will result in the appointment of a new CCDC soon.

The ministry that I continue to be enriched by and challenged within as part of the staff of Prairie to Pine Regional Council of this United Church of ours would not be possible without the Administrative Assistance provided by Cherry Abad and the partnering with so many volunteers who serve on committees, commissions and governing bodies of the Regional Council and the communities of faith /pastoral charges. I am grateful for the time, experience and skills they willingly share and all they continue to teach me.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Judy Hare, Pastoral Relations Minister,
Prairie to Pine Regional Council



Shannon McCarthy
Executive Minister



In some ways it is hard to believe that we have been a Regional Council for four years, and in other ways it seems like much longer! The reality is that we haven't experienced a full year of 'normal' operations, due to covid and the work of shaping our Regional Council and its work. It is my hope as we move into 2022/2023 that we can find ways of gathering and connecting around the mission and ministry of Prairie to Pine Regional Council. That we can take our learnings from the pandemic and integrate them into how we meet and gather as the church community who wants to be in relationship with one another, but also wants to be respectful of the time and energy of its volunteers as well as the cost to our environment and our fiscal reality.

We are still working on making sure our structure serves the needs of the Regional Council and the Communities of Faith within our bounds. We continue to refine our policies and get our structure document in writing and posted on the website. We have been trying to be flexible and change how things work as we go in order to be responsive; however, the Regional Council and the General Council will be doing a more formal evaluation of the new structures in 2023/2024.

I want to thank all of the staff for their dedication, hard work, and ministry in Prairie to Pine Regional Council. Your staff; Judy Hare, Julie Graham, Twila MacNair, Heather Dootoff, Cherry Abad, Jamie Mckay and Erin Acland, all work hard to ensure that Communities of Faith and members of the Regional Council have the support and resources they need to do the work of the United Church in our area. As a staff team we have been trying to improve communication and make sure people can connect in multiple ways to find out what is happening in Prairie to Pine Regional Council and that you have the information you need as Communities of Faith. Please make sure you are signed up for our newsletter, bookmark our website, and join us on Facebook.

Since our lease at 1622 St. Mary's Rd was up in 2021 we made the decision not to renew, this was a decision made to save us money, to accommodate for a smaller staff, and for some staff to work remotely. With a smaller staff team, no longer sharing the space with Winnipeg Presbytery and some staff deciding to work from home it seemed like a good time to look for a smaller more affordable space. In December 2021 we moved into our new space at the Centre for Christian Studies at 60 Maryland Ave. Thanks everyone who worked to make this move a success! I also want to take this opportunity to thank Dave Turchyn for his many years as Caretaker for the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario and Prairie to Pine Regional Council. Dave's presence around the office will be missed and we wish him well.

As a staff team we also mourn the loss of Linda Firman who passed away in December. Although she wasn't on the Regional Council staff she was instrumental in the transition from Conference to Regional Council and closing up the books of the Conference and Winnipeg Presbytery. As we packed up the office Linda's name came up often. For many years Linda kept the office running smoothly, she was very fiscally responsible and would never order one of something if she could save money by ordering 100 of them. She was a dedicated member of the staff team who was always up for a laugh or some fun at coffee breaks and she will be missed by the church community as well as her husband Ted and family.

Last but certainly not least, I want to thank to the Executive and the Co-chairs, Diane Dwarka and Pat Bird, for another year of prayerful discernment and decision-making on behalf of the Regional Council. We have met monthly for the last two years and are getting to a place that we believe we can shift to meeting once every two months via zoom and having one face-to-face meeting each fall to review our vision and mission.

*Respectfully submitted,
Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister
Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils.*



REMEMBERING

RECONNECTING

RE-VISIONING