

GENERAL COUNCIL 45 COMMISSIONERS



Jennifer Pakula

- Lay person
- Snow Lake, MB
- No previous GC experience
- “I’m interested in this position for two primary reasons. One, I am curious about how General Council works and would like to see it first-hand. Two, I am a member of an ecumenical ministry in a small northern isolated community that does not have ordained clergy and as such, think I would bring an interesting perspective to General Council.”



Teresa Melnychuk

- Lay person
- Balmoral United Church
- Previously attended GC 42
- “I am part of a small rural congregation and serve as chair of my pastoral charge. I would include my voice to represent small struggling congregations.”



Craig Miller

- Ministry personnel
- Knox United Church, Brandon
- No previous GC experience
- “It is essential for the voice of the Prairie to Pine Region, specifically our rural communities of faith, to be heard at the General Council. As a commissioner, I plan to share our experiences at Knox (Brandon) as an affirming ministry working actively for anti-racism, truth and reconciliation, as well as our experience developing community partnerships and interfaith ministry.”



Doug Neufeld

- Ministry personnel and incoming co-chair of Prairie to Pine Regional Council
- Trinity United, Brandon
- Previously attended GC 43
- “I will be co-chair of P2P at the time of GC45 so I have a responsibility to represent our region. I also have past experience by being a commissioner for GC43 and I served 9 years on the board of St. Andrew's College - the last 6 as board chair.”



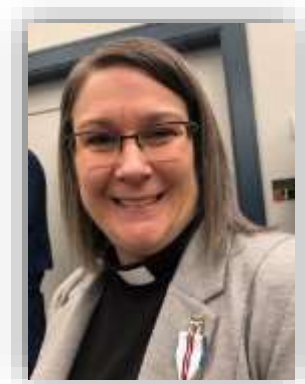
Donna Neufeld

- Lay person
- Trinity United Church, Brandon
- No previous GC experience
- “I think that my many years of work experience in administration and finance, at different organizations, gives me a valuable perspective for General Conference. I served as secretary of the Board at my home churches as well as other roles on committees, including Christian Education, Equity & Diversity, and the Prayer Team.”



Silas Lee

- Lay person
- Chinese United Church, Winnipeg
- No previous GC experience
- “Currently a board member of Committees of Faith Support, 10 years’ experience with Central District of Evangelical Free Church of Canada, completed LLWL course this past May and is currently a board member of the Chinese United Church.”



Tricia Gerhard

- Ministry personnel
- Westworth United Church, Winnipeg
- Previously attended GC 43 and 44
- “First of all, I LOVE CHURCH MEETINGS. Not sure if that is a strength or a weakness, but it's the truth. Participating in General Council as a Commissioner for the last two councils has been such an empowering and humbling experience. Through my participation in the (Re)Generate program I have expressed my intention to continue to offer leadership and spiritual care for the people of the church for another ten or more years. That means I need to participate in the life and work of the Region and the General Council as well as my community of faith in order for the church to flourish and continue to shift in response to the changes that we see in our people and church.”



Simbarashe Mazhara

- Ministry personnel
- United in Spirit, Steinbach, and Niverville
- Previously attended GC 44
- “The role offers an opportunity to learn, to grow and to be confronted by real challenges faced by congregations and personnel (paid & non-paid) in ministry. It offers a 'hands-on' experience for involvement in policy-making processes. That active involvement enriches my ministry and empowers my leadership, especially when it comes to explaining the new policies to my faith community or society at large.”



Emma Seamone

- Ministry personnel
- Carberry United Church, Carberry
- Previously attended GC 42
- “Background in Environmental Science and church policy around climate and mining. Youth Ministry Postgraduate diploma and membership in YAAY. Been in ministry in rural areas so have that perspective.”



Kristin Woodburke

- Ministry personnel
- Oakbank United Church, Oakbank
- Previously attended GC 40
- “I have been a commissioner previously and understand the importance of the role, not only in serving to do the work of the General Council, but also to communicate that work to the Region. This being the 100th anniversary year, I anticipate an opportunity to talk about the future of the church, something that has been on my mind quite a bit lately, as part of my work with the church I serve, but also just as an individual middle-aged Christian.”



Damber Khadka

- Ministry personnel
- Trinity United Church, Winnipeg
- No previous GC experience
- “I have an experience of working with diverse racial /ethnic demographic communities. Involved in intercultural ministries, advocate on behalf of racialized, underserved, non-privileged individuals and communities.”



Hope Mattus

- Lay person
- United Church in Meadowood, Winnipeg
- Previously attended GC 44
- “I am currently serving as commissioner to the 44th General Council. This has been a vast learning experience for me. It puts me in a position to keep my community of faith duly informed of the happenings of the General Council and the wider church. This experience continues to enrich me and deepen my faith. Participation gives me a greater understanding of the church and why we are called to be the church.”



Frances Flook

- Ministry personnel
- Knox United, Kenora
- Previously attended GC 39
- “I bring 27+ years of ministry wisdom/experience with me- have been part of the changing journey of the church during that time - understanding of history, knowledge and context. My ministry has been in rural and small-town setting, so I bring the unique perspective of what it means to be the church where you are the only liberal/progressive option in town, and where out-migration for education and work is a reality.”



Hannah Polasek (Youth Forum)

- Lay person, selected by the YAAY committee as the region’s commissioner to Youth Forum
- Carberry United Church, Carberry
- No previous GC experience
- “I am currently in my 3rd course of LLWL (licensed lay worship leader) training and am very thankful for the opportunity to go to General Council. I believe that we can all do something to spark change and hope to bring my own experiences from a small rural town with me to General Council.”

Alternates

Diane Dwarka

- Lay person
- United Church in Meadowood, Winnipeg
- Previously attended GC 39, 40 and 44
- “I have served the United Church of Canada at all levels in various capacities. I have been chair of the United Church in Meadowood, Presbytery, Co-Chair of the P2P Region, Chair of Programs for Mission and Ministry (GC) and been on various committees.”
- **Recommended by the Nominating Committee to be considered as a Category H commissioner, named by General Council.**

Patrick Woodbeck

- Ministry personnel
- Gordon King Memorial and Grey St. United, Winnipeg
- Previously attended GC 42
- “I am deeply interested in the future direction of the United Church of Canada. I bring the ability to view issues from many different perspectives while honouring, and holding, these different perspectives at the same time. I have previously been a commissioner and in that work I spoke directly to the court at the meeting a few times, bringing concerns raised by my table group to the whole. I am willing to engage with others and I am thoughtful in response. I am open-minded to new ideas and possibilities.”
- **Recommended by the Nominating Committee to be considered as a Category H commissioner, named by General Council.**

Susie McPherson-Derendy

- Ministry personnel
- Knox United Church, Brandon
- No previous GC experience
- **Recommended by the Nominating Committee to be considered as a Category H commissioner, named by General Council**

Karen Tjaden

- Ministry personnel
- Knox United, Winnipeg and Carman
- Previously attended GC 44
- “I am a diaconal minister, commissioned by Conference of MB/NWO in 1994. Social justice and community ministries have been a strong focus of my ministry whether in paid or unpaid accountable ministry in both inner city and rural contexts. I was nurtured in my faith by a lively rural Manitoba congregation which prepared me well to be a follower of Jesus. Almost all of my formal employment and career opportunities have been available to me through serving in UCC ministries.”