

Annual Report – Co-Chair, Lynne Sanderson for June 2024 to June 2025

Greetings to and Thanksgiving for You!

As I look back on the past year, I realize how quickly a one-year term as co-chair flew by. It was a one-year term and not two, what we might call in the church a “Gap” appointment. This was to help the terms work for Co-Chair Elect’s and Co-Chair positions that had previously been vacant.

As with anything new, there is a learning curve, and I certainly found this to be true. And I know I leave the position with more learning to go. Being Co-Chair is being the representative for Prairie to Pine Regional Council in ways I had not expected, like being in conversation with the provincial government and the Board of Regents for the University of Winnipeg, or like wrestling with the implications and impact of a nuclear waste dump proposal and who best needs to be in the conversation. The year has caused me to think of the leadership that has gone before and all the ways in which they served this church that we may not have been aware of.

An overview of some of the activities that have happened over the past year includes:

Hosting two Zoom-based Town Halls

Planning and implementation of a two-evening Zoom-based Annual Meeting in October 2024

Planning for in-person Executive meeting in November 2024

Being a representative at the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity worship service

Attended covenant services when able.

Representation at 100 Year Anniversary of the United Church of Canada in St. John’s Nfld

Coordinated Retirement Dinner Celebration

Provided representation at the Service of Celebration of Ministry for Elijah Mwandilla

These, along with regular monthly meetings, made for a full year, of which I am grateful for the experience. And there were many other events that took place over the year that we reached out to past chairs for their valuable assistance in filling in the gaps.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve this United Church of ours, a church that I love and hope to see continue for many years in the future. I was reminded of this while attending the 100-year anniversary. At the dinner on the evening before the worship service, there were several guests who spoke to us of the importance of the ways in which the United Church of Canada has been at the forefront of many important social justice initiatives. We heard from the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, our own current and past Moderators, our General Secretary and an Indigenous Youth

Scholar, Samantha Miller. I was moved by the various faith traditions represented of others who spoke, the Dean of Eastern NFLD/Labrador Anglican Church, and representatives from the Muslim and Hindu communities. And I believe these last two I mention gave me the “Yes!” to why we need to make sure there will always be a United Church loving and embracing and including all of God’s richly diverse and incredibly beautiful Creation.

Now I am stepping into membership of the Committee on Nominations, and it is my hope that I will find other “yeses” when I call to ask, “would you consider serving your church on...?”

Respectfully submitted by

Lynne Sanderson

Co-Chair

Prairie to Pine Regional Council

Annual Report - Co-Chair, Dawn Rolke for June 2024 to June 2025

“Anyone with ears to ear, listen to the Spirit. Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.” - Revelation 2:7

Over the past 12 months, the executive of Prairie-to-Pine, together with our skilled and committed staff, has attempted to hear what the Spirit is saying to the regional church. With a structure that is still finding its feet and deep change in the religious and spiritual landscape in Canada, hearing Spirit is not always easy.

I am grateful for the past year, during which I served as Co-Chair along with the very-able Lynne Sanderson. Before accepting the nomination, I attended Executive meetings as a guest and spoke to current and past chairs about the expectations of the role. I noticed that I was feeling disconnected from the regional church and decided that the way to learn was to jump in. So I did. And the following year was a challenge. I am new to Manitoba and I had been working outside of the United Church when the current structure was developed, so many things are still fuzzy to me. Too, the role of the Chair/Chairs is still evolving in real time, with many tasks emerging unexpectedly; many other tasks being diplomatic (and thus hard for me to prioritize) and yet other issues being unfamiliar and complex (and thus hard to navigate in my relative ignorance). Lynne named a couple such issues in her report: we were asked to consider a Nuclear Waste Disposal site in another province and asked to weigh in on United Church positions on the Board of Regents at the University of Winnipeg.

Because diverse and unexpected issues arise with surprising regularity, co-chairs rely heavily on staff for background information and advice. Needing to speak with one voice, as co-chairs *and* seek advice from one or more staff, creates a certain inefficiency in our current system and a sense (for me) of doing the job poorly. I’m not sure wherein the problems lie: maybe this will be revealed in the years ahead.

Also, heading into the role of co-chair, it was apparent that the P2P Region is driven largely by tasks, rather than by a guiding vision. This is not by desire or design. Rather, because the work facing staff and volunteers is so urgent and time-sensitive, it is hard to create time and space to create and articulate our vision. I wonder: do you, as an engaged member of P2P have a sense of the “why” of the P2P Region? What is your 30-second elevator speech? We will be focusing on our Call and Vision in the coming months. I look forward to this!

Like my co-chair, I have outlined some of my work over the past year below.

- Co-chaired P2P Executive meetings in 2024-2025.
- Participated in a meeting between the Moderator, the General Secretary and regional chairs (Oct. 2024) Chairs shared something we celebrate in our region and something that needs attention.
- Communicated with Communication and Justice Minister, Executive Minister or other staff, and co-chair, to prepare statements regarding local, regional or national issues in a timely way.

- Planned for, and co-chaired, Oct 2024 AGM.
- Hosted an in-person Executive day-long gathering in Wpg (Nov 2024).
- Attended and spoke at a leaders' meeting with the Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and ecumenical leaders from Winnipeg and Manitoba. Attended a public event with Dr Pillay at the Museum for Human Rights (Dec 2024).
- Engaged in an ongoing conversation with six downtown (and downtown adjacent) UCC congregations in Winnipeg about the future.
- Hosted an in-person ½ day Executive meeting in Wpg about Toward 2035
- Secured a letter from the Lt. Governor for all congregations in P2P having 100th Anniversary services and events. Sent the letter to all congregations that were holding services (Spring 2025).
- Attended the Retirees Banquet, organized by Lynne Sanderson (June 2025).
- Attended GC45 in Calgary, and all preliminary and training meetings, on behalf of the Region (Spring-Fall 2025).
- Attended an education and training day on Toward 2035 after GC45 (Aug 2025).
- Planning for and chairing the Oct 2025 AGM.
- Part of the Planning Team for the June 2026 AGM.
- Contacted people to attend a Structural Task Group Evaluation (Oct 2025).

In June 2025, as Lynne ended her term as co-chair, the Executive welcomed Doug Neufeld as co-chair. I have appreciated working with Doug and am sorry that his term will be cut short by a move to Ontario. We wish Doug and his family all the best. I look forward to more growth in my role as chair, and I thank the staff and the executive for their patience, knowledge and support.