

Growth Animator's report for the 2024/2025 pastoral year

One of the best things about my job is getting to know the people and communities of faith that make up our church. As I continue to meet with folks across Prairie to Pine, I have been able to develop on-going working relationships with several ministers and pastoral charges who are interested in deepening their discipleship, becoming more invitational, and growing the impact of their ministries. Whether through phone or Zoom conversations, face-to-face meetings, worship services, online or in-person workshops, I have now connected with clergy and lay folks from more than 60 communities of faith in the Prairie to Pine Region.

Over the past year, I have worked with 11 rural churches and 10 urban churches in your region. Together, we have discussed everything from reimagining use of church buildings, to planting churches for underserved populations, to building community partnerships. Two of the most common topics communities of faith invite me to explore with them are discerning God's purpose and vision for their ministry, and developing collaborative relationships with neighbouring churches.

Sustainability of ministry is another key concern for both urban and rural churches. We all know that society has changed, and those changes have had major impacts on churches. The Growth Department was created to support communities of faith as they seek to adapt to these new realities. It is a privilege to come alongside and support pastoral charges that are courageously reimagining how to be church in their current context. The creativity, dedication, and faithfulness of the people in our churches is inspiring.

One of the ways churches are finding new hope and growth is by becoming intentional about inviting and welcoming their neighbours. Six communities of faith in Prairie to Pine are participating in the [100 Tables](#) initiative of the United Church. Many of you are finding other ways to respectfully reach out and invite your neighbours into a deeper relationship and an encounter with the Good News we have come to know through faith. If you are looking for ways to help your congregation grow its capacity to share their faith humbly and confidently with your neighbours – in ways that are respectful, rooted in authentic relationship, and distinctly 'United Church' – please reach out to me. I would be delighted to work with you to develop an invitation plan for your community of faith that is a good fit for you.

Every week, the Growth Team hosts an online gathering to pray together for the church. Please consider joining us on Thursdays at 11 AM Central Time to pray for the health and vitality of our various ministries. (Register to receive the Zoom link [here](#).) If you have a prayer request to share, please send it to growth@united-church.ca; we will be sure to include it in our prayers.

Thank you for all you do to share the Good News of Christ in your context and strengthen the ministry and witness of the United Church in Prairie to Pine Regional Council.

Blessings,
Jordan Cantwell
Growth Animator – Prairie Region
jcantwell@united-church.ca