Prairie to Pine Online Regional Meeting
Wednesday, November 13, 2025

The Regional meeting was held online with Doug Neufeld chairing. The meeting had 141 sign-ins; some screens had more than two or more participants. Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister, offered opening words and noted that reports, budget and audit questions, etc. will be discussed during the in-person AGM in May 2026. Participants were directed toward their online workbooks for all documents related to this meeting. Noël Suministrado blessed us with Opening and Closing prayers.

Nominations

Lynne Sanderson presented the Nominations Report on behalf of Chair, Joey Dearborn. She described the work of Nominations, referred people to the online workbook for the current slate of volunteers and noted that the slate is passed by the Executive.

Lynne thanked folks who accept volunteer positions when asked and encouraged us to keep our eyes and ears open for people who have gifts for service. She also asked folks to be in touch with the region when leadership changes in their faith community.

Toward 2035

Cam Fraser, the Director of Growth and Ministry Development, offered a presentation on ***Toward 2035***. Using stories and anecdotes, Cam shared the vision and strategy of ***Toward 2035*** and encouraged us to become curious about where we are headed next, as a church, and what might be possible. Currently, the church faces significant obstacles; it is easy to focus exclusively on our problems. But ***Toward 2035*** offers another way. Resources will soon be available for faith communities to use at home and Cam's presentation is on the Prairie-to-Pine website. It's worth a second watch!

Stewardship

Vicki Nelson, Community of Faith Stewardship Support Staff for the Tri-Region, shared resources for stewardship and stories of faith-filled living. Vicki encouraged us to begin conversations about money in our faith communities; she is available to help if we don't know how to have these conversations. Talking about why we love our church makes a difference; we can strengthen our faith communities to become cultures of gratitude.

Report from General Council 45 (GC45)

Emma Seamone, minister at Carberry United Church and a delegate to General Council, gave an overview of GC45. Using an organizational chart of the United Church, Emma outlined the nature and purpose of key parts of the GC structure. She then made three points about the recent General Council gathering.

1) Business at General Council

When addressing proposals at General Council, delegates first listen and learn: proposals (in the online docket) are raised in the full Court and individuals or groups who submitted proposals offer explanations or clarity. Proposals then flow to small groups, where delegates discuss them more thoroughly. Feedback from small groups is gathered; it then flows to The Way Forward Committee, a group which synthesizes the material and revises it, if necessary. Revised proposals return to the full Court for a decision-making

session. If there is unfinished business at the end of General Council, proposals and discussion material, flow to the GC Executive.

b) Diversity

GC45 intentionally sought diversity in its delegates. Using markers such as age, ethnic make-up, gender and ability, GC45 was the most diverse Council in the history of our church.

c) Voting

At General Council, delegates vote as they are moved by the spirit. Delegates don't vote on proposals according to the wishes of "constituents" at home; rather, they listen, discuss and discern, trusting spirit is working through the business process.

Apology to 2-Spirit LGBTQIA Community

Central to General Council 45 was the Service of Apology to the 2-Spirit LGBTQIA community. Tricia Gerhard served on a Task Group which worked, for several years, toward the creation of an Apology. Tricia shared the process leading up to the Apology, some outcomes and the process moving forward.

At GC42, the church voted to begin a national project of story-sharing and dialogue with the people affected by the church's 1988 decision to ordain gay and lesbian folks into ministry in the UCC. The project became *"Iridesce: The Living Apology Project"*. It included stories from the ten years following "the Decision," known as the "Issue Years".

Prior to creating the Apology, the Task Group researched apologies given by other denominations, and by governments. They sought to create a statement which would include those affected by the decision and the issue years and those who have been targets of trans and homophobia intolerance and misinformation. The statement needed to be broad, yet succinct.

The Apology was offered in the context of worship at GC45. And reception has been mixed. Now, tangible, meaningful actions are needed. Action must grow out of the apology; words are not enough. The Apology offers a jumping-off point for conversation in communities of faith. We have taken one step in a long journey to live into the words that have now been spoken.

An Autonomous Indigenous Church

Shannon McCarthy noted that the Indigenous Church exists within the United Church as an autonomous entity, which makes its own decisions and creates its own structure. It is evolving and we are still learning how to live together. We continue to be in relationship and any person, region or community of faith is encouraged to reach out and build or strengthen relationships with folks in the Keewatin Circle and the Indigenous Church. We are still finding ways to decolonize the church. This is hard work and it is ongoing.