

## OTHER REPORTS

### UNITED CHURCH RURAL MINISTRY NETWORK

The United Church Rural Ministry Network (UCRMN) is a national network that connects electronically to share stories and news of rural communities across Canada (and around the world), by networking with leaders of rural communities of faith – lay and clergy. UCRMN received a one-time start-up grant of \$5,000 from the United Church Foundation in 2020. UCRMN is a charitable organization that receives donations from Regional Councils, Congregations or interested people. At UCRMN.ca, there is a link for online donations, information on how to email an e-Transfer, or how to mail a donation by cheque. UCRMN asks all Regional Councils (or tri-Region groupings) to put UCRMN in their annual budgets, as 70% of United Church congregations across the country are in rural or small towns, therefore a relevant cost to each Regional Council.

Our primary ways of connecting with people are e-Newsletters (10 times a year), quarterly Zoom workshops and the ongoing presence of our website, <https://ucrmn.ca>, online. Peter Chynoweth of Cochrane, AB, has been our Web Minder since October 2022.

The e-Newsletters are always available for sharing worship ideas and hopeful stories from rural congregations. Regularly, there is excellent tech advice and challenges from Martin Dawson in PEI and from Peter Chynoweth in Cochrane, AB, who writes the regular ‘Tech Corner’. In addition, the e-Newsletters publicize events happening throughout the Church which are of interest to rural folks, advertising from Regions and committees like Affirming Connections, Curiosity Cohort, etc. Rural Routes Through the Holy conference, held in the Maritimes for a number of years, receives good coverage through the UCRMN newsletter and website, as Catherine Smith is a partner of the UCRMN Board. Chinook Winds has also held rural ministry conferences publicized by UCRMN. If other Regional Councils would like to connect with the rural constituency, let us know – [editor@ucrmn.ca](mailto:editor@ucrmn.ca). We invite all rural congregations to connect by registering to receive the e-newsletter through the website ([ucrmn.ca](https://ucrmn.ca)).

Our Zoom workshops this year covered “Lifelong Learning (facilitated by St. Andrew’s College, Feb. 24, 2024), “Social Media for the Rural Church (facilitated by the United Church Digital Team, April 18), “Rural Church Check in” (an invitation to share concerns and events throughout the country, Sept. 19), “LLWL Check in” (a conversation with Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, which proved so welcome and valuable a networking and such rich conversation that we held a second and a third get-together in Jan. and March), “How is Your Rural Church Celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (facilitated by Bronwyn Corlett, Feb. 20) and coming up in May (15<sup>th</sup>), “Hands On – How to Save your Computer” (led by Martin Dawson and Peter Chynoweth). These workshops are advertised in the e-Newsletters, and registration is done through Eventbrite, offered free of charge. Reports on a number of the workshops that were held are found on the UCRMN website.

UCRMN folks ran the Canadian portion of the International Rural Churches Association (IRCA) 24-hour Global Prayer event that took place on March 10, 2025. A section of the day was about UCRMN specifically, and highlighted our Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, as well as Collaborative Ministries, and then Catherine Smith, a UCRMN member from the Atlantic Region, was the host of ‘Canada East’, and Robin Haensel, a retired Alliance pastor and member of CiRCLe M at the Saskatoon Theological Union, hosted ‘Canada West’. You can check them out on the IRCA website (<https://irca.online/24-hour-prayer-zoom> - the Americas).

UCRMN members are taking part in the “Rural Townhall” by Edge Network for Ministry Development, to hear people’s thoughts about what is going on in rural churches, and how rural ministries can be supported.

UCRMN is always looking for members to serve on the Board, as e-Newsletter Editor, Workshop Coordinator, or on the Finance Committee.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Catherine Christie, President UCRMN, (Abbey, SK)*

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## JUBILEE FUND



In 2025, the Jubilee Fund celebrated its 25th year. As a founding member of the Jubilee Fund and a continuing investor, the Prairie to Pine Region can take pride in the growth of the Jubilee Fund and the impact that it has had in alleviating poverty in Manitoba over the years. We have grown from an organization with primarily Winnipeg-based projects to one that is having an impact across the province. We were particularly honoured to be recognized by the City of Winnipeg with the Organizational Community Service Award, acknowledging Jubilee Fund’s contribution to community development and poverty reduction.

In 2025, loans have gone to projects in the areas of:

### **Affordable housing –**

Red Road Lodge, Winnipeg - to purchase previously leased property

Purpose: Home Construction in Winnipeg - to build two deeply affordable single-family homes

### **Day Care**

Springfield Learning Centre - Anola

Huron Childcare - Winnipeg

### **Food Security**

Direct Farm Manitoba - providing food vouchers for Farmers' Markets all over Manitoba

### **Community Wellness**

Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation - help with down payment on a commercial building

## Rent Guarantee Program

The Jubilee Fund has continued to offer the Rent Guarantee Program, acting as a guarantor for people with no rental history. We had 128 applications from almost 50 referring agencies, out of which we approved 110. When we approve an application, they receive a letter from Jubilee committing our willingness to guarantee/co-sign a rental agreement with them. The letter expires after three months, and applicants who have not found housing may reapply. This means that in 2025, Jubilee was prepared to support \$1.5 million worth of rent guarantees. We signed eight leases in 2025, totaling \$100,000 in actual guarantees.

The average age of an RGP applicant was 34; 86 percent of applicants were women, 68 percent of whom were coming from at-risk circumstances, and more than 90 percent of applicants were Indigenous. The program continues to see enormous success in terms of growth and approvals. We anticipate that we will receive more than 300 applications in 2026.

To learn more about the Jubilee Fund, go to [jubileefund.ca](http://jubileefund.ca). We would love to come to your church and talk about the Jubilee Fund. Please consider supporting the Jubilee Fund by investing, donating or promoting our Wreath Fundraiser.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Lynda Trono*

MANITOBA MULTIFAITH COUNCIL

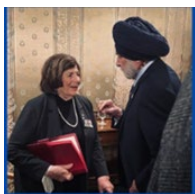


**Mission:** MMC exists to promote multifaith dialogue and understanding, while collaborating to serve the community as a whole.

**Vision:** People of diverse faiths working together to build a just and caring society.

The Manitoba Multifaith Council (MMC) continues to retain and embrace its partnership with the Prairie to Pine Regional Council.

*Some highlights of the year are featured for your reading.*



Her Honour the Honourable Anita Neville hosted a reception at Government House on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to honour Dr. Mohinder Singh Dhillon, recipient of the GG's award for Advancement of Interreligious Understanding. Congratulations, Dr. Dhillon, a former MMC Board Chair, on this well-deserved award.

The 10th Annual Manitoba Multifaith Leadership Breakfast began with special greetings from The Honourable Anita R. Neville, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba and a keynote address given by Dorota Blumczynska, CEO Manitoba Museum. Her personal story served to deepen the appreciation among those present for her leadership in this city.



A national conference: **"Fostering Hope in a Divided World"** was organized by the Canadian Interfaith Conversation in partnership with the MMC, the CMHR, and the Mauro Institute for Peace & Justice at St. Paul's College, U of M from June 15-17, 2025. The opening night featured a special musical arrangement on the theme of hope performed by the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra, followed by an opening plenary session on "Hope and Human Rights" featuring renowned international human rights lawyer Payam Akhavan, Professor of International Law and Senior Fellow at Massey College, U of Toronto. The conference addressed 1 questions about recognizing the gravity of current global challenges—including climate change, violence, and political instability—while simultaneously identifying and drawing upon understandings of hope to inspire collective action and explored issues on reconciliation, human rights, international affairs, and the pervasive issue of polarization.

**Spiritual Health Care Committee** has helped to update the End-of-Life Care Guide to update the role of different faith traditions.

**Justice and Corrections Committee** hosted an event during Restorative Justice Week, with Honourable Matt Wiebe present. The theme "Seeking the Light Inside," also enabled the Committee to showcase some of the art created by inmates based on this theme.

The Annual General meeting was held at St. Marks Lutheran Church on Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, with keynote speaker Tanya Brothers, who drew on her own personal story to draw attention to the difficulties her family of origin had in moving from the racism of Oklahoma into Alberta, where they faced tensions. Her grandfather became one of the Sleeping Car Porters, who gradually made their way into the life of Canada. Against the background of racism, Black People in Canada have realized some of the promises in this nation. Her brother, Duane Brothers, rose to be Superintendent of first the Sunrise School Division and later the Louis Riel School Division until his retirement.



*Respectfully submitted,  
Diane Dwarka  
Board Member, Manitoba Multifaith Council*

**UNITED CHURCH  
HALFWAY HOMES**

March 26, 2026

Submitted to: Harrow United Church

### **United Church Halfway Homes Inc. (UCHH) Annual Report**

#### **Meetings**

United Church Halfway Homes Inc. (UCHH) continues to rent space at Harrow United Church for meetings, training, and events. Meetings have taken place regularly throughout the year, averaging two to four times per month. There has been a noticeable increase in in-person meetings, including staff, board and union meetings.



Hybrid meetings have also been utilized by incorporating the large screen television in the lower hall. This setup has proven to be highly effective for presentations and training sessions, enhancing participation and engagement for those attending both in person and virtually.

We continue to primarily use the Parlour Room and the Main Hall within Harrow's lower-level facilities, which remain essential to our operations.

### **Training**

Training has expanded significantly this year, with a stronger emphasis on group-based learning. Staff have participated in training sessions including First Aid, Health and Safety, and Food Handler certification.

In addition, members of the Health and Safety Committee have completed individual health and safety courses, further strengthening our organizational standards and commitment to safety. We will continue to increase group training opportunities in the coming year.

### **Accommodations**

Harrow United Church has continued to demonstrate flexibility and generosity in accommodating UCHH throughout the year. We are especially grateful to Karen, who has supported us in booking space for various meetings.

This has included both scheduled meetings and last-minute or impromptu gatherings, all of which have been accommodated efficiently. This ongoing support has contributed greatly to our ability to operate effectively.

### **McMillan Gift Baskets**

Each holiday season, the women and children at McMillan continue to receive thoughtful gifts. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the women's group for providing gift baskets for the women's home, which bring comfort and joy during the holidays.

These generous contributions are deeply appreciated, particularly for residents who may otherwise receive very little during this time of year. Acts of kindness such as these make a meaningful difference in the lives of the women and children we serve.

### **Organizational Transition**

This year marks an important transition for UCHH with the separation of our halfway home services and the process of renaming to Step Forward Reintegration Homes now underway.

This change is being carried out as an amicable split, with the intention of maintaining positive relationships moving forward. We remain hopeful that we will continue to have meaningful ties with the United Church of Canada and would like to acknowledge and thank them for their years of ongoing support.

### **Employment**

UCHH has welcomed Marcia Torres as our new Board Secretary. She has been doing an excellent job in her role, particularly in her efforts to procure grant funding.

We currently have several grant applications in progress and are awaiting responses. Her contributions have been instrumental in strengthening our administrative capacity and supporting future growth.

### Grant Funding

We continue to actively pursue grant funding opportunities to support our programs and services. Several applications have been submitted and are currently under review. We remain optimistic about securing additional funding to enhance services for our residents.

### Gratitude and Acknowledgment

UCHH is deeply appreciative of the ongoing community partnership with Harrow United Church. Their continued support has played a vital role in our operations and success.

We also extend our gratitude to all individuals and partners who contribute to our mission through their time, generosity, and support. These contributions continue to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Audrey Dennis,*  
*Executive Director,*  
*United Church Halfway Homes Inc.*  
[executivedirector@uchh.ca](mailto:executivedirector@uchh.ca)

## WESTERN INTERCULTURAL MINISTRY NETWORK

**Report for the Prairie to Pine Regional Meeting, May 2026, covering the calendar year 2025  
(Prairie to Pine, Living Skies, Northern Spirit, Chinook Winds, Pacific Mountain Regional Councils,  
and the Indigenous Church)**



The Western Intercultural Network is a relatively ‘young’ network of communities in the United Church of Canada committed to a fully inclusive and intercultural church, covering the five Western Regional Councils.

The network holds gatherings, educational events and online conversations that focus on intercultural discussions and dialogue. Network members are engaging in and promoting action in their regions towards living out the UCC’s vision of being an intercultural church ([Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church | The United Church of Canada \(united-church.ca\)](#)). An executive composed of representatives from the five Western Regional Councils of the United Church offers us leadership.

Our vision of becoming an intercultural United Church encompasses:

- Racialized people and communities, which include ethnic churches within the United Church, racialized lay leaders, and
- Indigenous people and communities, within the United Church and beyond, of all traditions.
- People with disabilities.
- LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people and communities.
- The privileged, yet broken, who are seeking wholeness and justice.

We are each worthy individuals and numerous cultural groups, and richer for our diversity. And we are at the same time engaged in a common pursuit of caring for each other and the planet. We honour our identities, and the spaces where they intersect. Our ministry includes courageous (and awkward!) conversations about our diversity, and about the social privilege and history that hinder right relationships. We believe the Good News of Jesus Christ calls us into such conversations, right relationships, and mutual transformation.

### 2025 Activities

- Throughout the past year, the Executive continued discussions on how the Network can best live out its key focus on education on how the UCC's intercultural vision can be animated in our communities of faith and at regional levels. The network continues to engage in this key work through continuing Coffee Chai events and in-person events, when possible.
- In this 100th Anniversary Year for the United Church of Canada, the network's Coffee Chai sessions have focused on deepening understanding of the experiences of different diaspora groups within the United Church, by inviting the Ethno-Cultural Networks within the church to lead presentations and discussions during our sessions. To date, in 2025, the following sessions have been delivered and have been well received:

**From the edges**

**to the centre**

**Black Voices Shaping the Church**

As we enter 100 years as the United Church, this workshop will challenge us to amplify and embrace Black leadership in shaping the future of the church. Join the conversation with Rev Franklyn James, Black Clergy Network.

Thursday April 10, 11:00AM PDT, 2:00PM EDT, on Zoom

All details: <https://tinyurl.com/6dr3ajj6>

**April 10, 2025 - From the Edges to the Centre: Black Voices Shaping the Church** – A presentation and discussion led by the Black Clergy Network that challenged participants to recognize, amplify, and embrace Black leadership in shaping the future of the church, with the knowledge that people of African descent and other ethnocultural groups have long contributed to the life and mission of the church, yet their voices have often been overlooked or sidelined. The presentation and discussion were led by Rev. Franklyn James, a member of the Black Clergy Network

and Chair of the Ethnocultural Network Leads. The event also provided an opportunity for those present to learn also learn about the travelling community exhibit and storytelling project **Here from the Beginning** (<https://herefromthebeginning.ca>) from its originator, Rev Paul Walfall.

**November 20, 2025 - Beyond the Chinese Face: Challenges Faced by Chinese in Canada** – A presentation led by three members ( Rev. Dr. Alan Lai, Rev. Mini Choi, and Rev. Calin Lau) of the Chinese Association of The United Church of Canada who share their insights on aspects of Chinese culture, serving English congregations in Canada, and outreach to the Hong Kong diaspora.

- The Executive continued throughout the year to disseminate information about opportunities to serve on UCC committees or working groups and to encourage persons in the network to discern their involvement and submit nominations to these groups. Several members of the Executive also actively participate as members of their respective Regional Council Executive, or on various committees at the national level, and were Commissioners at General Council 45.
- The WIMN Executive continues to actively participate in activities and meetings of the Ethno-cultural Network Leads group. The group comprises the leaders of several ethno-cultural networks within the UCC, in discussions that contribute to the strategic plan development. The network is happy to contribute to this work. The group meets quarterly online and met most recently in person in Toronto in October 2025.
- The Executive of WIMN passed a motion in early Fall 2025 to archive all the minutes from the ANWC Ethnic Ministries and WIMN from 2007-2022, at The United Church of Canada archives in Alberta; specific archival location of Chinook Winds or Northern Spirit Regional archives to be determined in conversation with the archivist Leanne Templeton, CW/NS Regional Council Archivist. The transfer for archiving has been completed.
- Executive members Kathy Yamashita, Dorcas Kanana and Chelsea Masterman led worship on the evening of May 30, 2025, at the Northern Spirit Regional Council meeting. They were joined by Elder Kay Quon.
- The Network was asked to conduct a workshop at the "Everything We Need: A Learning Party for ministers and lay leaders/volunteers" in Calgary – Oct 17-19, 2025. The Network's presentation was led by Rev. OhWang Kwon.

### **The Executive**

Please note that the Executive meets every second month and welcomes new members! Please contact the Regional Council office to get in touch with an Executive member.

The Executive for 2024-25 comprises:

*Co-Chairs:* Kathy Yamashita (Chinook Winds) and Deborah Richards (Pacific Mountain)

*Secretary:* Rev. Chelsea Masterman (Northern Spirit)

*Pacific Mountain:* vacant

*Chinook Winds:* Rev. Dr. OhWang Kwon, Rev. Luke Haisa

*Northern Spirit:* Rev. Dorcas Muketha,

*Living Skies:* Rev. Mathias Ross, Rev. Salesi Takau

*Prairie to Pine:* Rev. Damber Khadka

During the latter part of 2025, two members of the Executive have resigned (Rev. Dorcas Muketha, Rev. Luke Haisa) as they transition to new roles within the church. We wish Rev. Dorcas Mutheka, who had been called to a new pastoral charge in Ottawa, and Rev. Luke Haisa, who began his term of service on the General Council Executive earlier this fall. We are grateful for their engagement and service to the WIMN and know that they will continue to serve the wider church and continue to bring the lens of intercultural vision of the UCC to their work.

*Staff support:* Julie Graham (Living Skies, Prairie to Pine and Northern Spirit Regions); Chris Mah Poy (Chinook Winds Region)

Recently, we were saddened to hear of the passing of Rev. Kurt Katzmar on September 14, 2025. Kurt served on the WIMN Executive from 2019- 2022, and then as an Elder with the group until early 2023. We cherish the memories of his work among us and know that the church and the wider communities that he served in his years of ministry are enriched by that service.

The Executive now meets bi-monthly for 90 minutes to discuss business matters. As planning for an in-person workshop in 2026 continues to take shape, the Executive also meets for 60 minutes in the month in between its bi-monthly business meetings.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kathy Yamashita and Deborah Richards*

*Co-Chairs*

*On behalf of the Executive of the Western Intercultural Ministries Network*

**CLIMATE FINANCE TASK GROUP  
(Climate Justice)**

The 2023 Annual Meeting of Prairie to Pine Region approved a proposal committing the Regional Council to review its investments with a focus on climate justice. It also committed itself to communicating with communities of faith to provide suggested actions and background materials. The proposal and the resources offered to communities of faith are archived on Prairie to Pine's website. The Climate Finance Task Group hosted monthly Zoom gatherings following that annual meeting for about a year. A small but committed group from across the Region showed up to share concerns about how climate change is impacting their communities and local efforts, as well as frustrations, in taking significant action to address climate change. While several communities of faith embraced the Region's call to review their investments, the overall response was disappointing. We have identified several factors which make this kind of campaign ineffective. When delegates attend a regional meeting in person only once every 3 years, there is little opportunity to gain enough knowledge about a social justice proposal to carry that forward as concrete action back home. Communication in our large region often doesn't reach those intended and does not encourage ongoing collaboration on complicated issues like climate justice. While many resources were posted on the Prairie to Pine website, it appears that the majority of communities of faith remained unaware of the resources and/or unwilling (or unprepared) to take on the issue of divestment from fossil fuels at the local level.

In some parts of our Region divestment is particularly controversial, and people were reluctant to engage in the conversation. Perhaps we do not provide enough practice and encouragement for these important faith conversations?

In November 2024, Prairie to Pine Climate Justice convened a gathering with about 30 people attending, the majority of whom were lay people. Funds accessed through the Region allowed people to travel from several communities outside of Winnipeg. Participants appreciated the opportunity to learn about resources from ecumenical partners and to meet others across the Region who are passionate about tackling climate change as a faith and justice issue.



Since 2025, several members of our Task Group have been participating in Direct Action Organizing to address the climate crisis and have found the intensive training and subsequent house meetings to be energizing, with the capacity to lead to real coordinated action. The program is driven by a very broad coalition of citizen initiatives, but the response from churches that have been invited to host house meetings has been discouraging. Direct action energy and timelines do not work well with congregational structures and expectations. However, individual church members are finding the house meetings in their communities to be life-giving and action-oriented. This points to a new direction for faith-based social action and climate justice work! Could we direct resources to sending this training to remote and northern communities in our Region?

We would like to offer some suggestions, based on our experiences over the past 3 years, for how we can make the best use of the current structure and resources available to our Region, and we would note strong alignment with the vision expressed in Towards 2035. Effective social justice education and action needs to be:

Ecumenical  
 Interfaith  
 Community based  
 Intergenerational

And we need to focus our efforts, energy and resources on collaborative strategies like the following:

KAIROS

For the Love of Creation

Earth Day/Earth Week Resources provided by the national church provide a great annual focus and align with events and awareness in the wider community, but it would be really helpful if these resources came out earlier in the year to allow adequate time for planning, education and coordination.

Finally, we wonder how Towards 2035 will prioritize social justice and climate justice ministries across the church.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Lori Stewart, Karen Tjaden, Lynda Trono*

*With thanks for staff support from*

*Julie Graham, our Regional Minister for Justice and Communication*