

REPORTS – STANDING COMMITTEES and COMMISSIONS

NOMINATIONS

Once again, we are proud to put forward this slate of individuals for your consideration to serve our region in the upcoming church year.

Our committee made over 150 reach-outs to folks both serving on committees and not, between September and May. This included phone calls, emails, virtual meetings, and in-person conversations. This is life-giving work that is vital to the work of this region and could be more equitably shared by all its servants.

Many people report being busy with multiple church tasks with their community of faith, in the broader community, or are volunteering in other ways that make their lives busy. Since the pandemic, we note that many individuals simply reassessed how they were spending their time and focused on things that either provided them with a tangible impact or things that were closer to home. That has undoubtedly made our work harder. We also note that, for those who have agreed to take on a commitment, it is on top of several other commitments.

We had a very small list of folks who declined to continue serving, and in most cases, were folks who were ‘termed out’. Our hope is that after some time away, these folks will return to our slate in another role that interests them. We are also thankful to folks who wish to serve on committees even after their terms expire, namely, to complete important work that started during their terms.

We always welcome further conversation on the roles that remain unfilled or how we can reach folks across our region in a better way. While we are a strong and mighty team, we can always use folks pointing us in the direction of those who are willing to serve.

A particular thank you to Julie Graham and Judy Hare, who thoughtfully contributed to our committee’s work.

On a personal note, it has been a great six years serving on the Nominations committee, and I am thankful not only to all the people who answered my calls and emails over the years, but to the many faithful servants who have been on this committee during my time. Many hands truly make light work, and it’s been a privilege to share in it.

*Respectfully submitted,
Joey Dearborn, on behalf of*

- Frances Flook*
- Marissa Smirl*
- Heather Lea*
- Lynne Sanderson*



PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Pastoral Relations Commission (PRC) continues its work through monthly meetings held via Zoom. The dedicated persons appointed to this Commission are supported in our work by Judy Hare, Pastoral Relations Minister, as well as those who are appointed as Liaisons to work with Communities of Faith through the pastoral relations process.

Much of our work continues to follow a similar pattern:

- We provide training and support to those serving as Liaisons throughout the pastoral relations process
- We appoint Pastoral Charge Supervisors and receive and review their Annual Reports.
- We receive requests from ministry personnel who are requesting a change in pastoral relations or seeking to begin a time of sabbatical.
- We receive requests for support from Communities of Faith when they are seeking to increase or decrease ministry time and when they are about to begin the process to search for a new minister.
- We receive and review ministry profiles from communities of faith when they are beginning the search process, and provide support as they upload the material to Church Hub.
- We receive, review, and approve calls and appointments resulting from the search process or renewal of current appointments.
- We provide personnel to attend meetings of governing bodies and communities of faith when pastoral relations matters are being discussed and/or when Liaisons are unavailable to attend.
- In conjunction with the Committee on Community of Faith Support, we alternate hosting training sessions for congregational Ministry and Personnel Committees.

While much of our work seems to be routine, it is not without its challenges. We continue to work with communities of faith who struggle with access to Church Hub and to the websites which continue to provide the most current handbooks related to our work. We recognize that there continues to be unequal access to the internet throughout our region.

We continue to work with communities of faith who find it challenging to attract applicants to part-time ministry. We now require such communities of faith to engage in conversations with their neighbours, which might lead to new opportunities for collaboration and the creation of full-time ministry positions. This collaborative work has become more frequent, and as each collaboration is unique in scope and practice, we, as a Commission, receive, review, and approve the Collaboration Agreements and resulting ministry position descriptions.

In recent pastoral years, several communities of faith have been able to engage in ministry with clergy from overseas. While the immigration process can be long and involved, those communities of faith have been actively engaged in the process. And, with the assistance of Judy Hare, there have been conversations in those places about the challenges of new immigrants and the need for cultural awareness. Where a community of faith has engaged an overseas clergy, we have provided cultural awareness and sensitivity workshops.

Sherrie McConnell has been a great asset to the Commission and has offered her help with many of the online training sessions that have taken place, including: community of faith profile training, search committee training, and M&P committee training.

The work of the PRC continues to be a collaborative process. I appreciate the support of the Liaisons: Linda Buchanan, Mona Denton, Lorraine Kakegamic, Harold Kenyon, Sherri McConnell, Paul Duval, Patrick Woodbeck and those who also serve as members of the PRC (Lorraine Kakegamic, Harold Kenyon, Sherri McConnell, Simbarashe Mazhara, and Paul Duval). Together we pool our gifts and our enthusiasm as we share in this work.

The work of the Pastoral Relations Commission continues to move forward with a dedicated group of individuals. We encourage any individuals who might be interested in, or feel called to, this work to reach out to a member of the Commission to explore that possibility.

*Respectfully submitted,
Patrick Woodbeck, Chair
Pastoral Relations Commission*

**COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNITY OF FAITH SUPPORT
(aka CCFS)**

Our committee provides oversight and support to Communities of Faith in the Prairie to Pine Regional Council, especially Pastoral Charges needing guidance with matters of transition such as structural changes, amalgamation, realignment and closure. This committee makes recommendations to the Prairie to Pine Regional Council Executive for decision.

The CCFS met monthly via Zoom with one in-person meeting (to be held) in Winnipeg. Our committee work is handled by a team of 7 dedicated folk, with the support of one RC staff. Each non-Indigenous Pastoral Charge is assigned to a committee member who supports them through their process of change.

Self-Assessments

We completed our first round (3-year cycle) of Self Assessments... just a few stragglers out there. We took this year off to allow the important discussions of Towards 2035 to take place in each Community of Faith, but we will resume the Self-Assessment cycle this fall. The Self-Assessment reports are a “snapshot” of a Community of Faith’s current life and are a requirement in the UCC Manual (By-law B.2.1).

Governance Documents

We supported two Pastoral Charges who changed or restructured their governance documents, provided resources, and supported two Pastoral Charges involved in Ecumenical Shared Ministry to accommodate changing needs.

Workshops

We assisted with providing online workshops for Ministry & Personnel Committees and financial support for training sessions for Pastoral Care Visitors. We cancelled our Self-Assessment Conversation workshop set for April 22 as there were not enough registrants, but we hope to reschedule that soon.

Annual Reports

We follow up with Communities of Faith who have not submitted electronic or hard copies of their Annual Report.

Since June 2025, we have been involved with assisting numerous Communities of Faith, as they process change:

Disbanded

Benito-Kenville PC

Emmanuel Anglican United Church-Ignace (disestablished by the Anglican Diocese, Sept. 4, 2025; acknowledged by UCC)

Final Service held and working toward disbandment

Victoria United Church in Melita, part of the Deloraine-Melita-Tilston PC
Hartney United Church and Lauder United Church of the Hartney-Lauder Pastoral Charge

It is important to highlight that the process of disbanding a Community of Faith is a complex and involved process. Once a Community of Faith has decided to pursue this option, we connect them with a support person and share the full resource “We Cannot Continue On Like This.”

Thank you to P2PRC staff, Judy Hare and Cherry Abad, for your excellent support.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee for Community of Faith Support: Pat Bird (Chair),
Irene Chabluk, Silas Lee, Bill Millar, Sourav Nag,
Heather Sandilands (Recording Secretary), Karen Kempe

**COMMITTEE ON
LAY MINISTRY/ LAY
LEADERSHIP**

The Committee on Lay Ministry and Lay Leadership Support is responsible for 1) supporting, licensing, re-licensing, and tracking information for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWLs); 2) training related to Sacrament Elders; and 3) tracking related to Congregational Designated Ministers (CDMs). More details on our role, including a link to our mandate, can be found at <https://prairietopiner.ca/about/governance/committees-on-support/clls/>. The committee is currently chaired by Jim Warburton, and Linda Buchanon serves as a corresponding member to the Executive meetings. In August 2025, we welcomed new members Susan Reed, Linda Buchanon, and Peter Latimer.

A gathering of the LLWLs took place on October 17, 2025, at McKenzie United Church, Portage la Prairie. The theme for the day was *Storytelling*. Following morning worship, the attendees viewed the Right Reverend Dr. Kimberley Heath presenting her sermon at her installation as Moderator of the UCC. This served to introduce the Moderator to those present and also led into a discussion of the use of storytelling in sermons. Jim Warburton facilitated a “sticky note” exercise that had previously been used by Ross Lockhart in an LLWL training session. Following lunch, Scott Douglas from the Centre for Christian Studies provided leadership for a storytelling workshop. The next LLWL gathering will be held in the fall of 2026.

In 2025-26, no new LLWLs have been licensed. Re-licensing is an ongoing process. Six were recommended for re-licensing in March and six more in April. We acknowledged with sadness the death of LLWL Rita Swan in the fall of 2025. This year, Barbara Ann Craik and Patricia Kopp declined to renew their LLWL licenses, and they were thanked for their years of service as LLWLs. We currently have 17 LLWLs and three retired Designated Lay Ministers available for pulpit supply throughout various areas of the Prairie to Pine Region.

As of August 2025, there were 58 Sacrament Elders licensed (associated with 36 Communities of Faith). On February 28, 2026, 6 people took part in the Sacrament Elder training provided via Zoom. Licensing and re-licensing occur annually.

Committee meetings have been moved to the 3rd Wednesday of the month (from the 4th) so that we can send timely reports to the Executive meetings. The committee members are appreciative of and thankful for the assistance and expertise of Judy Hare. We are making every effort to work efficiently and effectively.

Respectfully submitted,
Dianne Kowalchuk (Secretary), on behalf of the Committee:
Jim Warburton (Chair), Hope Mattus, Susan Reed, Linda Buchanan, Peter Latimer

For P2PLicensed Lay Worship Leaders in Prairie to Pine Regional Council (active)

- Benson, Elaine (McCreary United Church) *
- Buchanan, Linda (Westminster United Church, The Pas)
- Chabluk, Irene (Dugald United Church)
- Denbow, Wendy (Knox United Church, Plumas of Circle Marsh Pastoral Charge)
- Dzebo, Julie (Vermillion Bay United Church)
- Dzebo-Macklem, Nancy (Vermillion Bay United Church)
- Friesen, Rita (Neepawa United Church)
- Frost, Carol (Minnedosa United Church)
- Hastie, Fiona (Killarney United Church)
- Hutton, Julie (Minnedosa United Church)
- Lewis, Mille (Cloverdale United Church)
- Martin, Shirley (Cadurcis United Church)
- McKenty, Diane (Grey Street United Church, Winnipeg)
- Nadeau, Irma (Trinity United Church, Winnipeg)
- Richardson, Jan (Knox United Church, Kenora)*
- Schwartz, Dan (Bird’s Hill United Church)*
- Shiriff, Wilma (McKenzie United Church, Portage La Prairie)
- Spindler, Susan (St. Paul’s United Church, Beausejour)
- Swain, Ila (Roland United Church)
- Warburton, Jim (Meadow Lea United Church of Warren-Meadow Lea Pastoral Charge)
- White, Dora (Minnedosa United Church)
- Windle, Norma (McCreary United Church)

* Presently due for re-licensing

Barbara Ann Craik (Langruth United Church of Circle Marsh Pastoral Charge); Patricia Kopp (Langruth United Church of Circle Marsh Pastoral Charge), and Bev Leadbeater (Rock Lake Pastoral Charge) indicated in 2026 they would not be seeking re-licensing as LLWL at this time. We affirm their training, thank them for years of service as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders within Prairie to Pine Regional Council and its predecessor, and support them in the contributions they may continue to make to worship leadership within the communities of faith with whom they worship.

**COMMITTEE ON
MINISTRY PERSONNEL
SUPPORT**

Our committee is made up of Active and retired ministry personnel and lay folks who work together to provide support to both active and retired ministry personnel.

Our committee is comprised of David Howell, Joan Jarvis, Diane McKenty, Susan Tilleman, Chewe Mulenga, and Cathy Maxwell. In February, we welcomed Millie Lewis. At the end of May, we say goodbye to David Howell and Joan Jarvis. Our Staff support person is Judy Hare. We meet monthly via Zoom with one day long in person meeting in October.

Our mandate: “The committee seeks to encourage ministry personnel in the absence of formal localized structures to support and encourage ways of collegial connection and opportunities to gather locally.

Our work is done through annual events for both active ministry personnel and retired ministry personnel.

This year, we made the decision to give our full support as a committee to a gathering for active Ministry Personnel planned by the Vocational Minister who works for three regional councils (Northern Spirit, Living Skies and Prairie Spirit) rather than host our own regional event. Five Ministry Personnel from Prairie to Pine received financial support to attend **The Great Exhale: A Gentle Pause for Faithful Souls: A retreat** at the Star of the North Retreat Centre in St. Albert.

We will be holding a luncheon for ministry personnel pensioners and their partners on May 28th, 2026, at Prairie Spirit United Church.

Our thanks to Cherry Abad for her ongoing administrative support of our work and to Judy Hare for all that she does to keep us on track and accountable.

We look forward to another year of ongoing work as we continue to seek ways of offering our support to Ministry personnel.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Maxwell, on behalf of the Committee:

David Howell, Joan Jarvis, Susan Tilleman, Diane McKenty, Chewie Mulenga, Millie Lewis

PROPERTY COMMISSION

Prairie to Pine Property Commission
2026 Annual Report
July 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026

Membership:

Ken Thomas, chair; Kenneth Allison, Chuck Ross, Wayne Sanderson, Dwight Rutherford (corresponding member)

We were pleased to welcome Ken Allison to the commission. Ken brings considerable experience and knowledge, especially with building and redevelopment projects, which are becoming increasingly important to the work of the commission.

Since July 1, 2025, the commission has met 13 times.

We passed 19 resolutions giving consent as follows:

listings - 1

sales - 13

roof replacement/repair 2

leases -1

contracts related to development projects - 2

The difference between listings and sales is remarkable. We have completed considerable activity with sales of rural churches and other properties, but it appears there is a lull in closures in rural areas.

Commission work on development projects has increased substantially. At this time, there are 5 active projects at various stages in Winnipeg. The preparation and decision-making processes of these projects are very long and complex and require considerable time and commitment. The commission urges any congregation considering a repurposing of their building to contact the commission for advice before making any choices.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Ken Thomas, Chair

**EQUITY and DIVERSITY
COMMITTEE**

Equity and Diversity Committee
2026 Annual Report
July 1, 2025, to May 2026

Ongoing Work:

- Communication:
 - We have continued to share news, events, and resources through our Facebook group, Prairie to Pine Affirming Ministries and People and the Prairie to Pine website
 - We are still working on updating the email listing that Julie Graham, our Staff Support, maintains, as some email addresses are outdated.
- Supporting congregations:
 - We are here to support congregations that are Affirming, as well as those in the process of becoming Affirming, although we don't always know who they are! We have recently been able to get some of this information from Affirm United and are reaching out to congregations who are in the process.
 - We have continued to host a "community connection" Zoom session before PIE Day and before Pride month to help share ideas and resources.
- Connections with other groups:
 - We connect and keep in contact with Affirm United, as well as other groups such as Affirming Connections, Western Intercultural Network, Disability and Accessibility Network, Rainbow Resource Centre, and, most recently, with a Guaranteed Livable Income group.

Highlights of this year:

- We made arrangements for some people who weren't commissioners to GC45 to travel to Calgary to attend the Apology to 2S and LGBTQIA+ Peoples.
- In November 2025, we hosted an online workshop on Shifting from Unconscious Bias to Conscious Inclusion. There were approximately 65 people who attended this workshop online- some even gathered together in a group at their church to attend! We even had a few people from Living Skies and Northern Spirit Regions join us.
- We published a 2026 Equity and Diversity Calendar on the Prairie to Pine website, which gives the dates of as many holidays and observances related to justice as we can find! If you notice anything missing, please let us know so we can update it for 2027!

Looking ahead:

- Connection with other regions:
 - We have done some partnering with Equity and Diversity committees from Living Skies and Northern Spirit Regions, and are hoping to do more in the future. Julie Graham is also staff support for these regions, and so it is a natural fit for us to work together, and it means more sharing of ideas and good use of time!
- Other forms of Equity and Diversity
 - Although our committee was created when Prairie to Pine Region became Affirming, we are not only meant to be about 2S and LGBTQIA+ justice, and we have been trying to branch out and spend some time on other justice issues, such as Intercultural ministry, and Accessibility.
 - We have been in touch with the organizers of "Here from the Beginning", a Centennial project showcasing the significant role of Black people in the history of the United Church, and we hope to have it hosted in our Region later this year.

*Respectfully submitted,
The Equity and Diversity Committee*

UCW-BURSARY



The **Prairie to Pine Regional Bursary** has been funded by donations to the Prairie to Pine Regional Council, by UCWs or Communities of Faith. The Prairie to Pine Regional Bursary has been administered by a Committee within Prairie to Pine Regional UCW Network and meets in person and on Zoom twice a year. In 2025, we met via Zoom to make decisions regarding the Bursaries.

The purpose of the Prairie to Pine Regional Bursary has been to financially assist promising candidates for the Order of Ministry (ordained or diaconal) from our Conference who are registered in the theological studies, as well as persons in the Designated Lay Ministry Training program qualifying for leadership in the Church.

In 2025, there were four applicants, three of whom qualified for the P2P Bursary.

Karen Kempe: \$1,000.00 Accepted as a candidate for ordination at St. Andrews College
Jaime Miller: \$1,000.00 Diaconal Ministry
Mulumeoderhwa Buhendwa (Peter): \$1,000.00 Master in Divinity at Vancouver School of Theology

We sincerely thank all UCWs and Communities of Faith for their contributions and ask for their continued support. If your Community of Faith no longer has a contributing UCW, our committee requests that you consider including this in your future yearly budget. Our financial resources for the Bursaries are always welcome to help participants.

The **UCW Bursary** of \$800 is awarded annually from Prairie to Pine Regional UCW funds to people, at least 18 years of age (and not in, or studying towards, paid accountable ministry). The applicant must be actively involved in, and taking a course that would benefit, a local United Church Community of Faith. For this year, we had no applicants. Please encourage members of your Community of Faith who would benefit from this bursary to apply in the future.

As well, the **Agatha Kaasa Bursary**, established in 2003 by the National UCW, is available to women for leadership training, continuing education or projects/events that would benefit United Church work. This bursary application form can be found on the National site "search."

There is another National Bursary, the **Dorothy Amos Fund**, for any woman who is a UCW member and not in paid accountable ministry. This Bursary was founded in 2012 in honour of Dorothy Amos using proceeds from the UCW 50th Anniversary. Both these National Bursaries can be found by searching under the particular Bursary/Fund name.

Our Bursary Committee wishes to thank both Judy Hare and Cherry Abad, and the Prairie to Pine Regional Council office, for their years of work on our behalf. Our committee also works with Laura Fohse, Minister for the Office of Vocation, and former Heather Dootoff, now Robert Smith, Financial Administrator, both representatives for our Prairie to Pine Region. **Thank you to Heather Dootoff, from retirement to back to work**, for calculating the interest from the McArthur fund, from 2019 until 2025, and crediting \$1706.32 for funds for Bursaries! Happy retirement, Heather!!

Thank you all for your support!

Respectfully submitted,
 Darlynnne Smith
 Darlynnne Smith, Convener
 Prairie to Pine Regional Bursary Committee

**YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS
(YAAY)**

The Young Adult and Youth committee organized and oversaw a collection of events this year in the Prairie to Pine region.

Neechi Camp 2025, a reconciliation camp for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youths, was held at Ochekwí Sipi Cree Nation (Fisher River, MB) from August 17-21st. We made hand drums, did hoop dancing and powwow dancing, learned some Cree, joined a sweat lodge ceremony, and went fishing with commercial fishers, followed by cleaning, filleting, frying, and feasting!

Over the summer, one youth from Brandon and one from Carberry participated in the Climate Motivator Program. They were tasked with undertaking a climate-related project of their choice. They also joined with 8 Climate Motivators from other regions at Five Oaks camp in Ontario, where they learned about proposals and then created their own proposal to take to General Council 45.

Four youth represented our region at the Youth Forum of General Council 45 in Calgary in August 2025. They were from Brandon, Carberry, Dryden, and Oxford House. One of them also served as an elected commissioner from our region.

The YAAY committee met twice this year in person, in September and January, and once more online.

There was a Leadership event at Churchill Park in September, in conjunction with the YAAY meeting, as well as an ALF retreat planning meeting and Travelling Youth Group (TYG). So many things! The leadership participants planned and led events for TYG, including a small worship with lots of music and a few readings, followed by a game. The theme was communication. They led a SIM game in which participants had to find puzzle pieces by asking the correct questions. There were 21 participants, including the 11 leadership participants who led the event.

The December TYG was held at St. Andrew's River Heights. With games to start off the evening, they had a great night of building gingerbread houses and showing off their creativity. The night ended with Christmas-themed trivia. Despite a crazy winter storm, there were still 19 participants (with 10 from the home church).

From October 24th to 26th of 2025, the ALF youth retreat, St. Paul's United Church in Virden, saw 27 participants and 16 youth leaders from all across the province. The theme was 100 years of Faith and Community, so the main takeaways were learning about the United Church of Canada and the original three denominations that made up the United Church of Canada in 1925. The overall reception was positive, and many participants enjoyed the retreat altogether.

On November 15, we hosted our third "Sharing Across Cultures," a joyful celebration of the rich cultural diversity within our community. The event was a memorable occasion, highlighted by cultural presentations, like Indigenous dancing, a Filipino song, a lesson in using chopsticks, and an abundance of food prepared in many workshop activities. A participant offered a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving to God for our diversity, and prayed that this celebration would "build bridges of understanding, open hearts to friendship, and inspire us all to live in harmony."

In January, our second YAAY committee meeting was held at John Black Memorial, again with a Leadership event and a travelling youth group. Our 11 leadership Event participants led a capitalism-themed SIM game and worship for our 11 Traveling youth group participants!

Zeebu 2026 saw 20 youth participants and 18 young leaders in Harrow United Church from February 20th to February 22nd. The theme was interfaith, and the motto was "Knowing our Neighbours; many religions, one community." Throughout the weekend, the youth engaged in games, discussions, and learning sessions

with leaders of faith. Participants analyzed the differences and similarities between the three Abrahamic religions, made bracelets while learning about the roots of Buddhism, and went to a mosque to learn about how prayer is done in Islam. The event concluded with a Jeopardy game to test the memory of the participants and see what they learned.

Travelling Youth Group was held in March at St Mary's Road United Church, with a PIE Day theme, with weaving, crafting and pie baking and great discussion. April's TYG was held at Westworth UC with a small but mighty number that chatted and painted flowerpots. We look forward to growing these events.

Rock Lake United Church Camp had a great summer getting back into the groove of things! There were 4 weeks of youth camps (2 weeks ages 7-9, 2 weeks of 10-13) in 2025, plus the leadership development week. There were a total of 80 campers, 12 cabin leaders, and 7 on the leadership team. Campers were able to do all the campy-type things like canoeing, rock climbing, archery, crafting, hiking, and share their entertainment skills in talent shows. Worship, singing, night games and special meals were all a part of the camp community-building experience that will keep campers coming back for years! The camp also still relies on rentals, which provide additional income. RLUCC is looking forward to 2026, with 6 weeks of camp with more ages, and lots of great experiences!

Updates on Rock Lake Camp are shared at our meetings by a young person from Rock Lake who has joined the YAAY Committee. We would love to have someone from Wellman Lake Camp (our region's other United Church Camp) join our committee to let us know all the wonderful things that are happening there!

We would like to thank Twila MacNair for being the leading adult who made all the events possible, as well as the churches that hosted our many youth retreats. Without either, there would not be the possibility for so many young people to get to know some new people and have fun with other people.

*Submitted and written by YAAY Co-convenors Jayden Schettler and Emma MacDonald,
With extra help from Elizabeth Kenyon and Twila MacNair as support people.*
