

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL
REGIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE
October 29-30, 2025 at Trinity United Church, New Glasgow, NS

RC17

ATTENDANCE

Derek Elsworth, April Hart, David Hewitt, Angela MacLean, Faith March-MacCuish, Donald Morrison, Ann Piper, Carol Smith, Janet Sollows, Mary Taylor, Donna Tourneur.

Attendance

GATHERING AND WELCOME

Mary Taylor, President, welcomed the Executive to this in-person meeting. The President lit the Christ and Affirm candles, and opened the meeting with prayer.

Gathering and Welcome

QUORUM AND CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL

The President, Mary Taylor, noted that a quorum was present and constituted the council in the name of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, for all the business that shall properly come before it.

Quorum

Constitution of the Council

ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND

Mary Taylor, President, acknowledged the land on which we gather, live, work and worship, with respect for all peoples of this land as we live out the apology, and move towards becoming the community that God calls us to be together in peace and friendship.

Acknowledging the Land

AGENDA

The President noted that the agenda was circulated in advance of the meeting.

Agenda

OPENING DEVOTIONS

The President led the members gathered in opening devotions and opened the meeting with prayer.

Opening Devotions

GOVERNANCE ORIENTATION

The Executive Minister, Faith March-MacCuish, led an orientation session for the new and returning members of regional council executive. The Executive Minister reviewed the roles of the executive, and spent time focusing on the region's structure and goals.

Governance Orientation

TOWARD 2035

The Executive Minister, Faith March-MacCuish, began the discussion on Toward 2035 with a presentation to the executive members gathered. The Toward 2035 initiative of the General Council is focused on taking seriously the call to love our neighbours and embrace the strategic plan for deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice. Data has been collected from 1991-2023, and an expected trajectory towards 2035, with the hope that we will interrupt the trajectory and create the church we want to have in 2035; paying attention to strategically making sure we have a United Church presence in geographical areas across the country. The General Council hopes this report will lead to positive changes in places where there are United Churches. It will be a collaborative initiative of the General Council, Regional Councils and congregations.

Toward 2035

BREAK

Break

TOWARD 2035 – continued

Toward 2035

In the second phase of the discussion and presentation, the Executive Minister presented the data breakdown for the denomination, where multiple points of data have been collected from the denominational statistics, Statistics Canada and Environics Research Group. This overview helps us to see the denomination as a whole, using data that is available to us. There are 1898 (one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight) pastoral charges as created in Dynamics, and this data helps us to see the average picture of the denomination. The data was not surprising as it reflects what we have been experiencing in our own regions and pastoral charges.

Grace and
Lunch
Toward 2035

GRACE AND LUNCH

TOWARD 2035 - continued

The third phase of the Toward 2035 presentation was to discuss and look at our regional council and the strategies we will use to help support our congregations and leaders into 2035. Some of our agreed ways forward were to:

- seek to realize a vision of resilient, inspired, diverse United Church communities of disciples across our region; urban and rural; in a multigenerational denomination
- support congregations in their vitality
- support ministry leaders in faithful, adaptive and effective leadership
- support lay leadership within pastoral charges in faithful, adaptive and effective leadership
- support evidence-based implementation and active experimentation (collaborative and cooperative incentives, with a process for evaluation of what we have learned collectively)

With the goal of supporting resilient, inspired, vital communities of faith, we also realize that there will be congregations for which there is a need to help with ending well. It was agreed that we will need a strong process of support.

Grace and
Supper
Regional
Council
Evaluation

GRACE AND SUPPER

REGIONAL COUNCIL EVALUATION

The Executive Minister, Faith March-MacCuish, presented the final report on the evaluation of the regional council structure, including the background, key findings and recommendations, as prepared by Jenny Stephens, consultant for the review. The consultant began the evaluation report with scripture from 1 Peter 2:5a *Living Stones*.

Over the course of the evaluation, the consultant completed surveys, attended meetings, and reviewed minutes, newsletters and governance documents. The consultant noted that, while there was not a particularly strong response to the surveys, the surveys did provide important data for the evaluation.

The final report detailed that there is a significant change curve in emotional response that occurs with major change. The 2019 restructuring of the United Church caused great disruption, resulting in fear and resistance. Recovery from disruption takes time to recover from, before acceptance and openness brings confidence in the new.

Evening
Prayer

EVENING PRAYER

The President, Mary Taylor led the members gathered in prayer to close the day.

Thursday, October 30, 2025

Gathering and
Welcome

GATHERING AND WELCOME

Mary Taylor, President, welcomed members back to the meeting. The President lit the Christ and affirm candles, and opened the meeting with prayer. The Executive also took time to remember those named in prayer.

Priority
Setting

PRIORITY SETTING (Updates)

The President introduced the Strategic Plan document, as revised on March 13, 2024, and asked the Executive to take time considering what revisions may be necessary in light of the Toward 2035 and Regional Council Structure Evaluation discussions which took place yesterday. It was noted by the consultant that the regional council priorities do collaborate with what the evaluation of regional structure has heard from congregations. The three pillars are still relevant and do also intersect with the Toward 2035 initiative for discipleship, mission and leadership.

MINUTES

Minutes

MOTION: (Donnie Morrison/Janet Sollows)

That the minutes of the June 20, 2025 meeting of the Regional Council Executive be adopted.

CARRIED

It was noted for the minutes that the following motion was approved by an email vote, which was declared on July 17, 2025.

MOTION: (Donna Tourneur/Carol Smith)

That Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council endorses the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between The United Church of Canada and the Women of First Light, in the matter of the land transfer of the property known as the Tatamagouche Centre.

CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING

Business
Arising

Pastoral Letter and Template

Pastoral Letter

The Executive Minister noted that work on this has taken place, and the Executive confirmed that this piece of work is completed.

Stairs Memorial Investigation – File#2025-0206-01

Stairs
Memorial
Investigation
File#2025-0206-
01

The Executive Minister, Faith March-MacCuish and Regional Minister, David Hewitt, provided an update on the items coming from this investigation. Workshops and training have taken place. It was reported that there have been positive and proactive steps taken by all parties involved in the situation. Once completed, the Executive will receive a final report from the counsellor involved with a recommendation on the respondent's ability to return to work.

Dalhousie Campus Ministry

Dalhousie
Campus
Ministry

The Executive Minister noted that this work remains with the Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee. An update will be provided when it is available.

Tatamagouche Centre

Tatamagouche
Centre

The Executive Minister reported that she has contacted the working group for an update.

Brunswick Street United Church

Brunswick
Street UC

The Executive Minister reported that the process is in place, and some work to finalize the trust is currently with the lawyers. Once the trust is in place, the congregation will disband.

Correspondence

CORRESPONDENCE

Thank you

1. Thank you and Appreciation – Letter of thanks received from Jim Webber Cook for the region's recognition of his anniversary and retirement.

REPORTS

Reports

MINISTRY RESOURCES – Appendix A

Ministry
Resources

Janet Sollows presented the report of the division, included in the appendix.

Milford-Lantz United Church

Milford-Lantz
UC

MOTION: (Janet Sollows/April Hart)

That Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council approves the request for a decommissioning service of the Milford-Lantz United Church on September 28, 2025.

CARRIED

Upper
Stewiacke-
Springside UC

Upper Stewiacke-Springside United Church

MOTION: (Janet Sollows/Derek Elsworth)

That Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council approves the request for a decommissioning service of the Upper Stewiacke-Springside United Church building on September 10, 2025.

CARRIED

Newport PC

Newport Pastoral Charge

MOTION: (Janet Sollows/Donnie Morrison)

That Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council approves the amalgamation plan of the Newport Pastoral Charge, to be named Newport Pastoral Charge, Avondale United Church, effective July 1, 2025.

CARRIED

The Regional Minister, David Hewitt, provided some background information on this motion, offering that they have effectively been operating as one congregation for some time, and have made the decision to amalgamate as one congregation, operating from one church building.

Middle
Musquodoboit
PC

Middle Musquodoboit Pastoral Charge

MOTION: (Janet Sollows/Ann Piper)

That Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council approves that the proposed name of Middle Musquodoboit Pastoral Charge be changed to Middle Musquodoboit Faith Community Pastoral Charge.

CARRIED

St. Paul's UC

St. Paul's United Church

The Regional Minister, David Hewitt, provided some background information on this motion, and the current state of the church operations.

MOTION: (Janet Sollows/Donna Tourneur)

That Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council approves that St. Paul's United Church be decommissioned on November 16, 2025, and that St. Paul's United Church be disbanded upon the completion of all property transfer matters.

CARRIED

Grace and
Lunch

GRACE AND LUNCH

Grace was offered by President, Mary Taylor.

(David Hewitt left the meeting)

Reports

REPORTS - continued

President

PRESIDENT

The President, Mary Taylor, presented her report. The President highlighted some of the events she has attended on behalf of the region, including the 100th anniversary National celebration in St. John's, NL, in June, and General Council 45 in Calgary, AB in August. Regionally, the President has attended several events, offering leadership and worship at church services, retreats, decommissioning, and a camp. The President thanked the region for the privilege of serving the region in this way.

EXECUTIVE MINISTER

Executive Minister

The Executive Minister, Faith March-MacCuish, presented her report. The Executive Minister highlighted some of the recent work, including attendance at General Council 45, where a new moderator for the United Church was installed. The Executive Minister has extended an invitation for the Moderator to attend the annual meeting in May, 2026. The Executive Minister also attended staff leadership meetings in Toronto in September.

The Executive Minister offered her thanks to the Executive for their compassion and support during what has been a very difficult time, personally.

NOMINATIONS – Appendix B

Nominations

Angela MacLean presented the report of the committee, and highlighted several vacancies that currently exist in the regional structure. The committee have largely been meeting via email, and note that there are many committees in need of members. The executive were asked for some suggestions for persons that could be approached for filling these vacancies.

MOTION: (Angela MacLean/Donnie Morrison)

That Samuel Graham and Thea Burton be named to the Faith Formation and Leadership Development Committee.

CARRIED

MOTION: (Angela MacLean/Carol Smith)

That the following be named to the Affirm Committee: Katie Logan, secretary; and Julien Davis, chair.

CARRIED

MOTION: (Angela MacLean/Janet Sollows)

That the resignation of Linton Worrell from the Licensing Team be accepted with regret.

CARRIED

MOTION: (Angela MacLean/Ann Piper)

That the resignation of Shelly Pick from the Affirm Committee be accepted with regret.

CARRIED

MOTION: (Angela MacLean/Donnie Morrison)

That Darlene Brewer be named to the Faith Formation and Education Committee.

CARRIED

TRI-REGIONAL STAFF SUPPORT

Tri-Regional Staff Support

Derek Elsworth, reporting member of the Tri-Regional Staff Support Committee, offered the report of the committee. Two positions have been filled this fall, Rev. Lloyd Bruce has been selected as the Regional Minister for Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council, effective November 1, 2025, and Shari Kaster has been selected as the Communications and Administrative Support person for the Sackville Regional Council Office, effective November 17, 2025. It was also noted that staff interviews will take place over the course of the winter, in continuation of support for the Executive Minister.

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

United Church Women

Ann Piper presented the report of the United Church Women. The representative updated the Executive on the recent gatherings of the United Church Women, and also offered highlights of time spent with the General Secretary and Moderator this fall. The United Church Women are also exploring the work involved in becoming affirming.

New Business

Proposal for Structural Change

NEW BUSINESS

PROPOSAL FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE

Carol Smith noted that the collapse of the Future Directions committee highlights some of the changes needed in the governance structure. The Executive discussed possible ways of preparing for the December meeting, and how to have constructive conversations with fresh eyes. It was agreed that the Executive members would each review the materials discussed over the past two days, as well as possible new models for structural change. The Executive Minister will approach a consultant to also review the materials and attend the December meeting to facilitate this work. The purpose of this exercise is to see how the regional council structure can be revised to support the future directions and new priorities that have been identified through the recommendations made in the structure evaluation report, the Toward 2035 presentation and the regional strategic plan, and develop a proposal for discussion at the December Executive meeting. This work is in preparation of presentations to come to the annual meeting.

Reports

Finance and Administration

REPORTS - continued

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION – Appendix C

April Hart, chair, presented the report of the division, included in the appendix.

St. Paul's UC Spryfield

St. Paul's United Church, Spryfield

The chair offered an update of the work of the division, including that the congregation of St. Paul's United Church, Spryfield, has been working with the regional minister and Pastoral Relations towards disbanding the congregation. The property is noted as one of significance to the community and the Property Committee wishes to keep the property until we can make some informed decisions. After discussion, the following motion was made:

MOTION: (April Hart/Carol Smith)

That St. Paul's United Church, Spryfield, building be transferred to the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Trust.

CARRIED

(Carol Smith left the meeting)

Regional Services and Support

REGIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT – Appendix D

Donnie Morrison, chair, presented the report of the division, included in the appendix. The chair reported that the division has not met, as they were attempting to organize an opportunity to meet face to face. The next meeting of the division will take place in November, and will include a presentation from the Executive Minister on Toward 2035.

MOTION: (Derek Elsworth/Ann Piper)

That the reports of the region be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

Check-In

CHECK-IN

In closing, the President invited Executive members gathered to take time to check in with each other, and share joys and sorrows from their lives since the last time they gathered.

Closing Prayer

CLOSING PRAYER

The President thanked the Executive members for attending the meetings, and especially for the deep and thoughtful conversations that were shared. The President offered a closing prayer.

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the President declared the meeting adjourned.

NEXT MEETING

[Next
Meeting](#)

The next meeting of the Executive will take place on December 4, 2025 via Zoom video conferencing.

BENEDICTION

[Benediction](#)

Mary Taylor, President, closed the meeting with prayer.

Mary Taylor
President

Faith March-MacCuish
Executive Minister

Appendix A

MINISTRY RESOURCES

Divisional Reports to Regional Council Executive
Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council

Division Name: Ministry Resources

Committee Names within the Division

Future Directions

Retiree Support

Pastoral Relations

Faith Story & Community Covenant

Licensing

Date of Divisional Meetings: September 11, 2025, October 22, 2025

Report of the decisions and discussion items before the Division:

The review of Annual Reports was discussed by the Division. It was felt that some time was needed to plan and promote this event. It seems more reasonable to hold the event in the spring after the 2025 Annual Reports have been submitted to the Region.

The Division of Ministry Resources would like to hold an information session for all committee members in the Division regarding the "Towards 2035". Many of the slides that were shown at the last Executive meeting related to the work of several committees within this Division.

There was a discussion about churches wanting to change from full-time to part-time ministry. Examples were given about churches that had re-vitalized. It was suggested that 'vibrant' ministries support struggling churches that show some potential by sharing their strategies and stories of success through meetings, Zoom sessions or a video.

Discussion was had regarding ways that we may offer guidance and support for congregations to ensure that ministry continues amidst mass decline and closure, and to ensure that resources are being used to support growth and renewal, rather than just paying the bills to keep the building operating.

Dates of Committee Meetings: (since last Executive meeting)

Future Directions – none. The Committee is without a chair.

Retiree Support – none.

Pastoral Relations – June 27, July 18, September 5, October 17

Faith Story & Community Covenant – none. The Committee is without a chair.

Licensing – June 14, October 9

Reports of the decisions and discussion items from the Committees:

Future Directions: There is presently only one member on this Committee. The Division discussed an issue referred to the Future Directions Committee from the Pastoral Relations Committee.

Retiree Support: At the rise of the annual meeting, Ruth Gamble became the chair of the Retiree Support Committee. She has sent an email to the current group of retirees. She plans to send a message through the weekly announcements in the fall, advising people in the region of this committee and inviting people to get in touch with her. Ruth is working on a possible cluster meeting within the Halifax or Truro area.

Pastoral Relations: The actions of the Pastoral Relations Committee are reported each month in the weekly announcements of the Region. Many of the decisions are made by email in between the monthly meetings. This practice does not leave pastoral charges waiting for a decision.

Faith Story & Community Covenant: This committee does not have a chairperson. The Division discussed the Annual Report Review and decided to aim to begin this review in the spring of 2026.

Appendix A - continued

MINSTRY RESOURCES - continued

Licensing: The Licensing Committee met in person on June 14 at Woodlawn United Church. Sandi Irving was welcomed as a new member to this committee. Several matters regarding Sacraments Elders, Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and licenses for sacraments and marriage were discussed. It was agreed that this committee should keep a record of "Policies and Procedures". A script of questions for the first-year check-in of a Licensed Lay Worship Leader was approved. "Suggested Questions for Interviewing Candidates for Sacraments and/or Marriage License Privileges" was also approved as a template for interviewing these candidates. The Committee remains interested in conducting a workshop on Licensed Lay Worship Leaders at the 2026 Annual Meeting. Discussion continues on recognizing Licensed Lay Worship Leaders at the Annual Meeting and the question of whether they can conduct funerals outside their own pastoral charge. Several changes to the Licensed Lay Worship Leader Policy of the Region will be suggested. It was also noted that it is not appropriate for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to wear a stole. Three Licensed Lay Worship Leaders were interviewed and approved to be re-licensed for three years – Tim Aggett, Lisa Clarke and Susan Reid. Plans are underway for a LLWL Gathering in the fall. This will be a joint event with the Fundy St. Lawrence – Dawning Waters Region. Another LLWL interview was conducted on Zoom and the license of Sara Mattinson was renewed for three years. At the meeting on October 9, the LLWL Event (November 6 & 7) in Tatamagouche was discussed.

Concerns of the Division and the Committees:

Two of our committees do not have chairpersons. Many of the committees could use more people.

Recommended Motions from the Division to the Executive:

Motion: Moved that the request for a decommissioning service of the Milford-Lantz United Church on September 28th, 2025 be approved.

Motion: Moved that the request for a decommissioning service of the Upper Stewiacke-Springside United Church building on September 10th, 2025, be approved.

Motion: Moved that the executive to approve the amalgamation plan of the Newport Pastoral Charge, to be named Newport Pastoral Charge, Avondale United Church, effective as of July 1st, 2025.

Motion: Moved that the executive that the proposed name change from "Middle Musquodoboit Pastoral Charge" to "Middle Musquodoboit Faith Community Pastoral Charge" be approved.

Motion: Moved the executive approve that St. Paul's United Church be decommissioned on November 16th, 2025, and that St. Paul's United Church be disbanded upon the completion of all property transfer matters.

Janet Sollows
Chair
Division of Ministry Resources

Appendix B

NOMINATIONS

**NOMINATIONS REPORT
OCTOBER 29 2025
EXECUTIVE MEETING**

Due to many extenuating circumstances this team has not met officially since June 2025. However, some work has been accomplished via email connections and some response from the letter that was sent to the region in June.

- a) Samuel Graham and Thea Burton have been added to the Faith Formation team. This team, according to Chair, Michael Thompson is now fully staffed.
- b) Linton Worrall has taken a position out of the region, therefore as of Oct 1 he is removed from the Licensing team. Chair of Licensing has expressed a desire for a couple of more members. We have reached out to some folks but all have declined to come on board.
- c) Shelley Pick has resigned as Chair of the Affirming Committee. Katie Logan has stepped up to be secretary of that committee. Julien Davis has agreed to be the new Chair of this committee.
- d) Future Directions needs new leadership – currently no chair or secretary.
- e) Faith Story Community Covenant in need of new leadership currently no chair

Motions:

I move that Samuel Graham and Thea Burton be added to the Faith Formation team.

I move that Julien David be appointed to Chair of Affirming Committee.

I move that Linton Worrall be removed from Licensing Committee and Shelley Pick be removed from Chair of Affirming Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela MacLean

Appendix C

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Bermuda Nova Scotia Regional Council
Division of Finance & Administration
Report to Executive
29 October 2025

Included Committees & Meetings: Archives (meeting as needed)
Finance, Accountability & Investment (meeting monthly)
Incorporated Ministries (meeting semi-monthly)
Property (meeting monthly)

Date(s) of Recent Division Meetings: 26 February 2025

Summary of Committee Reports & Business to be Transferred to the Regional Executive
Archives

- *No recent meeting*

Finance, Accountability & Investment

- The committee meets regularly to review investments and process funding requests
- Work with Brunswick Street United Church in Halifax continues; the congregation has not yet disbanded as the transferring of assets into a trust is still in progress

Incorporated Ministries

- *No report at this time.*

Property

- The committee has been working with St. Paul's United Church in Spryfield for the past 6 months or so, in an effort to place the building and property under a Regional Trust rather than putting it up for sale. The work is nearing completion but for a bit of legal work still in progress.
 - recently St. Paul's has been operating on an overdraft; fundraising and a campaign have brought them out of overdraft, but the community of faith now lacks energy to keep moving forward and wish instead to close and disband. The church has lost its charity status and are following up with CRA to have that reinstated.
 - St. Paul's has a Resource Centre & Food Bank located in the lower level of the church building that plays an important role in the community and contributes monthly to the church's finances
 - The trustees engaged the NS Provincial Housing Authority re. using the property to develop affordable housing and provide space for community programming. An MOU was drafted between St. Paul's & HRM
 - The MOU has not been signed and it was agreed instead to move the building into the Regional Trust. Wally Chivers & Dave Hewitt have been investigating the process re. the Trust and also working with the folks at St. Paul's to determine their future ministry
 - Wally is also in contact with UPRC regarding possible management of the building; it is understood that Kindred Works does not see the location as viable for the redevelopment into housing
 - The Property Committee recently approved a motion to authorize Faith March-MacCuish to sign and complete setting up the Regional Trust to hold property within Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region.

MOTION by April Hart that Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region authorize the Executive Minister to move St. Paul's United Church, Spryfield, into the Regional Trust.

Date(s) of Upcoming Division Meetings: TBA

Respectfully submitted by April Hart, Chair
Division of Finance and Administration

Appendix D

REGIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Divisional Reports to Regional Council Executive
Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council

Division Name: Regional Services and Support

Sept. 17, 2025

Committee Names within the Division

Faith Formation and Leadership Development (FFLD)
Communications
Children, Youth and Young Adult (CYaYA)
Stewardship
Justice, Mission & Outreach (JMO)
Annual Meeting Planning (AMPC)
Affirm Ministries

Date of Divisional Meetings: The Division Committee is meeting on Sept. 19 in person, right after the September in person Executive meeting.

Report of the decisions and discussion items before the Division:

Webinars

FFLD is planning a fall webinar on the topic of leading public prayer.
FFLD is also planning a relevant, timely and engaging webinar series. FFLD will invite several participants in the (Re)generate project/program to present on their experience in the program.

In-Person Division Committee Meeting

The Division Committee will meet on Sept. 19 in person. This will include only the chairs of each division committee, secretary, chair and staff resource person.

Financial Report

The Division Committee financial report up to June 30 has been received and will be on the agenda for the Sept. 19 meeting.

Strategic Plan

For the May 21 meeting, the Chair broke down the strategic plan and bullet-pointed for each action where division committees are at achieving the actions and where committees might adjust their response to the strategic plan. Committee chairs will consider what the Division Chair has done and make further suggestions at our September in-person meeting.

Communications

Nothing new to report.

Dates of Committee Meetings: (since last Executive meeting)

- Faith Formation and Leadership Development (*meet monthly*): June 26. Next meeting Sept. 25.
- Communications Ø
- Children, Youth and Young Adult: Working by email while the chair is on parental leave.
- Stewardship: Ø
- Justice, Mission & Outreach: Next meeting Oct. 23 & 24 in-person.
- Annual Meeting Planning meets monthly from Sept. to June (except for December)
- Affirm meets monthly on the second Tuesday: Next meeting in September.

Ø = no meeting dates reported

Reports of the decisions and discussion items from the Committees:

Faith Formation and Leadership Development

FFLD is planning a fall webinar on the topic of leading public prayer.

Appendix D - continued

REGIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT - continued

FFLD is also planning a relevant, timely and engaging webinar series. FFLD will invite several participants in the (Re)generate project/program to present on their experience in the program.

Annika Sangster continues to develop a curriculum for the season of creation under the sponsorship of FFLD.

Communications

This committee has yet to be re-created.

Children, Youth and Young Adult

Catherine Stuart (Staff Support) reported as the chair is off on parental leave.

Camping seasons were successful for all three camps in the region this summer. Despite challenges with fire and woods bans, Sherbrooke Lake Camp and Camp Kidston were able to finish their seasons with good registration numbers and talented staff and boards. The United Church accreditation visit was completed at Sherbrooke Lake Camp by Catherine Stuart and Katie Aven. The full report will be available in the fall. Berwick Camp also had a successful 10 day encampment, with Catherine passing on the Vacation Bible School director position to Carolyn Milne. Catherine will continue to support their program committee, as she does with the other two camps as well.

General Council Youth Forum happened in Calgary, with 5 youth and young adults under the age of 30 attending from our region. We'll look forward to hearing more from them in the fall too.

Upcoming- Planning will begin in September for the 2026 installment of Youth @ Region, happening at Acadia University from May 29-31. Encourage youth (grade 6-12) in your communities to hold this date!

We've also received word that our national youth and young adult event is back for 2026! Collective (em)brace for Impact will be a joint event with the Presbyterian Church in Canada for youth (going into grade 9), young adults (to age 30) and their leaders August 12-15 2026 at Brock University in St. Catharines. There is already interest in a bus again, so plans for that will start when we meet in September.

Catherine is meeting with her national colleagues and the Growth Animators from Sept 15-19th, focusing on how First Third Ministries (Children, Youth and Young Adults) can be part of the conversation around Toward 2035.

Stewardship

August 24, 2025

Chair, Wanalda Parsons

August 14, 2023
Informal Report

1. Successful Annual Meeting with Poster Display on Stewardship and discussing Stewardship with the delegates. Business cards and Stewardship material provided.
2. Email sent out from region office to all Regional Representatives inviting communication. No response received.
3. Stewardship notices now being provided on Region Wednesday Newsletter. The plan is for two notices to be given each month on Stewardship programs available within a given timeframe. One church is now using Stewardship Seconds in its bulletin and material on Stewardship has been left in the narthex.
4. The Certificate of Stewardship cohort starts Winter 2025. I have also joined this hoping to meet others with a passion and interest in joining our Region Stewardship team.
5. Upcoming Stewardship programs include : Getting Started in Stewardship and Bequest and Estate Giving.
6. Looking forward to the new person who will be replacing our well-loved Roger Janes.
7. Remain interested in visiting churches to share stewardship, only two churches to date. Once Fall starts and church governing bodies are back at work, hope to be able to visit individual churches.

Appendix D - continued

REGIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT - continued

Justice, Mission & Outreach (*Joint Committee with FSLDW*)

Bermuda-Nova Scotia

Sandra Tomsons, Chair
Kathryn Anderson, DM (2026)
Linda Scherzinger, (2026) Just Peace
Sheila van Schaik, (2026) Eco-Justice

Fundy, St. Lawrence, Dawning Waters

Kathy Bigsby, Chair (2026)
Barbara Cairns, (2027, 2nd)
Audrey Lounder (2028)
Keith MacPherson (2026, 2nd)
Jennifer Broomhead (2025)
Christine MacLeod (2027)
Natasha Pearen (2027)
Mary Kennedy-Fulton (2028)
Jane Doull (2028)

Corresponding members:

Karen Llewellyn, BIG
Norm Laverty, Mental Health
Minister for JMOC
Shepherd Munikwa

The Chair, Sandra Tomsons reported.
September, 2025

JMOC has not met since the in-person meeting on May 29, 2025.

JMOC has a full roster (9) of members from FSLDW. There are still 5 vacancies for B-NS. A new member-at-large from B-NS has been recruited, but he is moving soon to New Brunswick. Kathy and I are working with the nominating committees from each region to determine how to handle this situation.

The Campus Chaplaincy issue is being actively explored by JMOC. This concern was brought to JMOC by the Bermuda-Nova-Scotia region after the Dalhousie Chaplaincy position ended. Rev. Natasha Pearen and Rev. Jenn Broomhead have developed a proposal that involves churches in the area of Dalhousie campus providing support to students. JMOC recognizes this issue is not limited to Dalhousie.

JMOC will be holding its annual in-person meeting at Tatamagouche October 23-24, 2025. We will be looking at using cluster gatherings to engage with communities of faith and help build local justice interest and capacity.

Updates from Working Groups:

Indigenous Rights and Relations

JMOC does not have an active working group for Indigenous Rights and Relations so continues with a "whole of JMOC approach." B-NS region has asked JMOC for a webinar on Land Acknowledgements and we are following up on this.

JMOC, along with Women of First Light, co-sponsored a spring book launch tour by Marie Wilson to introduce North of Nowhere: Song of a Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner. With JMOC support, Marie was able to speak to large audiences in Halifax, Mahone Bay, Sydney, Antigonish, Pictou, Truro, Tatamagouche, Charlottetown, Fredericton, Sackville and Moncton. In some locations United Churches collaborated with community groups to support these events. JMOC is now urging follow-up to this tour by encouraging local United Churches to find ways to enact the United Church Apology. These include book studies, participating collectively in the Sept. 30th National Day of Reconciliation, and developing relationships with Wabanaki communities (Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey, Passamaquoddy).

Appendix D - continued

REGIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT - continued

Just Peace

Teams continue to offer the Palestine Land Exercise (PLE). A group was trained recently in Saint John to provide the program. On PEI, the PLE Team provided the program earlier this year and has another booked for the fall.

JMOC endorsed a call to cancel the Davis Cup matches planned for Halifax this Fall. The issue is the presence of Israeli athletes at a time when the government of Israel is engaged in genocide in Gaza. Against a background of acceptance in sport, regardless of politics, there is also a history of sport speaking loudly against repression as happened with bans on South Africa during the Apartheid Era.

Just Peace Working Group Update September 2025

Since our last report to the region in April we:

1. Have responded to the desperate calls for solidarity and support from local neighbours whose families are in constant danger in Gaza.

a) Islam Elbatie anxiously approached us for help when his siblings in Gaza found access to food scarce, difficult to access, and very expensive. Islam's resources are limited. He knew that we had previously raised money for a family whose home was damaged from Israel's bombing of Gaza in 2014. We organized a team to provide a lunch and Islam shared his personal story to people who came. Four churches hosted a Fundraiser for Gaza Relief. We raised over \$5,000 Ca which was sent to Islam's family in Gaza. Some still want to give.

b) Over a year and a half ago, Najlaa applied for her family to be able to come to Canada through the federal government's Gazan Special Immigration Measures Program to reunite families. As time passes and dangers increase for her family in Gaza, she continues to advocate for her family's approval. The Minister with this portfolio has not agreed to meet with Najlaa or others in her situation. She has asked supporters to stand with them in solidarity and to show support until there is a positive response. We have written letters to the Minister and joined rallies in support of Najlaa's efforts.

c) Helmi, in St John, NB, has been speaking up for justice for Palestinians and asked for our support in educating Canadians. We responded by leading the Palestine Land Exercise for a group of church and community people in St John and agreed to work together in co-sponsoring a film series in the fall.

2. We continue to promote and sell Zatoun Fair Trade Palestinian olive oil and Zatar which supports Palestinian farmers, justice and peace.

3. We continue to educate church members and to encourage their advocacy.

a) We have been promoting and leading the Palestine Land Exercise in churches in both of our regions and supporting PLE leadership teams in other parts of Canada who we trained last year in Toronto. We have begun conversations with the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ Churches in the USA and Canada about training teams to lead the PLE for them to use in their home areas.

b) We have been spreading the word about the United Church Justice Principles and encouragement to participate in BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) and to sign the Pledge to be Apartheid-Free Communities.

c) We have been sending letters and signing petitions to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and other Canadian government officials urging them to take urgent actions such as to:

- Secure an immediate and permanent ceasefire;
- Ensure food, water, fuel, and humanitarian aid are delivered unhindered;
- Achieve the release of all captives, both Israeli and Palestinian;
- Impose a comprehensive, two-way arms embargo on Israel, including closing loopholes such as exports via the US;
- End Israel's military occupation and annexation of Palestine, paving the way for a just peace.

d) We have been signing petitions and sending letters against allowing Israel's team of military veterans of genocidal violence to play in the Davis Cup in Halifax, Canada in September.

Appendix D - continued

REGIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT - continued

4. We believe in following the lead and amplifying the voices of key Palestinian partners in our advocacy work especially Kairos Palestine and the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center. We maintain close ties with leading and credible Palestinian advocacy groups in Canada including United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel, Canadian Friends of Sabeel, and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East.

Kairos Palestine, a United Church of Canada partner, named the development of a Post Gaza Theology as one of their key priorities in their strategic plan. In response, the Just Peace Working group wrote a proposal that was adopted by both regions and forwarded to General Council in support of the development of a Task Group in the United Church to work on this issue.

The proposals submitted to GC45 have not yet been voted on. They will be dealt with at a special meeting in September. This includes the proposal for development of a post Gaza theology.

5. GC45 closing statement:

The genocide in Gaza has reached unimaginable horror. On August 7, 2025, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared his government's plan to occupy Gaza, confirming decades of warnings from Palestinian communities. This comes amid the deliberate deprivation of food, the weaponization of aid, and the destruction of hospitals, schools, water systems, and homes. Families have been displaced repeatedly, children are dying of starvation, and communities lack clean water, medical care, and safe shelter. These crimes against humanity demand our moral response as people of faith. We cannot remain silent as the survival of Palestinians in Gaza hangs in the balance.

The United Church of Canada:

- Calls upon the Government of Canada to prioritize the protection of civilian life, ensure unimpeded humanitarian access, impose a comprehensive, two-way arms embargo on Israel, including closing loopholes such as exports via the U.S., ensure security for journalists and humanitarian aid workers, and work toward sustainable peace that honors the dignity and rights of all people in the region.
- Commits itself to prayer, advocacy, and concrete action to support those in need and to work for the day when Palestinians and Israelis alike can grow up in safety, security, and hope alongside one another, and calls on all people of faith and goodwill to do the same.

6. Since the conclusion of GC45: a famine has been officially declared in North Gaza. Israel denies the reality of famine and is prepared to begin an offensive invasion and take over of North Gaza forcing Palestinians to leave and not be able to return - since Israel aims to totally destroy all structures.

Palestinians are begging the international community for protection.

We support advocacy for the Canadian government to take urgent and stronger actions to protect the lives and future of Palestinians.

Mental Health

Rev. Chris MacLeod, currently a member at large on JMOC, has agreed to provide leadership for this working group.

Annual Meeting Planning

No report since the Division hasn't met since our last report.

Affirm Ministries

No report since the Division hasn't met since our last report.

Concerns of the Division and the Committees:

We continue to be concerned about the low membership of the FFLD and JMO Committees.

Recommended Motions from the Division to the Executive

No meeting since last report.

-Donnie Morrison, Chair
Division of Regional Services and Support