



## BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL

### Into The Deep



Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council  
The United Church of Canada

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
Acadia University  
Wolfville, NS  
May 28-31, 2026

Volume 1 - REPORTS TO REGION



## INDEX

President’s Message.....	3
A Whole People’s Covenant.....	5
Holy Manners.....	6
Guidelines for Business Procedures.....	7
Regional Resource Persons.....	9
General Council Representative .....	10
Theme Speaker.....	11
Indigenous Guest .....	11
Opening Procedural Motion.....	12
Consent Motion.....	14
Executive Minister’s Report .....	15
Candidates for Celebration .....	20
President-Elect .....	24
Division Reports	
Division of Finance and Administration.....	25
Archives, Records and History Committee.....	25
Financial Accountability & Investments Committee .....	25
Incorporated Ministries Committee .....	26
Property Committee .....	27
Budget - 2027 .....	29
Audited Statements - 2025 .....	33
Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council Funds, December 31, 2025 .....	51
Incorporated Ministries Reporting .....	53
Incorporated Ministries Directory .....	53
Division of Regional Services and Support.....	55
Communications .....	56
Affirm Committee.....	56
Faith Formation and Leadership Development Committee.....	57
Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee.....	58
Guaranteed Livable Income Working Group .....	59
Eco-Justice Working Group.....	59, 60
Just Peace in Israel and Palestine Working Group .....	59, 64
Mental Health Working Group .....	59
Indigenous Rights and Relations Working Group.....	59
Stewardship.....	66
Children, Youth and Young Adult Committee.....	66
Annual Meeting Planning Committee.....	67
Division of Ministry Resources .....	68
Faith Story and Community Covenant Committee.....	69
Future Directions Committee .....	69
Pastoral Relations Committee.....	69
Licensing Committee .....	70
Retiree Support Committee.....	71

Nominations Committee .....	72
Directory of Divisions and Standing Committees .....	73
Tri-Regional Staff Committee.....	79
Other Reports	
Atlantic School of Theology.....	80
Atlantic School of Theology, Senate .....	81
Centre for Christian Studies .....	82
Cluster Animator.....	85
Emmanuel College .....	93
Growth Animator.....	96
Hunter Church Building Fund .....	98
Maritime United Church Women .....	99
Office of Vocation .....	100
Regional Minister's Report.....	102
St. Andrew's College.....	103
Stewardship.....	104
Ukulele Church.....	105
United Church Rural Ministry Network .....	106
Proposals.....	107
Regional Proposal Template .....	109
Proposal 1 – Pledging to Become a Apartheid-Free Community.....	111
Proposal 2 – First Third Ministry – A Priority in Our Region.....	114
Proposal 3 – Resurrecting Campus Ministry in FSLDW and BNS Region .....	116
Jubilarians .....	117
Retirees .....	120
Staff Anniversary .....	123
Best Wishes to Those Leaving Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council .....	124
Welcome to Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council .....	124
Candidate for President Nominee.....	124
Memorial Observances .....	124
Draft Agenda .....	132

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**The Reverend Doctor Mary Taylor**  
President

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus says to the disciples, "Put out into the deep water." It is a simple invitation, but not an easy one to accept. Deep water requires trust, attentiveness, and a willingness to move forward even when the way ahead is not entirely clear. That image has stayed with me this year as I have served as President of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council.

This past year has been shaped by both celebration and challenge. I have participated fully in the governance life of the region, attending all executive meetings, along with additional meetings where we worked through questions related to regional structure and how it is currently serving our communities of faith. I also took part in a panel discussion on the newer regional structures, and in further conversations within our own region about what is working well and where we need to improve. These have been thoughtful, honest discussions, rooted in a shared desire to support ministry faithfully and sustainably.

Beyond the region, I have been involved in broader church-wide conversations, including General Council in Calgary, where we celebrated the 100th anniversary of The United Church of Canada and where I was first introduced to *Toward 2035*. I also participated in centennial celebrations in Newfoundland, including a special service marking 100 years of shared history and witness. These moments of celebration offered both gratitude for the past and a clear reminder that we are being called to think carefully and creatively about the future.

At the same time, much of this year has involved what I would describe as holding space in change. I have been present for times of transition and discernment across the region, including church closures, covenanting services, and moments of grief alongside communities and colleagues. I have found all of these to be holy moments.

What weighs most heavily on my heart in this season is the level of exhaustion I see across the church. Volunteers, ministry personnel, and staff at every level are carrying significant responsibility, often with limited resources and increasing demands. The faithfulness of those who continue to serve, lead, and show up for one another is both humbling and inspiring, and it deserves to be named and honoured.

And yet, I remain hopeful. Not because the work is easy, or because the answers are obvious, but because Jesus continues to call us forward. I continue to see people showing up with courage and

care. I hear stories of long, patient faithfulness beginning to bear fruit. I see communities willing to ask hard questions, to try new approaches, and to trust that God is still at work among us.

As President, I have tried to listen carefully, to encourage honest conversation, and to help steady the work in a time of significant change. We are not being asked to have everything figured out, but we are being invited, together, to put out into the deep water, trusting that we do not go alone.

Thank you for your commitment to this very worthwhile work, for your willingness to serve, and for the many ways you continue to live out Christ's love in your communities. It is a privilege to walk this journey with you.

Grace and peace,



Rev. Dr. Mary Taylor

President, Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council

## PROCEDURES FOR HOLDING A MEETING AND DECISION-MAKING

### A WHOLE PEOPLE'S COVENANT

*The 41st General Council 2012 used A Whole People's Covenant to help define the way in which the members of the General Council sought to work together. It has been adapted here for use as a resource by all councils and church bodies.*

Each of us comes as a pilgrim to this gathering of siblings in Christ. Each of us comes with our own cultural values, assumptions, and world views. Each one of us, and the cultures we represent, are God's living letters of faith, hope, love, and beauty. Therefore, we embrace the following Christian virtues that honour God and promote right relationship between us as we gather together and learn from one another:

We promise to relate to one another with:

- respect;
- humility;
- patience;
- open-mindedness;
- courage; and
- the spirit of grace and forgiveness we have received in Christ Jesus.

We acknowledge the land that we stand upon by

- remembering that Indigenous peoples have walked these paths;
- understanding that we are one part of God's creation; and
- honouring future generations by preserving this land as they find their own paths.

In our Christian love for one another we will:

- invite the Spirit into both our worship and business;
- attend to others with our whole selves: our physical senses, intuition, imagination, and intellect;
- speak for ourselves in the spirit of truth and gentleness, avoiding unhelpful generalizations and racial stereotypes;
- not interrupt when others are speaking;
- be mindful of language that is not inclusive;
- affirm the deep wisdom of silence and pause, as necessary, to ponder what others have said;
- seek to understand rather than win arguments and assume best intentions;
- hold our beliefs and opinions lightly; and
- hold one another in prayer.

Today this pilgrimage will lead us to becoming a whole people. With God's help, I will leave behind what I must to make this journey. Thanks be to God.

## HOLY MANNERS

*The Very Reverend Marion Pardy introduced Holy Manners as a resource for the 38<sup>th</sup> General Council 2003. Holy Manners has been used as resource for the conduct of meetings by subsequent General Councils and their executives. It has been adapted here for use as a resource by all councils and church bodies.*

We will:

- keep God at the centre of everything we do;
- each speak for ourselves;
- speak for a purpose;
- separate people from problems;
- allow for full and equitable participation;
- attend to others carefully without interruption;
- welcome the conflict of ideas;
- take a future orientation;
- demonstrate appreciation;
- honour the decisions of the body;
- commit to holding one another to account when we do not keep our holy manners;
- keep the discussion at the table;
- be mindful of our body language;
- check in about good use of time;
- allow the quiet people to speak, with an invitation to speak; and
- sincerely say what we really feel.

## GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS PROCEDURES

1. Motion: A Council may only pass motions for which it has the authority and which do not contradict the decision of the higher council. A motion contradicting a motion already passed at the same meeting is out of order, unless it is a motion to reconsider.
  - The mover reads the motion.
  - The seconder is named.
  - The mover has the privilege of speaking at the beginning and end of the discussion of their motion.
  
2. Discussion:
  - Start by identifying yourself (name, Pastoral Charge or Community of Faith)
  - All discussion should be directed to the President.
  - Each person may address the President only once about a motion, except the mover, who may speak both first and last.
  - The initial time allocated for the mover to address the motion is limited to three minutes.
  - All subsequent speakers limit their time to two minutes, including any reply by the mover of the motion.
  - All discussion should be clear and concise and deal only with the motion.
  
3. Amendments:
  - Any motion to amend a motion must be dealt with before dealing with the original motion.
  - Any voting member, except the mover and seconder of the original motion, may make a motion to amend the original motion.
  - An amendment is a suggestion to change a motion slightly by:
    - i. Removing words and replacing them with others, or
    - ii. Adding or deleting words
  - An amendment cannot change the intent of a motion.
  - When all motions to amend have been dealt with, the Council may deal with the final form of the original motion.
  - A separate vote must be taken for each motion to amend.
  
4. Amendment to the Amendment:
  - A motion to slightly change the amendment.
  - See above
  
5. Voting:
  - Voting will take place by raising hands
  - All those with voting privileges (members) are expected to indicate their vote by raising of hands.
    - i. If there is a close vote, tellers will count.
    - ii. If there is a tie, the President will cast the deciding vote.
  - Ballots will be used for electing commissioners to General Council or other elections, as deemed necessary.

## 6. Motions that Interrupt the meeting:

At any time during a meeting, any voting member may make a motion to:

- Close discussion without a vote on the motion;
- Fix the time to adjourn;
- Adjourn;
- Take an immediate vote (2/3 vote required);
- Limit or extend limits of discussion (2/3 vote required);
- Postpone discussion and decision on the motion to a definite time;
- Refer the motion to another body or commission;
- Amend/change the motion; or
- Postpone discussion and decision on the motion indefinitely (without a specific time).

An original motion may be interrupted by any of the above motions.

While these motions are being dealt with, they may only be interrupted by a motion above it in the list.

## 7. How to Reconsider a Motion:

- A motion to reconsider a motion already passed may be made if no motion is under consideration. A motion to reconsider has the same priority as the motion to be reconsidered.
- Only a voting member who voted “yes” for the original motion may move the motion to reconsider. This motion must be seconded by a voting member.
- A motion to reconsider in an ongoing meeting must be approved by 2/3 of the voting members present.
- The revised motion may be reconsidered if a motion is changed on reconsideration and passed.
- A motion on which action has been taken may not be reconsidered.

## 8. Business Committee:

- Sort and clarify issues when things are bogged down in procedure, wrangles or wording problems.
- Deal with changes to the Agenda during the General Meeting.

## 9. Other:

- Other rules of order are contained in *The Manual*. In general, the conduct of the business is at the discretion of the President. The President may seek the advice of the Business Table. Where *The Manual* is silent, Bourinot’s Rules of Order will be used.

**REGIONAL RESOURCE PERSONS**

President	Rev. Dr. Mary Taylor
President-Elect	Donald Morrison
Executive Minister	Rev. Faith March-MacCuish
Annual Meeting Planning Chair	Jane McDonald
Annual Meeting Planning Minute Taker	Rev. Heather Manuel
Proposals Unit Chair	Rev. April Hart Rev. Mary-Beth Moriarity
Equity Support Team	Rev. Shannon MacLean Rev. Katie Logan
Local Arrangements	Rev. Heather Manuel
Worship Planning	Rev. Dr. Mary Taylor
Head Teller	Fay Smith
Retirees & Jubilarians Banquet Host	Rev. Donna Tourneur
Office Manager/Finance (Sackville Office)	Jennifer Whittemore
Communications and Administrative Support (Sackville Office)	Shari Kaster
Executive Assistant (UCC Regions East)	Jennifer Taylor

**GENERAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE****Angelica Benalcazar**

Executive Minister for the Shared Services Unit

Angelica is the Executive Minister for the Shared Services Unit. The Manager, Human Resources & Payroll will be reporting to this position.

A Human Resources and Administrative Professional with over 15 years of progressive leadership experience augmented by a post-secondary education in Human Resources Management and Business Administration, she has experience in Benefits Administration, Talent/Performance Management, Recruitment/Selection, Training/Development, Payroll Administration, People Management, and Process Improvement. A creative and innovative thinker with effective human resources management and goal setting abilities combined with superior leadership, team building, communication, interpersonal skills and organizational skills, she is self-motivated with the ability to excel in a fast-paced environment; communicate effectively at all levels; manage competing priorities; and adapt readily to new challenges.

She has a degree in Human Resources Management from York University and a Certificate in Human Resources Management at Ryerson. Before joining the United Church, Angelica worked in different not-for-profit organizations such the Catholic Children's Aid Society in Toronto, the Salvation Army and Canadian Mothercraft Society.

**THEME SPEAKER****The Reverend Doctor John Pentland**

John Pentland is a spiritual seeker and teacher, public speaker, and public theologian who is Lead Minister at Hillhurst United Church in Calgary, since 2004. Hillhurst is a growing and dynamic community that is an Affirming congregation which hosts two services in person and online on Sunday with a midweek Second Campus, Living Spirit Center. He is author of the Canadian bestseller: Fishing Tips: “How Curiosity Transformed a Community of Faith.” He consults, leads workshops and writes on various topics of spiritual formation and church growth for *The Calgary Herald* and *Globe and Mail*. John was raised in Ontario. He is an avid cyclist, racquet enthusiast, and dog walker. He holds a B.A. from Queens University and M.Div from Emmanuel College in Toronto; a M.Th. from Princeton Theological Seminary; and a D.Min. from the Chicago Theological Seminary. “Speaking Faith in Public Space.” John has served in rural, urban and inner city ministries and was Project Lead in Civil Society at United Way of Calgary outside UCC leadership. He was nominated for Moderator of the UCC in 2025.

**INDIGENOUS GUEST****Sunshine Paul-Martin**

Sunshine Paul-Martin of Millbrook First Nation, Nova Scotia, describes herself as an L'nu'k language and cultural specialist from Millbrook First Nation. Although she says her most important roles are being a daughter, mother, grandmother, auntie, niece, friend, seamstress and babysitter.

**OPENING PROCEDURAL MOTION**

1. That the Roll of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council be (Manual 2026 C1.1 and C.1.2):
  - a) Members of the order of ministry within the bounds served by the regional council; and
  - b) Other ministry personnel in a covenantal relationship with a community of faith within the bounds of the regional council; and
  - c) The lay members who are members of the United Church who are not ministry personnel and who are elected by their Communities of Faith.
  - d) Appointed members, lay members of the Regional Council Executive who have not been elected by their Community of Faith.
2. That the quorum be as indicated in Section C.4.3 of the Manual 2026;  
“The Regional Council may meet only if a minimum number of members is present... If there are 60 (sixty) or more members, at least 20 (twenty) members must be present; and that there must be at least one ministry personnel and one lay member who is not ministry personnel present. Corresponding members are not counted for this purpose.”
3. That the Bounds of the Regional Council meeting be Acadia University, Wolfville, NS.
4. That representatives of General Council; representatives of United Church organizations; ministry students not serving a pastoral charge; the active and retired Lay Overseas Personnel; ecumenical guests and observers; the President of the Atlantic School of Theology (or their designate); the Incorporated Ministries representatives; and any other registered visitors to the Regional Council meetings be Corresponding Members of this Council.
5. That the agenda, as printed and distributed, be adopted as the agenda for this meeting of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council, subject to such changes as may be adopted and such Orders of the Day as may be determined by the Council.
6. That the business table for the meeting be Jane McDonald, Heather Manuel and Jennifer Whittemore.
7. That the Proposals Team be April Hart and Mary-Beth Moriarity.
8. That the minute secretary for the Eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) Annual Regional Council meeting be Jennifer Taylor.
9. That this meeting will be recorded for the purpose of the Record of Proceedings. Once the Record of Proceedings has been produced, the recording will be destroyed.
10. That any elections held during this meeting be by majority ballot.

11. That the Table Group Facilitators for this meeting of Regional Council be as selected by the table groups.
12. That the following shall be Tellers for this session of Regional Council: Fay Smith (Head Teller), Gloria Churchill, Kevin Cox, Joyce Custance, Ruth Gamble, Sandi Irving and Gerry Kerr.
13. That the Chaplains/Pastoral Care providers for the meetings be Rhonda Schofield and Jun Chon (Thursday); Tee Vhembo and Tom Woods (Friday); and Daniel MacDonald and Beth Hayward (Saturday).
14. That the Process Flow and Support for the meeting be Mary-Beth Moriarity.
15. That the Friend in Council for the meeting be Jane McDonald.
16. The President will chair the meeting, making any rulings necessary. The Regional Council will work together using the Whole People's Covenant and Holy Manners as its guide. The President will apply the Manual 2026 Appendix: Procedures for Holding a Meeting and Decision-Making. (*Note 3.7 In any point not covered in The Manual, the parliamentary rules accepted in Canada (Bourinot's Rules) will be followed.*)

Speakers will:

- start by identifying themselves (name, Pastoral Charge or Community of Faith)
- direct all discussion to the President
- address the President only once about a motion; except the mover, who may speak both first and last
- be allocated time as follows: The initial time allocated for the mover to address the motion be limited to three (3) minutes, and that all subsequent speakers be limited to two (2) minutes; including any reply by the mover of the motion
- make every effort to have all discussion be clear and concise, and deal only with the motion.

**CONSENT MOTION**

That Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council:

1. Approves the Minutes of the Regional Council Meeting, May 14&15 and May 30-June 1, 2025 (RC70-RC87), as circulated.
2. Receives and accepts the following accountability reports:
  - a. President
  - b. Executive Minister
  - c. Division of Finance and Administration
    - i. Financial Accountability & Investments
    - ii. Incorporated Ministries
    - iii. Property
    - iv. Archives, Records & History
  - d. Division of Regional Services and Support
    - i. Communications
    - ii. Faith Formation & Leadership Development
    - iii. Children, Youth & Young Adults
    - iv. Stewardship
    - v. Justice, Mission & Outreach
    - vi. Annual Meeting Planning
    - vii. Affirming
  - e. Division of Ministry Resources
    - i. Pastoral Relations
    - ii. Licensing
    - iii. Faith Stories & Community Covenants
    - iv. Future Directions
    - v. Retiree Support
  - f. Nominations Committee  
 INCLUDING THE DIRECTORY OF DIVISIONS AND STANDING  
 COMMITTEES AND THE 2026-2027 REGIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE
  - g. Tri-Regional Staff Support Committee
3. Receives for information the following reports:
  - a. Atlantic School of Theology
  - b. Atlantic School of Theology Senate
  - c. Centre for Christian Studies
  - d. Cluster Animator
  - e. Emmanuel College
  - f. Growth Animator
  - g. Hunter Church Building Fund
  - h. United Church Women
  - i. Office of Vocation
  - j. Regional Minister
  - k. St. Andrew's College
  - l. Ukulele Church
  - m. United Church Rural Ministry Network

**EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT**  
**Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council Report**

**Reflecting on the Year**

*One willing heart can't stop a war.  
 One willing heart can't feed all the hungry.  
 And sometimes, daunted by a task too big, I tell myself what's the use of trying?  
 But today, the invitation is clear: to be ridiculously courageous in love.  
 To open the heart like a lilac in May, knowing freeze is possible and opening anyway.*

*Because* by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

I have been focusing on the words of this poem this year. It's a much longer poem, but the phrase "To open the heart like a lilac in May, knowing freeze is possible and opening anyway" especially resonates with me as I think about the church and the world. We have experienced unsettling moments this year. We hear everyday of war and violence, and, in some ways, we can feel very helpless. I also know that when we look at the acknowledged and documented decline in our churches and for some of our congregations, we can also feel a sense of helplessness. It is hard to be one willing heart in a sea of despair. As our General Secretary has named very clearly, this is a watershed moment for our church, perhaps for all churches. But I think the words of the poem ring true, "the invitation is clear: we are called to be ridiculously courageous in love" to open our hearts, minds, and imaginations, to believe that we are being called to pursue a hope-filled future for the church. While one willing heart may struggle, many willing hearts can, and will, perceive the new thing that God is doing: Isaiah 43:19 *"Behold, I am about to do a new thing; now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"* I do not believe that we are just called to perceive it, I believe that we are called to be co-creators in it.

We are standing at a place in our time in history where we need to be bold and make brave decisions, to take risks and make mistakes and pick ourselves up again, to take the learnings and make our impossible happen. I was gifted a book entitled, *"The Impossible Takes Longer"*. It speaks to things that were once thought impossible that are of course now commonplace. Society is changing, the world is changing, and the question before us is, where is God calling us as disciples? For *"It is not so much the case that God has a mission for the church in the world, as that God has a church for God's mission in the world"*. The phrase, attributed to theologian Christopher J.H. Wright, highlights that the church's essential nature is to be sent into the world to participate in God's reconciling work.

**What We Are About**

This has been a busy year and, perhaps more so, a reflective year for our Regional Council; its leadership and Congregations, and our General Council. The following is a summary of some of the work that has been happening in our Region this year.

**Regional Council Executive**

In September of each year, our Executive takes a two-day retreat to focus on the work of the Regional Council from a higher level, "the balcony" or "birds' eye" view. This year, we focused our time on several pieces of work; the Regional Council priorities, the Toward 2035 whole church initiative, and our Regional Council evaluation.

### **Regional Council Priorities**

One of the confirmations that came from the evaluation of our regional council structure was that the priorities set by the Regional Council do continue to resonate with our Communities of Faith and the Region's leadership. This is good news as the Regional Council Executive understands these pillars as being the work we are tasked to support, and the Executive's responsibility is to ensure that decisions about committee structure and work being carried out needs to be reflective of the agreed upon priorities/pillars. Considering our denomination's call to Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship and Daring Justice, the Executive has done some extra work on defining the pillars, their objectives, and an action plan. While more work is needed and measurables put in place, we feel that we are beginning to more clearly define the work to better support congregations and ministries. To see the Pillars, the objectives and action plan please see the following link: <https://ucecast.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Strategic-Plan-Revised-March-13-2025.pdf>.

### **Regional Council Evaluation**

After receiving the final report from Rev. Dr. Jenny Stephens, the Executive made the decision to engage a consultant from Integrated People Solutions. The Executive embarked on a commitment to four sessions. Each session was a four-hour working session with a focus on information gleaned from our evaluation, and from there helping the Executive to forge a path forward for our Regional Council. You will receive a progress report from the Executive at our annual meeting. We will also be asking for some feedback from our table groups about the progress and the way forward.

### **Toward 2035**

By now most of our Communities of Faith will have at least heard of the whole church conversation Toward 2035. As our General Secretary named "*One hundred years ago, [The United Church of Canada] began with faithful people seeing the possibility God guided them into, right there in the place they called home. We are convinced that God still calls, and that we can respond—we are not alone*".

Toward 2035 is an invitation to prayer and a whole-church conversation about the future of God's call to The United Church of Canada. When we say whole church, we mean all of us—Communities of Faith, Regional Councils, and the General Council. It does not mean a one-size-fits-all solution, as we need to be contextual in our initiatives. Considering that call, our Executive and our Regional staff have begun the conversation by offering presentations at annual meetings, hosting webinars for ministry personnel and lay leaders and now preparing for conversations in cluster groupings and with individual Communities of Faith to support discernment. This year at our annual meeting, everyone will be invited into a workshop to have further discussion about the future for our church in our Regional Council and partially in our Communities of Faith.

As part of that continued discernment and conversation, our Executive will be assessing our current policies to determine if the policies are in line with the priorities of the Regional Council.

### **General Council Priorities**

The General Council has also been working on their strategic plan and this plan does, of course, intersect with the Regional Council's life and work. This is a three-year plan, which will take us into 2028 of the Toward 2035 initiatives. The General Council has been doing extensive work with their priorities of Growth, Leadership and Justice. In April of 2026, staff from the Regional Council and General Council met to work collectively on these three priorities, the objectives, and the actions associated with this work. More will be shared around these strategic priorities which will

see extra support given to Communities of Faith and Regional Councils in programing, policies and practices for ministry personnel, for Communities of Faith strengthening invitation, renewal, and emerging ministries, as well as work with congregations to engage in contextual justice initiatives.

### **Cluster Gatherings**

One of the things that we have heard from our Communities of Faith and our leadership in our evaluation is a feeling of isolation or disconnect in the Region, a disconnection of Communities of Faith to the Region and from our neighbours. In the new denominational structure, the concept of clusters and networks was to be something that happens organically. Meaning if Communities of Faith or groups of people felt it was important to be connected, they would develop a cluster in their area and that would fill the gap of isolation and help initiatives and resource sharing. In our Regional Council, the experience has been mixed. Some clusters that were operating prior to restructuring continued into the new structure, some new clusters developed organically, however there were gaps. In recognizing these gaps, the Regional Council approved a proposal to hire a Cluster Animator. After securing a grant we were able to hire for that position. Rev. Robyn Brown-Hewitt has been working with us now for the past 18 months as our Cluster Animator and has been in contact with all areas of our Regional Council. You will see her final report in the Regional Council reports. As Robyn's term with us is now complete, the Executive will be looking for ways to further support clusters. Part of that support is through our Regional Ministers, whose job descriptions have this piece of work.

### **Health Joy and Excellence Institute**

After the passing of Rev. Kendall Harrison in March of 2025, the work of the Health, Joy and Excellence Institute took a little bit of a break as we were awaiting the position to be filled so that the Regional Minsters and I could continue the work of the institute and create a three-year plan for offering.

The purpose of the institute is:

Good management practice recognizes that providing supports and developing skills are important to improving performance. Ministers, and other leaders, come into their roles with a range of education and experiences which equip them with many of the skills required to do the work. However, professional development is important to continuous improvement and to addressing the new challenges which arise.

It is significant to note that every time ministry personnel and lay leaders develop their skills or receive support, it benefits their personal development but also creates the possibility for them to play a leadership role in applying this new skill in their pastoral charge and bringing information back to other leaders to help in their development. To that end the institute's priority is supporting ministry personnel and then it will expand it reach to lay leaders. Part of the work is to make sure that clergy have a way of connecting with each other within the Regional Councils, which may be monthly conversations on Zoom, clergy retreats or personal conversations with staff. Another part of the work is to provide skill development and to the end we are working with Credence & Company to provide learning cohorts focused in several different areas, congregational leadership, conflict and communication, and nurturing equity, diversity and inclusion. More information will become available as we continue our conversation with Credence & Company.

**Reparation**

As part of our commitment to the Calls to the Church coming out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, our Region; through my office, the Property Committee and the Tatamagouche Board of Directors, have been engaged in a conversation with the Women of First Light about the Tatamagouche Centre itself as a possible repatriation (return of the land) to the indigenous people whose ancestors were the caretakers of the land on which Tatamagouche Center is located. This place has been the place of Peace and Friendship and considered a place of healing for all people who gather there. The Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU), which solidifies our commitment to move forward with the repatriation, has been signed and meetings continue to be held between Women of First Light, the Tatamagouche Board of Directors, the Regional Council Property and Finance Committees and myself as Executive Minister. This is a slow process, which it needs to be, so that we continue to build relationship and move forward in a good way.

**Things of Interest****Growth and Stewardship**

As part of the General Council's work and reorganization of the work of Growth and Stewardship, two departments have been combined and new positions created to further support Communities of Faith in Regional Councils. Therefore, each of our Regional Councils will have a staff person deployed to the Regional Council to work specifically with Communities of Faith on renewal, invitation, and stewardship and will work with our Regional Council with supporting emerging Communities of Faith. We are excited to have extra staff dedication to supporting our Communities of Faith as we look toward the future.

**General Council Evaluation**

General Council has completed their information collection and continue to discern the learnings from the information gathered. At General Council this year, the Commissioners were given a brief overview of some of the findings. One of the interesting, but not surprising things, was that some of their learnings mirror the information we heard from our Regional Council evaluation. As with the Regional Council, the General Council continues to work through the findings and discern what that means for the continued work of the church through its priorities and strategic plan. We will hear more about that as the work continues.

**General Council 45**

The General Council 45 met in Calgary, Alberta, in August 2025. If you are interested in reading about the work there and the work since by the Executives, please go to the General Council news website <https://generalcouncil.ca/news> for updates and information.

**Staff Updates**

This year we have had some changes to our staff compliment. We said goodbye to Oluwaseyi (Seyi) Adeyemo, who transitioned from our office to work in Alumni Affairs at Mount Allison University. We certainly wish him well in his new job. With his departure, the Staff Committee and I began the search process to fill the position, and we were very pleased to have Shari Kaster, who was a former employee with our office, return to the now full-time position of Communications and Office Administration. Welcome back Shari, we are so happy to have you join our team once again.

Rev. Robyn Brown-Hewitt, has been working with us now for the past 18 months as our Cluster Animator. Many of you would have had an opportunity to speak with Robyn discerning the best way to create our cluster gatherings for our Region and how to help them be sustainable. Robyn will conclude her work on this project May 31, 2026. Thank you for all your work and learnings you have shared.

Rev. Roger Janes retired in December. In conversation with him, he is doing well and is enjoying his retirement and is part of a singing group in his home church. As mentioned above, there has been a reworking of these positions and in our Regional Council, we will have Rev. Dr. Sharon Ballantyne as our Growth and Stewardship staff, while our other two Regions will see new staff hired.

Rev. Lloyd Bruce has been hired for the position of Regional Minister for Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters. This means that we have our full compliment of Regional Ministers, which is a gift as they work in collaboration with one another and share initiatives across the Regions.

Rev. Rob Shearer has accepted the position of Stewardship & Growth Animator, serving Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters and First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Councils. Once we have our full compliment, the three Growth and Stewardship staff will also be working in collaboration with each other and our Regional staff for the best possible outcomes for our Regional Council work.

Rev. Andrew Richardson left his position as Office of Vocation Minister for our three eastern Regions and has taken a new position with the General Council as Director Emerging Ministry Leadership, Co-Director Office of Vocation. We welcome Rev. Ivan Gregan to the position of Office of Vocation Minister for our three Regions on a contract until the month of August, when the new person will begin their role. Announcement for the new staff will be forthcoming.

### **Thank You to Our Staff**

Thank you to all our staff. Our administration and archives staff including Jennifer Whittemore, Shari Kaster, Jennifer Taylor and Sarah Wallace. Our program staff including David Hewitt, Rev. Catherine Stuart, Rev. Dr. Shepherd Munikwa, and Rev. Robyn Brown-Hewitt. Thank you to our deployed staff, Rev. Dr. Sharon Ballantyne and Rev. Ivan Gregan. All our staff have worked hard over this past year to support our Communities of Faith, our committees, our ministry personnel, and our laity. I take this opportunity to thank each one of them for their continuous support, faithfulness, and professionalism.

### **Thank You to Our Members**

The vibrancy of our Communities of Faith and our Region is realized through the interconnected actions we take to support one another. Thank you to our Elected Regional Members to the Regional Council for continuing to connect us. Thank you to our divisions and committees and to all members who have engaged by offering yourselves, your time and your skill sets to the work of discipleship in our Regional Council. None of this work is done by one person, it takes all of us. *“The invitation is clear: to be ridiculously courageous in love. To love as if it matters, as if the world depends on it”.*

Rev. Faith March-MacCuish  
Executive Minister

## CANDIDATES FOR CELEBRATION

### ORDINATION

#### **Donna Marie Kelly, CD1, B.A., M.Div.**



Feeling called to ministry from an early age, and being unable to live out that calling in her previous faith tradition, Donna came to The United Church of Canada in the 1990's. Since that time, she has embraced The United Church of Canada and has participated fully within her home congregation of First South United Church. She was a long-time choir member, lay reader, and served on a number of committees including becoming an Elder with Session. She, and several other lay persons, led worship when ministry personnel were not available, and she eventually completed the Licensed Lay Worship Leader training and received her certification as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader. She continued to serve her congregation and neighbouring congregations in that capacity until beginning her Master of Divinity studies at Atlantic School of Theology in June of 2021.

As part of her studies at AST, she was blessed with a student placement at the LaHave-New Dublin Pastoral Charge, West Side United Church in Pentz, Nova Scotia. She completed two years of student placement there, then went on to complete two years of Supervised Ministry Education there where she served the charge in a 20 hour per week appointment. Since then, she has remained at the charge in a Candidate Supply capacity working 20 hours per week in team ministry with Reverend Neil McEwen. Being placed at LaHave-New Dublin Pastoral Charge was a blessing for Donna. It was a wonderful experience right from the start and her current appointment has been extended several times – currently, until the end of June 2026. As the LaHave-New Dublin Pastoral Charge and the Petite Riviere Pastoral Charge have entered into a collaborative ministry beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>, Donna has accepted a provisional call to this new ministry. She looks forward to continuing to serve the LaHave-New Dublin Pastoral Charge and is excited to begin serving the Petite Riviere Pastoral Charge as well.

Donna currently resides in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. She has lived in Newfoundland and British Columbia, but returned to her home in Lunenburg; living a block away from where she grew up as a child. She served in the Canadian Forces Reserves (Cadet Instructor Cadre) for twenty-nine years where she worked with youth ages twelve to eighteen. Although now retired, she remains active in supporting the cadet program as a member of the Navy League of Canada. She was employed with the Government of Canada in a civilian capacity for thirty-three years in a number of positions. She received her first degree from Acadia University in 1995, a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in Psychology.

Being a mother of a son and daughter has brought her immense joy over the years. They have both married, and live in different provinces but always remain close to her. She has also been blessed with a grandchild to increase her joy.

Donna genuinely loves having the opportunity to be a minister and serve in congregational ministry. She is looking forward to ordination and continuing to serve God and God's people.

### **Ronald John William Shaw, M.Div.**



Ron Shaw is a husband, father, and grandfather (what he is proud of most).

He grew up in London, Ontario; left there at age 20, and since then lived in Alberta, several places in Ontario, and all 3 Maritime provinces. He spent 45 years in radio and television news and began feeling the call to ministry 20 years ago; first becoming a Licensed Lay Worship Leader.

There are many, many, reasons he pursued ministry, including that when bad things happened, he wanted to be one of the ones who was there to help; not report on it.

### **W. Wayne Jarvis, DLM**



My mother and father were farmers in the small village of Lyn, Ontario. I was the oldest son of three boys. Unfortunately, I lost my mother when I was five years old and my dad was devastated. I was raised by my grandparents. My middle brother was raised by my aunt and uncle, while my youngest brother was raised by friends of my grandparents. My grandparents made sure that I went to Sunday school and church every Sunday. I remember my grandparents saying to me that I could not play hockey or any other sport on Sunday afternoon unless I attended Sunday school and church on Sunday morning.

I attended Christ United Church in Lyn, was confirmed in the church, and began to teach Sunday school in the church. Following being confirmed, I always felt that I was called into ministry. At that time, I knew that my grandparents could not afford to help pay me for collage, so I decided to work for a year and then go to college, but I got married and my wife and I started a family.

I taught Sunday school in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and in Lower Sackville and Lorneville, Nova Scotia until all the children were old enough and did not want to go to Sunday school any longer. The feeling of wanting to be a minister never left me and when we moved to Lorneville and I was speaking to our minister about the feeling I had, she suggested I look into the Licensed Lay Worship Leader (LLWL) course. I applied and went to Atlantic School of Theology (A.S.T.) I graduated from the LLWL course and enjoyed preaching and helping the older people in the congregation. I registered for the Designated Lay Minister (DLM) course. I attended Calling Lakes in the spring and fall for three years and received my certificate. Being a DLM was very satisfying. I had a church and enjoyed preaching, visiting those who could not get out to services, visiting those in hospital and nursing homes, leading bible study, doing weddings, and comforting those at the funerals I did. I still felt I could offer more; thus, the reason I am proceeding to be ordained.

## ADMISSION

### **Rev. Jenny Eisener, B.R.E., M.Div.**



From a young age, Jenny has felt called to ministry and used to line her stuffed animals up on the stairs to preach to them. She grew up in the Pentecostal church where her grandfather was the minister in Ontario.

Jenny attended an Evangelical Bible College, and Presbyterian and Lutheran Seminaries. She has served in ministry positions working primarily with children and youth in Mennonite, Baptist and now United Church congregations. She has served as a multifaith Chaplain in university and hospital settings. Through these multi-denominational experiences, Jenny has come to know and embrace God's ever expanding love for all people.

Jenny moved to Nova Scotia in 2014 to begin with First Baptist Church Halifax and was ordained with them through the Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms in 2015. Since November of 2021, Jenny has served as the Children and Youth Program Leader at St. John's United Church in Fall River. The children, youth and families there have warmly embraced her and she's delighted to continue serving with them as Family Minister.

Jenny lives with her husband Charlie, step-son Jamie, daughter Joanna, dog Bella, and 50,000 of her closest bee friends in her backyard hive.

### **Rev. Webster Vhembo, Dip.Th., B.Th., M.Th.**



Rev. Webster Vhembo was born and raised in a Christian family in Zimbabwe. His parents were devoted members of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe. His faith and spirituality were formed and shaped within the Reformed tradition, where he was called to ministry and later ordained as a Minister of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care.

Rev. Vhembo brings over twenty years of faithful service in congregational ministry, theological education, and community engagement. He holds a Master of Theology in Practical Theology, as well as a postgraduate diploma from the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. He also earned a Bachelor of Theology from Justo Mwale Theological University in Zambia, and a Diploma in Theology from Murray Theological College (Reformed Church University) in Zimbabwe.

More recently, he has completed the required courses for admission into The United Church of Canada at the Atlantic School of Theology. These include United Church Polity, United Church Theology, and United Church History, as well as training in Racial Justice, Professional Boundaries, and Orientation Circle.

Throughout his ministry, Rev. Vhembo has served both as a congregational minister and as a professor of Practical Theology, shaping theological students through teaching in preaching, Christian education, leadership, and community development. His ministry is marked by a relational and collaborative leadership style, encouraging others to share their gifts while guiding congregations in worship, pastoral care, and mission. He is deeply experienced in preaching, administering the sacraments, providing pastoral counseling, and supporting individuals and families through life's significant moments.

Currently serving at Aylesford United Church in Nova Scotia, Rev. Vhembo continues to offer spiritual leadership within the Aylesford Pastoral Charge and the wider community. His passion for intercultural ministry, social justice, and community outreach reflects his commitment to a living and active faith.

Rev. Vhembo is married to Tee, and they have three children; Alpha, Mufaro, and Omega, as well as their granddaughter, Aileen Tariro.

Rev. Vhembo is an outdoor person who loves community gatherings and engagement. He enjoys gardening, jogging, fellowship with friends and family, and watching soccer. He remains deeply grateful for the support and mentorship he has received within The United Church of Canada, which continues to enrich his ministry and discernment journey.

**PRESIDENT-ELECT****Donald Morrison, B.Sc. Pharm., LLWL**

I was raised in New Waterford, NS, and nurtured in the faith at Calvin United Church; where I became a Sunday School teacher and member of Session. After university, I returned to Calvin, resuming my involvement in the congregation and my wife, Ruth Ann, and I were married there. The late Rev. Duncan Roach, who served that pastoral charge for 55 years, played a significant role in shaping my faith.

In 1988, we moved our family to Sydney and to the United Protestant Church of Sydney River. I currently serve as Chair of the Official Board, Chair of Session and as an elected representative to the Regional Council. Our son, Ian, and daughter, Jean, both live nearby in Sydney.

I have served as Chair and Secretary of Sydney Presbytery, and on the Pastoral Relations and Education and Students committees. I was honoured to serve as a commissioner to the 39<sup>th</sup> General Council. During the restructuring of the church, I chaired the Region 15 Transition Committee and the commission that followed. I served on the Governance Committee at that time. Since then, I have chaired the Division of Regional Services and Support and am a member of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council Executive.

My professional life was in pharmacy. I operated five Pharmasave stores in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality until retiring in 2017. During that time I chaired the Pharmasave Atlantic Board, was awarded the Bowl of Hygeia Award by the Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia for community service and contributions to the pharmacy profession, and was inducted into the Cape Breton Business Hall of Fame.

In the community, I have been a member of the Rotary Clubs of New Waterford and Sydney; serving both as Secretary and New Waterford as President. I have served on the board of Maple Hill Manor in New Waterford for 48 years and currently act as Treasurer. From its inception until its windup, I was a member of the Cape Breton Victoria Child Advocacy Society.

I have always loved the United Church and I am proud of its progressive and courageous history, as well as how we live into the new directions that the Spirit is leading us.

Whether leading worship or chairing a meeting, I try to create a space for the Spirit to guide the work.

No doubt what is ahead for the Regional Council will be no less challenging than what has come before. God has blessed us with leaders who have vision and abundant gifts and I am excited to work with them for the next year.

## **DIVISION REPORTS**

### **DIVISION OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**Division Chair:** April Hart

**Division Secretary:** Fay Smith

#### **Division Committees**

##### **Archives, Records and History Committee:**

**Chair:** Ross Cameron

**Secretary:** Shane Doucette

**Members:** Wendy Kean  
Heather Ferrier  
Roberta Phillips

**Ex-Officio Members:** Regional Archivist (Staff Support)  
Division Chair

The Archives, Records and History Committee uses the Weekly Announcements to remind and encourage the Governing Body of the Community of Faith to send their records to Archives when they are no longer needed.

We met by zoom with Faith March-MacCuish, April Hart and Sarah Wallace, reviewed our mandate from the Regional Governance Handbook and discussed other ways that information that is available from the United Church can be forwarded to the governing bodies, like links and webinars.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ross Cameron

##### **Financial Accountability & Investments Committee:**

**Co-Chair:** Allan Davis

**Co-Chair:** Malcolm (Mac) MacLeod

**Secretary:** Vacant *\*See note below.*

**Members:** Michael Ball  
Cindy Penney

**Ex-Officio Members:** Executive Minister (Staff Support)  
Division Chair

The committee meets regularly, about once a month via ZOOM, where we review the investments, financials, and funding submissions and any other business that may arise.

Our mandate is: “To provide leadership and guidance to the Division of Finance and Administration regarding issues pertaining to the finances of Communities of Faith, including requests for grants and loans, and to provide oversight, leadership, and guidance on all Investment and Trust issues within the bounds of the Region.”

We continue to monitor general council assessments and reach out to pastoral charges in the region that have fallen into arrears. More recently we have been following up with pastoral charges that are late in filing their annual statistics.

We encourage our Communities of Faith to be aware of the various funding opportunities available to them. Guidelines and application forms are available at: <https://uceast.ca/regional-council-15/funding-resources>.

*\*The committee would like to offer special thank to Debbie Davis who has graciously volunteered to act as recording secretary over the past year whilst we've been without a Secretary.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Allan Davis and Malcolm Macleod

### **Incorporated Ministries**

**Chair:** Krista Anderson  
**Secretary:** Dale Skinner  
**Members:** Kevin C. Little  
 Katie Aven  
 Kathy McKay  
**Ex-Officio Members:** Executive Minister (Staff Support)  
 Division Chair

Our mandate as the Incorporated Ministries (IM) committee is to provide oversight, leadership, and guidance to the Incorporated Ministries (IM) within the bounds of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region. The IM committee met online in September, October, November, February and March. The IM Connectors are keeping linked with each IM by attending meetings when available and especially connecting during annual meeting times and calling the chairpersons and visiting the IMs as able.

The IM connectors are: Krista Anderson (Berwick Camp), Katie Aven (Shebrooke Lake Camp & Arthur Kidston Memorial Camp), Kathy McKay (Brunswick Street Mission & North Dartmouth Outreach Resource Centre), Kevin Little (Pine Hill Divinity Hall & St. Paul's Family Resources Institute), and Dale Skinner (Tatamagouche Centre & Church Extension Board).

With Krista as Chair and Dale as Secretary, the team updated their committee terms of reference this year to reflect its work. Time to update on our incorporated ministries is a regular standing

agenda item. We supported accreditation for Camp Kidston in 2024 and planned support for accreditation for Sherbrooke Lake this summer.

The team discussed and sent feedback in for the BNS Strategic Plan. We reviewed our budget and sent in our information for 2024/25.

Our yearly responsibilities include:

- Committee reports to the Division
- Consult with chairs on an annual basis
- Visit Incorporated Ministries at least once a year.
- Report to the Region annually.
- Review IM proof of insurance; charitable status; incorporated status.
- Respond to requests for assistance from the IM.
- Hold copies of current bylaws
- Respond to requests for incorporation.
- Create working groups when needed.
- Sit on GCO Camping Committee on a rotational basis (to be added to terms of reference by Region).

We are lucky to have such a terrific committee filled with people who are passionate about alternate forms of ministry for the United Church. We are grateful to have recruited Katie Aven this year and are thankful for the support Faith March-MacCuish and April Hart give our committees through the year.

### **Property Committee**

**Chair:** Wally Chivers  
**Secretary:** Fay Smith  
**Members:** Rev. David A. LeBlanc  
 Jack Logan  
 Bob McArel  
 Wayne Cochrane  
 Joyce Custance

**Ex-Officio Members:** Executive Minister (Staff Support)  
 Division Chair

The Property Committee has continued to deal with many matters at each of its monthly meetings via zoom and email polls when requested to meet timed restraints.

B-NS Region support Rev. Faith March-MacCuish attends meetings when possible. Faith shares National & Regional news/highlights and provides valuable information, updates and offers guidance to difficult issues.

There have been many inquiries on a variety of Property matters. 2024 had over 60 files and another dozen or so from previous years, 15 new files since Jan 1, 2025. Numerous motions have been put forth: requests for grants/loans, renovations, leases, selling property/transfer of title, disposition of assets, manses and cemeteries. Many requests come at last minute and email poll handle files with deadlines. Presently there are 6 churches for sale and transfers of cemeteries. Cemeteries attaching to an existing charity is the ideal situation, but the process can take CRA up to a year.

For a broader picture, assistance and input comes mainly from Archives, Future Directions, Pastoral Relations and David Hewitt and others. While Amalgamations keep the funds within the new CoF/pastoral charge, it can create paperwork to cover the movement of assets.

Applications from various sources of funding have come from: within B-NS Region, Faithful Footprints / Kindred Works, General Council and any of the government levels. There are 3-4 properties under Kindred Works for redevelopment. UPRC/Kindred Works, indicate any interest for repurposing the property before being offered for sale. A 'Region Trust' is currently being set up within the region, so the region can hold properties with partners such as UPRC/Kindred Works.

Property listing in NS is on going with new properties (mostly cemeteries) coming to light more often. There are now over 270+ parcels including churches, halls, manses, vacant property, cemeteries, camps/retreat centres. B-NS Region owned Property includes two (2) vacant parcels with a cemetery on each: Lower Ship Harbour and Oyster Pond, formerly part of the Musquodoboit Harbour Pastoral Charge.

There are currently 4 church properties up for sale or going up for sale and the possibility of 3 more to come up for sale by end of June 2025.

Committee member: 7 with terms staggering to allow for continuity. Most of members have been asked to continue. Many thanks to these volunteers for their dedicated commitment to the property Committee.

*\*Property Handbook for Congregations: various areas to be updated, aiming for Dec. 2025 for completion.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Wally Chivers

I want to offer a sincere thanks to all members of the Division who work so hard on behalf of the Region and on behalf of the church. Our committees generously give of their time and expertise month after month and our ministries are enabled and made richer by their work.

Respectfully submitted,  
April E Hart



<b>EXPENSE</b>					
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>					
Regional Executive					
Executive Meeting	\$ 4,069.85	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Nominations	0.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
Conflict Resolution/Legal	13,322.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Regional Executive</b>	<b>\$ 17,392.20</b>	<b>\$ 2,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,250.00</b>
<b>Administration</b>					
President Expenses	\$ 1,503.60	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
Audit Expense	10,757.75	10,000.00	12,500.00	13,000.00	13,000.00
User Fees/Bank Charges	116.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>\$ 12,377.35</b>	<b>\$ 13,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 15,750.00</b>	<b>\$ 16,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 16,250.00</b>
<b>Regional Office</b>					
Copier Expense	\$ 1,172.90	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Computer Non-Capital	1,066.60	500.00	800.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
Website	340.42	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Office Supplies	1,387.93	750.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
Archives Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Subscriptions/Resources	1,485.31	1,250.00	1,250.00	1,250.00	1,250.00
Communications	929.49	750.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Postage	319.61	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Telephone	706.10	1,000.00	850.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Equipment & Furniture	0.00	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Insurance	4,815.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Utilities	7,646.57	13,000.00	14,000.00	14,000.00	14,000.00
Cleaning Supplies	111.86	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Cleaning Contract	3,700.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
Garbage Removal	238.66	500.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
Show/Lawn	2,418.76	2,000.00	3,400.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Archives Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
GC Rent	18,000.00	18,000.00	18,000.00	18,000.00	18,000.00
Other (Sundry)	3,721.83	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
<b>Total Regional Office</b>	<b>\$ 48,061.04</b>	<b>\$ 62,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 55,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 55,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 55,500.00</b>
<b>Salaries and Travel</b>					
Staff Salaries	\$ 342,197.16	\$ 339,702.00	\$ 361,217.84	\$ 375,047.00	\$ 375,047.00
Cluster Animator	23,213.34	30,400.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

GC Shared Services	6,735.00			5,000.00	9,000.00	9,000.00	
Mission & Service Salaries	\$ 70,090.82			68,855.00	74,644.16	\$ 78,681.00	
Mission & Service Grants	89,463.00			0.00	0.00	0.00	
Children Travel/Phone/Con Ed	2,993.83			6,760.00	6,760.00	6,760.00	
JMO Travel/Phone/Con Ed	4,984.97			6,760.00	6,760.00	6,760.00	
Reg Min Travel/Phone/Con Ed	13,593.42			10,780.00	10,780.00	10,780.00	
Exec Minister/Exec Assist. Travel/Phone/Con Ed	10,898.72			15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	
Archivist Travel	68.89			500.00	500.00	500.00	
Worker's Comp	(90.08)			1,300.00	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Contract Work	8025.00			0.00	0.00	0.00	
<b>Total Salaries and Travel</b>	<b>\$ 404,641.45</b>	<b>\$ 167,532.62</b>		<b>\$ 402,682.00</b>	<b>\$ 88,164.16</b>	<b>\$ 411,627.00</b>	<b>\$ 92,201.00</b>
<b>Division of Reg Services &amp; Support</b>							
Division of Reg Services & Support	\$0.00			\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	
Annual Meeting	32,797.94			35,000.00	45,000.00	45,000.00	
Annual Meeting Planning Committee	113.86			250.00	250.00	250.00	
Affirm Committee	6.50			2,500.00	400.00	1,500.00	
Youth@Region (formally YF and @C)	\$ 14,085.86			10,000.00	10,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	
Children, Youth & Young Adult	9,999.17			10,000.00	10,000.00	12,500.00	
Communications	0.00			500.00	500.00	500.00	
Justice, Mission & Outreach	4,024.81			8,500.00	8,500.00	8,500.00	
Faith Formation & Leadership Dev	6,916.00			10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	
Stewardship	0.00			850.00	500.00	500.00	
<b>Total Div of Reg Services &amp; Support</b>	<b>\$ 32,918.30</b>	<b>\$ 35,025.84</b>		<b>\$ 43,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 39,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 49,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 46,500.00</b>
<b>Division of Reg Finance &amp; Admin</b>							
Division of Reg Finance & Admin	\$0.00			\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	
Financial Accountability & Investme	344.35			500.00	1,000.00	500.00	
Property	1,554.36			2,500.00	2,500.00	5,000.00	
Incorporated Ministries		\$0.00			\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
Archives, Records and History	0.00			600.00	500.00	500.00	
<b>Total Div of Reg Finance &amp; Admin</b>	<b>\$ 1,898.71</b>	<b>\$ -</b>		<b>\$ 5,100.00</b>	<b>\$ 500.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 500.00</b>
<b>Division of Ministry Resources</b>							
Division of Ministry Resources	0.00			\$ 7,575.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	
Licensing	4,400.24			1,000.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	
Future Directions Committee	0.00			1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Retiree Support	0.00			800.00	800.00	800.00	
Faith Story & Community Covenants	0.00			2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	
Pastoral Relations	4,126.41			9,000.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	
<b>Total Div of Ministry Resources</b>	<b>\$ 8,526.65</b>			<b>\$ 21,375.00</b>	<b>\$ 21,300.00</b>	<b>\$ 23,800.00</b>	

<b>Other Appointments</b>							
Tri-Regional Staff Committee	\$ 0.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
<b>Total Other Appointments</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
<b>Regional Council Liabilities</b>							
Mission & Service Grants - Unallocated	\$ 0.00	\$ 64,025.00	\$ 64,025.00	\$ 64,025.00	\$ 58,585.84	\$ 45,795.00	\$ 45,795.00
<b>Total Regional Liabilities</b>	\$ 0.00	\$ 64,025.00	\$ 64,025.00	\$ 64,025.00	\$ 58,585.84	\$ 45,795.00	\$ 45,795.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	\$ 525,815.70	\$ 540,657.00	\$ 538,247.84	\$ 186,250.00	\$ 186,250.00	\$ 568,177.00	\$ 185,000.00
<b>SURPLUS or (DEFICIT) FROM OPERATIONS</b>	\$ (81,291.67)	\$ (115,977.00)	\$ (111,817.84)	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ (127,047.00)	\$ 0.00
<b>Other Income and Expenses</b>							
Income							
Property Sales	\$ 132,394.40						
Investment Income	50,943.13						
<b>Expenses</b>							
Management Fees - Investment	16,836.77						
Accounting Expense (Investment)	1,139.50						
<b>Total Other Income and Expenses</b>	\$ 165,361.26	\$ (11,500.00)	\$ 215,000.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 201,500.00	\$ 17,900.00	\$ 54,600.00
<b>SURPLUS or (DEFICIT)</b>	\$ 84,069.59	\$ (127,477.00)	\$ 89,682.16	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (72,447.00)	\$ -

**Audited Statements – 2025**

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

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**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Index to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

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	Page
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT	1 - 2
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	
Statement of Financial Position	3
Statement of Revenues and Expenses	4
Statement of Changes in Net Assets	5
Statement of Cash Flows	6
Notes to Financial Statements	7 - 14
Statement of Internally Restricted Funds ( <i>Schedule 1</i> )	15
Statement of Externally Restricted Funds ( <i>Schedule 2</i> )	16

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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

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To the Members of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council

### *Opinion*

I have audited the financial statements of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council (the "Council"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2025, and the statements of revenues and expenses, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Council as at December 31, 2025, and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

### *Basis for Opinion*

I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Council in accordance with ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in Canada, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

### *Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with ASNPO, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Council or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Council's financial reporting process.

### *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements*

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

(continues)

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council *(continued)*

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Council's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Council to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

St. John's, NL  
March 19, 2026



Brian T. Scammell Professional Corporation  
Chartered Professional Accountant

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**December 31, 2025**

	2025	2024
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Cash	\$ 141,510	\$ 357,535
Term deposits (Note 3)	875,000	750,000
Accounts receivable (Note 4)	16,642	79,081
Due from related parties (Note 6)	-	18
Prepaid expenses	2,582	3,507
	<b>1,035,734</b>	<b>1,190,141</b>
LONG TERM INVESTMENTS (Note 7)	1,530,042	1,310,414
CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 8)	90,493	111,193
	<b>\$ 2,656,269</b>	<b>\$ 2,611,748</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 28,279	\$ 19,204
Due to related parties (Note 6)	18,476	28,982
Other current liabilities	11,859	18,210
	<b>58,614</b>	<b>66,396</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Operating Fund - Unrestricted	525,065	517,276
Internally Restricted Fund (Schedule 1)	1,819,473	1,780,672
Externally Restricted Fund (Schedule 2)	253,117	247,404
	<b>2,597,655</b>	<b>2,545,352</b>
	<b>\$ 2,656,269</b>	<b>\$ 2,611,748</b>

ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE (Note 10)

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Statement of Revenues and Expenses**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

	Operating Fund - Unrestricted	Internally Restricted Fund	Externally Restricted Fund	2025	2024
<b>REVENUES</b>					
Grant - United Church of Canada (Note 6)	\$ 572,000	-	-	\$ 572,000	\$ 596,375
Miscellaneous	12,065	23,835	100	36,000	19,470
Rent	24,518	-	-	24,518	4,530
	608,583	23,835	100	632,518	620,375
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
Staff salaries and travel	404,641	-	-	404,641	353,369
Mission and support services	202,558	-	-	202,558	210,715
Other	-	195,710	1,126	196,836	86,428
Office operating	48,061	-	-	48,061	55,672
Standing committees	43,344	-	-	43,344	48,639
Administration	26,839	-	-	26,839	14,084
Regional council executive	4,070	-	-	4,070	3,452
	729,513	195,710	1,126	926,349	772,359
<b>DEFICIENCY OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS</b>	(120,930)	(171,875)	(1,026)	(293,831)	(151,984)
<b>OTHER INCOME (EXPENSES)</b>					
Contributions from sale of church properties	132,394	-	-	132,394	368,723
Unrealized gain on marketable securities	170,993	-	-	170,993	159,120
Investment income	54,015	-	6,739	60,754	66,250
Gain on sale of investments	19,530	-	-	19,530	2,847
Amortization	-	(20,700)	-	(20,700)	(11,405)
Investment management fees	(16,837)	-	-	(16,837)	(12,113)
	360,095	(20,700)	6,739	346,134	573,422
<b>EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES</b>	\$ 239,165	\$ (192,575)	\$ 5,713	\$ 52,303	\$ 421,438

See notes to financial statements

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Statement of Changes in Net Assets**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

	Operating Fund - Unrestricted	internally Restricted Fund	Externally Restricted Fund	2025	2024
<b>NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>					
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	\$ 517,276	\$ 1,780,672	\$ 247,404	\$ 2,545,352	\$ 2,123,914
Interfund transfers (Note 9)	239,165	(192,575)	5,713	52,303	421,438
	(231,376)	231,376	-	-	-
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	\$ 525,065	\$ 1,819,473	\$ 253,117	\$ 2,597,655	\$ 2,545,352

See notes to financial statements

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL****Statement of Cash Flows****Year Ended December 31, 2025**

	2025	2024
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Excess of revenues over expenses	\$ 52,303	\$ 421,438
Items not affecting cash:		
Amortization of capital assets	20,700	11,405
Gain on disposal of investments	(19,530)	(2,847)
Unrealized gains (losses) on marketable securities	(170,993)	(159,120)
	(117,520)	270,876
Changes in non-cash working capital:		
Accounts receivable	62,439	11,713
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	9,075	(17,112)
Prepaid expenses	925	(2,822)
Other current liabilities	(6,351)	3,715
	66,088	(4,506)
Cash flow from (used by) operating activities	(51,432)	266,370
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Advance (repayment) of amounts due from related parties	(10,488)	12,246
Purchase of long term investments	(177,152)	(103,808)
Proceeds on disposal of long term investments	148,047	109,341
Purchase of capital assets	-	(122,597)
Proceeds from redemption of term deposits	750,000	600,000
Purchase of term deposits	(875,000)	(750,000)
Cash flow used by investing activities	(164,593)	(254,818)
<b>INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH FLOW</b>	<b>(216,025)</b>	<b>11,552</b>
Cash - beginning of year	357,535	345,983
<b>CASH - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 141,510</b>	<b>\$ 357,535</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION</b>		
Interest received	\$ 35,052	\$ (30,821)

See notes to financial statements

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE COUNCIL**

Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council (the "Council") is a Council of The United Church of Canada. Its principal activities include the provision of services to the pastoral charges affiliated with The United Church of Canada in Nova Scotia and Bermuda.

Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council is a registered charity. As a registered charity, the Council is exempt from the payment of income tax under Subsection 149(1)(f) of the Income Tax Act.

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

*Basis of presentation*

The financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

*Fund accounting*

The Operating Fund accounts for the Council's delivery of services and administrative activities. This fund reports unrestricted resources and restricted operating grants, as well as externally restricted contributions for which there is no corresponding restricted fund.

The Internally Restricted Fund consists of funds maintained by the Council which are restricted in their purpose by the Council and cannot be used for general operations of the Council.

The Externally Restricted Fund consists of funds restricted outside of the Council to be used for specific purposes and cannot be used for general operations of the Council.

*Cash and cash equivalents*

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, balances with banks and short-term investments with maturities of three months or less.

*Term deposits*

Term deposits include guaranteed investment certificates that are recorded at cost. Any accrued interest is included in investment income receivable, which included in the total of accounts receivable on the statement of financial position.

*Investments*

The long-term investments held with RBC Wealth Management, consist primarily of equities and bonds, and are carried at fair value.

The remaining long-term investments consist of fixed income investment certificates, and are carried at amortized cost.

*Financial instruments*

The Council recognizes financial instruments when the Council becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Financial assets measured at amortized cost include cash, term deposits, accounts receivable, interest receivable, amounts due from related parties, and some long-term investments. Long-term investments held with RBC Wealth Management are measured at fair value.

Financial liabilities measured at amortized cost include accounts payable and accrued liabilities, amounts due to related parties, and other current liabilities.

*(continues)*

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**Notes to Financial Statements**

**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)**

*Arm's length financial instruments*

Financial instruments originated/acquired or issued/assumed in arm's length transaction ("arm's length financial instruments") are initially recorded at their fair value.

At initial recognition, the Council may irrevocably elect to subsequently measure any arm's length financial instrument at fair value.

The Council subsequently measures all other financial assets and liabilities at amortized cost.

Transaction costs and financing fees directly attributable to the origination, acquisition, issuance or assumption of financial instruments subsequently measured at fair value are immediately recognized in excess of revenues over expenses. Conversely, transaction costs and financing fees are added to the carrying amount for those financial instruments and subsequently measured at cost or amortized cost.

*Related party financial instruments*

The Council initially measures the following financial instruments originated/acquired or issued/assumed in a related party transaction ("related party financial instruments") at fair value:

- Investments in equity instruments quoted in an active market.
- Debt instruments quoted in an active market.
- Debt instruments when the inputs significant to the determination of its fair value are observable (directly or indirectly).
- Derivative contracts.

All other related party financial instruments are measured at cost on initial recognition. When the financial instrument has repayment terms, cost is determined using the undiscounted cash flows, excluding interest, dividend, variable and contingent payments, less any impairment losses previously recognized by the transferor. When the financial instrument does not have repayment terms, but the consideration transferred has repayment terms, cost is determined based on the repayment terms of the consideration transferred. When the financial instrument and the consideration transferred both do not have repayment terms, the cost is equal to the carrying or exchange amount of the consideration transferred or received (refer to Note 5).

At initial recognition, the Council may elect to subsequently measure related party debt instruments that are quoted in an active market, or that have observable inputs significant to the determination of fair value, at fair value. The Council has not made such an election during the year; thus all such related party debt instruments are subsequently measured at amortized cost.

The Council subsequently measures investments in equity instruments quoted in an active market and all derivative instruments, except those designated in a qualifying hedging relationship or that are linked to, and must be settled by delivery of, unquoted equity instruments of another entity, at fair value. Financial instruments that were initially measured at cost and derivatives that are linked to, and must be settled by, delivery of unquoted equity instruments of another entity, are subsequently measured using the cost method less any reduction for impairment.

Transaction costs and financing fees directly attributable to the origination, acquisition, issuance or assumption of related party financial instruments are immediately recognized in excess of revenues over expenses.

*Financial asset impairment*

The Council assesses the impairment of all its financial assets measured at cost or amortized cost. The Council groups assets for impairment testing when 1) available information is not sufficient to permit identification of each individually impaired financial asset in the group, 2) there are numerous assets affected by the same factor, 3) no asset is individually significant, etc.. Management considers whether the issuer is having significant financial difficulty; whether there has been a breach in contract, such as a default or delinquency in interest or principal payments in determining whether objective evidence of impairment exists. When there is an indication of impairment, the Council determines whether it has resulted in a significant adverse change in the expected timing or amount of future cash flows during the year.

*(continues)*

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

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**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)**

With the exception of related party debt instruments initially measured at cost, the Council reduces the carrying amount of any impaired financial assets to the highest of the present value of cash flows expected to be generated by holding the assets; the amount that could be realized by selling the assets at the statement of financial position date; and the amount expected to be realized by exercising any rights to collateral held against those assets.

For related party debt instruments initially measured at cost, the Council reduces the carrying amount of the asset (or group of assets), to the highest of: the undiscounted cash flows expected to be generated by holding the asset, or group of similar assets, excluding the interest and dividend payments of the instrument; the present value of cash flows expected to be generated by holding the assets; the amount that could be realized by selling the assets at the statement of financial position date; and the amount expected to be realized by exercising any rights to collateral held against those assets.

For related party equity instruments initially measured at cost, the Council reduces the carrying amount of the asset (or group of assets), to the amount that could be realized by selling the asset(s) at the statement of financial position date.

Any impairment, which is not considered temporary, is included in current year excess of revenues over expenses.

The Council reverses impairment losses on financial assets when there is a decrease in impairment and the decrease can be objectively related to an event occurring after the impairment loss was recognized. The amount of the reversal is recognized in excess of revenues over expenses in the year the reversal occurs.

**Capital assets**

Capital assets are stated at cost or deemed cost less accumulated amortization and are amortized over their estimated useful lives at the following rates and methods:

Furniture and fixtures	20% declining balance method
Leasehold improvements	10 years straight-line method

The Council regularly reviews its capital assets to eliminate obsolete items. Government grants are treated as a reduction of capital assets cost.

Capital assets acquired during the year but not placed into use are not amortized until they are placed into use.

Capital assets which are attributable to specific restricted fund(s) are recognized as assets in the year they are acquired, and amortized over their estimated useful lives using the stated rates & methods. The resulting amortization expense is reflected as an expense for the specific restricted fund(s).

**Post retirement benefits**

The employees of the Council participate in a defined benefit plan administered and held nationally by The United Church of Canada. Defined contribution plan accounting is applied to this multi-employer contributory defined benefit. The Council is not responsible for the obligations due to the employees under this benefit plan.

**Revenue recognition**

Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions.

Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate restricted fund in the year in which the contribution is received or receivable. All restricted contributions for which there is no specific restricted fund are recognized as revenues in the Operating Fund when the related expenses are incurred.

Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the Operating Fund when received or receivable if the amount can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Investment income earned on restricted investments is recognized as revenue as it is earned in the appropriate fund. Other investment income is recognized in the Operating Fund.

*(continues)*

## BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2025

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)***Measurement uncertainty*

The preparation of non-consolidated financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period. Such estimates are periodically reviewed and any adjustments necessary are reported in earnings in the period in which they become known.

By their nature, these judgments are subject to measurement uncertainty, and the effect on the financial statements of changes in such estimates and assumptions in future years could be material. These estimates and assumptions are reviewed periodically and, as adjustments become necessary, they are reported in earnings in the years in which they became known.

*Contributed services*

A number of volunteers contribute their time each year to the Council. Due to the difficulty of determining the fair value of these items, no amounts are recognized in the financial statements.

**3. TERM DEPOSITS**

	2025	2024
Royal Bank of Canada, one year prime-linked redeemable GIC at prime minus 2.450%, maturing on October 27, 2026	\$ 875,000	\$ -
Royal Bank of Canada, one year non redeemable GIC at 3.300%, matured on October 21, 2025	-	600,000
Royal Bank of Canada, one year prime-linked redeemable GIC at prime minus 2.450%, matured on October 21, 2025	-	150,000
	<b>\$ 875,000</b>	<b>\$ 750,000</b>

**4. ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE**

	2025	2024
Investment income receivable	\$ 8,038	\$ 12,830
Harmonized sales tax recoverable	7,124	4,281
Other receivables	1,480	340
Contributions receivable from the sale of church properties	-	61,630
	<b>\$ 16,642</b>	<b>\$ 79,081</b>

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

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**5. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

The Council, as part of its operations, carries a number of financial instruments. It is management's opinion that the Council is not exposed to significant liquidity, market or credit risks except as noted below.

*Liquidity risk*

Liquidity risk is the risk that an entity will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities. The Council is exposed to this risk mainly in respect of its receipt of funds and payment of its expenses.

*Market risk*

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises three types of risk: currency risk, interest rate risk and other price risk. The Council is mainly exposed to interest rate risk and other price risk.

*Interest rate risk*

Interest rate risk is the risk that the value of a financial instrument might be adversely affected by a change in the interest rates. In seeking to minimize the risks from interest rate fluctuations, the Council manages exposure through its normal operating and financing activities. The Council is exposed to interest rate risk primarily through its investments.

*Other price risk*

Other price risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices (other than those arising from interest rate risk or currency risk), whether those changes are caused by factors specific to the individual financial instrument or its issuer, or factors affecting all similar financial instruments traded in the market. The Council is exposed to other price risk through its investment in marketable securities.

## BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2025

**6. RELATED PARTIES**

The following is a summary of the Council's related party transactions:

	2025	2024
<u>Related party transactions</u>		
<b>General Council of The United Church of Canada</b>		
<i>(Governing body of the Council)</i>		
Grants - Operational	\$ 392,000	\$ 401,375
Grants - Mission work	180,000	180,000
Salaries expense	(364,052)	(317,279)
Mission & support services expense	(159,554)	(170,976)
Rent expense included in office operating expenses	(18,000)	(18,000)
Information technology support	(6,735)	(8,845)
Funds received from the General Council	(48,752)	(84,257)
Repayments to the General Council	18,000	18,000
	<u>(7,093)</u>	<u>18</u>
<b>First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council</b>		
<i>(Related through common control)</i>		
Expenses paid by First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council on behalf of the Council	(28,835)	(24,173)
Repayments to First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council	28,806	15,869
Expenses paid by the Council on behalf of First Dawn Eastern Edge	-	44
Copying fees charged to (from) First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council	(282)	3
	<u>(311)</u>	<u>(8,257)</u>
<b>Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council</b>		
<i>(Related through common control)</i>		
Expenses paid by Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council on behalf of the Council	(115,001)	(111,370)
Rental income (Split with Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council)	24,518	4,628
Copy income (Split with Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council)	151	92
Funds deposited by Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council due to the Council	4,661	7,835
Funds deposited by the Council due to Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council	-	(2,500)
Expenses paid by the Council on behalf of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council	478	381
Repayments to Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council	96,595	202,432
Capital assets purchased by Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council on behalf of the Council	-	(105,505)
Credits received by Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council due to the Council	6,490	-
	<u>17,892</u>	<u>(4,007)</u>
		<i>(continues)</i>

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

6. RELATED PARTIES <i>(continued)</i>	2025	2024
<b>Related party transactions <i>(continued)</i></b>		
<b>Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council <i>(continued)</i></b>		
	\$ 10,488	\$ (12,246)

These transactions are in the normal course of operations and are measured at the exchange amount, which is the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

Due to related parties

	2025	2024
Current portion due from related party		
General Council of The United Church of Canada	\$ -	\$ 18
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Current portion due to related parties		
General Council of The United Church of Canada	\$ 7,075	\$ -
First Dawn Eastern Edge Regional Council	7,506	7,195
Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council	3,895	21,787
	<b>\$ 18,476</b>	<b>\$ 28,982</b>

Advances from a related Council are non-interest bearing and have no set repayment terms.

7. LONG TERM INVESTMENTS	2025	2024
<u>Investment - interest for distribution as bursaries for ministerial candidates</u>		
Vera Dickey Bequest	\$ 9,948	\$ 9,948
Aitken Memorial Trust	2,500	2,500
Wesley Memorial United Church	1,000	1,000
	<b>13,448</b>	<b>13,448</b>
<u>Investment - interest for distribution as support for special projects</u>		
Guy R. King Bequest	75,331	75,331
Annie V. King Bequest	23,000	23,000
J. Oscar Young Bequest	19,500	19,500
Edward Jost Bequest	8,000	8,000
Edith MacPherson Bequest	5,000	5,000
MacRae-Belliveau Trust	4,070	4,070
William A. Crawford Trust	988	988
Metzler Bequest	411	411
	<b>136,300</b>	<b>136,300</b>

The investments above are investment certificates issued and held in trust by Financial Services, Maritime Conference of The United Church of Canada. They represent long term, in perpetuity trust fund investments bearing interest at 4.5%.

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

**7. LONG TERM INVESTMENTS (continued)**

The investments below are mutual funds and equities held with RBC Wealth Management.

<u>Investments held with RBC Wealth Management</u>			
Marketable securities	<b>1,050,188</b>		991,786
Unrealized gain (loss) on marketable securities	<b>330,106</b>		168,880
	<b>1,380,294</b>		1,160,666
Grand total	<b>\$ 1,530,042</b>	<b>\$</b>	1,310,414

**8. CAPITAL ASSETS**

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	2025 Net book value	2024 Net book value
Furniture and fixtures	\$ 105,505	\$ 29,541	\$ 75,964	\$ 94,955
Leasehold improvements	17,093	2,564	14,529	16,238
	<b>\$ 122,598</b>	<b>\$ 32,105</b>	<b>\$ 90,493</b>	<b>\$ 111,193</b>

**9. INTERFUND TRANSFERS**

During the year, the Board of Directors authorized the transfer of \$231,376 from the Operating Fund to various Internally Restricted Funds to maintain the ongoing operations of these funds.

The Board of Directors did not authorize any transfers to the Externally Restricted Funds during 2025.

**10. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE**

The Council receives a substantial portion of its operating funds under a grant from The United Church of Canada. If this situation should change in the future, management is of the opinion that continued viable operations would be doubtful.

**11. COMPARATIVE FIGURES**

Some of the comparative figures have been reclassified to conform to the current year's presentation.

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Schedule of Internally Restricted Funds**  
**(Schedule 1)**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

	Balance Opening Jan. 1/25	Revenue	Expenses	Deficiency of Revenue over Expenses	Interfund Transfers	Balance Ending Dec. 31/25
Discretionary Funds	\$ 172,715	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 172,715
Mission & Support Reserve Fund	144,318	-	2,500	(2,500)	(15,898)	125,920
Younger Ministry Personnel Retreat Fund	1,032	-	125	(125)	-	907
Youth@Region	2,239	-	-	-	-	2,239
Ministry Resources	6,097	-	-	-	-	6,097
Archives Fund	263,956	-	26,844	(26,844)	65,605	302,717
Sackville Office Maintenance	35,965	-	22,313	(22,313)	23,587	37,239
Property Reserve Fund	79,858	-	6,217	(6,217)	-	73,641
Camping Ministry Reserve Fund	49,127	-	18,000	(18,000)	1,279	32,406
Youth Opportunity Fund	47,978	-	-	-	-	47,978
Facility Innovation Fund	122,540	23,810	101,585	(77,775)	-	44,765
Ministries Initiatives Fund	663,402	-	22,052	(22,052)	129,350	770,700
Supervised Ministry Education Site Fund	65,000	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	60,000
Active/Retired Ministry Personnel Assistance Fund	52,340	-	-	-	-	52,340
Ministry Personnel/Lay Continuing Education Fund	41,092	25	1,774	(1,749)	-	39,343
Ministry Candidate/Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Education Fund	18,779	-	-	-	-	18,779
Community of Faith Assistance Fund	5,854	-	10,000	(10,000)	27,453	23,307
Mission and Social Justice Fund	8,381	-	-	-	-	8,381
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,780,672</b>	<b>\$ 23,835</b>	<b>\$ 216,410</b>	<b>\$ (192,575)</b>	<b>\$ 231,376</b>	<b>\$ 1,819,473</b>

See notes to financial statements

**BERMUDA-NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Schedule of Externally Restricted Funds**  
**(Schedule 2)**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2025**

	Balance Opening Jan. 1/25	Revenue	Expenses	Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses	Interfund Transfers	Balance Ending Dec. 31/25
Bequest Funds	\$ 149,748	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 149,748
Active/Retired Ministry Personnel Assistance Fund	21,999	978	1,000	(22)	-	21,977
Ministry Personnel/Lay Continuing Education Fund	63	63	126	(63)	-	-
Ministry Candidate/Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Education Fund	14,121	788	-	788	13,581	28,490
Community of Faith Assistance Fund	48,253	4,650	-	4,650	-	52,903
Mission and Social Justice Fund	13,221	360	-	360	(13,581)	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 247,404</b>	<b>\$ 6,839</b>	<b>\$ 1,126</b>	<b>\$ 5,713</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$ 253,117</b>

See notes to financial statements

**Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council**

**Funds**

Balances as at December 31, 2025

Following is a list of funds held and operated by Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council, through the Financial Accountability and Investment Committee. To view the funds and their guidelines in full go to the Regional website (<https://ucceast.ca/bns/funding-resources>).

- 01 – Operating Reserve Fund .....\$525,064.13  
Objective: To provide a source of operating funds for years when the Regional expenses exceed the General Council Assessment Grant.
  
- 02 – Mission Support Reserve Fund .....\$125,920.04  
Objective: To provide a source of Mission Support funds for years when the regional mission support expenses/grants exceed The United Church of Canada Mission and Service regional allocation.
  
- 03 – Archives Fund .....\$302,717.59  
Objective: To provide a source of funds for archives maintenance, repairs, equipment and projects.
  
- 04 – Sackville Office Maintenance Fund.....\$37,239.01  
Objective: To provide a reserve fund to assist with the expenses for maintenance, repairs, and upkeep of the Sackville Office, the shared office space for Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council.
  
- 05 – Property Reserve Fund.....\$73,641.08  
Objective: To provide a reserve fund of financial resources to manage real property that becomes the legal responsibility of Regional Council 15, including sale of property and legal protection of such property.
  
- 06 – Active/Retired Ministry Personnel Assistance Fund .....\$74,338.80  
Internally Restricted.....\$52,339.87  
Externally Restricted.....\$21,998.93  
Objective: For active and retired ministry personnel who have emergency situations that are not covered by other funds.
  
- 07 – Ministry Personnel/Lay Continuing Education Fund .....\$39,342.71  
Internally Restricted.....\$39,342.71  
Externally Restricted.....\$0.00  
Objective: To provide a Regional fund that can offer grants to ministry personnel/lay members to undertake learning opportunities that enhance their leadership and education.

08 – Ministry Candidates/Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Education Fund .....	\$55,649.80
Internally Restricted.....	\$27,159.83
Externally Restricted.....	\$28,489.97
Objective: To provide a Regional fund that can offer grants to ministry candidates and Licensed Lay Worship Leaders to undertake learning opportunities that enhance their leadership and education.	
09 – Supervised Ministry Education Site Fund .....	\$60,000.00
Objective: To provide financial support to Communities of Faith who are approved as education sites and who have a student minister employed for up to one-year.	
10 – Community of Faith Assistance Fund.....	\$76,209.40
Internally Restricted.....	\$23,306.67
Externally Restricted.....	\$52,902.73
Objective: To provide a reserve fund to assist Communities of Faith within Regional Council 15 to meet unplanned financial demands on their resources for which there are no other financial resources within The United Church.	
11 – Mission and Social Justice Fund.....	\$0.00
Objective: To support needy (financially struggling) communities of faith with their mission and social justice work.	
Monies from this fund have been transferred to the Ministry Candidates/Licensed Lay Worship Leaders Education Fund.	
12 – Camping Ministry Fund.....	\$32,406.50
Objective: To assist the operation of United Church Camps within Regional Council 15 through the provision of financial support for the maintenance of camp facilities and the development of camping programs for children and families.	
13 – Youth Opportunities Fund .....	\$47,977.89
Objective: To foster spiritual growth and faith development by providing financial assistance to youth and young adults in the Region to enable them to participate in expressions of Christian faith and gatherings of the wider church, primarily, but not limited to, participating in national and international events or ministries.	
14 – Facility Innovation Fund.....	\$44,764.77
Objective: To support Communities of Faith who are seeking to implement innovations in the way they use their physical facilities, who have a plan for moving forward and require some additional financial support.	
15 – New Ministries Initiatives Fund.....	\$770,699.62
Objective: To provide financial support for new innovative approaches to assisting existing communities of faith for the enhancement, expansion and/or growth of existing programs, or in the introduction of new programs and services within the Community of Faith and for committees of Regional Council 15 to support an event or new program which would be of benefit to the entire Region.	

**Incorporated Ministries Reporting**

Name	Constitution/ Bylaws	GC Admin Approval	Liability Insurance	Directors Annual Report	Last Financial Report	Corporation Filing	Charitable Filing	Date of Most Recent Visit	List of Directors
Arthur Kidston Memorial Camp	Revised 2020	December 2, 2020	2026	2025	2025	-	2024	2025	2026
Atlantic Christian Training Centre (Tatamagouche Centre)	Revised 2021	March 16, 2022	2024	2023	2023	2022	-	2025	2026
Brunswick Street Mission	Revised 2021	June 15, 2021	2023	2020	2023	-	2023	2025	2024
Church Extension Board - Halifax	Revised 2021	June 11, 2021	2026	2025	2025	2023	-	2025	2026
North Dartmouth Outreach Resource Centre	1996		2026	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025
Pine Hill Divinity Hall (AST)	Revised 1986		2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025
Sherbrooke Lake United Church Camp	Revised 2019	October 30, 2019	2025	2025	2025	2025	2024	2025	2025
St. Paul's Family Resources Institute	April, 2021	September 26, 2021	2022	2023	2023	-	2023	2025	2024
United Church Camp Meeting Association (Berwick Camp)	1885 (By-Laws Revised 2021)	March 16, 2022	2026	2025	2024	-	2023	2025	2025

**List of Incorporated Ministries Directory**

<b>Arthur Kidston Memorial Camp</b>	
Pam Carter	Susan Cochrane
Lisa Clements-Titcombe	Jessie Daigle
Matt Collins	Paige Lane
Carol McKnight	Cassandra Baccardax
<b>Atlantic Christian Training Centre (Tatamagouche Centre)</b>	
Natalie Abdou	Naima Chowdhury
David Fletcher	Rena Kulczycki
<b>Brunswick Street Mission</b>	
Liz Townsend	Ian Parker
Josh Bates	Jim Sharpe

Ann Burleigh	Heather Williams
David Griffiths	Sundari Pashupathinathan
William Chambre	Richard Gunn
Margaret Casey	Sundeep Chopra
Chance Diplock	Heather Fitzpatrick
Elizabeth Welcher	
<b>Church Extension Board - Halifax</b>	
Murdock Morrison	Don Stonehouse
Don Munro	Raymond Watts
Ron Cochrane	Diane Dalton
Helen Dixon	Roland Murray
<b>North Dartmouth Outreach Resource Centre</b>	
Sam Schwartz	Betty MacNeil
Betty Kemp	Wanda Baker-Hayward
Brigit Hurst	Sylvia Anthony
Helen Carpenter	Lynn Orton
Sandra Jamieson	Tom Clarke
Mark Hazen	David Kaiser
Lynn Loder	Peter Comeau
<b>Pine Hill Divinity Hall</b>	
Ross Bartlett	Ross MacIntosh
Bob Carter	Malcolm MacLeod
Louisa Duck	Keith MacPherson
Heather Donnelly	Faith March-MacCuish
Rob Fennell	Brenda Munro
Heather Ferrier	Jim Musgrave, K.C.
April Hart	Donald Sellsted
Steven Harding	Kim Waite
Kate Jones	Dan Wellwood
Kevin Little	Linda Yates
<b>Sherbrooke Lake United Church Camp</b>	
Alex Bawn	Ondra MacLean
Hannah Bawn	Faith March-MacCuish
Denise L. Beaulieu	Kelly D. Moores
Ross S. Blakeney	Leslie V. Moores
Morgan M.M. Book	Susan Parks

Hazel L. Burch	Dawn Pelley
Austin Clem	Jenni Power
Sandra L. Creaser	Aaron Scott
Laura Crouse	Catherine Stuart
Keltie Fournier	Ron Walker
Kirk Johnson	Krista Anderson
Jack Logan	
<b>St. Paul's Family Resource Institute</b>	
Donna G. Martin	Mike Lavoie
Ronald E. Buckley	Bernadette Maillet
Max Martin	Anne Gilhen
Ian Reid	Bruce Holland
Elaine Amirault	DeAnn Mitchell
June Bates	David Maskell
<b>United Church Camp (Berwick)</b>	
Krista Rietzel	Julia Cottingham
Bethany Gjesdal	Leslie Reid
Paul Dillman	Ted Tupper
Peter Johnston	Kim Young-Ward
Wendy Levo	Anne Montgomery
Anne Levo-Harrop	Nancy Creighton
Janet Sollows	Faith March-MacCuish
Christine Crooks	Karin Picard
Shawn Redden	Ken Moors

### **DIVISION OF REGIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT**

The mandate of this division is to provide oversight, leadership and guidance to Communities of Faith within the Region.

The membership of the division committee is:

Chair, Donnie Morrison

Secretary, Mike Henderson

Communications Chair, Vacant

Faith Formation and Leadership Development Chair, Michael Thompson

Justice, Mission and Outreach Chair, Sandra Tomsons (*resigned Feb. 24, 2026*)

Stewardship Chair, Wanalda Parsons

Children, Youth and Young Adult Chair, Paige Fraser

Regional Council Annual Meeting Planning Chair, Jane McDonald

Affirm Chair, Vacant

The Executive Minister, Faith March-MacCuish is our Staff Support.

Since we reported to the last Bermuda-Nova Scotia Annual Meeting, the Division has met by teleconference on May 21 & Nov. 19, 2025 and on Mar. 3, 2026. A teleconference meeting is planned for May 6, 2026.

During the past year, Sandra Tomsons stepped down as Chair of Justice, Mission and Outreach. Shelley Pick stepped down as Chair of the Affirm Committee and was replaced by Julien Davis on Oct. 30, 2025 who unfortunately had to resign in January 2026. We thank them all for their participation in the work of the Division.

Executive Minister Faith March-MacCuish continues to be the Staff Support for the Division. Faith is also Staff Support for the Communications, Annual Meeting Planning and Affirming Committees. We are grateful for Faith's guidance and leadership.

We are also continue to be thankful for the dedication of the Support Staff who work with other Division committees: David Hewitt (FFLD & AMC), Catherine Stuart (CYaYA), Sherpherd Munikwa (JMO). Roger Janes retired during the year and Sharon Ballantyne has assumed the position of Growth and Stewardship Animator.

The Division Committee Secretary, Mike Henderson, has provided the Division with his valuable input and thorough minutes since its inception. We are very grateful.

The Division Committee is also grateful to the many individuals who share their gifts and passion with the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council through the Division committees.

The **Communications Committee** has no chair and the committee is not functioning.

The Executive Minister continues to work on finding a new vision for the Communications Committee.

The **Affirm Committee** has no chair presently.

The committee meets monthly on the first Wednesday. They met on Oct. 1 & Dec. 3, 2025 and on Jan. 7, Feb. 4, Mar. 4 & Apr. 1, 2026. Upcoming meetings are May 6, June 3 and July 1, 2026.

Committee members are Ian Harrison, Mary Jolynn Harrison, Michael Henderson, Katie Logan (Secretary), Shannon MacLean, and Max Martin.

A webinar was presented on March 25 by Ian Harrison called "Invisible Illnesses Awareness, My Journey with Crohn's".

Another possible webinar is "How to be more Equitable in our Faith Communities". Further discussions on other webinars are to come with hopes to coordinate with neighbouring regions.

The Affirm Committee is continuing its equity support work and continues to be a supportive and constructive presence at regional meetings and when opportunities arise.

The Affirm Facebook page attempts to keep up to date with relevant events and resources for BNS Affirming people/communities. The committee makes an effort to share any affirm-related events happening in affirming churches in the region.

Submitted by Donnie Morrison, former Chair, and Anne Cameron, Chair Division of Regional Services and Support

*Reports from Committees Follow:*

### **Faith Formation and Leadership Development**

*Report for Faith Formation and Leadership Development Committee for inclusion in Division Report for the BNS Annual Meeting*

This past year the committee, following the previous AGM, has been blessed with the introduction of 4 new members: Samuel Graham, Michelle Green, Thea Koenig Burton, and Darlene Brewer; it is great to have this infusion of new blood to invigorate the committee's activities.

As of the AGM this year long time member Susan Reid will be resigning from the committee and Michael Thompson will be resigning from his role of Chair. The committee has not yet confirmed the replacements for the Chair and Secretary but will do so prior to the AGM. Finally long-time chair of the Division of Regional Services & Support, Donnie Morrison, has moved on to his role as President Elect for the Region and been replaced by Anne Cameron as the new chair of the Division of Regional Services & Support. We wish Donnie the best in his new role, he will be missed by the committee and we welcome Anne and look forward to her input and support in the future.

This past fall the Committee sponsored a successful webinar series where the Atlantic participants in the past Moderator's (Re)generate program presented on their experiences and their keystone projects. The presenters for this series were Rev. Penny Nelson, Rev. Rick Gunn, Rev. Katie Aven, and Rev. Michelle Johnson-Armstrong. This two-webinar series was well received and attended.

This Spring we sponsored a webinar on the statistical analysis of church neighbourhoods that are available through Rev. Sharon Ballantyne, the Growth Animator for Atlantic Canada, who along with Sharon Buttrey the Geographic Information Systems Strategist for the United Church General Counsel led this presentation. This webinar was well attended and received.

Blessings

Michael A. Thompson (He/Him)

Chair of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council Faith Formation and Leadership Development Committee – <https://ucceast.ca/regional-council-15/region-15-faith-formation-and-leadership-development>

### **Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee**

#### **Part 1 JMOC Activities**

JMOC continues to operate as a bi-regional committee consisting of the chair or representative from each working group, members at large who may or may not also belong to a working group, and a co-chair from each region. The current active working groups are Just Peace, Guaranteed Liveable Income, and Eco-Justice. The Mental Health working group is being re-developed. Refugees and Newcomers is an inactive group, in need of regional leadership. Indigenous Rights and Relations does not have a current working group, but JMOC as a whole has committed to

doing this work as we are able. JMOC met five times over the year, including an in-person meeting at the combined 2025 annual meeting in Sackville.

JMOC met at Tatamagouche Centre October 23-24, 2025 for the annual Fall Gathering. The theme for the meeting was Clusters: Deep, Bold, Daring? Our guests for the meeting were Robyn Brown-Hewitt and Jordan MacDonald.

Robyn Brown-Hewitt was our guest speaker for our theme conversation on clusters. Robyn's position in BNS was created to support the establishment of the clusters that had been envisioned during restructuring. She described the main needs filled by clusters and what elements she identified as important for the success of a cluster. JMOC hopes to use clusters to connect the work of JMOC with communities of faith. It appeared that few clusters in BNS were ready to invite JMOC or any other outside speakers. There was a JMOC-themed PEI Cluster gathering planned for the next week. JMOC agreed that clusters are important for the health of communities of faith and the need for staff support for clusters would be communicated to the regional executives.

Jordan MacDonald participated in the Pilgrimage of Learning Initiative of the United Church of Canada (<https://united-church.ca/news/pilgrimage-learning-initiative-launches-global-engagement-2025>). Jordan was invited to share a presentation on his team's visit to UCC partners in Kenya. His reflections included how we relate to international partners as equals, youth engagement and empowerment, and global perspectives on climate change and adaptation.

At the Fall Gathering, JMOC also asked "How can JMOC support the strong youth network in their justice work?" Catherine Stuart met with JMOC in February to discuss this, as well as to help JMOC with the task of addressing the loss of the Dalhousie campus ministry. There was strong endorsement from JMOC for the wider church embracing Youth and Young Adult Ministry as a priority, framing the need to address the lack of campus ministry in the context of "Toward 2035." There was agreement that the issue of campus ministry should be under Youth and Young Adult Ministry. JMOC will bring forward a proposal for each region asking that Youth and Young Adult Ministry be assigned a high priority in our regions, including creating a task group to explore options for animating this priority, and (for BNS) that JMOC not be given responsibility for handling concerns related to loss of the Dal Chaplaincy.

## Part 2 Working Group Activities

Guaranteed Livable Income, Eco-Justice, and Just Peace in Israel and Palestine have regular meetings throughout the year. The following summaries of their activities show their commitment to justice and how they provide communities of faith opportunities to make visible the members' passion for justice.

### **Guaranteed Livable Income**

The Atlantic provinces' four GLI groups belong to a nation-wide UCC network of provincial groups which have advocated for GLI for many years. Together they encourage all communities of faith to join the GLI movement.

**Eco-Justice**

Eco-Justice continues to live into its goals to educate and advocate. It continues collaboration with other climate and environmental justice groups and has undertaken identifying a Green Enthusiast from each community of faith. See Appendix A for a report from the working group.

**Just Peace in Israel and Palestine**

The Just Peace working group continues to shine light on the tragedy unfolding in Gaza and the occupied territories. Facilitators are providing the Palestine Land exercise to communities of faith. Members of the working group continue their advocacy activities. Their Proposal: “Pledging to Become an Apartheid-Free Community” will be presented at the annual meeting. See Appendix B for a report from the working group.

**Mental Health**

JMOC agreed to pause the Mental Health Working Group until the group’s mandate has been established. During the pause there will be no workshops or meetings. JMOC is in the early stages of redeveloping this working group.

**Indigenous Rights and Relations**

JMOC has not yet re-established this working group, but a small group of JMOC members are responding to the request from BNS region for a webinar on Land Acknowledgements. JMOC was very sorry to learn that Tatamagouche Centre is closing its doors and will continue to monitor the progress towards repatriation of the property.

I would like to recognize and thank retiring FSLDW JMOC members Barbara Cairns and Keith MacPherson and BNS co-chair Sandra Tomsons for their many years of passionate service to social justice and the work of JMOC. I would also like to thank our regional minister for JMOC, Rev. Shepherd Munikwa, for his support and guidance.

Respectfully submitted:

Kathy Bigsby

Co-chair of JMOC, Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters

**APPENDICES****Appendix A****Eco-Justice Working Group**

*In the face of climate change, come paddle with us*

Our group is made up of 7 members and 1 regional representative. We have had 2 members step down for personal reasons. We will be actively searching for and recruiting new members during the two AGMs in May and June. Our members are in NS, NB, PEI and Nfld.



We met on Zoom almost every month and had interesting conversations while working towards our objectives. We use UCC foundational policies and documents to guide our direction, particularly “One Earth Community” and its application, as in “Energy in the One Earth Community.”

Summary of this year’s activities:

- assisted Faithful Footprints Program coordinator in spreading the word about their Road Show and inviting other churches to come learn more
- continued to add to our list of Green Enthusiasts from congregations in Nova Scotia, PEI and New Brunswick; in March, eleven new Green Enthusiasts signed up; we can do more together!
- created a working document in Nov. stating our group’s Goals, Objectives and Activities; created our Group’s full “Terms of Reference” in April
- continued improving content on the Ecological Justice page of the UCC East website
- continued posting climate information in weekly UCC East E-newsletter
- continued working on a series of ‘Minutes for Creation’ for churches to use in their announcements
- connected and worked with ecological organizations: Clean Nova Scotia, Faithful Footprints, Seniors for Climate Action Now, Green Nova Scotia First, Sustainable Northern Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Climate Change Task Force, KAIROS, CRED-NB, Ecology Action Centre, East Coast Environmental Law, MiningWatch Canada and UCC members from organizations in other UCC Regions with related issues.
- read, discussed and forwarded Information on radioactive facilities planned within Ottawa River watershed and the St. Lawrence River, potentially affecting the Gaspé
- signed the petition against Bill 5 in Ontario, which is to remove protections such as Indigenous, species at risk, and environmental rights from zones slated for resource extraction, particularly to permit mining
- signed on to a letter about “Building Canada with Renewable Electricity”
- signed in August the Open Letter by faith organizations in support of El Salvador’s Ban on Metals Mining
- signed on to letter to Prime Minister and Ministers re: Civil Society Groups Support Renewable Energy and Oppose Federal Investment in New Nuclear Reactors
- signed on to letter from faith leaders urging Canada’s banks NOT to finance new LNG pipelines on Indigenous territories
- signed on to a letter about “Building Canada with Renewable Electricity”
- as an organization, signed a Petition on 2SLGBTQIA+ rights in Canada in July
- in July, signed a Petition to the federal government on the management of nuclear waste, multi-billion-dollar contracts and against involvement of U.S. firms with connections to U.S. nuclear weapons

Some members participate in webinars or events and report to our Group:

- Canadian Food Grains Bank Webinar on June 19 World Refugee Day to learn more about ending global hunger
- KAIROS Book Study on “Serviceberry, Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World” (2024) by Robin Wall Kimmerer

- “In Peace and Friendship” webinar about the repatriation of the Tatamagouche property, led by Women of First Light.
- Parade for Life on Earth in Halifax, June 7
- NB Social Forum 2025 in Fredericton in Oct to inform and reflect on ways to strengthen social movements
- “Shoulder to Shoulder: We Are All Treaty People” event in Halifax in Nov.; a very worthwhile experience continuing in rallies together on important issues
- Seniors for Climate Action Now event “Later is too late!” at St. Andrews Church in Halifax in September, with an information table; one member was a speaker on “Climate Solutions – Don’t be Misled”
- Peoples Parade for Life on Earth in Halifax in April

Our Group’s participated in public awareness through CBC programs on the proposed Strange Lake Rare Earth Elements Mine which would impact areas of Quebec and Labrador:

- 2 members provided information to CBC in Labrador on potential impacts of this mine and were interviewed on CBC Morning Labrador
- 1 member provided information on the Impact Assessment process of the IAAC for the proposed Strange Lake Rare Earth Elements Mine to CBC researcher for the Fifth Estate program on that project.

We are monitoring draft policy proposals and government studies at federal and Atlantic provincial levels for other opportunities for our Ecological Justice Working Group to have input.

Our goal is to support improvements in:

- phasing out power sources that are GHG emitters or radioactive waste producers
- energy efficiency and appropriate modern renewable energy and storage (including church buildings - Faithful Footprints program)
- the equitable distribution of electricity with a priority for the poor
- plans and decisions concerning energy and climate-related policies
- environmental protection policies for land, freshwater and marine environments
- impact assessments and regulations of projects for greater social and environmental protection – including related to nuclear power, resource extraction, and mega projects
- consultation with the Indigenous peoples of Canada (UNDRIP)
- treatment of people negatively affected by projects and changes in policies for a just transition
- environmental justice and addressing the harm caused by environmental racism
- countering climate misinformation, greenwashing, and other deceptions
- regulation and accountability of mining for uranium, thorium, rare earth metals and other metals
- controls of nuclear energy projects because of the legacy chain of toxic radioactive wastes from uranium mining, milling, fuel fabrication, nuclear reactors, and used nuclear fuel storage.

We watch for proposed legislation, project impact assessments and other opportunities for advocacy, comments or submissions on ecological justice issues including:

- resource extraction projects
- development projects affecting protected spaces
- power-related projects: social and environmental problems of large scale, potential of small-scale
  - hydroelectric

- wind energy - onshore and offshore, focus on safety issues
- solar energy - individual, community, decentralized
- grid systems - bi-directional, web format to accommodate small energy producers.
- energy storage - batteries; innovation in storage systems
- hydrogen industrial projects - inefficient with limited application
- nuclear power/waste - costs and risks: economic, health, environmental, social and future generations
- oil production, natural gas fracking and new fossil fuel power plants

Our focus is on issues related to UCC Regions East and, if our group has the expertise, we try to help other UCC Regions.

Some Documents by our Group during this annual report period:

#### March/April 2025

Letter to the NS Premier on the dangers of Fracking including the UCC Maritime Conference statement (2012).

Written submission and in-person presentation to the Nova Scotia Legislation Public Bills Committee to remove articles in Bill 6 on restarting Fracking and remove articles in Bill 6 on eliminating the ban on uranium mining.

Letter of Concern on the Churchill Falls and Gull Island Proposed Projects to NL Premier, pointing out the significant adverse impacts on people and ecosystems, the legacy of debt and the lessons that should have been learned from the grave errors of the Muskrat Falls dam.

#### May

Joint Submission to IAAC by UCC East-West Regions on proposed Peace River Nuclear Power project AB, raising ethical, social and environmental issues associated with this project.

#### August

Submission to Employment and Social Development Canada raising concerns that the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and ESDC proposed changes did not address effective protection but in fact would worsen the systematic exploitation faced by temporary foreign workers.

Submission to IAAC on unacceptability of proposed gas power generation facility at Centre Village NB

Submission to Canadian Standards Association on inadequacies in CSA N292.8 “Characterization of radioactive waste and irradiated fuel.”

#### September

Submission to the Public Bills Committee, NS legislature, regarding Bill 137 “Making Business Easier Act” which emphasizes the need for amendments to ensure economic development is tied to responsible resource development projects that bring economic prosperity to NS without threatening the environment and quality of life.

October

Submission to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission on the proposed Wheeler River Mine and Mill, SK, the first proposed in-situ leaching uranium mine in Canada, on the failure of the proponent to address groundwater, watershed, environmental, health, and social impacts known from other countries.

Provided the material for the SK-based retired UCC minister, Rev. Vicki Obedkoff to report to the Wheeler River Project Panel Hearing in person on the documented harmful impacts of in-situ uranium mining in the US.

January 2026

Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources on the ethical, financial, and record of failure of the Management of Canadian Nuclear Laboratories by U.S. companies with ties to military nuclear applications.

February

Submission to IAAC on the Proposed Deep Geological Repository for Canada's Used Nuclear Fuel critiquing the project description including bringing forward the relevant conclusions of UCC multi-year work on this issue through the Seaborn Panel and the 3 years of UCC inputs to the NWMO process of Choosing A Way Forward.

Comments of concerns to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission on the Environmental Effects Review related to the application by Canadian Nuclear Laboratories to proceed with decommissioning of the Gentilly-1 Waste Facility

Submission to IAAC on the proposed Wesleyville Nuclear Project in Port Hope ON calling into question the ethics, indicating the weakness of information and the serious risks of having up to 10 large nuclear power plants on this one site.

Submitted by Sheila Van Schaick, and the Eco-Justice Group  
For the period from March 2025 to April 2026

**Appendix B**Just Peace Working Group Annual Report  
to JMOC and Regional Councils

- I. Brief summary of the situation during this past year
  1. Last year in Gaza at this time there was constant bombing by Israel's military as well as IDF ground invasions resulting in deaths of many tens of thousands of Palestinians, including tens of thousands of children, and hundreds of thousands injured. There was total destruction of every type of building and infrastructure and large areas of former cities and towns were left as rubble. Gaza itself was clearly becoming uninhabitable. Very little food, medicine or humanitarian aid was allowed into Gaza. Young children and elderly Palestinians were dying of hunger and diseases and a famine was officially declared. And

- while the world's attention was on Gaza, violence, death and destruction by both Israel's military and Israeli settlers against Palestinians increased significantly in the West Bank.
2. During the summer and early fall the United Church General Council 45 met in Calgary and held its final meetings online. A revised version of the Justice Principles to be used as the basis for all justice work of the United Church were approved as well as all proposals relevant to Palestine/Israel that had not previously been voted on. The UCC formally endorsed the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism and not the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish). The UCC is using educational resources to increase the understanding of United Church people of the background of Israel's military occupation of Palestinians and called for urgent action on the ongoing genocide and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.
  3. After two years of intensive investigation, September 16, 2025, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory reported that Israel met the definition of the crime of genocide and urged Israel and all States to fulfill their legal obligations under international law to end the genocide and punish those responsible for it.
  4. In mid-October, a ceasefire was declared between Israel and Hamas. Israel did not abide by the ceasefire agreement and continued the genocide in Gaza. Since that ceasefire, as of mid-April 2026, over 700 Palestinians have been killed by Israel in Gaza.
  5. Trump created a Board of Peace which many countries signed onto with a plan to build many expensive high-rise buildings along the waterfront and to move Palestinians who remain in Gaza into small, well-guarded and monitored enclaves.
  6. Late November, Palestinian church leaders and other UCC partners wrote Kairos II: Faith in a time of genocide and their Christmas appeal to Christians, churches, and people of conscience everywhere. Here is some of what they wrote: They are on the verge of total annihilation of Christians in the land of Jesus where our Christian faith began. They are being destroyed by a destructive system and the world's silence. It is an urgent call that demands costly solidarity until there is justice and equality. Faith demands truth-telling about what international law and human rights organizations have confirmed: genocide, settler colonialism, apartheid and illegal occupation. Courageous action is needed for churches and governments to hold Israel accountable under international law. Theologies that justify oppression must be rejected. Use Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions and other nonviolent actions.
  7. When Israel and the U.S. began a bombing war against Iran in February, Israel closed all exits and entrances to Gaza which meant no food or other aid could enter and there is the renewed possibility of famine.
- II. Actions of the Just Peace Working Group since last year's annual report
1. **Speaking:** Returned Ecumenical Accompaniers Bill Chambre and Steve Berube continue to speak to churches and community groups educating them on the background of relations between Israel and Palestinians and what has been and is happening 'on the ground' there now. Steve also led a group of church people on a visit to church partners in the West Bank

and Jerusalem through Canadian Friends of Sabeel. Linda Scherzinger spoke on a panel at New Horizons Baptist Church in Halifax.

2. **The Palestine Land Exercise:** We have teams that continue to lead the Palestine Land Exercise (PLE) with churches and community groups throughout Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI. As a result of our having done a training of teams in Toronto in 2024, many Palestine Land Exercises are being led by new teams throughout Canada. In March our Halifax team introduced the PLE to an online meeting of Friends of Sabeel North America and, as a result, there may be teams beginning to lead the PLE in the U.S.
3. **Supporting Palestinian farmers:** We continue to support Palestinian farmers and their families and communities by promoting and selling Zatoun Fair Trade Palestinian olive oil – and also Palestinian dates.
4. **Fund Raising and solidarity** with local neighbours from Gaza: We have responded to local neighbours whose families are in desperate need in Gaza by organizing a series of fundraisers with churches and donating funds raised to his family and their neighbours in Gaza. We also sold handiwork of, stood in solidarity with, and wrote letters on behalf of another neighbour who has applied to bring her family to Canada through the family reunification program. Unfortunately, she has still not been able to reunite with and bring her family from Gaza to Canada.
5. **Advocating:** We have been writing letters and signing petitions for Canada to take various action such as: establish a complete arms embargo to/from Israel including ending the U.S. loophole allowing arms/weapon parts to go to the U.S. and then they go to Israel; speaking up for a ceasefire and release of all captives/prisoners before those happened; to speak up against a new settlement being built near Beit Sahour in the Bethlehem area; speak up to release the doctor who was kidnapped from Gaza and mistreated (still not released); to use the names of the international crimes Israel is guilty of – genocide, apartheid, illegal occupation, settler colonialism; to exercise Canada’s legal and moral duty to use all its abilities to urge Israel to comply with international law; to ban trade with companies in the settlements; to disallow Israel’s players in the Davis Cup and FIFA; and to take a position against the death penalty law that was just passed by Israel that effects Palestinians and not Israelis. (Unfortunately, the Canadian government did not respond positively to almost all of our requests.)
6. **Promoting and participating** in the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement
7. **Promoting:** the growing Apartheid-Free Communities movement
8. **Organizing and participating in a book club on:** “The Cross and the Olive Tree”
9. **Proposing** that the Bermuda Nova Scotia Region and the Fundy St Lawrence Dawning Waters Region Sign the Pledge to become Apartheid-Free Communities (to be voted on at the 2026 Annual Meetings)

### **Stewardship Report**

1. Continue to use Weekly Wednesday Region Newsletter to put Stewardship News in, at least, monthly.
2. Received 23 email responses to the Region Stewardship Committee request sent out by the Sackville Office to the local Regional Representatives.

3. Electronic Easter cards sent to Community of Faith (COF) that responded to general email from Sackville Office.
4. One COF Stewardship Committee is gathering recipes to do a cookbook, using some of my well loved recipes to their project.
5. Visitation planned to Cape Breton to talk with COF Stewardship Committee in May.
6. Attending AST Convocation 2026 to receive my Certificate in Stewardship.
7. Display space requested at Regional Council Annual Meeting, poster presentation on Stewardship.
8. Small posters on Stewardship to be available for each delegate table.
9. Many thanks to Margaret Dobson, our one committee member, for her great support.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chair, Wanalda Parsons

### **Children, Youth and Young Adult Committee (CYAYA)**

Committee Members: Chair Paige Fraser, Secretary, James O'Connell, Alicia Cox, Ema MacLeod, Elliot Chambers, and Regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults Rev. Catherine Stuart (staff support).

In 2025, the Children, Youth and Young Adults Committee (CYAYA) has continued to support and advocate for ministry with children, youth, and young adults across the region. Our work remains grounded in the region's strategic priorities, with a growing emphasis on leadership development, accessibility, and strengthening connections between communities of faith.

A significant focus this year has been the ongoing development and support of the Youth @ Region (Y@R) program. While registration and leadership engagement remain strong, financial accessibility has emerged as a challenge. The committee has engaged in meaningful conversations with regional partners around funding structures, sponsorship models, and policy limitations, while continuing to support the planning team and explore sustainable ways to ensure broad participation for youth across the region.

Looking ahead to summer 2026, CYAYA is actively supporting participation in the national Collective gathering. The committee has allocated funds to help subsidize youth participation and is working alongside regional partners to coordinate transportation, including a bus pilgrimage. This initiative continues our commitment to ensuring that youth and young adults in our region can access national United Church events, fostering connection, leadership development, and a sense of belonging within the wider church.

Leadership development has also been a key priority through our exploration of a Regional Youth Advisory Council (YAC). Building on learnings from other regions, CYAYA has begun discerning a model that would empower youth to participate meaningfully in governance and decision-making. This work includes ongoing conversations, research, and planning for a potential pilot.

The committee has also been engaged in broader conversations about “First Third” ministry and the place of children, youth, and young adults within the life of the church. This includes contributing to emerging proposals and identifying opportunities to strengthen advocacy and visibility for this demographic at the regional level. CYAYA continues to support camping ministry through Outdoor Recreational Ministry (ORM), including United Church camps Sherbrooke Lake Camp, Berwick Camp and Camp Kidston, which we have also supported financially. We celebrate the ongoing leadership, collaboration, and program development within these ministries, recognizing the vital role camps play in faith formation across all age groups.

In addition, the committee is attentive to emerging needs, including the possibility of offering training opportunities such as a neurodiversity workshop to better equip leaders working with young people in faith communities.

Other areas of engagement this year include initial conversations around chaplaincy and campus ministry in partnership with other regional committees, as well as recognizing the growing importance of digital communication. CYAYA is exploring opportunities to support churches in strengthening their social media presence as a tool for outreach and connection.

As we look ahead, CYAYA remains committed to fostering vibrant, inclusive, and accessible ministry with children, youth, and young adults. We are grateful for the dedication of leaders, volunteers, and communities of faith across the region who continue to nurture spaces where young people can grow in faith, leadership, and belonging.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,  
Paige Fraser (Chair)

### **Annual Meeting Planning Committee**

Every year the Annual Meeting Planning Committee ramps up in the fall to begin deliberations on what our Annual Meeting will look like the following year. We were happy to plan each year for an awesome experience for our members. Our meeting place for 2025 was at the Mount Allison University in Sackville, NB. As we were in the year of the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada we choose to celebrate with Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters (FSLDW). It was great to spend time with old friends.

This would be our third-year meeting in person since COVID. We strive to have this meeting in various locations in our Region to attempt to facilitate equitable travelling arrangements for the members of our Regional Council. Because of the coming together of the two regions, we felt it appropriate to celebrate in the location where we historically have used. Somewhat central to both regions.

The whole weekend was reminiscent of when we were all as Maritime Conference. Familiar spaces, dining hall, meeting areas etc.

The program was focused on Janet Gear’s book *Undivided Love*. Throughout the weekend we heard from different people what brings them to the faithful community to which we belong.

Hearing those stories was extremely thought provoking and gave us an understanding of where people come from and what drives them in their faith journey. It helps us to have greater respect for the passions that drive each of us to this important work within our faith communities and region. The best piece of this was our fortune in hearing from our very own participants on their journeys. It made the message more profound.

Aside from the message that Janet helped to portray to us the time we were able to share with our friends in FSLDW, enjoy meals and opportunities for sharing stories and of course replenishing our spiritual reading material with browsing and the ever-present Bookstore pop-up. We did not have workshops available for participants. This was a focus on the Anniversary of the United Church and living into the message and teachings delivered through our Theme speaker. This was an opportunity to be together to experience spirit lifting and this opportunity to learn together gave us that sense of belonging to something larger than ourselves.

As the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, we strive to bring you a thought provoking, spiritual filled time of sharing and learning each year as to strive to improve upon the last. As with our new format of holding the business online prior to the coming together allows us to do that.

We continue to work on making our Annual Meeting enjoyable, faith filled, informative and transforming.

Respectfully Submitted  
Jane McDonald  
Chair Annual Meeting Planning Committee.

### **DIVISION OF MINISTRY RESOURCES**

The Division of Ministry Resources provides leadership, oversight and guidance to the activities of the committees that support human and ministry resources within this Region of The United Church of Canada. There are five committees within this Division: Faith Story and Community Covenant; Future Directions; Licensing; Pastoral Relations; and Retiree Support. The members of this Division include:

Janet Sollows, Chair  
Alicia Cox, Secretary  
Joan Griffin, Chair of Licensing  
Sean Boulger, Chair of Pastoral Relations  
Ruth Gamble, Chair of Retiree Support

Staff support is provided by David Hewitt and Faith March-MacCuish and the President of the Region is an ex-officio member of the Division. This year we have been without chairs for the Future Directions and the Faith Story and Community Covenant Committee. The Division has assumed the work of these committees.

The Division of Ministry Resources met on June 5, September 11, October 22, November 13, November 27, February 26, March 18 and May 7. Committee chairs reported to the Division and

motions needing Executive approval were passed along to the Executive through the chair of the Division. At each meeting, our financial statement was reviewed. We also discussed on a regular basis the governance structure review and the General Council's initiative Toward 2035.

This year we dealt with things that would normally come before the Faith Story and Community Covenant Committee as well as the Future Directions Committee. These committees have not been functioning due to the lack of a chair. We did consult with members of these committees to keep them informed of situations and decisions.

The **Faith Story and Community Covenant Committee** developed an Annual Report Review process that was approved by the Executive in the fall. It was decided in the spring that we would hold off on implementing this process until the report of the governance structure was received and we knew where the responsibility of reviewing annual reports would rest.

The **Future Directions Committee** work that we accomplished this year had to do with amalgamations, pastoral charge name changes, disbandings, decommissionings, collaborative ministries and reviews of congregations. Thank you to our Regional Minister, David Hewitt who has coordinated the discussions and has done a lot of the work on these matters.

Here are the reports from the other three committees within the Division of Ministry Resources:

#### **Pastoral Relations Committee Report**

Throughout the past year, your Pastoral Relations (PR) held 10 regular monthly meetings. Committee members are: Rev. Karen MacNeill, Rev. Emily Duggan, Sheila Stewart, Jennifer Robarts, Janet Sollows (ex officio, chair of Division of Ministry Resources, David Hewitt (Regional Minister) and chair Sean Boulger. Members are geographically representative of our Region.

After each regular meeting, the Regional Minister posts to the Region newsletter relevant information relating to Pastoral Relations.

The Committee was busy throughout 2025 with a number of amalgamations of Faith Communities throughout the Region. Such events inevitably produce strong emotions and our Regional Minister and Pastoral Relations has worked extensively to mitigate some of the stressors created by such events. There will no doubt be more issues of this nature in the very near future as we all grapple with the realities presented in Toward 2035.

Throughout 2025, your Pastoral Relations committee began a couple of proactive initiatives intended to promote and assist Communities of Faith in the Region.

First, PR has decided to begin offering funding or grants for ministry personnel wishing to pursue training in the Intentional Interim Ministry Program (IIM). Those wishing to know more should contact the Regional Minister.

Also, in 2025 your PR Committee decided to pay the costs associated with one core module within the United Fresh Start Program. Faith Communities in a new Call or appointment are eligible and

are being encouraged by PR to complete the module within the first few months of the Call or appointment.

Of particular concern this past year has been the number of ministry personnel being forced by circumstances beyond their control to take extended medical leave. Naturally, this is deeply concerning for Pastoral Relations and indeed, the entire Region. Congregations are encouraged to continue in their efforts to support the health and spiritual growth of their ministry personnel.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sean Boulger, Chair  
BNS Pastoral Relations Committee

### **Licensing Committee Report**

The Licensing Committee of Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council met five times since the last Annual Meeting of the Regional Council. Two of these meetings (June 2025 and November 2025) were held in-person at which time the committee conducted interviews with Licensed Lay Worship Leaders seeking to have their licenses renewed. The other meetings were held on-line which continues to be an effective way for the committee to continue its work and deal with emerging issues and requests.

Throughout the year the committee responded to requests for information regarding the process to be licensed as a Licensed Lay Worship Leader and offered guidance and support to meet the requirements for this program. Interviews were conducted which resulted in re-licensing of Tim Aggett, Lisa Clarke, Sara Mattinson, Barbara Bent, Jane Keller, Donald Morrison and Arthur Smith as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders for a three-year period. There are currently 13 Licensed Lay Worship Leaders in the Region. The Licensing Committee also responded to a request from a Pastoral Charge for a student appointment to be licensed to preside for Sacraments. Six individuals who are in student appointments are currently licensed for Sacraments and/or Marriages.

The Licensing Committee co-sponsored the Annual Gathering of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders in partnership with Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council which was held at Tatamagouche Centre in November 2025. Discussions are ongoing regarding whether or not to continue working together as Regions for this event, and if so, how this might be done effectively. Members of the committee met with Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council L.L.W.L.s who attended the Annual Gathering for a time of meaningful conversation and consultation. As a result, the committee decided to be more pro-active in making L.L.W.L.s aware of opportunities for Continuing Education.

Some of the efforts of the committee this past year included creating templates as working documents to be used for interviews (for licensing and re-licensing of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders and for requests for licensing for Sacraments and Marriages) so that the process is standardized. The committee established a "Policy and Procedures" page to keep track of prior and new decisions of the committee and the processes used in fulfilling its mandate.

Plans are being made for the committee to host a workshop/information session at a future Regional Council Annual Meeting focused on the ministry of Licensed Lay Worship Leaders, the

process for being licensed, and the policy of the Region which guides this ministry. The committee has also been in discussion regarding how we might recognize those who are Licensed Lay Worship Leaders in our Region and what might be an appropriate symbol individuals could wear to represent this ministry with the hope of instituting such in 2027.

The Licensing Committee reminds faith communities that lay persons are required to be licensed as Licensed Lay Worship Leaders in order to offer worship leadership beyond their home pastoral charge. The committee welcomes inquiries about the policies of the Regional Council and contact with those who would consider training to be able to offer this ministry.

The Committee thanks Joan Griffin for her dedicated service to the Licensing Committee as member from the committee's beginning and then Chairperson for the past three years. Sandi Irving has agreed to assume the role of Chairperson and Jim Webber-Cook will continue as Secretary.

Respectfully submitted, Jim Webber-Cook, Secretary on behalf of Joan Griffin, Chairperson

### **Retiree Support Committee Report**

The mandate of our committee is 'To provide pastoral care, support and guidance to the retirees of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region, including ministry personnel and lay staff.' We currently have 84/85 retirees on our email listing, which is by no means up to date.

As newly elected chair at the 2025 Annual meeting of the Region, I sent an email to those on our current list re-introducing myself once again as chair. Our Mandate of keeping in touch through the year is key in these times and moments we are living within. Notes are sent whenever the chair feels called to connect, or business needs to be shared. I welcome the comments, questions, suggestions that are shared after an email has gone forward. Thank you.

Many retired folks of our region have not connected with us. I've placed notices on the weekly Region announcements, with not much response. I will place another notice within the next two weeks as we near the annual meeting.

Committee Reports are sent to the Division Chair prior to our meetings, held every three months normally. Our next meeting is May 7<sup>th</sup>, and always held via ZOOM.

Now that winter is beyond us, I will attempt to make arrangements for a cluster gathering or two over the summer/fall months. If you are willing to host, please let us know.

Please send an email to [kathjohngamble@gmail.com](mailto:kathjohngamble@gmail.com) if you wish to join us as retired members of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region, even though you may be sharing pulpit exchanges or supply. Everyone is welcome!

The Retirees Support Committee includes Chair, Ruth Gamble, David Haan, who has agreed to take part in any way possible, Glenn MacLean, and Brenda McCurdy. Most of our conversations happen via email.

*Rev. K. Ruth Gamble, April 2026*

On behalf of the Division, I would like to thank Joan Griffin who has resigned as chair of the Licensing Committee at the rise of the Regional Annual Meeting. We appreciate her dedication to the work of this committee. We will be welcoming Rev. Sandi Irving to the position of Chair of Licensing following the Annual Meeting. Sandi has been a member of the Licensing Committee and has agreed to step up to the task of chairing!

Thank you to all the chairs and committee members who serve in positions within the Division of Ministry Resources. Your time, leadership and input are appreciated. As we continue along our journey of faith, may we be receptive to where the Holy Spirit is leading us.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Sollows, Chair

### NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

This year marks the conclusion of my time serving as Chair of the Nominations Committee. It has been meaningful work, and at times demanding work, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served the region in this way. As I step back from this role, I do so with deep appreciation for those who have supported the committee's efforts and with confidence in those who will carry this ministry forward.

Throughout the past year, the Nominations Committee has continued its work of identifying and encouraging gifted disciples to serve within the various committees and ministries of the Bermuda–Nova Scotia Regional Council. The ongoing challenge remains the same: while our region is blessed with many capable and faithful people, it is increasingly difficult to find individuals able or willing to take on regional responsibilities. Even so, we remain committed to ensuring that our committees are supported by people who bring wisdom, dedication, and a heart for the mission we share.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to **Tony Orlando**, who has served alongside me with steadiness, humour, and unwavering support. For much of this year, we have functioned as a committee of two, and Tony's partnership has been invaluable. I am grateful for the ways he has shown up, followed through, and helped shoulder the work.

As both Tony and I step back from our roles, I am pleased to share that Rev. Donna Tourneur, Anne Cameron and Andriel Pitter who are discerning their involvement will be taking up the baton. Their willingness to serve is deeply appreciated, and I trust that their gifts, perspectives, and energy will strengthen the work of Nominations in the year ahead.

We continue to encourage communities of faith across the region to reflect on the gifts present within their congregations and to consider how those gifts might be offered in service to the wider church. As 1 Peter 4:10 reminds us, *"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."* The region depends on the generosity and discipleship of individuals who feel called to step into leadership, and every "yes" makes a difference.

With gratitude, we acknowledge all who currently serve on regional committees, as pastoral supervisors, liaisons, General Council commissioners, and representatives to ministry boards. Your dedication is essential to living out our shared mission:

*Inspired by God, we are Christ's people in Bermuda and Nova Scotia—loving each other, following Jesus, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.*

As I conclude my term, I want to express my appreciation for the trust placed in me and for the colleagues who have supported this work. It has been a privilege to serve the region in this capacity.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Rev. Angela MacLean**  
 Chair, Nominations Committee (concluding term)

**DIRECTORY OF DIVISIONS AND STANDING COMMITTEES**  
**In effect at the rise of the Regional Annual Meeting**  
 Updated May 11, 2026

*Terms lengths are normally three years, renewable for one year.  
 An effort will be made to stagger the terms.*

**Regional Executive**

Executive Minister	Faith March-MacCuish
President	Donnie Morrison (2027)
President-Elect	
Past President	Mary Taylor (2027)
Chair of the Division of Finance and Administration	Jane MacDonald (2029)
Chair of the Division of Regional Services and Support	Anne Cameron (2029)
Chair of the Division of Ministry Resources	Janet Sollows (2027)
Chair of Nominations Committee	Donna Tourneur (2029)
Staff Committee Liaison	April Hart (2029)

**Members at Large**

1. Carol Smith (2027)
2. Youth/Young Adult VACANT
3. Bermuda Rep VACANT
4. VACANT

UCW Representative  
 VACANT

**Nominations Committee**

Chair Donna Tourneur (2029)  
 Secretary VACANT  
 Members

1. Anne Cameron (2029)
2. VACANT

### **Division of Finance and Administration**

Chair           Jane Macdonald (2029)  
 Secretary     Fay Smith (2027)  
 Financial Accountability and Investments Committee  
                   Allan Davis (2027)  
                   Mac MacLeod (2029)  
 Incorporated Ministries Committee  
                   Krista Anderson (2029)  
 Property Committee  
                   Wally Chivers (2028)  
 Archives, Records, and History Committee  
                   Ross Cameron (2027)  
 Members at Large  
                   VACANT

### **Financial Accountability and Investments Committee**

Chair           Allan Davis (2027)  
 Vice Chair    Mac MacLeod (2029)  
 Secretary     VACANT  
 Members  
     1. Cindy Penney (2027)  
     2. April Hart (2029)

### **Incorporated Ministries Committee**

Chair           Krista Anderson (2029)  
 Secretary     Dale Skinner (2029)  
 Members  
     1. Kevin Little (2027)  
     2. Kathleen MacKay (2026)  
     3. Katie Aven (2027)

### **Property Committee**

Chair           Wally Chivers (2028)  
 Secretary     Fay Smith (2027)  
 Members  
     1. Bob McArel (2028)  
     2. David LeBlanc (2027)  
     3. Jack Logan (2028)  
     4. Wayne Cochrane (2028)  
     5. Joyce Custance (2027)

**Archives, Records, and History Committee**

Chair            Ross Cameron (2027)

Secretary      Shane Doucette (2028)

Members

1. Heather Ferrier (2027)
2. VACANT
3. VACANT

**Division of Regional Services and Support**

Chair            Anne Cameron (2029)

Secretary      VACANT

Communications Committee

VACANT

Faith Formation and Leadership Development

Thea Burton (2028)

Child, Youth, and Young Adult Committee

Paige Fraser (2027)

Stewardship Committee

Wanalda Parsons (2028)

Justice, Mission, and Outreach Committee

VACANT

Annual Meeting Planning Committee

VACANT

Affirming Ministries Committee

VACANT

**Communications Committee**

Chair            VACANT

Secretary      VACANT

Members

1. Kym Burke (2028)
2. Ron Shaw (2029)

**Faith Formation and Leadership Development**

Chair            Thea Burton (2028)

Secretary      Samuel Graeme (2028)

Members

1. Darlene Brewer (2028)
2. Michael Thompson (2028)
3. Michelle Green (2028)
4. VACANT

**Child, Youth, and Young Adult Committee**

Chair            Paige Fraser (2027)

Secretary      VACANT

**Members**

1. James O'Connell (2029)
2. Ema MacLeod (2027)
3. Elliot Chambers (2029)
4. VACANT
5. Outdoor Ministry Unit Representative, VACANT
6. Youth at Region Representative, Alicia Cox (2028)

**Stewardship Committee**

Chair Wanalda Parsons (2028)

Secretary VACANT

**Members**

1. Margaret Ann Dodson (2028)
2. VACANT
3. VACANT

**Justice, Mission, and Outreach Committee**

Co-Chair VACANT

**Members-at-Large**

1. Andriel Pitter (2029)
2. VACANT

**Working Groups**

1. Breaking the Silence, Kathryn Anderson (2027)
2. Just Peace, Linda Scherzinger (2029)
3. Eco Justice, Sheila van Schaik (2027)
4. Guaranteed Livable Income, Karen MacKay Llewellyn  
Hal Llewellyn

**Annual Meeting Planning Committee**

Chair VACANT

Secretary Heather Manuel (2028)

President Donnie Morrison (2027)

President-Elect

Past President Mary Taylor (2027)

**Members:**

1. Local Arrangements, Heather Manuel (2028)
2. Head Teller, Fay Smith
3. Worship, Mary Taylor (2027)
4. Affirm, Shannon MacLean (2027)
5. Constance McNamara (2027)
6. April Hart (2027)

**Affirming Ministries Committee**

Chair VACANT

Secretary Katie Logan (2028)

**Members**

1. Shannon MacLean (2028)
2. Mike Henderson (2028)
3. Max Martin (2028)
4. Ian Harrison (2028)
5. Mary Jo Harrison (2028)

**Division of Ministry Resources**

Chair Janet Sollows (2027)

Secretary Alicia Cox (2027)

Pastoral Relations

Sean Boulger (2027)

Licensing Committee

Sandi Irving (2029)

Faith Story Community Covenant Committee

VACANT

Future Directions Committee

VACANT

Retiree Support Committee

Ruth Gamble (2028)

**Pastoral Relations**

Chair Sean Boulger (2027)

Secretary VACANT

Members

1. Jennifer Robarts (2027)
2. Sheila Stewart (2027)
3. Karen MacNeill (2028)
4. Emily Duggan (2027)

**Licensing Committee**

Chair Sandi Irving (2029)

Secretary Jim Webber-Cook (2029)

Diaconal Minister VACANT

Designated Lay Minister VACANT

Ministry of Supervision Jim Webber-Cook (2029)

Members

1. Betty Ann Watts (2027)
2. Sandi Irving (2028)
3. Bethe Benjamin Cameron (2028)

**Faith Story Community Covenant Committee**

Chair VACANT

Secretary VACANT

Members

1. Bev Dauphinee (2027)
2. Vivian Moores (2027)

## 3. VACANT

**Future Directions Committee**

Chair VACANT

Secretary VACANT

## Members

1. Mary Thomson (2028)
2. Sean Handcock (2027)
3. VACANT

**Retiree Support Committee**

Chair Ruth Gamble (2028)

Secretary VACANT

## Members

1. David Hann (2028)
2. Brenda McCurdy (2028)
3. VACANT

**Other Appointments****Bermuda-Nova Scotia Representatives to the Staff Support Committee**

1. April Hart (2029)
2. Linda Yates (2027)

**Representative to Atlantic School of Theology Senate****(3 year term, renew once for 3 years)**

1. Susan Gamblin (2029)

**Representative to Brunswick Street Mission Board of Directors****(3 year term, renew once for 3 years)**

1. Jessica Crabtree (2029)

**Representative to Tatamagouche Centre Society**

1. VACANT

**Representative to St. Paul's Family Resources Institute****(3 year term)**

1. Ian Reid (2028)

**Representatives to Maritime Conference Financial Services****Chair** Jack Logan**Secretary** Donald MacKay**Treasurer** Anne Thompson**Members**

Jane MacDonald

Heather Manual

Maxine Smith

### **TRI-REGIONAL STAFF COMMITTEE**

The Tri-Regional Staff Committee met regularly throughout the past year, online through Zoom.

Our role is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Tri-Region staffing model, including how the cost-sharing arrangements are working and help to identify improvements in this arrangement from time to time; to share experiences and insights about transitional work, including the possibility of any other shared projects; to advocate for and express care, appreciation and support for staff; to support the Executive Minister in matters of staff including hiring, working conditions and responsibilities.

Members are Rev. Faith March-MacCuish (Executive Minister), Rev. Derek Elsworth (Bermuda-Nova Scotia), Rev. Dr. Linda Yates (Bermuda-Nova Scotia), Doreen Cave (First Dawn Eastern Edge), Jim Blanchard (Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters), and Rev. Kimberley Waite (First Dawn Eastern Edge). We are awaiting the appointment of one additional new member from Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters.

Included in our work this year was the exit interview for Seyi Adeyemo, Communications and Administrative Support. We then received and reviewed applications, interviewed a number of candidates, and checked references, which resulted in the hiring of Shari Kaster. The hiring process also was carried out for Regional Minister of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council, with Rev. Lloyd Bruce accepting.

Faith reported on the annual review process for staff, and all were positive. There were online “Check In” gatherings with the staff and staff were recognized at Christmas with gifts.

The Committee members would like to recognize and commend the staff of all 3 regions for their ongoing dedication, insight and caring commitment. We are all truly blessed!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Derek Elsworth  
Tri Regional Staff Committee  
Executive Liaison, Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region

### **OTHER REPORTS**

#### **Atlantic School of Theology (AST)**

2025 Annual Report to United Church of Canada Regions

Atlantic School of Theology serves Christ’s mission by shaping effective and faithful ordained and lay leaders and understanding among communities of faith. We did this in a variety of ways in 2025. With students and alumni in almost every United Church of Canada Region, we bring together a community with an extensive understanding of the varied needs of the church. The

Summer Distance MDiv continues to be the degree with the highest enrollment. This form of the MDiv is normally 5 years and integrates the 2-year SME required for ordination into the program of study. This program brings students together for 6 weeks of intensive learning on campus in the summer and online, synchronous, and asynchronous classes are taken in the fall and winter. This integrated MDiv, suitable for those who have been approved as candidates and deemed eligible for a pastoral appointment outside of SME, enables candidates to be working in a ministry site at the start of their degree, or at any point within it, integrating the study of theology with the practice of ministry, allowing them to earn an income, serve the church and experience 6 weeks each year of in person community, formation and learning. Many of our graduates will be ordained at spring meetings of their regions and we rejoice in their success and the ministry they will continue to share with the church.

In addition to the MDiv degree, we have United Church of Canada Students enrolled in the MA as well as 3 diplomas and a wide range of continuing education options. The Diploma in Theological Studies and the Diploma in Intergenerational Faith Formation are lovely steppingstones for those interested in theological education but not sure if they want to commit to a degree. AST is also beginning to offer micro credentials for those looking to develop recognized skills in practical aspects of pastoral ministry. We believe these short term, specifically focused areas of learning, will provide people with credentials that will be valuable for the wider church.

The Bachelor of Theology degree, which includes a “Ministry Specialization” stream, is proving popular with UCC students. We anticipate our first UCC graduates in this stream in May 2027. This degree reduces the barrier for those without an undergraduate degree who feel called to serve the church and want academic excellence at a bachelor's level combined with opportunities for practical experience serving the church. Students who complete the degree and all the requirements for Testamur can be approved for SME as the final requirement for ordination. We are excited about the ways this may meet the identified needs of our founding parties. We value our relationship with the Office of Vocation and Candidacy Boards across the country as we seek to respond to the educational needs of the church for shaping effective and faithful leaders. We are grateful to Pine Hill Divinity Hall who offer all United Church of Canada Candidates for ministry with a full tuition bursary, allowing them to follow their calling without incurring huge debt.

Our President, the Rev. Dr. Heather McCance works closely with the other heads of UCC colleges and schools as we seek to find ways of sharing ideas and resources. As part of that consortium, AST is pleased to be part of the large-scale Lilly Grant, Reimagining Theological Education Across the United Church of Canada Affiliated Schools. In addition to this grant, AST is the lead school in a second large-scale Lilly grant given to work with schools from other denominations and the Canadian Council of Churches on Ecumenical Shared Ministries.

We are excited to move this initiative forward and help congregations, students and judicatories develop and work successfully in these ecumenical partnerships.

AST is involved in various accreditation processes to ensure that we maintain the highest standards of theological education.

Like all educational institutions, we face challenges and the road ahead is not always clear, however, there is a spirit of optimism and a sense of renewal within our school community as we chart a path for the future.

It is a joy to work with United Church of Canada students as well as those who support them within the administrative structure of the church and individual communities of faith. We welcome your input as we seek to serve the ever-changing needs of the church. It has been a pleasure to serve as Dean at AST for these past 3 years.

With the Deepest Respect and Gratitude,

*Susan MacAlpine-Gillis*

Rev. Dr. Susan MacAlpine-Gillis  
Academic Dean  
Atlantic School of Theology

### **Atlantic School of Theology, Senate**

Annual Report from BNS Regional Representative to AST Senate 2025-2026 on behalf of Bermuda-Nova Scotia and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Councils.

Luke 5:3-6

He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets. When they had they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish their nets began to break.

The Senate met on October 29, 2025 and February 4, 2026 with a third meeting scheduled for April 29, 2026. I attend all meetings via Zoom.

At Atlantic School of Theology (AST) staff and faculty are dedicated to carrying out the school’s mission of shaping faithful and effective leaders and understanding among communities of faith. The three denominational faculty include the Divinity Faculty of the University of King’s College ([Anglican Church of Canada](#)), Holy Heart Theological Seminary (The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Halifax) and [Pine Hill Divinity Hall](#) ([United Church of Canada](#).)

I am currently serving on the Search Committee for the position of Professor of Pastoral Theology/Director of Contextual Theology. Interviews will take place in June. The successful candidate will begin teaching in January 2027.

At the Convocation Ceremony for 2026 graduates May 9th, at Cathedral Church of All Saints in Halifax, John Roberto will receive the degree of Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa), while The Rev. Dr. Linda Yates and Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray will be named Associates of the

University. Commenting on these recognitions, Rev. Dr. Heather McCance, President of AST shared, “John, Linda, and Rob show us what we aspire to be – a university that shapes faithful leaders, a place striving to be of service to church and world, and an ecumenical community where all are invited to share their gifts. In accepting these honours, they truly honour us.”

I would ask you to continue in prayer for all of those in leadership positions at AST, especially the President, Dean and Faculty. And, also please pray for our future leaders, our students, who have put out *into the deep* and answered the call to serve their respective communities of faith in so many different ways, all giving of themselves in the name of Christ.

Please direct any questions or concerns relating to the business of the AST Senate to me at [s.s.gamblin@gmail.com](mailto:s.s.gamblin@gmail.com).

This report is respectfully submitted this 21st day of April 2026 by Rev. Susan Gamblin, BNS Regional Council representative to AST Senate.

### **Centre for Christian Studies**



The Centre for Christian Studies  
Regional Council Report, for 2025 to the Bermuda-  
Nova Scotia Regional Council

The Centre for Christian Studies is a national theological school grounded in the tradition of *diakonia*. We prepare people for ministries in the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada, and offer lifelong learning for anyone who wants to deepen their faith-in-action

### **2025 Students and Programming**

Central to the preparation of diaconal ministers and lay leaders are the learning circles, the vessels through which learning, growth and development occurred. In addition to the regular circles, a 2-week Learning on Purpose circle was held in Winnipeg in June 2025. The Theme circles offered in 2025 included

Ministry as Community Building,  
Worship,  
Grief and Loss,  
Ministry as Listening,  
Power and Privilege, and  
Health, Pain and Trauma, as well as the three Integration Year Circles.

Learning on Purpose and all Theme circles are open to lay people, candidates for all ministry streams, and ministry personnel for Continuing Education. More information is available online about [upcoming learning circles](#), for both online and in-person 6-day intensives and 6-week circles.

In Winter 2025, we also offered a course on Intercultural Leadership for Educational Ministry, in collaboration with Emmanuel College and St. Andrews College.

Two students and one programme staff person were able to be part of the meeting of the Diakonia World Federation (DWF) in Tanzania, in July 2025, and that formed their Global Perspective Experience.

In other programming news, we continued our free, monthly, ‘lunchtime’ Zoom CCS Fridays on topics such as

Punching Up or Punching Down: Comedy, Politics, and Social Justice  
 Unbounded Stories from Palestine,  
 Our Daily Bread: Resisting the Central Lie of ‘Diet Culture’,  
 Decolonizing Diakonia,  
 God and Money, and  
 Microaggressions

## **2025 Milestones and Celebrations**

The 2025 graduates were **Hyerim Park, Letitia Berger, Lisa Byer-de Wever, Lisa Leffler,** and **Lynda Dickson.**

**Ann Naylor** was recognized as a beloved and honoured Companion of the Centre. Ann’s commitment to diaconal ministry and to the Centre for Christian Studies is unquestioned, as was evidenced by the number of former students who spoke of the profound influence Ann had on their personal formation and ministry identity. Her service to the General Council Office of the United Church of Canada as staff and then as Acting General Secretary in the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education was acknowledged.

It was with a deep sense of gratitude that CCS accepted and acknowledged the retirement of Cheryl Thiessen. Cheryl served faithfully as the Office Administrator for 10 years and was also celebrated at the graduation event.

Later in the calendar year the contract period of Gwen McAllister came to an end. Gwen held the role of Interim Development Coordinator for 2 years.

The Centre welcomed two new members of staff: Robyn Cruz and Marlene Britton.

Robyn assumed the role of Finance and Administration Coordinator, having previously worked as a manager with the Manitoba Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Council. She has brought to CCS her love for administration and her deep understanding of her own roots as an Indigenous person. Marlene assumed the role of Principal for Leadership and Development, having previously served at the General Council Office of the United Church of Canada, as the Director of the Office of Vocation.

## **2025 Strategic Planning and Deeper Partnerships**

The recommendations in the areas of governance simplification and staffing restructuring have been put into place. New staff was hired as detailed above, and significant, deep conversations

were held with potential partners in theological education. While those conversations were taking place, town hall meetings were also held with the various constituencies of CCS in order to share the progress of the conversations, as well as to garner helpful contributions and to have concerns aired.

### **2025 Sustainability and Partnerships**

Amidst the shifting sands of theological education, funding challenges, and volatile investment markets, we continue to be sustained by generous donors, creative collaboration, dedicated and visionary volunteers, Council members, and staff, a diaconal imagination of what church can be in the world, and God's grace. We are thankful for the mutual partnerships with which we engage in this sacred ministry of education, spiritual care, and justice. Particularly with; Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, St Stephen's College, St Andrew's College / Saskatoon Theological Union, associate schools in the United and Anglican Churches of Canada, and the national staff who support them, Diakonia of the United Church of Canada, Anglican Deacons Canada, Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC), and all who support CCS and its students (particularly, diaconal Mentors, Field Placement organizations & communities of faith, Learning Facilitators, Local Committee members).

### ***Curious about which CCS Diaconal Diploma and Certificate students live in your region or relate to your candidacy board?***

Caitlin Smithers

### **In addition...**

*The 2026 Learning on Purpose course will be held in June at Five Oaks, in Paris, Ontario.*

Come deepen your self-awareness as a leader in these changing times, discern your next steps in ministry or formation, learn practical tools like the Spiral model of theological reflection, and engage liberative perspectives of the bible, theologies, and social analysis. And it's fun! From puppets to Paulo Freire to prayer, music to Miriam to social movements, come learn together.

### **To know more...**

- Subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter Common Threads: <http://ccsonline.ca/blog/common-threads/>
- Follow us on Facebook or Instagram to hear about happenings and upcoming events.
- For information about the program and studying with us: <http://ccsonline.ca/about-ccs/>
- For more details and numbers, 2025 Yearbook, 2025 Annual Report, and financial statements: <http://ccsonline.ca/event/ccs-annual-general-meeting-2025/>

*Respectfully submitted by Marlene Britton, Principal, April 2026.*

## Cluster Animator

### **BNS Cluster Animator Final Report & Recommendations January 2025 – June 2026**

#### **Background**

In the beginning, when the United Church was considering restructuring, the concept of clusters and networks was presented. In the background document introducing the Three Council Model to GC2015, clusters were described in this way:

*One of the key components of the recommended model would be collegial gatherings called clusters. Clusters would be regular gatherings of communities of faith and their leaders within a geographic area. Clusters would be the driving force in gathering as the people of God to support mission. Clusters would be responsible for • promoting and encouraging communities of faith to work together for worship, mission, justice, collegiality, stewardship development, and strategic planning as well as connecting with networks in the wider church • electing a planning team to manage the regular meetings of clusters • supporting communities of faith in articulating their mission strategy and assessing their success in carrying it out. Within three years, current presbyteries would create appropriate clusters of communities of faith. The presbyteries would then cease to exist as decision-making courts of the church.*

GC2018 received a proposal which asked the General Council to:

- a. affirm that clusters and networks will be central to living out our faith in the Three Council Model, and essential to a healthy transition to the Three-Council Model, and*
- b. instruct the General Council Executive and the Councils of the new model to develop a strategy that prioritizes the formation of clusters and networks beyond simply encouragement for their formation, including incentivizing their creation and facilitating communication during the period of experimentation,*
- c. establish an expectation that each community of faith will engage in the period of experimentation by forming or joining at least one cluster or network.*

#### **MANUAL 2026 VII. Clusters and Networks**

9. Alongside the three-council structure, there are clusters and networks that, while not formal governance bodies, are central to the living out of the faith of the United Church: (2019)

9.1. clusters: local clusters of Communities of Faith that provide community and support for Communities of Faith and their leaders, and focus on worship, mission, learning, collegiality, and strategic planning; (2019)

After living with a revised conciliar structure after 2019, the 2023 BNS Regional Council Annual Meeting revisited the expectations related to clusters. It was apparent the initial intention and expectations for clusters expressed in earlier decisions and documents of the national church had not been realized. Without start-up support for local leadership, very few clusters had formed in BNS Region.

A Proposal by the Future Directions Committee was presented to the 2023 Annual Meeting which stated the *‘lack of clusters is limiting our health and capacity for faithful mission and mutual support on a local level.’* The BNS council voted to make *‘the development of local clusters a*

*priority in its life and work*' and to create a term staff position (12 hours per week). I accepted the offer to serve as BNS Cluster Animator and began work on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The position was scheduled to end on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025, but was extended to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

### **Cluster Animator's Role**

The main areas of the Animator's work have been as follows:

1. Consultation and Engagement:
  - Consult with designated regional representatives and ministry personnel to clarify local needs/interests, determine logical geographic groups, and possibilities for ongoing sustainability.
  - Consult with existing groups and clusters to learn about their purpose, structure and sustainability.
  - Consult with BNS Regional staff and committees.
  - Consult with staff from other regions to learn about their best practices.
2. Planning and Development:
  - Analyze information collected from consultations to create a plan for Cluster Animation.
  - Organize initial meetings and identify potential ongoing leadership.
3. Cluster Support:
  - Attend initial meetings of clusters and support their ongoing development by providing information and resources.
  - Create an updated listing of clusters to be shared with the Region on its website.
  - Prepare reports and recommendations for best practices to support clusters.

### **Clusters (as of April 24, 2026)**

These groups are active or currently taking shape within the Region.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Pre-2019/ New/Renewed</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Contact Identified</b>
Administry	new	UCC Church Administrators	Colleen Naomi
Affirming Communities HRM	new	reps from local CoFs	no
Cape Breton East	new	ministers & lay reps	Sheila VanSchaick
Cape Breton West Causeway	renewed	active ministry personnel	Heather Manuel
Cape Breton West Causeway	new	ministers & lay reps	no
Halifax Regional Municipality	pre-2019	ministry personnel	Rhonda Schofield
HRM Youth	since 2024	youth leaders & youth	Jenny Eisener
Hub (Truro & area)	pre-2019	active ministry personnel	Shannon MacLean
Lunenburg	new	ministers & lay reps	Kim Curlett
North Nova	new	ministers & lay reps	no
North West Halifax	new	ministers & lay reps	Lesley Griffiths
Pictou County	pre-2019	ministry personnel	Mavis Peddie Peters
South Shore	pre-2019	ministry personnel	Carol Smith
South West Nova	new	ministers & lay reps	no
UCC for Dartmouth	pre-2019	ministers & lay reps	Mark Hazen
Valley	Pre-2019	ministry personnel	Karen Lynch
Valley	new	ministers & lay reps	Jane McDonald

There are ongoing clusters that **Pre-date 2019** which have established sustainable patterns of meeting and regularized their activities (such as monthly meetings, annual retreats, collaborative bible studies, shared worship services). Over time they have developed a strong sense of community and a high level of trust. There is a **Renewed Cluster**, a clergy group which had been meeting regularly before their primary organizer died. I invited them to a meeting, and they made the decision to restart their group.

**New Clusters** have been initiated. After this position was announced, four people representing four different areas in Nova Scotia, reached out for assistance in establishing a local cluster. However, in most cases I reached out to ministry personnel and lay Regional Representatives with an invitation to create a group. My goal for meetings was representation by at least one person from each community of faith within the given area. I will submit a current contact list for each cluster to the regional office and staff at the end of May.

Each initial cluster meeting consisted of:

- getting acquainted and building community
- explaining the purpose for clusters
- prayer or devotional time
- sharing food and coffee/tea
- sharing the Good News from each community of faith
- open conversation, often naming the challenges being experienced by congregations and leadership in their area
- naming the benefits of establishing an ongoing cluster
- confirming next steps, next dates/locations

Those listed are certainly not the only active clusters within the Region. For example, a Mid Valley Cluster representing four Valley CoFs formed several years ago when they were all faced with changes in pastoral relations and they have continued to meet even after vacancies have been filled. Here and there, neighboring church members and ministers have been meeting informally around shared events, bible study or lectionary groups, and for mutual support. In locations from one end of the province to the other, local inter-church congregational and ministerial partnerships are collaborating on local events and worship (ex. World Day of Prayer, Remembrance Day).

### **Bermuda**

Since it is Bermuda Nova Scotia Regional Council and I was curious about the current relationship between the three congregations which fall under the previous Synod structure, I reached out to a contact there. None of the 3 are currently served by UCC ministry personnel. The congregations have managed to maintain some contact with each other and the feedback included the intention to connect more frequently. An annual covenanting service is held in January or February that allows the 3 churches to worship and fellowship together.

### **Regional Committees, Staff and other Regions**

I've consulted with the following regional committees: United Fresh Start, BNS Affirming Committee, Association of UCC Ministers, BNS Future Directions, and Justice, Mission & Outreach. In all three Atlantic Regions, at the time of restructuring, support for clusters was named in the position descriptions of the Regional Ministers. I've spoken with Rev. Dr. Sharon Ballantyne

(Growth), David Hewitt (Pastoral Relations & Congregational Support), Seyi Adeyemo (Communications), Rev. Jenny Stephens (Restructuring Review), and Rev. Faith March-McCuish (Executive Minister). In general, committees and staff see the establishment of permanent, sustainable local groups across the province as vehicles through which their mission and resources might be shared, and avenues of communication improved significantly.

Letters of inquiry were sent to all other 15 Regions, asking about their work with clustering and best practices. Five responses were received. A summary of their responses:

- a.) **Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters:** After 2019, the Executive made an effort to initiate cluster gatherings. \$500 was put aside per cluster as needed. The region was divided into geographical sections, and introductory workshops were held under the direction of a regional committee. A small working group continues to work on making cluster connections. Groups meet primarily for educational and social reasons. The PEI Cluster evolved from PEI Presbytery connections and has continued to meet regularly since 2019. The PEI Cluster's future has been sustained by temporary 'rural experiment opportunity' grant funding from the GCO, which has been discontinued.
- b.) **Chinook Winds:** Rev. Shelley Den Haan serves as regional staff for Communications & Cluster Support. Four hours of her time per week are assigned to cluster support. She facilitated cluster start-ups and continues to assist their continued meetings by sending reminder emails, supplying information and resources. She's found communication between local CoFs and the regional office has been improved as regional staff have attended the clusters as guest speakers. Each cluster has defined its own priorities: one is focused on social justice issues; others meet for mutual support and around local concerns. Since the pandemic, all groups meet in person, except the Rural Cluster which covers a large territory and meets via zoom. During the past year, the Executive Minister has presented the Toward 2035 materials to all the clusters. Shelley says, "*so much depends on willing leadership who are motivated*".
- c.) **Canadian Shield and Shining Waters:** encompass a wide variety of clusters including groups gathered around an Intentional Learning Community (providing faith formation programs), clusters that came together to hire shared staff and ministry personnel, a cross-border cluster between the 2 regions, outreach projects and retreat opportunities, refugee & asylum seekers support and Affirming congregations in GTA, and 'no agenda other than getting to know each other'. Comments from their experience:
 

*The notion that clusters can be successful without staff intervention is, for the most part, untrue. Having said that, the most successful clusters are the ones that came together on their own and then asked for staff support. Many of our clusters are precarious – the loss of 1 or 2 key leaders will bring an end. Often clusters are most successful when relationship is the first priority and doing something takes a back seat. Having a preconceived idea about what a cluster may accomplish is rarely useful until time and attention has been given to relationship/trust building and group discernment...which is hard and takes time. (D.M. Dec.2024)*

- d.) **Western Ontario Waterways:** After 2019, the Volunteer Recruitment Team (nominating) organized one-time gatherings on the understanding groups would be self-selecting but need help getting started. Volunteers were recruited to lead the first gatherings and were provided with a process and PowerPoint resources. Some groups never met because so many CoFs were in transition and without ministry personnel. Several did get together to plan 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events and have continued since then. (H.L. Dec.2024)

### **Communication within BNS Regional Council**

Cluster conversations regularly named a problem with communication between the different councils of our church in recent years. Here are challenges named during cluster conversations:

- Weekly Regional announcements and national *E-ssentials* newsletter require finding and subscribing;
- Weekly Regional announcements may only reach one person in a community of faith and are put through their sieve – “*there are good things happening but no one knows about them!*”
- Access to the Regional Directory had to be removed temporarily, for privacy and security reasons;
- The Regional Facebook page is undersubscribed and not very active.
- To find contacts for regional committees, searchers need to locate last year’s nominating report.

Communicating effectively with CoFs has been my biggest challenge. Significant effort has been required to bring people together where physical distances are expanded by pastoral vacancies, the absence of lay representatives, undependable internet services, or a lack of familiarity with past presbytery relationships.

After I was first hired, several months passed before I was provided with a contact list for designated Regional Representatives. Many CoF’s have not identified a representative. Further, the names of individuals and CoFs (who expressed an interest in cluster development) collected through last year’s extensive Restructuring Review Survey could not be relayed to me. However, consultant Rev. Jenny Stephens’ presentation to last year’s Annual Meeting did demonstrate interest in clusters being continued and supported, a desire for closer connection between clusters, and for improved communication – more of it, faster, and to the right people.

### **Meet Together, Eat Together, Feet Together – the 3-Step Plan for Cluster Development**

#### **Step 1. Meet Together**

*“Looking forward to it, Robyn, there are so few opportunities to gather in person these days”*

*BJ*

In her 2020 book, *‘This One Wild and Precious Life’*, author Sarah Wilson opens with a long list of the world’s current woes, including wars, famine, climate disasters, intimate partner violence, doomscrolling, and so on. She searched for one word that accurately described the modern human reality, one word that communicated our current experience. Wilson writes, “*what we’re all feeling, at the most basic level, is **disconnected.***” She suggests that disconnection is humankind’s common condition and a threat to our future survival.

Thousands of recent studies have researched the cost of disconnection, social isolation and loneliness to our personal health and wellbeing. In May 2024, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, posted the key points of a report on Social Connection: staying connected to others creates feelings of belonging and being loved, cared for, and valued; social connections are important to our mental and physical health; being connected to others helps protect against serious illness and disease; people with stronger social bonds are more likely to live longer, healthier lives.

As I've traveled around the province, I have heard phrases such as '*I feel so isolated*', or '*we're so out of touch with the rest of the church*,' or '*who cares about us out here*' repeatedly. People who remember Presbytery meetings have said they've missed the conversations over supper as much as the scalloped potatoes and ham. People who are new to the United Church or to their location have expressed deep appreciation for the chance to meet and learn more about other congregations around them.

I believe our denomination has suffered from disconnection in recent years, especially since the pandemic, and our 'connective tissue' has been deteriorating. In '*Find Your People: Building Deep Community in a Lonely World*', Jenny Allen identifies the enemies of community: the myth of independence, busyness, laziness or apathy, gossip and make believe, competition and comparison, fear, negativity, indifference (the opposite of curiosity). I've witnessed these enemies at work in the church and suggest clusters offer a chance to intentionally counteract their effect.

Providing opportunities for United Church people to gather in person, in the same safe space, is essential. All BNS clusters have met in person at least once, often over lunch; some groups always meet in person. Zoom is a useful tool, especially during winter months and where physical distances are significant. However, zoom does not lend itself to building trust and deep sharing.

## **Step 2. Eat Together** ***"Can I have the recipe for that?" SW***

Theologian Rachel Held Evans has written, "*The first thing the world knew about Christians was that they ate together*" (*Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving and Finding the Church*). In Acts 2:41-47, we learn the first Christian community took shape around the dining table. Eating together is the first sacrament of our faith and an indispensable aspect of cluster success.

The 2025 World Happiness Report dedicates an entire chapter to the importance of sharing meals with others. The report presents Gallup evidence on this understudied measure of social connection – sharing food. This practice has a strong impact on our overall wellbeing – on par with the influence of income and employment.

When timing and location made it possible, I arrived at cluster meetings (especially the initial meetings) carrying carrot soup, sandwiches and Turtle clusters. I'm very grateful to local hosts who've also provided hospitality. Potluck becomes pot-blessed, as it is in the face-to-face informal conversations at the table stories are told and relationships are established.

**Step 3. Feet Together**  
***“I don’t feel so alone anymore.” AR***

Although the United Church makes the credal proclamation “*We are not alone*”, it seems to me in recent times our communities of faith have been living as if we are alone. But continued disconnection is not a life-giving option for our denomination. I suspect the Toward 2035 initiative will make this reality more visible.

Gathered together, cluster conversations have quickly elicited a list of shared concerns and possible collaborative actions. We are communities with service and mission in our DNA, and the desire to grow the Good News. As the local groups have met together, a sense of a common direction has appeared, and a shared hope has emerged.

The clusters are taking shape according to their geography, needs and interests -- whether it be for mutual support, improving communication, sharing resources and ideas, or planning joint events. All it takes is ONE person who’s willing to keep the contact information and send out meeting reminders. All it takes is ONE meeting during which dates and locations for the year ahead are set. Its also helpful if one person agrees to make some basic notes and send them out to all participants.

**Recommendations to the BNS Regional Council Executive:** As the Executive is going through an extensive overview process, the following recommendations have been shared with them for their consideration. These things fall outside the scope of my work, however, they reflect concerns and requests common to many, if not most, of the cluster conversations:

1. **Improve communication between communities and councils.** This includes work to make the Region’s database and the website more effective, as well as investigating new ways to engage. The Communications Committee needs to be populated with volunteers who have energy and imagination for this work, as well as access to knowledgeable consultants and methods of communication being used in other Regions and organizations. I recommend expanding this committee’s mandate to include work to develop, sustain and connect clusters.
2. **Expand the Calendar on the BNS website.** At present, our calendar displays regional committee meetings. I recommend its expansion to include cluster meeting dates and all presentations, workshops or webinars being offered by regional staff. In addition, I suggest the Weekly Announcements begin with ‘*This Week in the Region*’, listing all events being offered by regional staff. It would be helpful for our leaders and communities to be aware of the leadership being offered by our staff in different locations, and for our staff to be aware of each other’s activities and the potential for collaboration. This calendar can be subscribed by CoFs, so all this information would show up immediately on their local calendars.
3. **Create a Resources Toolbox.** The lay leaders within BNS Regional Council are very busy and some are exhausted. Especially in places where ministry positions have not been filled or are part-time, our CoFs rely heavily on laity for worship and program leadership. There are a million resources available online, but our cluster conversations have recommended

the creation of one Resources Toolbox: one page on our website listing program and worship resources (complete with sermons and prayers) and links which are free or affordable, and aligned with United Church theology and ethos. This idea has already been referred to the Faith Formation and Leadership Development Committee for their consideration. This page could also provide a DIY Cluster Meeting Program resource and a PowerPoint or YouTube video introducing CoFs to the structure and ministries of the BNS Regional Council.

- 4. Address the need for Pastoral Care.** As I've listened to cluster conversations, the need for pastoral care has become apparent. Lay leaders are expressing concerns about burn out and exhaustion. Ministry personnel are meeting together for mutual support in at least 5 areas, but not in all areas. Those in active ministry have different needs than those who are retired. The Regional Minister meets regularly with younger ministry personnel and this needs to continue. I would encourage the Retirees Committee to work with a Cluster staff person, to organize in-person meetings for retirees around the province. Individuals have conveyed a request to reestablish triennial pastoral care visits. I recommend the creation of a Regional Pastoral Care team, separate from the Pastoral Relations committee. This would be a small group, skilled in pastoral care who would be available to ministry personnel, to clusters, and to communities of faith.

#### **Recommendation to the BNS Regional Council:**

- 1. Designate staff time to develop, support, and maintain clusters.** Following the example set by Chinook Winds Regional Council, I optimistically recommend a minimum of 4 - 6 hours per week be granted to maintaining contact lists and scheduling, providing Zoom support, supplying suggestions for resources or guest speakers. I have just scratched the surface of what is possible in terms of cluster creation.

#### **Gratitude**

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Rev. Faith March-MacCuish, for her guidance; to all of the BNS Regional Council Staff, for their assistance and knowledgeable suggestions; to all of the leaders who welcomed me and helped me organize local groups; to all who offered hospitality and shared their stories; to my family for their patience. I have truly enjoyed being with you.

Though many, may we be united.  
Rev. Robyn Brown-Hewitt

**Emmanuel College**



**EMMANUEL COLLEGE**  
OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY IN  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Emmanuel College – Principal’s Report to United Church of  
Canada Regional Councils  
*Spring 2026*

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Dear friends in the United Church of Canada,

Greetings from Emmanuel College at Victoria University in the University of Toronto. We give thanks for your ongoing partnership in theological education, leadership formation, and the shared work of nurturing ministry across the Church. It is a privilege to share a brief update on the life and work of the College.

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Lilly Endowment Grants: Pathways for Tomorrow

Emmanuel College is deeply engaged in the *Pathways for Tomorrow* initiative, supported by the Lilly Endowment. This includes:

- \$1M USD awarded directly to Emmanuel College
- \$10M USD awarded to the United Church of Canada (Collaborative Grant)
- \$6.5M USD awarded to the Toronto School of Theology (Collaborative Grant)

These grants are enabling us to strengthen leadership pathways, expand continuing education, and deepen collaboration with the United Church of Canada.

As part of this work:

- We will be hiring a Manager for the Emmanuel Professional Advancement and Continuing Training Centre (EMPACT Centre) this spring. This role will help coordinate Emmanuel’s work within the Lilly initiative and support collaboration with United Church partners.
- We are also launching a pilot Artist-in-Residence program, supporting creativity, worship life, and experiential learning within theological education.

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New Centre for Buddhist Spiritual Care and Counselling

We are pleased to share that Emmanuel College has secured \$750,000 in funding over 10 years to establish the:

Tung Lin Kok Yuen (TLKY), Canada Society Research and Education Centre for Buddhist Spiritual Care and Counselling

This groundbreaking Centre will:

- Launch a new academic journal in Buddhist Spiritual Care and Practical Theology
- Host academic conferences and scholarly gatherings
- Offer psychospiritual continuing education for healthcare professionals
- Serve and support Buddhist communities in Canada and beyond

This initiative reflects Emmanuel’s growing leadership in multifaith theological education and its commitment to equipping leaders for diverse spiritual care contexts.

## Faculty Updates

We celebrate important milestones among our faculty:

- Dr. Glenn McCullough – Interim review: Successfully completed his interim (pre-tenure) review.
- Dr. Henry Shiu – Tenure and promotion: Approved for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, effective July 1, 2026, along with a year of research leave.
- The Very Reverend Dr. Carmen Lansdowne – New appointment: We were pleased to welcome Dr. Lansdowne to Emmanuel College on December 1, 2025, following the completion of her term as Moderator of the United Church of Canada. She serves as Assistant Professor of United Church Studies—the first appointment of its kind at Emmanuel—and will serve as the Director of the Master of Divinity program, as of July 1, 2026. We are deeply grateful for the leadership and insight she brings from across the national Church, enriching the formation of our students and strengthening our shared work of preparing future ministry leaders.

## Student Admissions

- Continued growth in applications: Emmanuel is experiencing another year of strong application growth, with sustained and increasing interest in our multi-faith Master of Psychospiritual Studies program.
- Steady MDiv enrolment with renewed focus: Applications to the Master of Divinity program remain steady. Through our participation in the Lilly Endowment *Pathways for Tomorrow* initiative, we are intentionally deepening engagement with United Church communities—supporting vocational discernment and encouraging potential leaders for ministry.
- Strong doctoral interest: Emmanuel has received a growing pool of applicants, including 26 PhD applications in the first round, among the highest in recent years.
- TST-wide doctoral trends: Across the Toronto School of Theology, there were 54 PhD applications (32 international, 22 domestic).

We continue to discern ways to strengthen financial support for students, ensuring accessibility and competitiveness within the broader University of Toronto context.

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### Psychospiritual Continuing Education Initiative

Supported by a generous gift from Ms. and Mr. Price, Emmanuel has launched a three-year pilot in Psychospiritual Continuing Education:

- A dedicated program coordinator has been hired
- A soft launch will take place online on April 24, 2026
- Initial instructors include Prof. Jenny Bright and Dr. Agnes Wong (SickKids Hospital)
- A formal public launch is anticipated in 2026–2027

This initiative aligns closely with Emmanuel’s commitment to equipping leaders for spiritual care, counselling, and ministry in complex contexts.

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### Alumni Update: Centennial 2028

As Emmanuel College prepares for its Centennial in 2028, we are updating our alumni records and reconnecting with graduates across generations. If you are an Emmanuel College alum, please reach out to [emmanuel.admissions@utoronto.ca](mailto:emmanuel.admissions@utoronto.ca) to ensure we have your current contact information and can keep you connected to the celebrations ahead.

We are also delighted to invite alumni to our annual Alumni Day on May 11, 2026, a special opportunity to return to Emmanuel, reconnect with the community, and celebrate the life of the College as we begin this journey toward our Centennial. Two of our faculty members, Prof. Natalie Wigg-Stevenson and Prof. Nazila Isgandarova will be workshop leaders for the Day.

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### Closing

We remain deeply grateful for the United Church of Canada’s ongoing partnership in theological education and leadership formation. Your communities continue to shape and send students to Emmanuel, and we are committed to forming leaders who embody deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice.

With gratitude and every blessing,



HyeRan Kim-Cragg  
Principal and Professor of Preaching  
Emmanuel College

## **Growth Animator**

### Message of Hope to the Regions of UCC-East

Dear Friends across the Regions of UCC-East,

Grace and peace to you in this season of reflection and renewed hope. As we look back on the ministry, we have shared through this past year, there is much to celebrate. Across communities of faith, we have experienced people gathering with courage, deepening spiritual practices, listening, praying, experimenting with new forms of community, getting beyond our walls, developing community partners and being intentional to “invite! Invite! Invite,” building vital connections, strengthening invitation, discipleship identity, and deepening relationships grounded in care, belonging, and faithful presence. The work unfolding in congregations, pastoral charges, and regional gatherings reflects the Spirit moving persistently among us, always meeting us where we are, accompanying us in our next small step forward.

Our shared call to Deep Spirituality, Bold Discipleship, and Daring Justice continues to shape our path. These words are more than vision statements. These words are lived daily in worship, pastoral care, outreach, equity, diversity, advocacy, and the quiet acts of kindness that build trust and hope. We have witnessed ministries adapting with creativity and resilience, and we give thanks for the many leaders and volunteers who continue to offer themselves generously.

This year has also held meaningful milestones. As we celebrated our one-hundredth centenary, we rejoice that 34 pastoral charges across UCC-East participated in the One Hundred Tables Project, joining 117 tables nationally. Around tables both ordinary and sacred, people gathered to share stories, nourishment, and build community — a powerful sign that belonging continues to expand when we make room for one another, making ourselves visible and present in our neighbourhoods. Keep embracing resilience to think outside the box, getting to know neighbours, listening, learning and working together.

We have gratefully explored neighbourhood profiles, noting surprises about the community around us, wondering and trying new things to connect with our neighbours. Continued curiosity to survey the fertile soil around us, finds us considering new possibilities. It is another tool in ongoing conversations about our renewal and new ministries possibilities. If you have not yet connected with me, do reach out and let’s discuss what tools and resources will support you in your context.

We have used the “A Place at the Table” photograph in our worship, lunch and learns, workshops and webinars to help invite conversations beyond our walls, using the postcards as topics for wider outreach, invitation and connection.

Through our workshops on strengthening invitation, visioning, belonging, collaboratively working together-imagining, and in conversations 1:1, with communities of faith, leadership, and groups of churches we’ve been vulnerable in our situations, and explorations. Weekly growth ideas have found their way to your in-boxes through the weekly regional announcement newsletters. Seasonal letters and resources I have shared, continue to plant seeds of possibilities. The Wednesday 30-

minute virtual drop-ins have helped us build community across the regions and share ideas, as we support one another.

We recognize some work has felt too big and overwhelming, and with grace, adapted our action plans to fit our unique contexts. We celebrate the wins of each small risk, when we've dared to try that new thing, always learning from it.

We hear again the words of scripture: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" — Isaiah 43:19 (NRSVUE)

These words invite us to notice the new life already emerging. As we look ahead, we embrace "Toward 2035" — not as a distant plan, but as a hopeful movement grounded in faithful small steps. Together, we are learning what it means to simplify, to collaborate, and to focus on what gives life so that communities can thrive in changing times.

Learning and shared reflection will continue to guide us. Opportunities such as the 2026 Toward 2035 webinars, and resources for our communities of faith, remind us that the wider church is dreaming together about how we might reshape the future. We are invited to imagine new ministry models, vibrant worship, and governance that supports energy and mission. These conversations strengthen our sense that we are part of something larger than ourselves — a church seeking to embody Christ's presence in every context.

"Inspired, resilient, and diverse contextual communities of disciples seek to continue the story of Jesus by embodying Christ's presence in the world. The church is present and deeply connected coast-to-coast-to-coast in rural and urban settings, and in ecumenical and global relationships. Guided by hope-filled, adaptive and effective ministry leaders, the denomination is increasingly multigenerational, multiracial, and intercultural". – Towards 2035 Vision Statement

As Growth Animator, I want to offer encouragement and gratitude. The work you are doing matters. Every small step taken toward welcome, inclusion, justice, and spiritual depth contributes to the unfolding future God is already preparing among us. Transformation often comes through steady, faithful movement rather than large leaps.

Please know that you are not walking alone. I invite you to reach out, to share ideas, questions, hopes, and challenges. Together we can continue to nurture communities shaped by belonging, invitation, and hope.

With gratitude for all that has been and trust for all that is still emerging,

Rev. Dr. Sharon Ballantyne  
Growth Animator, Atlantic Canada (UCC-East)  
Growth and Ministry Development  
The United Church of Canada  
[sballantyne@united-church.ca](mailto:sballantyne@united-church.ca) 506-306-0500

## **Hunter Church Building Fund**

### History

The Hunter Church Building Fund (“the Fund”) was first established by a statute of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly in 1876, amended in 1896, 1969, and 2024, following the terms of a bequest from the estate of Charles D. Hunter to the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (now the United Church of Canada) for churches located in Nova Scotia.

The Fund is administered by Trustees who review applications and, based on a congregation’s need, award grants that may cover up to 50% of the project cost. Grants never exceed 50% of funds raised by the applicant congregation.

### Grants in 2025

In 2025, Hunter Fund Trustees were pleased to be able to award grants totaling \$374,536.79 to 13 congregations/communities of faith.

### Application Process

Application forms must be obtained from the Region’s Property Committee and returned to them for initial review. The Region then forwards applications to the Fund trustees for final determination. Please note: Hunter Fund forms were revised in 2025 and only applications submitted on revised forms will be considered. All others will be returned.

To ensure adequate time to review grant applications, applications for “Regular” grants (up to \$20,000) must be submitted to the Property Committee no later than March 15, September 15, or November 15 for the Trustees’ meetings in April, October and December. “Special” grant applications (exceeding \$20,000) are considered once a year, in December. Grants are paid after the congregation has provided proof that the approved project has been completed and that all service providers have been paid.

### Appreciation

Hunter Fund Trustees are honoured to preserve responsible stewardship of the Fund and to follow its historical mandate of providing grants to Nova Scotia congregations/communities of faith. We appreciate ongoing consultations with, and the support of, the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Region’s Property Committee, as well as the administrative support and advice of the staff of the Region.

Respectfully,

*Rev Dr Wayne Smith*

Wayne Smith (Rev Dr)

Secretary

Hunter Church Building Fund

**Maritime United Church Women**

The 2025 Annual meeting was held April 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> at Bedford United Church in Bedford N.S. This was an opportunity for United Church Women from across the Maritimes to gather, with worship, education, food, fun and friendship.

The MUCW presented cards and a donation to M&S in each of their names to all of the ordinands at the joint annual meeting of BNS and FSLDW regional councils.

The Executive met on June 9<sup>th</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup> at the UCC office in Sackville NB. The executive also met on Oct 6<sup>th</sup> in Moncton, and on November 21<sup>st</sup>, January 23<sup>rd</sup> February 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026 via Zoom.

At Berwick Camp this past summer the UCW continued to provide Cookies for the beloved cookie cottage, the majority of which came from the women of PEI. Letha Mowat's name was added to the plaque at the cookie cottage. On UCW day at Berwick we were delighted that Bishop Rev. Karen Oliveto agreed to speak with our women that day. It was a very uplifting and inspiring message.

In September, President Betty-Ann Watts, President-elect Ann Piper, Anna Peters Member at Large and Myra Thiemann Recording Secretary travelled to Mississauga Ontario to attend the National UCW Annual Meeting. We were surprised to learn that not every regional council has a seat at the table for UCW. This is something that BNS, and FSLDW regional councils do and we are honoured to be part of the work of regional council. NUCW has formed an affirming committee to look into our National UCW becoming an affirming community of faith.

The MUCW puts out 3 newsletters per year which are distributed to all of our members across the three provinces. Although our Bermuda units are no longer functioning as a UCW they still receive the newsletters to keep in touch with us here in Nova Scotia. The newsletters are filled with information from individual units across the Maritimes. These newsletters are also posted on the UCC east website. When you read any one of these newsletters you will see that our units across the Maritimes are still very busy indeed.

Mission and Service givings for 2024 (we receive the total amount given in June or July each year) \$55,666.

The Healing Fund was chosen as our 5-year project in 2022, and as of December 29, 2025 the total amount of gifts received from UCW members nationally is \$107,726.88. MUCW is proud to be part of one step towards reconciliation.

2026 Annual Meeting will take place April 24-26 in Nashwaaksis United Church, Fredericton NB.

Respectfully Submitted  
Ann Piper, President-Elect MUCW  
UCW representative to BNS regional council.

## **Office of Vocation**

The work of the Office of Vocation is to ensure that the United Church of Canada has effective ministry leadership. We support that work in a variety of ways, including supporting new leaders through the candidacy pathway process, and assisting ministers in becoming more effective and accountable through the remedial and support processes.

The 45th General Council gave us a frame worth holding close. “Vocations of the Whole People of God” (a new statement on ministry adopted by 4<sup>th</sup> General Council) is not merely a programmatic theme - it is a theological claim about who belongs to the ministry of the church and whose calling the institution is responsible for honouring. It pushes the Office of Vocation to ask whether our processes, our formation pathways, our governance structures, and our culture of accountability genuinely reflect a conviction that God's call is wider than any one form of ordered ministry. This question has animated much of the work reported here.

That question also has a strategic partner in Toward 2035. The call to be “guided by hope-filled, adaptive and effective ministry leaders” is not a slogan - it is a mandate. In a church navigating rapid cultural change, significant financial constraints, and an ongoing reckoning with its own history of harm and exclusion, the quality of its leadership matters immensely. The Office of Vocation is one of the principal bodies responsible for ensuring that the people called to lead communities of faith are genuinely equipped, genuinely supported, and genuinely accountable. This report reflects how seriously the Board and staff team take that responsibility.

As in the whole church, the office of vocation has been navigating real transitions within its own team. Staff changes - including a renewed leadership configuration within the Office of Vocation staff, the departure of long-serving colleagues, and the welcome of new ones - have tested the resilience of the team even as the work has continued without pause.

In October 2025, all the committees of the Board of Vocation gathered in Toronto to begin its work as a community. One hundred and five elected members and seventeen staff came to that gathering with the intention of building something more than a functional governance committee, and something more was indeed what happened. There was an electric quality to the connections being made across committee lines and across the country - ideas beginning to flow, enthusiasm kindling, people discovering in each other colleagues they could not wait to work alongside. Committee members left with a palpable sense of the importance of their work and a genuine eagerness to get on with it.

## **Staff**

In 2025, the Office of Vocation experienced significant change within the staff team. Most significant was the departure of Marlene Britton from her role as Director of the Policies and Programs for Ministry Personnel and staff leader of the Office of Vocation. Her position was reconfigured and the work of the Office of Vocation was divided into two halves. I was appointed as the Director of Emerging Ministry Leadership, essentially having responsibility for policy and procedures leading to ordination and commissioning and managing the Vocation Ministers. As well I am devoting significant time to continuing a General Council Executive priority of co-operative ministry. Adam Hanley was appointed as the Director of Emerging Ministry Leadership

which includes remedial processes and support to clergy leadership. Together we co-direct the Office of Vocation.

In addition we had two Vocation Ministers leave and began a search for the Vocation Minister for the Atlantic Regions. By the time of the AGMs these positions will be filled.

### **Candidacy Pathway**

The Candidacy Pathway is served by 66 elected members of seven Candidacy Boards across the church including our own Atlantic Board. These individuals commit to three to five days a month of service to the Boards and bring tremendous dedication, wisdom and skill, including the commitment to on-going learning and practice, to the work they have taken on, on behalf of the church.

As opportunities are taken for Candidacy Boards to meet and work together regionally and denominationally, the commitment for greater consistency of practice across the Candidacy Boards is being realized. The pathway is built to ground the discernment and preparation for ordered ministry on the Competencies for Formation for Ministry and Lifelong Ministry Leadership. This is also the document that links theological education, field education and supervised ministry with the Candidacy Board's assessment of readiness for ordered ministry, making the candidacy process coherent, collaborative and focussed on hope-filled, adaptive and effective practice of ministry.

### **Candidacy Pathway Trends**

- increased number of candidates from other denominations;
- candidates are trending slightly younger;
- no significant increase in number of racialized candidates
- many second-career applicants and candidates who desire to be bi-vocational;
- younger candidates are without much United Church experience or formation;
- candidates tend to enroll in local theological school, without much knowledge of the variety of theological education opportunities and streams of ministry (an area of improvement for Candidacy Boards)
- applicants with a call to serve their own congregation are turning to opportunities to train for lay-led/clergy-supported ministry rather than entering the candidacy pathway.

One significant piece of work for the next triennium is a re-examination of the current model of supervised ministry education. The many factors leading to this widespread call include:

- fewer congregations able to offer an appropriate learning site;
- off-site supervision proving less effective;
- working students in part-time programs which include SME
- emerging models of church suited to SME but without finances for compensation.

A decision was made in 2025, as part of a successful application to the Lilly Foundation with the church's theological schools, to employ a Supervised Ministry Education specialist to take on the re-examination of SME and DFE in partnership with all related parties. I am delighted that Rev. Dr. Sally Shaw has been hired to this position. This position began on April 1<sup>st</sup> and will be funded through the Lilly grant.

In 2025, five Supervised Ministry Education sites were made available through a memorandum of understanding between the community of faith and the Office of Vocation which offered grants for two years of half-time salary for SME candidates eager to be formed on-the-ground for a model of ministry that is lay-led and clergy-supported, rather than clergy-led and lay-supported. This model of ‘mutual’ or ‘cooperative’ ministry was supported by Rev. Dr. Andrew Richardson, Strategic Lead for Cooperative Ministry. The initial report of these varied SME opportunities demonstrates that no single model of cooperative ministry is emerging in the denomination, but rather a variety of models, each with its own challenges to governance, sustainability, staffing and ministry focus. All candidates report commitment to, and gratitude for, learning from these challenges and opportunities. The Pilot will be evaluated at the end of 2026.

### **Atlantic Candidacy Board**

In the Atlantic Region we are well served by an excellent and competent candidacy board that is a model for boards across the country. At the beginning of the new triennium Susan Butler-Jones began her term as the chair and several new members were added. The board members are: Susan Butler-Jones; Barbara Cairns; Erasmus Madimbu; Kathleen Anderson; Kimberly Douglas; Liz Dawson; Stephen Fram; Alicia Walls; Marie-Beth Wright; Gneid Lackey. In 2025 the board held 28 interviews with candidates and applicants. Currently there are 21 candidates with 4 being ordained at the various AGMs. The majority of candidates are from the two mainland regions with only 2 from FDEE Regional Council. Eight of the candidates are in or beginning their Supervised Ministry Education all of whom are in appointments on the mainland. Overall there has been a decrease in the number of applicants to the candidacy pathway. All of those in the pathway are in the ordained ministry stream and all but one are doing theological studies at the Atlantic School of Theology.

This is my last report as Vocation Minister for the Atlantic Regions. I have been working with candidates and ministers in these regions since the inception of the Office of Vocation in 2019. During that time I have been supported in that work by the Regional Staff across the regions. I have had opportunity to talk and support ministry leaders and candidates in their vocational journey. It has been a privilege and an honour to work with such dedicated and able leaders, many of whom are exceptional. To all those who continue to minister among us I can only offer deep gratitude for your dedication, commitment and continued calling. This is not an easy time to be church, but I am inspired and strengthened by your leadership and faithfulness.

Respectfully

Rev. Dr. Andrew Richardson

Director Emerging Ministry Leadership and Co-Director of the Office of Vocation

### **Regional Minister’s Report**

Bermuda Nova Scotia Regional Council, by the numbers – April 2026

132 pastoral charges, 159 preaching points

106 ministry personnel in Call or Appointment

16 collaborative ministries (32 pastoral charges, 16 ministers)

- 2 ecumenical shared ministries – Anglican/United (1 Anglican priest, 1 in Search)
- 4 “team” ministries of multiple staff
- 4 Interim Ministries
- 2 amalgamations currently in process involving 5 pastoral charges
- 28 retired ministry personnel in Appointment (24 part-time, 4 full-time)
- 32 solo part time (partially funded) positions
- 8 Candidates serving in Appointment
- 5 ministry personnel on medical leave
- 2 formal complaints in process, 1 Review in process
- 27 in pastoral relations processes (13 Profile prep, 14 Search)
- 9 vacancies posted for Search on ChurchHub (6 full-time, 3 part-time)
- 2 vacancies not posted, not looking
- 31 Pastoral Charge Supervisors (vacancies, Candidates, Admissions, medical leave, admin leave)

In 2025, the BNS Pastoral Relations Committee met almost monthly, for a total of 10 times, by Zoom. Most meetings ran for approximately one hour. In 2025, the following approvals occurred:

1. 65 Appointments
2. 9 Calls
3. 8 Requests for Change in Pastoral Relations
4. 26 Profiles and/or position descriptions
5. 3 Congregational Designated Ministry positions

Actions of the Pastoral Relations Committee are posted promptly to the weekly Region email.

For more information, please contact Regional Minister David Hewitt, [dhewitt@united-church.ca](mailto:dhewitt@united-church.ca).

### **St. Andrew’s College**

Dear Kin in Christ of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council,

I am grateful for the continued support and encouragement of the Regional Councils, and I am pleased to share an update on the life and work of St. Andrew’s College. There is much to be thankful for, and a strong sense that we are building on solid foundations while responding faithfully to the needs of the church today.

The Oliver & Gruchy Learning Centre continues to emerge as a central platform for accessible theological learning. It is serving both congregations and the wider church with programmes that are flexible, grounded and responsive. The Centre has become a trusted space for ongoing formation, supporting lay leaders, ministry personnel and those exploring new questions of faith

and practice. Its reach and impact continue to grow, and it reflects our shared commitment to learning that is open, hospitable and connected to the realities of ministry.

Our collaboration through the Saskatoon Theological Union remains a significant strength. Working alongside our partner colleges, we are expanding learning opportunities through shared faculty, joint programmes and a spirit of genuine collegiality. This collaboration allows us to steward resources wisely while also enriching our students' academic and formational experience. The current alignment with the STU is strong and life-giving, and it continues to shape our teaching and community in constructive ways.

The College continues to welcome a strong cohort of students preparing for leadership in the church. Our students bring diverse experiences, cultural backgrounds and vocational stories, alongside a deep commitment to ministry and service. Their presence enriches classroom learning and community life, and their engagement gives us confidence in the future leadership of the United Church. We remain attentive to the changing patterns of ministry and are committed to preparing leaders who are adaptable, reflective and grounded in faith.

Alongside this, important work is underway to strengthen pathways of leadership development and vocational discernment within the United Church. We are paying close attention to how people are invited, accompanied and supported as they explore calls to ministry and other forms of leadership. This work is relational and collaborative, and it reflects a shared desire to nurture gifts with care, clarity and integrity.

We also continue to value and deepen our local and international partnerships. These relationships broaden our perspective and root our work in the global church. We are especially pleased to name our new relationship with Murray Theological College in Zimbabwe. This partnership is already opening opportunities for mutual learning, shared reflection and deeper solidarity, and we look forward to where it may lead.

Overall, there is a strong sense of momentum and hope. We remain committed to serving the church with humility, imagination and faithfulness, and we are thankful for the ongoing relationship with the Regional Councils as partners in this shared ministry.

In Christ,  
Dea. Dr. Richard Manley-Tannis

### **Stewardship**

Report not received.

## Ukulele Church



Hello from Ukulele Church!

For those of you who might be unfamiliar with this ministry, we are a worshipping community that has been meeting weekly since October 2020 over Zoom. A ministry founded here in the Atlantic Regions, we currently have participants from NL, NB, PE, NS, ON, MB, BC, Nunavut, and India! Our membership includes folks who have regular “in person” communities with whom they worship, but for some, this is their only experience of church. We continue to be surprised when people of all ages and stages join us because of the ukulele, which we still describe as the “world’s happiest instrument.”

We’ve been blessed at Ukulele Church with consistent and dedicated leadership. Our team includes Linnea Good from Summerland, BC, Nancy Callbeck from Borden-Carleton, PE, Isaac Jonsson-Good living in Vancouver, BC and me, Rev. Catherine Stuart, Regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults for Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters, Bermuda-Nova Scotia and First Dawn Eastern Edge. From time to time, we are also happy that a few of our regular worshipping members take on leadership roles to both teach music and lead in art. Together, we plan and lead our programme for the participants that receive our weekly email, consisting of a reflection, our music pages, art resources, and occasional pictures that we share. We meet at 12:30pm Atlantic time/ 1pm NL Time, for an hour and 15 mins of worship.

Our weekly worship continues to follow a pattern that we’ve developed over our time together. We follow the pattern of the church year (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost), focussing on biblical stories that we tell for three-four weeks (what we call a mini-series), as well as music and art that fit those themes. Highlights this year included our annual Christmas pageant and a Readers’ Theatre version of the story of Esther that included several pices of music from secular sources, including “Be our Guest,” from Beauty and the Beast, “Roar,” by Katy Perry, and Abba’s “Dancing Queen,” among others. We do take a break for the summer months—at least, online.

Linnea travelled once again to the Maritimes, and we enjoyed a week spent together under the hemlocks as part of the offerings at Berwick Camp. We met together at Linnea’s family cottage in Harvey Station, NB to work on a resource that will soon be published that will include many of our Ukulele favourites. This resource is made possible by the Rev. Alison Etter Memorial Grant, through Atlantic School of Theology. We are excited about this project, so please stay “tuned.”

Catherine continued to offer workshops and worship leadership across all three regions. We are still exploring how Ukulele Church provides a model for skill-based intergenerational ministry, both in person and online. For us, this means that all ages are together as they learn based on the level of skill that they have with the instrument.

Behind the scenes, Ukulele Church accomplished a great deal this year. We continue to send out weekly emails to our base, which has grown to 112 recipients, across the country and around the world. We are exploring how to continue to offer this resource in sustainable ways that will help us to grow and learn together.

We continue to be open to invitations for worship, workshops, and other events where we can provide leadership and resources. We are still spending time taking already existing music and putting it into musical keys and formats that are Ukulele specific, so send us your ideas!

As mentioned above, now in All THREE Atlantic Regions, Catherine has access to an ever-growing Ukulele Lending Library, so please be in touch with her ([cstuart@united-church.ca](mailto:cstuart@united-church.ca)) to find out how she can visit your community/ministry, or how you can make use of this resource. We particularly wish to thank the Mary Stuart Van Mater fund for financially contributing to grow both of these libraries, this year in First Dawn Eastern Edge. Catherine and Linnea are also available for coaching if you have your own instruments and are wondering how to use them in your communities. Now that we have our method, please ask us how we do it so that this ministry can be available on the ground where you are.

We are, as always, grateful to the three Atlantic Regions who have provided funding from each region's New Ministries Funds. We are also receiving increased support through the regular offerings of Ukulele Church community members, and are exploring other avenues of funding to broaden our base.

If you're appreciative of this ministry and would like to contribute, please find us on Canada Helps, through the [regional website](https://ucceast.ca/make-a-donation) <https://ucceast.ca/make-a-donation> . Thank you for all of the ways you have supported, and continue to support, this ministry!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Ukulele Church,  
Rev. Catherine Stuart  
Regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults & Co-Minister for Ukulele Church

### **United Church Rural Ministry Network**

The United Church Rural Ministry Network (UCRMN) is a national network, connecting 515 subscribers from all of the Regions in Canada, an electronic network sharing stories and news of rural communities across Canada (and around the world), and bringing together leaders of rural communities of faith – lay and clergy. In 2020, we received a one-time start up grant of \$5,000 from United Church Foundation and got going. UCRMN is a charitable organization that receipts donations from Regional Councils, Congregations or interested people. At [UCRMN.ca](https://ucrmn.ca), there is a link for online donations, and information for emailing e-Transfers or mailing cheques. UCRMN has requested that all Regional Councils (or tri-Region groupings) put UCRMN in their annual budgets; 70% of United Church congregations across the country are in rural or small towns, therefore this support is 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 write 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, Learning on the Way, 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 wider rural constituency, let us know through [editor@ucrmn.ca](mailto:editor@ucrmn.ca). We invite all rural congregations to connect and receive e-newsletters through registering on the website ([ucrmn.ca](http://ucrmn.ca)).

Our Zoom workshops this year: Jan. 20 “LLWL Check in” (continuation of conversation with Licensed Lay Worship Leaders across the country. So interesting and helpful finding out the different practices within Regions, and supporting each other. Continued in June.) May 15, “How to Save your Computer” (as Windows 10 reached the end of its life and Windows made demands for new systems, Martin and Peter, our tech gurus, talked about open source software as a secure, ethical and economic option for churches). Nov. 20, “The gifts of Rural Culture” (Shawn Sanford-Beck led some thinking about the gifts rural communities offer the wider church shaped by Joyce Sasse’s observations on rural culture). Jan. 22, 2026, Christine Jerrett who is leading the ChurchX Lenten Study on book, Bless, Break and Share, led a discussion to hear a rural perspective on the theme. Feb, 19, 2026, Lay-Led Congregational Leadership. These workshops are advertised in the e-Newsletters and offered free of charge. Registration is done through Eventbrite. Reports on a number of the workshops that were held are found on the UCRMN website.

IRCA (International Rural Churches Association) Day of Prayer will be hosted by UCRMN folks again this year, on April 16, with some stories of local ministries and opportunity to pray for them. You can check last year’s program out on the IRCA website (<https://irca.online/24-hour-prayer-zoom> - the Americas).

UCRMN members take part regularly in the “Rural Townhalls” by United in Learning to hear peoples’ thoughts about what is going on in rural churches, and how rural ministries can be supported.

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

Respectfully Submitted Catherine Christie - President, UCRMN (Abbey, SK)

### **Proposals**

A “proposal” is a formal request for a council to take action. It is one way that a United Church member may raise an issue that is important for the church, and ask the church to discern appropriate action. The council that is being asked to take action is called the “council of action.”

- In general, a proposal may be started by any one member of a community of faith, the governing body, a committee, or other church body of a community of faith.

- A proposal may also be started by
  - a) a member of the regional council or General Council;
  - b) a committee or other church body of the regional council or General Council; or
  - c) the regional council.
- Members and councils are responsible for completing the parts of the process assigned to them. See Manual 2026 (F.1 pp. 104-108)
- When a member of a community of faith makes a proposal, the member gives the proposal to the governing body of the community of faith.
- When a council makes a proposal, the first step is for the council to pass the proposal on to the next council.
- When a member of a council makes a proposal, the first step is for the member to pass the proposal on to that council.
- When a committee of a council makes a proposal, the first step is for the committee to pass the proposal on to that council.
- If the governing body is the council of action, it makes a decision on the proposal.
- If the regional council is the council of action:
  - a) The governing body decides if it agrees with the proposal.
  - b) If it agrees, the governing body must pass the proposal on to the regional council.
  - c) If it does not agree, the governing body decides whether or not to pass the proposal on to the regional council.

If the governing body does not agree with a proposal, it normally passes it on to the regional council only if there is a compelling reason.

  - d) The governing body may include its own recommendations when passing a proposal on to the regional council.
- If the General Council is the council of action:
  - a) The regional council decides if it agrees with the proposal.
  - b) If it agrees, the regional council passes the proposal on to the General Council.
  - c) If it does not agree, the regional council decides whether or not to pass the proposal on to the General Council.

If the regional council does not agree with a proposal, it normally passes it on to the General Council only if there is a compelling reason.

  - d) The regional council may include its own recommendations when passing a proposal on to the General Council.
- In determining if something is the proper subject matter for the regional council, consider if this is a matter for the full region, whether direction from the regional council is required, or whether it suggests a new policy or direction. (If the matter is currently the work of a committee or division, perhaps a discussion with the committee or division is the best action.

- In determining if something is the proper subject matter for a proposal to General Council, consider whether it pertains to the whole church, whether direction from the General Council is required, and whether it suggests a new policy or direction.
- The council making the decision must have the necessary information for a sound decision. In communicating from one council to another, it is important that the proposal gives an action and provides sufficient background to the emerging question, the consideration undertaken and the rationale for the proposed action.
- A well written proposal guides the decision makers through the process of discernment; from framing the question to a reasoned and wished for response and is no more than 2 (two) pages. A proposal may be accompanied by a more substantive report.
- The proposal, in order to be voted on as an action, must be made into a motion. Once a motion is made, it is put to the council. The normal rules of debate and procedure then are applied.

#### Response by Council of Action

The council of action is responsible for making a decision on the proposal. It has the following options:

- a) taking the action requested in the proposal;
- b) taking the action requested in the proposal with some changes;
- c) taking different action on the same subject matter as the proposal;
- d) referring the proposal;
- e) receiving the proposal but taking no further action; or
- f) taking some other action that the council of action decides is appropriate.

See Manual 2026 (F.1 pp. 104-108)

### Proposal Template

**Please see templates for completion of proposals:**

- 1. Regional Council as the council of action**
- 2. *General Council Office is not accepting proposals for General Council until 2027 to allow for a review and update of process and form***

### Proposal Template

Enter title of PROPOSAL here

**Origin: Origin of proposals is usually a Division/Committee or Community of Faith**

#### **1. What is the issue?**

Description in broad terms. We believe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit is calling us to do something about... / engage the topic of... respond to the challenge of...

**2. Why is this issue important?**

e.g. What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues?

What is the history/background of this issue?

What are the principles informing this issue?

What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue?

**3. How might the Region respond to the issue?**

**Name a possible response that the Region might consider:**

**A. Study/Discussion of the issue****B. Action on the issue. This could include:**

- **Region directing that a policy/strategy be developed based on specified principles and parameters**
- **Region adopting a policy position/strategy**
- **Region directing the Executive Minister or Executive to act/operationalize**
- **Region encouraging/suggesting action by congregations and other communities of faith on the issue**

Note to 3.A: The Regional Executive could be asked to have a conversation about a particular issue as an end in itself without making a policy decision or taking other action.

Note to 3.B: Suggestions for wording of a policy/strategy could be offered as possibilities for consideration in the decision-making process but not as expectations of a particular outcome.

**4. What will be the impact?**

How does it align with the Strategic plan/Vision?

What is the cost? Staff time + budget (*If the cost is estimated to be over \$10,000.00 the proposal will need to be referred to the Finance committee for review and affordability before being approved*)

Who will be impacted? How?

What are the risk management issues?

**5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?****6. For the body transmitting this proposal to the Region:**

Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal?

**7. Who will speak to this proposal on behalf of the originating body?**

## **PROPOSAL 1**

### **Title: Pledging to Become an Apartheid-Free Community**

#### **Originating Body:**

The Just Peace Working Group of the Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee of Bermuda-Nova Scotia and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regions

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#### **What is the issue? Why is this issue important?**

For decades, Palestinians living in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza have experienced military occupation, displacement, restrictions on movement, and unequal access to resources. Within Israel, Palestinian citizens also face systemic inequalities.

The term “apartheid,” once associated primarily with South Africa, is now used in international law to describe systems of institutionalized racial domination and oppression. In 2022, following years of first-hand experience, extensive research and documentation, several international human rights organizations such as [Amnesty International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), the Israeli human rights organization [B’Tselem](#) as well as the International Commission of Jurists, applied this term to the situation in Israel and the occupied territories. They were followed by nations such as South Africa and Ireland that concluded that the current system experienced by Palestinians amounts to apartheid.

The [International Court of Justice](#) addressed the issue of Israeli apartheid under [Article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\)](#), which obligates states to prevent and eradicate all forms of segregation and apartheid in an [Advisory Opinion issued in 2024](#). In a historic ruling the International Court of Justice found multiple and serious international law violations by Israel towards Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories, including finding Israel responsible for apartheid.

Palestinians have reached out to the international community to support them in becoming free of Israel’s apartheid. As followers of the Gospel, we are called to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. The situation in Palestine and Israel raises urgent theological and moral questions about human dignity, equality, and the use of power.

The United Church of Canada has a long history of prophetic witness in matters of justice, including opposition to apartheid in South Africa. This proposal invites the Bermuda Nova Scotia Region to continue that legacy by responding in our own context to present-day realities with courage and integrity.

Theologically, the United Church of Canada affirms that all people are created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) and are deserving of dignity, justice, and peace. The biblical witness consistently calls for the protection of the oppressed and the pursuit of justice.

We believe that God is calling us to respond to this unjust treatment of God’s children by recognizing and responding to the reality of apartheid including systemic discrimination and

segregation faced by Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories and in Israel, and committing to concrete actions that resist complicity in these systems as our faith demands of us. God loves all people and calls us to liberate the oppressed (which also liberates the oppressor).

At this Kairos moment, we must accompany the Palestinians who are on the verge of total annihilation of Christians in the land of Jesus where our Christian faith began. Our silence would only contribute to their destruction. Our faith demands truth-telling, courageous action, and solidarity. Silence, delay or cautious diplomacy while people are knowingly being killed and abused would be a betrayal of our faith and humanity.

All of us have seen horrific, heartbreaking scenes of death, destruction, and inhumane treatment of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank - on TV, our computers and cell phones. We are called and we long to do more towards a just and sustainable peace for Palestine/Israel.

The Just Peace Working Group of JMOC (Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee) has been educating United Church Communities of Faith and others in our regions about the unjust oppression, 59-year military occupation, and conditions amounting to apartheid. We have done this through leading many Communities of Faith in the Palestine Land Exercise, modeled after the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, in the B-NS Region and in the FSLDW Region. Many Communities of Faith in both regions have learned of the injustices and oppression of Israel over Palestinians from personal witness accounts of returned Ecumenical Accompaniers Bill Chambre and Steve Berube, from others who have visited the West Bank and Jerusalem, and from local neighbours whose families are still in danger in Gaza and/or in other parts of the occupied Palestinian territories.

As people have learned about these injustices, we have shared resources for them to learn more and to take action against apartheid and for international law and equal human rights for Palestinians. Actions we've encouraged have been: signing petitions; writing letters to federal government representatives; and joining the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement supported by the United Church of Canada. In October 2024, following GC44 affirmation of the Justice Principles for advocacy work, the Moderator of the United Church of Canada wrote a pastoral letter to those of us of the United Church of Canada encouraging participation in strategies including: the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction movement; the Apartheid-Free Communities movement; and the international human rights community in recognizing and rejecting Israel's apartheid system of laws and legal procedures towards the Palestinian people.

The Apartheid-Free network is a coalition of communities who pledge to work together to end Israeli apartheid. Originally created by faith groups in North America, the network currently includes congregations, faith communities, solidarity organizations, non-profits, campus groups, businesses, and more. This network is based with the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers). Over 1,000 communities have signed the pledge and joined the growing movement – including over 300 communities in Canada – church congregations and others. April 20, 2026, we sponsored and promoted a webinar, “Is it time to Become an Apartheid-Free Community?”

## How might the Region respond to the issue?

### The Region might:

1. **affirm** the educational work of the Just Peace Working Group of JMOC focused on recognizing and rejecting Israel's apartheid system towards the Palestinian people;
2. **endorse** the Just Peace Working Group of JMOC signing the Apartheid-Free Pledge:
 

“WE AFFIRM our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people and all people;  
WE OPPOSE all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression; and  
WE DECLARE ourselves an Apartheid-free community and to that end,  
WE PLEDGE to join others in working to end all support to Israel's Apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation.”
3. **invite** Communities of Faith in its Region, after engaging in further learning about Israel's apartheid system towards the Palestinian people, to sign the Apartheid-Free pledge to join others in working to end all support to Israel's Apartheid regime, settler colonialism and military occupation;
4. **sign** the Apartheid-Free Pledge as a Region, after further learning about Israel's apartheid system towards the Palestinian people, to join other faith-based communities in working to end all support to Israel's Apartheid regime, settler colonialism and military occupation; and
5. **request** that the Just Peace Working Group report back at the next Regional Annual Meeting.

**What will be the impact?** Palestinian Christians and our other church partners in Palestine/Israel will be strengthened by our public witness and costly solidarity.

**How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?** It calls the Region to focus directly on recognizing and addressing an issue of inequity – Apartheid - in a way that calls us, Israelis, and Palestinians to live into equity. This is part of our commitment to freedom, justice and equality for all peoples.

**For the body transmitting this proposal to the Region:** The Just Peace Working Group and JMOC are ready and willing to assist the Region and its Communities of Faith in learning and in taking actions.

**Who will speak to this proposal on behalf of the originating body?** Linda Scherzinger

## PROPOSAL 2

### **Proposal: First Third Ministry - A Priority for Our Region**

#### **Origin: Children, Youth and Young Adults Committee**

##### **1. What is the issue?**

The General Council, at its most recent meeting in August of 2025, named “First Third Ministry” (known in this region as ministry with Children, Youth and Young Adults) as a priority for the denomination (in GCE04 Funding Strategic Growth Initiatives, WF37 National Youth Council, and GC45 Vocations for the Whole People of God). This action names and centres the ministry in ways that make it a priority in action and in our use of resources (both people and financial). Further to that, a national strategy is being developed to centre this ministry for the current triennium that will help both the General Council and the Regional Councils to attain goals that will enhance the ministry that is before the whole denomination in the report “Toward 2035.” We recognize the support that Bermuda-Nova Scotia has consistently offered in the past; most notably a full-time staff person devoted to a shared youth ministry with Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters and First Dawn Eastern Edge, a decent-sized budget to provide regional youth programming and support towards First Third Ministry events organized at the national level. We also recognize the unimaginable donation of volunteer hours and clergy’s unpaid overtime to ensure that First Third Ministry remains vital in our region. While this region has named strategic pillars: 1. Bold Discipleship 2. Clear Mission and 3. Daring Leadership, we feel that this unwritten priority of First Third ministry should be named in a way that recognizes and ensures a continued intentional commitment. In keeping with larger church trends and goals, we recommend modifying the current strategic plan, updated in 2025, to ensure that our understanding of and the language we use to describe this vital ministry is in line with larger church language and goals. First Third Ministry is not just ministry activities for those who “do” this ministry. It promotes commitment to Faith, growing Discipleship, and a deeper understanding of Justice. A declared commitment to First Third Ministry also helps Bermuda-Nova Scotia with its purpose of Bold Discipleship, Clear Mission, and Daring Leadership.

##### **2. Why is this issue important?**

Actively naming and claiming a First Third Ministry offers a commitment to growth, the full integration of children, youth, young adults, their families and leaders into the ministry of the wider church, and because these age groups are already engaged in ministry, this will provide examples, activities, and guidelines for the rest of the region to consider and engage in when looking “Toward 2035.” By intentionally naming this often-overlooked cohort, we are ensuring that the voices of those in their first third of life and their families and leaders are able to contribute easily in meaningful ways and their contributions are sought and accepted as valuable to the church.

##### **3. How might the Region respond to the issue?**

Therefore, we believe that God is calling our Region to recognize the critical importance and vitality of these ministries in all aspects of its life and they need to be intentionally included by naming them in the current strategic plan.

This proposal recommends:

1). Naming, 'First Third' Ministry with Children, Youth and Young Adults in the strategic plan by updating the pillars so that actions specific to First Third Ministry appear in each pillar - a promise of mutuality in making this vision a reality.

2). Empower the Children, Youth and Young Adult committee to review and update the Objectives and Actions, following the pattern named in the pillars—and bring them to the executive for full consideration and implementation.

3). The Nominations Committee, with help from CYAYA and the Regional Minister for CYAYA, will actively seek out people within the First Third of their lives to serve in all areas of regional ministry to ensure full integration of the updated Objectives and Actions.

**4. What will be the impact?**

Enacting this proposal will ensure that First Third Ministry will be considered crucial to the ministry of the region, recognizing and prioritizing it as ministry that provides discipleship, mission, and leadership.

**5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?** Voices of Children, Youth, Young Adults, their families and their leaders are underrepresented in key areas of the region. This proposal seeks to invite First Third church members into all areas of the conversation, keeping their presence at the forefront of conversations.

**6. For the body transmitting this proposal to the Region:**

**7. Who will speak to this proposal on behalf of the originating body?**

Paige Fraser CYAYA Chair

Alicia Cox, CYAYA member

James O'Connell, CYAYA member

Catherine Stuart, Regional Minister to Children, Youth & Young Adults

### **PROPOSAL 3**

#### **Proposal: Resurrecting Campus Ministry in Fundy St. Lawrence Dawnig Waters (FSLDW)/Bermuda-Nova Scotia (BNS) Region**

##### **Origin: Justice, Mission and Outreach Committee**

##### **1. What is the issue?**

The report “Towards 2035” shows starkly the drop in membership in the United Church of Canada. It challenges us to look to the future with optimism rooted in our recognition of the changes in our society and the constancy of our need for the Holy Spirit. While we search for new ways to live our faith, we cannot forget what has served us well in the past. UCC campus ministries have eroded over time and our current ministries are not reaching our youth. Campus chaplaincies can touch the lives of hundreds of young adults every year.

Recognizing the social justice work done by that ministry, when financial support for the Dalhousie campus ministry ended Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council assigned JMOC the task of responding to that loss. In responding to this request, JMOC asked: *Where does Campus Ministry most naturally belong so it can thrive?*

##### **2. Why is this issue important?**

Young adults need spiritual care and counselling and guidance as they navigate questions of identity and purpose into adulthood. Campus ministry builds relationships with this generation, offers outreach to respond to their current needs, and encourages an inclusive faith where Christian Nationalism and Fundamentalist ideologies often take hold. A positive experience of faith in the first third of one’s life allows a person to identify their own gifts and learn to use them to serve others. Thus, it creates a great sense of purpose, nurturing resiliency and mental well-being.

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##### **3. How might the Region respond to the issue?**

Therefore, we believe that God is calling our Regions to recognize the critical importance of this unique type of ministry at this time, and to recommit to its value as an outreach ministry to young adults.

This proposal recommends moving the responsibility of “Campus Chaplaincy” from JMOC to Children, Youth and Young Adults (BNS) and Faith Formation and Education (FSLDW).

##### **4. What will be the impact?**

For the denomination, the need to connect with young adults is crucial to our sustainability. For communities of faith, opportunities to expand intergenerational reach adds different perspectives, beliefs and rituals that benefit the whole body of Christ. For young adults, the presence of accessible spiritual care at a time of existential questioning can be life-changing and life-saving. There is a strong need to feel loved and accepted as one seeks to find their place in the world.

This is not just an administrative shift, but a correction of alignment. Campus Ministry is fundamentally a relational, developmental, and formational ministry, not primarily a justice

program. Its day-to-day work is centered on accompanying young adults in their spiritual growth, identity formation, and faith exploration. JMO is structured to address systemic issues, advocacy, and outreach. Having Campus Ministry under JMO risks treating young adults as recipients of outreach rather than as people being formed, mentored, and integrated into the life of the Church. Moving it recognizes that young adults are not a “mission field”; they are part of the Church’s present and future.

Campus Ministry is deeply about faith formation. That work aligns directly with Faith Formation and Education. When Campus Ministry sits alongside Children, Youth, and Young Adult ministries, it becomes part of a lifelong faith journey rather than a disconnected initiative. Placing Campus Ministry in formation-focused bodies ensures that justice engagement emerges from deep roots rather than being the sole organizing framework.

**5. How does this proposal help us live into the commitments on equity?**

Campus ministries work to include the most vulnerable, such as foreign and racialized students, those who identify as 2S&LGBTQIA+, and individuals struggling with poverty. This proposal also helps to affirm the important role that youth and young adults play within faith communities and society at large. It also empowers voices that have been historically missing or under-represented at the table.

**6. For the body transmitting this proposal to the Region:**

Yes, this proposal is going to both regions.

Yes, this proposal is originating in a bi-regional committee and is directed at two committees, one from each region.

**7. Who will speak to this proposal on behalf of the originating body?**

Dr. Kathy Bigsby (co-chair of Justice, Mission and Outreach)

Rev. Natasha Pearen (member of Justice Mission and Outreach)

Rev. Catherine Stuart, Regional Minister for Children, Youth and Young Adults (resource, if needed)

Rev. Shepherd Munikwa, Regional Minister for Justice, Mission and Outreach (resource, if needed)

**JUBILARIANS**

**50 Years in Ministry**

**The Reverend Jeffro Bursey, B.A., M.Div.**

Thank you for your ministry!

**The Reverend Donald MacPherson, B.Sc., M.Div.**

Thank you for your ministry!

### **60 Years in Ministry**

**The Reverend R. Diane MacVicar, B.A., M.Div.**



Sunset, sunrise, sunset, swiftly pass the days...” and suddenly a young woman, who found herself on the threshold of walking forward into the fulfillment of her calling since childhood, finds herself looking back at six decades!

My ministry has been enriched, enlarged and encouraged by all those who shared ministry with me. It has been sprinkled with laughter and salted with humour. I have always considered myself a ministerial GP: my love and comfort zone has encompassed the wonder of infants, the curiosity and exuberance of children, the challenging and questioning mode of teens. One of my greatest challenges and delights is to have shared faith exploration groups with adults as they were struck with new and exciting “Ah Ha” moments of faith. And to share a multitude of journeys together until we shared the privilege of travelling through the valley of the shadow of death. Our welcome presence and participation in all these journeys and life events have not so much to do with us as individuals, but rather who we represent.

I feel privileged to have been entrusted with ministry during some of the most divisive and hurtful times of challenge and change in the life of our church. During the 60’s and 70’s, many of our growing number of women in ministry were finding it an uphill journey to have their ministry received, celebrated and valued on an equal basis with their male counterparts. Periodically, the church struggled with the lively word of God in a different and difficult time, understanding and interpreting eternal truth in an ever-changing world. Inclusive language presented a major stumbling block for many.

During the 70’s and 80’s, harsh and hurtful times, saw persons of many, and no, faith communities learn, grow, and share together in realities of gender identity, diversity and equality. We continue to grow and heal, to be and to become the whole people of God...each of us, and all of us, in every aspect of the Church’s life.

60 years!! What would I rather have done with my life? NOTHING!....but the privilege to be called and enabled to answer this Call to the best of my ability in the faithfulness of Gods’ presence.

**The Reverend Doctor Norman Marple, B.A., M.Div, M.Th, D.Min.**

I extend my gratitude to our Region of the United Church of Canada for the recognition of my 60 year milestone in ministry. I believe that we owe much to our denomination and its support of colleges for our theological training and support through the years. I so appreciate their introduction and promotion of progressive and inspiring theological thinkers, past and present. It is uplifting to belong to a Christian denomination that risks dealing with complex, controversial issues. I receive hope knowing that our United church, through its General Council, is presently

offering guidance to the church at large facing changing demographics, dwindling numbers, as well as fostering ways for greater relevancy within community and the world.

Ministry continues for Joan and I, however in a limited way but nevertheless important and meaningful. Due to health issues, Joan and I find it necessary to participate in weekly Online Church. While we miss the “in house” worship experiences, our loyalties and financial support remain with Trinity United, New Glasgow, NS. Living in a large apartment complex, there is always time to engage in active listening and discussion of faith issues.

At some point, Joan and I decided to branch out and join other United churches for Online worship on particular Sundays. As it is said, “variety is the spice of life!” It is heartening to observe different roles carried out by lay persons; to be moved by the enhancement of the worship experience by talented musicians as well as presentations of secular music with lyrics in keeping with the worship theme; listening to clergy expound on chosen scripture, offering reflection out of their reading, personal travels and life experiences while making connection with scripture and present day. It is always good news to hear about the various forms of outreach carried out in their communities.

We live in troubling times. Such worshipful experiences, conducted by talented and sincere individuals give us hope. Knowing that many churches are involved in outreach ministries is reassuring and in keeping with the words of our creed, “to love and serve others”.

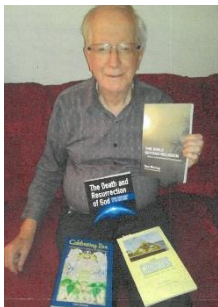
### **65 Years in Ministry**

**The Reverend Neil F. MacDonald, B.A., B.D., Th.M.**

Thank you for your ministry!

### **70 Years in Ministry**

**The Reverend Donald F. Murray, B.A., B.D., Th.M.**



B.A., M.Div., M.Th.; further training in Transactional Analysis, Education Design, Group Dynamics, The School of Sacred Psychology (Jean Houston's "Mystery School"), Jungian Psychology.

Minister, educator, workshop facilitator and author, enjoying life with his partner Emily Kierstead, in Truro, Nova Scotia.

Now retired, he has served pastorates in the Maritimes for 32 years and as Program director and then Executive Director of Tatamagouche Education and Spirituality Centre for 8 years.

Having awakened to "the-death-of-God" in the early 1960's, Don has been an avid searcher. He has authored four books, For Unbelieving Christians (1987), Celebrating Eve, (2001), The Death

and Resurrection of God: From Christianity to the New Story (2014), and now the bible Beyond Religion: Witness to the Evolution of Consciousness.

With Emily he enjoys their families, eight children (two deceased) and eleven grandchildren, along with fiddle playing, singing, and a passion for the emerging Universe Story.

My success was getting the people into leadership who knew what they were doing.

In retirement the joy was supplying many places and doing workshops with Emily, my second wife and soul partner.

My legacy is five wonderful offspring and four books.

### **75 Years in Ministry**

**The Reverend Edward P. Thompson, M.A., B.D.**

Thank you for your ministry!

### **RETIREES**

**The Reverend Doctor I. Ross Bartlett, B.A., M.Div., M.A., Th.D., D.Min.**



Ross Bartlett received his early university education and training for ministry at Queen's University (Kingston, ON) and St. Andrew's, Scotland (B.A., M.Div., M.A.). He began serving congregations as student supply, a leadership journey that lasted for thirty-eight years in seven rural, urban core, and suburban congregations in Ontario and Nova Scotia. As a minister, he was known as a strong preacher, a caring counselor, and a committed educator.

When the church turned to him, he responded by serving at all levels of the church. Nationally, he was a member of the Theology and Faith Committee, co-chaired the Liturgy and Music Committee, served on the General Council Executive, and as a commissioner to nine General Councils. Closer to home he served a variety of roles including President of Maritime Conference, chair of two Presbyteries (Kingston and Halifax), as well as a number of other committees and task groups.

Teaching and learning have always drawn Ross, leading him to doctoral degrees in history (Th.D., Toronto) and ministry (D.Min., Princeton) and to an involvement in theological education for ministry candidates and lay people since the mid-1990s. Beginning at Queen's and continuing with AST in 2001, he has regularly been a sessional lecturer and workshop leader in a variety of settings. He also taught through his writing which includes a number of published articles on a variety of subjects and six books.

Education became the primary focus of his ministry when he was appointed United Church Formation Director at AST in 2018, the position from which he retires this summer. He calls that his “dream job” as it draws on many different skills and knowledge of the church and ministry gained over four decades of service and involves him regularly with individuals on an exciting path of faith and growth.

Throughout his time in ministry the loving support of his family has been crucial and being invited into significant moments in peoples’ lives a tremendous privilege and blessing.

**The Reverend Alex Constable, B.A., M.Div.**

Thank you for your ministry!

**The Reverend Phillip Kennedy, B.A., M.A., M.Div.**



I had my first experience in paid ministry as a student 52 years ago and have been ordained for 41 years. How does one sum all that up in a few paragraphs? I was settled in Eastern Guysborough PC, followed by Marysville- Penniac (Fredericton), St. Andrews, Calgary, and then, Harvey Station, NB. I then spent 6 years at UTC in Montreal as the Director of Lay and Continuing Education, 12 years at Woodlawn United in Dartmouth and lastly Old Barns and Hilden united in the Truro area for the last 5 years. I encountered faithful and loving people in all these places. I love my parishioners, my family and friends and colleagues.

Through all of this, my passion has been faith formation and life long learning. People describe my preaching as "educational and Biblical with a passion for social justice." I haven't been afraid to be political (but not publicly partisan). Having grown up Baptist, I joined the UCC in 1980. The social justice and questioning of the UCC has been a great fit for me.

My church business card says what I think I have tried to be about for the most part: "Seeking to help people remove obstacles so that they can experience the unconditionally loving God known in Jesus by following his Way for transformation of self and the world”.

As I look ahead to a part time teaching ministry with lay folks and speaking truth to power, (especially theology in the service of the power of the Empire, I see three areas where I might be able to offer some help; areas of growth in my own life long faith formation. 1. the Bible- 2. grace and reconciliation without God needing blood sacrifice and 3. Theodicy- god and evil

My prayers will continue to include the thriving of the progressive United Church. The community and world needs us more than ever!

**The Reverend Heather D. Wright, B.A., M.Div.**



I don't remember a time when I didn't feel called to ministry. From the encouragement I received as a young teen playing my guitar at the 5 points of Eastern Guysborough Pastoral Charge, to the confirmation of call at Sharon St. John in Stellarton, to the tremendous support and sacrifice of my young family that allowed me to follow my dreams through a Sociology degree at St.FX, and M.Div at AST, and an incredible year-long internship in Grande Cache AB, I have always felt a deep sense of the Divine hand in my life. When I experienced an unjust ordination process, my call was deeply affirmed and supported by the former mighty little Pictou Presbytery and the

beautiful folks of St. Paul United in Westville NS.

I also don't remember a time when a strong sense of justice and deep compassion did not rule my heart. It led me into such rich and diverse experiences of ministry across this beautiful country that they are more than these paragraphs or indeed my heart can hold. I understood my ministry as grounded in love and justice, always working toward right relationship. This took the form of my involvement in the former Conference Right-Relations Working Group and Education & Students; in the GC Intercultural Ministries; and in leading congregations in Sambro/ Jollimore, and Hopewell Eureka East River in NS, St. Paul United in Thunder Bay, and both Trinity United and the former United on Whyte in Edmonton in the Affirming process, developing inclusive marriage policies. It also led to being a part of the development of Roots for Youth House in Pictou County following the break-in of our church by unhoused youth in the area.

The most formative part of my ministry came in being invited into Healing Circles with the Aseniwuche Winwak Nation in AB; attending the National Apology to Indigenous Peoples as part of the MCRR Working Group along with the development of the Peace and Friendship Circle at Tatamagouche Centre; working in support of the Nishnabe Aski Nation's Northern Communities' children, schooled in Thunder Bay, while at St. Paul's United; focussing our work on Reconciliation as Chair of the former Cambrian Presbytery; the honour of sharing our UCC Apology at the TRC with the Rt Rev Dr. David Giuliano; being guided by the wisdom of the Very Rev. Hon. Dr. Lois Wilson, as the minister of her childhood church; and learning in community with the Maya of Guatemala through Breaking the Silence, then educating our church of our own complicity in their oppression. In all of it I have been deeply humbled, shaped and forever changed by the experience.

In what became the final decade of active ministry for me, I was drawn into the work of Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM) quite by happenstance, but found in it, a hand meet glove form of ministry for me. I delighted in working with congregations who were seeking guidance and care through change. As one of only two designated IIM's in ANWC at the time, I found myself at the helm of a major amalgamation project, transforming four city of Edmonton congregations into a brand-new entity, unifying it around a new identity, values and purpose, in the creation of Spirit of Hope United Church. This project also resulted in locating the Korean United Church into their own building for the first time. I was honoured to be invited as guest preacher at their inaugural service. It was from this work that I was invited back home to Nova Scotia to work with the wonderful folks of United Heritage Church in Sydney, just prior to the great upheaval of the pandemic. In the

midst of major structural changes, we had to pivot with the rest of the church in transforming into an on-line community of faith, which will remain as one of the greatest challenges & accomplishments of ministry for me. I was also at that time honoured to be invited onto the faculty of the Interim Ministry Network who provides the training for UCC designation as an IIM. Having now retired back to Pictou County since the precipitous end to my work due to health challenges, I have been enjoying the gift of reconnecting with my six grandchildren, old friends & colleagues, writing of my experiences of ministry and continuing to engage in the rewarding Ministry of Supervision with a local student minister. God is Good. All the time. God is good!

**The Reverend Mary Lynne Whyte, B.Mus., M.Div.**

Thank you for your ministry!

**STAFF ANNIVERSARY**

**15 Years**



**David Hewitt**  
Regional Minister  
Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council



**Sarah Wallace**  
Archivist  
Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning  
Waters Regional Council

**BEST WISHES**

To Those Leaving Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council

- The Reverend Linton Worrell: to Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council

**WELCOME**

To Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council

- The Reverend Andrea Budgey: Ecumenical Shared Ministry of Sheet Harbour Pastoral Charge and the Parish of Tangier
- Heather Cronhelm, DLM: North Highlands Pastoral Charge
- The Reverend Beth Johnston: Springhill and River Phillip Pastoral Charges
- The Reverend Tambudzai Vhembo: Walton Pastoral Charge

**CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT**

No nominations at time of printing.

**MEMORIAL OBSERVANCES****The Reverend Adams Frederic Archibald**

Adams Frederic Archibald of Halifax (formerly of New Glasgow) passed away peacefully on December 18, 2025 at the age of 90. Born in Windsor, Nova Scotia on June 14, 1935, he went to school in Moncton and then went on to Mount Allison where he earned his BA, BEd and then on to Pinehill where he earned his MDiv. He answered a lifelong calling to ministry and served congregations in River Hebert, Minto, Middleton, Windsor, New Glasgow and Bermuda. He was ordained in 1959 and dedicated his life to faith, service and community. In 1959, he married the love of his life, Vera (Barron) and together they shared 66 devoted years of marriage. He deeply cherished his family and took great pride in the life they built together. Outside of his ministry, he had a passion for cars, woodworking, camping and travelling. He also had a strong interest in his Scottish heritage, which remained meaningful to him throughout his life. He was predeceased by his parents, Rev. Dr. Frank and Margaret Archibald. He is lovingly remembered by his wife of 66 years, Vera and sons Allan (Joanne), Argyle and Frank (Abbie), Timberlea. His grandchildren Katie (Kirk), Robert (Ben), Jordan (Corey), Jacob (Anna) and Jenny (Payton) and his great-grandchildren Ellie and Charlotte, sister Pat (Garry) Condon. Fred will be remembered for his quiet dedication, steady faith, love of learning and deep commitment to both family and service. His legacy lives on in the many lives he guided, supported and inspired.

A funeral service was held on December 22, 2025 at Bethany United Church, Halifax, NS.

### The Reverend John William Fraser



Fraser, The Reverend John William, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on October 28th, 2025. He has received the crown of righteousness and has finished the race. God called his name, and welcomed him to rest with the saints. John is missed by his wife Barbara, daughters Tanya (Jamie), Christina (Jeff) and son Marc (Sonja); as well as his mother Grace, brothers Lorne and Carl (Linda), and sister Barbara. John was a beloved grandfather to Samuel, Serene, Sophie and Piper as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins and other family members. He was predeceased by his father Russell, sister-in-law Lona, brother-in-law Andrew and other family held deep in hearts and memory. John was a storyteller, who loved to fish, and was a passionate Habs fan but his greatest passion was serving the Lord. Fearlessly living out his faith, John left Strescon to begin his call into ministry. Serving in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island to New Brunswick John served many congregations, and lived the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The funeral was held at St Mark's United Church, West Saint John, NB, October 31, 2025.

### The Reverend Mary Elizabeth Haylock



We share, with full hearts and deep gratitude for a life beautifully lived, the passing of our dearly loved mother, Mary Elizabeth Haylock. Born July 9, 1942, in Halifax to John ("Jack") and Sarah ("Sally," née McKeagan), Mary was a force of life—radiant, energetic, and endlessly generous, squeezing every bit of joy from whatever life threw her way, she passed on March 8, 2026. Mary's greatest pride was her family. She is lovingly survived by her four children—Wendy (Gaston), Steven (Cindy), Scott (Aileen), and Debbie (Steven)—as well as her three stepchildren, Gabriel (Jill), Tessa (Joseph), and Meghan (Mike). Her presence will continue to be felt through her 13 grandchildren—Nicole, Mark, Ben, Alison, Dan, Lauren, Alexandra, Isabella, Gus, Graeme, Abby, Ty, and Ellie—and in the bright new life of her first great grandchild, baby Luca. She also leaves behind her former wife, Gail Logan, with whom she shared a meaningful chapter of her life. Mary is predeceased by her first husband, Michael Johnson, her sister, Susan Burchell, and her nephew T-Scott Burchell. Mary carried a vibrant spirit and a deep, unwavering love that touched everyone she met, leaving a light in every space she entered. If you had the privilege of knowing her, you likely heard her proudly recount the many chapters of her remarkable career: an "old OR nurse" from the Victoria General (class of 1963); an ordained clergy member of the United Church of Canada; a community chaplain supporting women in conflict with the law; and, most recently a psychotherapist, practicing well into her 79th year. A lifelong feminist, Mary cared deeply for other women. It feels fitting that she passed on International Women's Day, a day that reflects the very values she lived and breathed. Throughout her own journey, and in the lives of countless women she supported, Mary demonstrated bravery and worked tirelessly to uplift those at their most vulnerable. We all benefitted from Mary's strength and determination. In her final years, Mary devoted her heart and energy to what she cherished most: her children and grandchildren. She was endlessly proud of her children and grandchildren, and an avid and gifted knitter, creating handmade pieces for everyone she loved.

Along with baby clothes, hats, mittens, and countless sweaters, she discovered a special blanket pattern, and went on to knit more than nineteen of them over the past two years for her family, with two still on her needles at the time of her passing. Creativity was her comfort and her joy. She also delighted in word puzzles and, in her later days, found happiness in all things pink. In the past few months, Mary faced numerous hospitalizations as she navigated the challenges of pulmonary fibrosis. She met this chapter with the same bravery, optimism, grace, and determination that had carried her through every stage of her life before it. She remained cheerful, curious, and deeply appreciative of those around her, particularly her children who offered her tender care and support. True to the values instilled in her by her father, Jack, Mary made sure to learn the names of everyone involved in her care. She offered genuine warmth not only to her nurses and doctors, but especially to the housekeepers and care team assistants whose work is often unseen. Her kindness created meaningful moments of connection that brightened the days of those who cared for her. The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the dedicated care team on Unit 8.2 at the Halifax Infirmary for their attentive support during Mary's many hospital stays. Deep appreciation is also extended to the Palliative Care Unit at the Victoria General Hospital, whose compassionate and dignified care provided comfort and peace in her final days.

A Celebration of Life was held on March 20, 2026 at Snow's Funeral Home, Halifax, NS.

### **The Reverend Iain T.M. Macdonald**



Rev. Iain T. M. Macdonald, 87, of Bedford passed away on Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at the VG Site, QEII, Halifax. Iain Thomson Macleod Macdonald was born in Edinburgh, Scotland to the late Roderick and Jean (Thomson) Macdonald. He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Lois E. Miller; daughters, Christina (Ian Sinclair) and Margaret; grandson, Alden Macdonald-Sinclair; sister, Valerie Chappel (late John), Reno, Nevada; brother, Derick (Shauna Hooker), Scottsdale, Arizona; sister-in-law, Mary Miller (late Ross), Halifax. He is also survived by nieces and nephews in Canada and the US and by cousins in Scotland. His earliest memory as a

young child was being pulled away from a window and carried to shelter under the stairs as bombs fell on Edinburgh, probably in October, 1939. With his mother and infant sister Valerie, Iain was evacuated to the small town of Millport on the Greater Cumbrae, an island on the west coast of Scotland downriver from Glasgow. There the family lived with the Macdonald grandparents and Iain began school. Iain's war years were scarred with grief at the death of one uncle in the War and the serious wounding of another. Like other children of the War, however, he found opportunities for joy whenever possible. World War II inspired in him a life-long interest in military history. In 1947, the Macdonalds immigrated to Canada for a fresh start, moving often as Iain's father sought work and a good home for his family. In all, Iain attended 26 schools, including four universities. Iain received a BA from University of Alberta and an MDiv from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. At Alberta, he received a prestigious award for outstanding service to the student body in his role as secretary of the Students' Union. He did graduate work at Oxford University where he was a member of St. John's College and kept in touch with the college on later visits to the UK. Iain and Lois married in Kingston, Ontario in 1978. He was a devoted husband and was happy to be able to support Lois in her endeavours. He was an incredibly loving father to daughters Christina

and Margaret. After his ordination as a United Church minister in 1980, Iain served congregations in Ontario and Nova Scotia. He was an excellent narrative and Biblical preacher. In a recent tribute, one congregation member referred to his thought-provoking sermons that were the highlight of that person's week. Another recalled how Iain would deliver a sermon without notes while walking up and down the church aisle, on one occasion with a crying baby, not his own, in his arms. He loved children and welcomed their vocal contributions to his services. Iain was an effective and compassionate pastor. People have reached out to his family to describe Iain's calm and reassuring presence during times of crisis or grief. Iain collected and cherished friends. He was a member of Royal Canadian Legion, Masonic Lodge, New Democratic Party and the Oxford and Cambridge Society of NS. Iain loved travelling with Lois to visit friends and family throughout North America and the United Kingdom. He voraciously devoured both books and sushi. The last meal he enjoyed was sushi served in his hospital bed. Iain adored cats and his family see him now reunited with many beloved family cats.

The funeral was held at St. John's United Church, Fall River, NS, May 30, 2025.

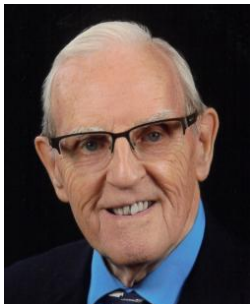
### **The Reverend Ian K. MacDonald**



The Reverend Ian Kendon MacDonald, 90, of Summerside, Prince Edward Island passed away on Dec 8, 2025. Born in Sydney, NS, Ian was the son of John D and Effie (MacLean) MacDonald. He was ordained by the Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada. In 40 years of service, he ministered to the Pastoral Charges in St. Ann's, NS, Lorneville-South Bay, NB, St. Lambert, PQ, Arnprior, ON, Kentville, NS, Vernon Bridge, PEI and Gibson Memorial, Fredericton, NB. Remembered with love by his daughters Marilyn MacDonald (Kevin Stewart), Summerside, PEI; Gail Marchand (Doug) Halifax, NS; son Michael MacDonald (Mazie), Markham ON; grandchildren Lauryn and Reid Marchand and Briana MacDonald; and sister Sheila MacDonald, Sydney NS. Also remembered by his nieces and nephews, friends and new family at Andrews of Summerside. The family would like to thank the staff at Andrews of Summerside and Prince County Hospital for all their care and kindness.

A memorial service was held at Trinity United Church, Summerside, PE, on December 13, 2025.

### **The Reverend Alexander F. "Sandy" MacLean**



Reverend Alexander F. "Sandy" MacLean - 87, Truro, passed away on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, surrounded by loving family, at Colchester East Hants Health Centre, Truro. Born in Fredericton, Sandy was the son of the late Reverend Frank and Margaret (Fraser) MacLean. He grew up in Fredericton, Sydney and Charlottetown. Sandy graduated from Dalhousie University and Pine Hill Divinity Hall. He was ordained to the Ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care in the United Church of Canada in 1963. In 1962, Sandy married Lila Allen of Wolfville, and they were privileged to

serve in six pastoral charges: Red Bank, New Brunswick; Nashwaaksis, New Brunswick; Woodlawn United, Dartmouth; Gower Street United, St. John's, Newfoundland; Bridgewater United, Bridgewater; Central United, Moncton, New Brunswick. After his retirement, Sandy served in Trenton and South Hamilton, Bermuda. In 2003, First United Church, Truro, became their church home. Sandy is survived by his wife, Lila; son, Greg (Lynne); granddaughter, Justine; brothers, Ian, Hugh (Norma), Alan (Alison); sister-in-law, Patricia (Peter) Longino; many loving nieces and nephews. Along with his parents, he was predeceased by his beloved son, Stephen; sister, Margery Crooks (Reverend Bob); sister-in-law, Wilma MacLean.

A Celebration of Life Service was on February 9, 2026, at First United Church, Truro, NS.

### **The Reverend Richard John Meredith**



Reverend Richard John Meredith completed his earthly journey on Monday, January 12, 2026, and rose in glory. Born in Shobdon, England in 1959 to Tom Meredith and Valerie Jinks, Richard was the middle child, nestled between Tom, Stanley, Rosie and Valerie. In 1969 they immigrated to Canada, making their home in Highland Village, Colchester County and establishing Meredith Farms. Growing up on the farm and working in the family business, until his early 30s, Richard learned to be a jack of all trades. He helped build the barns, tended the pigs and kept the farm equipment running. In his early 30s Richard answered a call to ordained ministry in the

United Church of Canada. After nine years of dedication, determination and hard work he completed his GED, received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from St. Mary's University and a Masters of Divinity from Atlantic School of Theology. Upon graduation he moved across the country, with his family, to begin ministry in rural Saskatchewan. He served several rural congregations until his diagnosis of Parkinson's took him on another journey. Through it all, Richard's life was marked by love, compassion, laughter and joy. He was a life-long learner and justice seeker, with a heart to build a world where love is lived. At the age of 21 Richard married his soul mate and life partner, Cindy Lowe. Together, they raised four beautiful children who were his joy and life – Christine, Andrew, Megan and Olivia. When not on the farm, studying or working in the church, Richard might be playing darts or horse shoes; fishing along the bay, the brook or from a boat; or heading out on the next adventure with his family – camping, exploring the Five Islands, clam digging, hiking or discovering the many treasures of this country. On any given day he might have a chainsaw in his hands; a hammer and nails and plans for the next thing to build; be found driving the tractor or beach combing on the Bay of Fundy. Richard was predeceased by his parents, Tom and Valerie; brother, Tom; nephew, Mitchell. Left to carry on his legacy are his wife of 45 years, Cindy; children, Christine (Holly), Andrew, Megan, Olivia (Matthew); grandchildren, Tierney, Conlinn, Finnigan, Winter; sisters, Rosie and Valerie; brother, Stanley; many nieces and nephews who held a special place in his heart. Richard's wish for all would be "to seek justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God."

A celebration of life was held on January 16, 2026, at First United Church, Truro, NS.

### The Reverend Eric William Lawson Pace



It is with love that we announce the peaceful passing of Eric Pace, at the age of 89, in Camp Hill Hospital on January 13, 2026. He was the son of Louise (nee Ayers) of Lamaline, Newfoundland and Eric B. Pace of Glen Margaret, born on December 11, 1936. Eric spent his early years in Hackett's Cove, where his parents owned and operated a General Store. He attended a one-room school in Hackett's from Primary to Grade Six. His family moved to Halifax following his father's illness. He attended Cornwallis Junior High School and Queen Elizabeth High School, where he met Elaine in grade 10, and so it began. Eric developed a fondness for sports including baseball and hockey; he played hockey at the secondary and varsity levels. He attended Mount Allison University and received his B.A. in 1958. He went on to attend Pine Hill Divinity School in Halifax and, while there, was assigned as Student Minister to Brunswick Street United Church. He was ordained a Minister of the United Church of Canada in 1960 and began his ministry with the Goshen Pastoral Charge in Guysborough and Antigonish Counties. He and Elaine were married in West End Baptist Church, Halifax, that same year. During his Berwick ministry, he was the Fire Department Chaplain and enjoyed coaching fastball and participating in camp leadership. He was introduced to curling, which he continued to enjoy for many years and passed down his love of the sport to his daughter, Joanne. Eric was a Manpower Counsellor with the Federal Department of Manpower Services in Saint John, NB. The family returned to Halifax, where he was employed as Supervisor and eventually Director of Staffing for the Province of Nova Scotia, retiring in 1993. Over his lifetime, he remained involved with the local and regional church serving as Elder, Secretary and Chair of the Pastoral Relations Committee. His other endeavors included Director of Mixed Curling at Mayflower Curling Club, Chair of the Board for Windsor Elms Seniors' Home and Chair of several congregational committees and events. Throughout his life, he was a member of numerous golf clubs, a sport he passionately embraced with the company of great friends, including Wayne Redmond. Following retirement, he and Elaine enjoyed 12 years wintering in Florida, while operating "Julia's Antiques" from their fishstore during the summer months. By this time, they had moved to Hackett's Cove and William Black Memorial Church became their much-beloved home congregation, completing the circle. Eric is survived by his wife Elaine (nee Wagner), his children Gregory (Elsie) of Hantsport, Joanne MacGillivray (Daniel) of Falmouth, and grandchildren Mark and Brian MacGillivray and Eric, Matthew and Sarah Pace, as well as his brother Glenn (Beverley) of California. He is also survived by brother-in-law John (Marge) Wagner and nieces and nephews: Craig Connolly, Nancy Snow, Julie Ann (Wagner) Stienburg, David Pace and James Pace. He was predeceased by his parents, sister Thelma Boutilier (Melvin) and sister-in-law Judy (John) Snow. A special thank you to family, friends and caregivers who have provided support and companionship over the past few years. Also, thank you to the staff on 3 East, Camp Hill Hospital, especially nurses Amanda and Ariane.

The funeral was held at William Black Memorial Church, Glen Margaret, NS, January 24, 2026.

### The Reverend Leslie Robinson



The Reverend Leslie Robinson passed away December 2025. He was born on May 13, 1948. He came from Mirfield, Yorkshire, England. Ordained into the Christian ministry in 1970, Leslie served the Moravian Church in London, England, and Labrador. It was in Makkovik, Labrador that he met his spouse Margrit, from Basel, Switzerland, who served with the Grenfell Medical Mission as a nurse. They had two children, Andrew and Fiona. Rev. Robinson was admitted to The United Church of Canada in 1995 and served in Chipman, New Brunswick and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

### The Reverend Doctor J. Henry Tye



John Henry Tye, 95, of Charlottetown, passed away on Sunday, December 28, 2025, at Andrews Park West after a life of community service. Born in New Glasgow, NS on June 13, 1930, he was the son of the late Orval and Evelyn (Nichols) Tye. The first person in his family to attend university, Henry earned a BA from Mount Allison University in 1952 and a Bachelor of Divinity (now a Master of Divinity) from Pine Hill Divinity Hall (now the Atlantic School of Theology) in 1954. He later pursued postgraduate studies at the Boston School of Theology. After ordination as a United Church minister in 1954, Henry served congregations in Cape North, NS and Parrsboro, NS before coming to Park Royal United Church, Parkdale in 1961. At Park Royal he oversaw the expansion of the congregation as well as financing and construction of the church's extension. In the community he tirelessly promoted ecumenicalism in a variety of forms, including sitting on the committee that led to the formation of UPEI. He left Charlottetown in 1967 to assume administrative positions in the United Church's Maritime conference office in Sackville, NB, first as Director of Christian Education and then as Executive Secretary for the Maritime Conference. Later, he also served a term as President of the Maritime conference. In 1989 he returned to Park Royal where he ministered until he retired in 1991. For many years the word "retirement" didn't hold much meaning for Henry, whose work ethic was unmatched. He continued to supply preach for congregations in the Charlottetown area in need of a minister. At the same time, he helped to launch the PEI chapter of Habitat for Humanity and held leadership roles in a wide range of organizations including the Canadian Bible Society, the Upper Room Ministry, and the Charlottetown Christian Council. He was particularly proud of the Tye Foundation, a charitable foundation that he established in memory of his wife Laurene to financially support the work of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and other community organizations. Over the years his contributions were recognized by many awards including an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity by the Atlantic School of Theology in 1991. Henry was named Charlottetown's Citizen of the Year in 2003, and his leadership was acknowledged by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism in 2009. He had tireless energy and wide-ranging interests that included innumerable woodworking and building projects, beekeeping, photography, and family history. He enjoyed time spent at the family cottage that he built in Little Harbour, NS and in later years filled many pleasurable hours reminiscing about his days growing up on MacDonald Street in New Glasgow and the important influence of his grandfather who lived next door. He was a

lifelong gardener, collector, and book lover. A great storyteller, Henry loved to laugh and make others laugh; his good humour will be missed by everyone who knew him. He was a cherished husband, father, and grandfather. He is survived by his children, Diane (Peter), St. John's, NL; Cathy (Tony), ON; and Mark (Veronica), Mount Uniacke, NS; grandchildren Laurene Davis (Mike), Melissa Thompson (Colin), Miranda Landry, Kayla Tye Flemming (Tyler), Callum Latta, and Emma Tye; great-grandchildren Aria Persaud, Amaya Gordon-Landry, Naomi Davis, and Bentley Thompson; and nieces and nephews. Besides his parents, Henry was predeceased by his wife, Laurene (Falconer) in 1989, his brother Alison in 2009, and his sister Margaret (Peg) in 2020.

Completed arrangements to be announced in mid-January 2026.

**“Into The Deep”****Draft Agenda****Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council  
The United Church of Canada****Acadia University**

(Meeting/meal location: Fountain Commons, #26 on campus map)

**May 28-31, 2026****Thursday, May 28****Afternoon**

2:00 Registration Opens (Fountain Commons, #26 on campus map)

5:00 Supper

**Evening**

6:15 Gathering with Music

6:30 Welcome and Call to Order

Constitution of the Regional Council

Introductions and Greetings

Acknowledgement of Place

Greetings from Indigenous Guest

Procedural Motions

Consent Motions

Opening Worship

Service of Remembrance

Introduction of Candidates for Ministry

- Maritime United Church Women Presentation

8:00 Atlantic School of Theology

8:10 Licensing Committee

8:15 Justice, Mission and Outreach – Beyond the Bean

8:30 Registration Closes

8:30 Community Connexion (Gathering Space Opens)

10:00 Community Connexion Closes

**Friday, May 29****Morning**

7:00 Early Morning Worship (Manning Memorial Chapel, #45 on campus map)

7:00-8:30 Breakfast

7:30 Business Table Opens

- Meeting Registration at Business Table

- Meal and Accommodations Registration

8:45 Gathering Music

8:55 Announcements

9:00 Opening Worship and Deepening Conversation

9:45 Division of Finance and Administration

- Audit, 2025 - Budget, 2027

10:00 Break

- 10:30 Theme Introduction
- 11:55 Announcements and Grace
- 12:00 Lunch

**Afternoon**

- 1:20 Gathering with Music
- 1:30 Theme Time
- 3:00 Break
- 3:30 General Council Representative
- 4:00 Proposals
- 4:45 Cluster Animator
- 4:55 Announcements and Grace
- 5:00 Supper

**Evening**

- 6:20 Gathering with Music
- 6:30 Table Group Check-in
- 6:45 President's Report
- 6:55 Executive Minister's Report
- 7:05 Eco-Justice Working Group, Care for Creation
- 7:15 Justice, Mission and Outreach, Invitation Video
- 7:25 Children, Youth and Young Adults
- 7:35 Welcome and Best Wishes
- 7:40 Announcements
- Closing Prayer
- 8:00 Nominations for President-Elect Close
- President's Reception
- 8:15 Business Table Closes
- 9:00 President's Reception Closes

**Saturday, May 30****Morning**

- 7:00 Early Morning Worship (Manning Memorial Chapel, #45 on campus map)
- 7:00-8:15 Breakfast
- 8:20 Gathering Music
- 8:30 Opening Worship
- 9:00 Theme Time
- 10:30 Break
- 11:00 Nominations of President-Elect Nominees
- Vote for President-Elect
- 11:15 Regional Council Progress Report, Evaluation/Governance
- 11:40 Report from the Ecumenical Guests
- 11:50 Presentation of the President-Elect
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:30 Choir Practice (University Hall, #15 on campus map)

**Afternoon**

- 1:30 Toward 2035 / Going Deeper with Theme (90 minute presentation)  
3:30 Toward 2035 / Going Deeper with Theme (90 minute presentation)  
5:30 Retirees and Jubilarians Banquet (Fountain Commons, #26 on campus map)

**Evening**

- 7:30 Youth Lead Worship  
8:00 Closing Motions and Courtesies  
8:30 Social Time (The Axe)  
11:00 Social Time Closes (carry on the party as you wish)

**Sunday, May 31****Morning**

- 7:00-9:00 Breakfast  
8:00 Celebration of Ministry Rehearsal (University Hall, #15 on campus map)  
9:15 Choir Call Time  
10:00 Celebration of Ministry Service (University Hall, #15 on campus map)  
12:00 Closing of Regional Council