
Thank you for joining the Spring Meeting of Antler River Watershed

Regional Council, either in-person at The Stoneridge Inn or on-line by Zoom. We're still learning how best to facilitate hybrid gatherings for a large group and extend our thanks to Mark Perry for his role as our Zoom in-person Community Host. Approximately 120 people attended in-person with another 60 people online. Special thanks also to Jody McDonald-Groulx who stepped in to assist with music following the passing of Canon Greg Smith, partner of Marque Smith. We hold Marque and their family in prayer.



The Spring Meeting is for ***inspiration, education and celebration*** and all three were in abundance! **Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel** was our first theme speaker. Her wit and her wisdom, her understanding of the church's current reality and her clarity about our purpose encouraged us.

Rev. Dr. Jessica Hetherington stirred us in climate realizations, provided information and a clear call to action at Saturday's presentation. She combined her scientific expertise with words of faith. Both our guest speakers called us to deepen our relationship with God, through worship and service.



If you wish to re-watch the speakers sessions or share them with your community of faith (*highly recommended*), they will be posted shortly on the regional council [YouTube channel](#).

Time was devoted to preparing for **Remit #1** from General Council 44. Minister, Social Justice, Thérèse Samuel, led the session, opening with a video in which Cathy Dilts and Maggie Dieter reviewed Indigenous ministry.

All communities of faith are asked to consider the remit and submit their vote by March 31, 2024.

This was followed by an information session explaining the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls to the Church which have laid the

groundwork for the remit. A resource sheet with links follows after the highlights of the Spring Meeting. The presentation will be available to communities of faith to assist with their preparation.

Gawii Wiikaa Ga-Nendimisii – Never, Ever Forget Me

Another right relations matter the regional council considered was support for the Chippewa of the Thames campaign to **Save the Barn**, the last remaining structure from the Mount Elgin residential school operated by The United Church of Canada. The regional council agreed it would wait on direction from the Chippewa Nation but saw value in considering **how we might help preserve this structure**, that still bears the artwork and inscriptions of generations of residential school students.

Ryan Baxter and Sarah Charters explained the work and grants of **The United Church of Canada Foundation**. Consider how the Foundation can be a resource and partner in the ministry of your community of faith.

The third focus of the meeting is celebration as we elect and covenant with new leaders. The regional council agreed to move to preparing a **slate** of new Commission and Executive members to work towards ensuring that a full slate of diverse members is elected each year. Many thanks to **Jim Stirling** and **Herb DeJong** who are joining the Congregational Support Commission and to **Jim Hatt**, **Lillian Patey** and **Doug Peck** who are joining the Discipleship and Justice Commission.

The regional council confirmed **Cheryl Bolton**, one of last year's nominees, as its new President-Elect. Abiel Khalema, who was elected last year, needed to step away from the role for personal reasons. Please hold Abiel and Caroline in prayer. We thank Cheryl for letting her name be brought to the regional council and we look forward to her focus on renewal.

Before the business session ended, **Pam Wilcox**, Community Building Facilitator, asked everyone to identify **what message they were taking back to share** with their Council and congregation of their home community of faith!

Fear Not! Be Bold & Courageous!

The regional council closed by thanking **President Jane Van Patter** as her term draws to a close. She has guided us through the past 30 months with grace and good humour. Jane took advantage of the pandemic to join the majority of congregations in Antler River Watershed Regional Council for worship. When a congregation was mentioned, President Jane would often add

how she had been with them online and what she appreciated about them. This more than anything demonstrates Jane's love of our congregations and her understanding of her regional council role as one of **supporting and encouraging communities of faith**.



That's the purpose statement of Antler River Watershed Regional Council, "Holding and Encouraging Communities of Faith." It was developed thanks to the wisdom of Oneida elder, **Rev. Grafton Antone**, who talked about how the southern tip of the turtle's shell holds the shell and that, as the southern-most regional council, that was our role also.

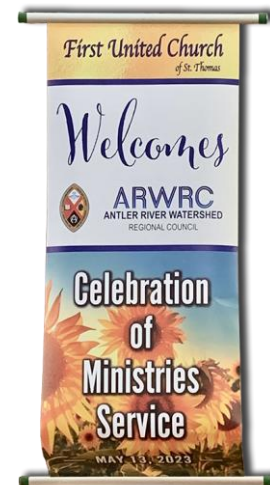
Please hold Grafton and his wife, Eileen, in prayer as they deal with health challenges.

~ We held our Celebration of Ministry Service ~

When the business concluded, we moved to **First United Church in St. Thomas**, where the ministry and music teams inspired as they led worship. Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel was our preacher.

Many thanks to First United Church for their gifted worship leadership, warm welcome and generous hospitality, including the reception following.

Check out the banner they had made for the day > > >



Nancy Vandenberghe, pictured alongside President Jane Van Patter conducting one of her final duties, was recognized as Designated Lay Ministry and will be serving at College Avenue United Church in Woodstock.



Jennifer Prince, shown being presented by President Jane Van Patter, was commissioned as a Diaconal Minister and will be serving at Metropolitan United Church and Richards Memorial United Church in London.



Andrew Gilliland was ordained by the worship team presided over by President Jane Van Patter, and has a provisional call to Riverside United Church in Windsor.

Oh, happy and blessed day!

May these new ministers and the communities they serve be filled with joy and hope.



Our final act together was the installation of our new Antler River Watershed Regional Council **President, Cheryl Bolton**.

With one voice we pledged our support as she takes up her duties.

Together we are Antler River Watershed Regional Council!



RESOURCE SHEET for REMIT 1
Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization

ON the GC44 Website (www.generalcouncil44.ca)

Remit 1: Establishing an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization

- For more information email remits@united-church.ca
- To read the proposals, visit <https://commons.united-church.ca>
 - Then select the following: Governance > General Council > 44th General Council > 3. Proposals > Theme - Nurture the Common Good.
 - And then select the document you wish to read:
 - GS10 Living into Reconciliation
 - NIC01 National Indigenous Circle—Restructuring of Indigenous Church

United Church Remit video, 6 minutes: <https://youtu.be/d5KbFs8BRMw>

THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

- The United Church Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery
[Backgrounder and 2012 Motion to Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery](#)
- Doctrine of Discovery: Canadian Museum for Human Rights article
[The Doctrine of Discovery](#)

THE UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
<https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/reconciliation-and-indigenous-justice/un-declaration-rights>
 - UN Declaration and Canada
<https://justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/index.html>
 - The UN Declaration
https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf
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**THE CALLS TO ACTION
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION**

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
<https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/reconciliation-and-indigenous-justice/truth-and-reconciliation>

**THE CALLS TO THE CHURCH
CARETAKERS OF OUR INDIGENOUS CIRCLE,
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA**

- The Calls to the Church
<https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/being-community/indigenous-ministries/calls-church>

**THE UNITED CHURCH APOLOGIES
United Church Apologies to Indigenous Peoples**

- <https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/reconciliation-and-indigenous-justice/apologies>

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES (RCAP)

- The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples **Final Report** is a huge document. If you wish to take a glance, here is the link: <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx>
- A CBC Radio article on how the legacy lives on. November 21, 2021 was the 25th anniversary of the final report of the RCAP **Final Report**: <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples-25-1.6243545>

Other Background Information

JOURNEY TOWARD RECONCILIATION of THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

- The **Reconciliation 101** Workshop was recorded on April 29, 2021. It offers an introduction to the non-Indigenous United Church's journey of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. It is a comprehensive 1 hour and 8 minutes in length. You can find this video on the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council website's [Right Relations and Indigenous Justice page](#).

Holding and Encouraging Communities of Faith

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