



**The United Church  
of Canada  
General Council**

# **GC45 Chinook Winds Regional Council Report for Summer 2025**

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**Origin: Chinook Winds Regional Council**

## **Executive Summary**

Since our last report in 2022, Chinook Winds Regional Council has continued to flourish as a dynamic and faithful expression of the United Church of Canada. We are embracing a season of vitality, innovation, and courageous discipleship. Inspired by the vision in Ezekiel 47, we are witnessing new life springing up across our region—in congregations daring to begin again, in the leadership of bold young people, and in ministries rooted in justice and reconciliation.

Over the past three years, Chinook Winds has marked several transformative achievements:

- Faith communities across the Region are collaborating, reimagining, and innovating. In Calgary, a tri-congregational partnership is sharing resources to build a thriving joint ministry. New ministries are emerging, and rural churches are discerning bold models for shared ministry.
- Our LeaderShift program is equipping leaders with the spiritual and practical tools they need, through clergy retreats, rural ministry events, governance training, and a Guatemala pilgrimage focused on Indigenous solidarity and global justice.
- First Third Ministry remains a vibrant priority, with Camp Caravan expanding across the Region, youth retreats centering mental health and spiritual formation, and campus ministries offering presence and accompaniment in post-secondary settings. Our Youth Council is a powerful and faithful voice, leading within and beyond the Region.
- We continue to lead with integrity in the work of reconciliation and right relations. Through the leadership of Rev. Tony Snow and the active participation of our

communities, we are deepening our commitment to treaty understanding, public witness, and theological reflection on land and legacy.

- As an Affirming Region, we are boldly advocating for 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion and justice. Through educational partnerships, regional learning, and public responses to harmful legislation, we are living into our commitment to be a safer, braver church.
- We continue to speak out when our government enacts legislation which we believe is counter to the gospel. During the Alberta election (2023) we presented a series on “Jesus Politics” to help our folks discern which policies were aligned with the Way of
- In this Centennial year of The United Church of Canada, Chinook Winds is celebrating with joy and purpose—gathering stories, honoring transformation, and preparing a Region-wide celebration that looks back with gratitude and forward with bold hope."

Looking ahead, we remain focused on deepening First Third engagement, strengthening collaboration among communities of faith, and expanding our support for faithful, resilient leadership. Always, we are asking: Where is the living water flowing? Because where it flows, there is life.

Chinook Winds is proud to be a thriving part of that sacred current.

## Flourishing: Where Living Water Flows

The theme of our 2025 Regional Meeting, “Flourishing: Where Living Water Flows,” drawn from Ezekiel 47, captures the heart of our Regional vision. In a time of ecological urgency, spiritual longing, and social fragmentation, we embrace the call to be channels of living water—bringing healing, vitality, and hope.

Across Chinook Winds, this living water is already flowing:

- In bold new ministries and faith communities experimenting with fresh models
- In young leaders stepping confidently into the future
- In congregations choosing courage over comfort
- In the transformative work of justice and reconciliation

We are witnessing life and renewal in the very places we were told were too dry. This is flourishing faith—and it is unmistakably alive in Chinook Winds.

# Healthy Communities of Faith

At the heart of our Regional work is a commitment to supporting strong, vibrant, and spiritually grounded communities of faith. We are walking alongside congregations as they discern what thriving looks like in their unique context—often beyond traditional metrics of size or stability.

Noteworthy examples include:

- A creative three-point collaboration among Calgary congregations, sharing leadership and resources to form a united, thriving ministry
- A congregation planting a contemplative second campus
- Rural churches in Southeastern Alberta beginning bold conversations around shared ministry models

Through support, ministry planning tools, and deep accompaniment, our regional staff are empowering congregations to imagine sustainable, faithful futures.

## Effective Leadership

Chinook Winds is deeply committed to equipping leaders—both lay and ordered—with the tools, spiritual grounding, and resilience they need to lead in today's complex landscape.

LeaderShift engages this work, offering:

- Clergy retreats focused on rest, renewal, and connection
- Rural ministry events designed to empower small and rural congregations
- Conflict resolution and governance training
- M&P Committee sessions
- Online communities for clergy
- Guatemala Pilgrimage, which deepened our collective understanding of Indigenous solidarity and spiritual resilience

We recognize the emotional and spiritual toll that ministry can take—and we are responding with care, intention, and innovation.

# First Third Ministry

First Third Ministry continues to be a priority for Chinook Winds. We believe deeply in nurturing faith in the first third of life.

Key accomplishments include:

- Expansion of Camp Caravan, bringing summer programming across the region
- Children and Youth Retreats focused on mental health, spirituality, and leadership
- Growth of Campus Ministry, offering vital spiritual accompaniment to post-secondary students
- Ongoing development of intergenerational programming and leadership training

What sets our First Third Ministry apart is that youth and young adults are not just attending—they're leading. The Youth Council is shaping regional priorities and representing Chinook Winds on the national stage. They are bold, brave, and deeply faithful.

## Reconciliation and Right Relations

Chinook Winds continues to be a strong and consistent voice for justice, truth-telling, and reconciliation. Under the leadership of Rev. Tony Snow, we live our commitment to the Calls to the Church, Indigenous justice, and public witness.

Recent initiatives include:

- Right Relations Circles for learning and dialogue
- Worship resources for communities across the region
- Public actions and commemorations on Truth and Reconciliation Day, Indigenous Veterans Day, and more
- Active engagement in national and global justice conversations

We are proud of our growing theological and practical commitment to land, language, legacy, and treaty responsibilities. The work of reconciliation continues to shape everything we do.

## Affirming Ministry

As an Affirming Region, we are living into our public commitment to 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion and justice with clarity and conviction.

Highlights include:

- Ongoing partnership with Affirming Connections, supporting advocacy and education
- Regional learning events on gender identity, allyship, and intersectionality
- Public advocacy in response to harmful legislation and rhetoric targeting trans youth in Alberta

We believe this work is central to who we are as Christians—not optional, but essential.

## Political Advocacy

We have a conservative government in Alberta whose actions sometimes run counter to our understanding of Gospel. As noted above, we continue to advocate for the rights of trans kids and parents of trans kids. Recognizing that our congregations are politically diverse, during the 2023 Election, our Executive presented a series called “Jesus Politics” through our Chinook Winds newsletter. Topics included: Climate Change and the Eastern Slopes; Diversity (Immigration and Refugees); Civic Engagement and political divisions; Public/Private Medicine; Non-Partisan Preferential Option for the Poor; faith-based approach to energy consumption; Living in Right Relations; and Homelessness and addiction.

## Centennial Reflections and Celebrations

The Centennial of the United Church of Canada is a time for bold remembering and joyful celebration. In Chinook Winds, we are:

- Collecting community stories that reflect both our heritage and our transformation
- Supporting worship, storytelling, and events across the region
- Preparing a joyful celebration at our annual gathering to mark this historic milestone

We give thanks for the faithfulness of our past and the Spirit-led future we are stepping into.

## Thanks to Our Staff

Our Chinook Winds Region is grateful for our talented and dedicated staff.

- Treena Duncan, our Executive Minister, has been tireless in her leadership of Chinook Winds Region. Her commitment to ministry at the local level has enabled our region to focus on the issues that matter most to Communities of Faith. She has assisted the Executive with insight and grace, and we are grateful for her guidance.
- Mauricio Araujo is Treena's Executive Assistant. He has kept all the balls in the air, assisting with Executive meetings, and the AGM – always with grace and humour and kindness. We so appreciate his attention to detail.
- Karen Medland is our Regional Minister: Pastoral Relations and Community of Faith Support. Karen's deep experience, coupled with her grace and sense of humour have given her the ability to forge connections with both ministry personnel and communities of faith. Her wisdom is a gift to our Chinook Winds Region.
- Thanks to Pamela Evans who oversees our First Third Ministry. Her passion for reaching the younger members of our church is evident in all she does. Thanks to Pacific Mountain Region for sharing Pam with us!
- Chris Mah Poy has a varied portfolio being involved with First Third Ministries and justice ministries, including Affirming. Chris brings a depth of knowledge and a deep commitment to a more just society. His advocacy with Youth to ensure they have a place in decision making in our region has been crucial to ensuring diverse participation in our decision-making. We are grateful for his dedication to this role.
- We are so grateful for Jess Andrews who coordinates our campus ministry. She has brought new life to this ministry and students at our post-secondary institutions have a true advocate. We are looking forward to how this ministry will evolve in the coming years.
- Lisa Penzo has recently taken on the role of Regional Minister: camping. She is consulting with our camps to ensure they meet Duty of Care, and assisting with First Third Ministry. We value her experience and passion for this demographic.
- Michelle Slater, through LeaderShift, has been creative and innovative in re-imagining "continuing education" for our clergy and other leaders. Thanks to her for helping us imagine new ways of being church. Thanks again for Pacific Mountain for sharing Michelle with us!
- Scott Reynolds is our Growth Animator. His vision for the future church has been invaluable as he works with CoFs to develop a plan to engage our communities. We are grateful for his passion and commitment to the well-being of our region.

- Jes Beckerley is an amazing, efficient, good natured office manager and pastoral relations support who always finds a path forward! Thanks to her for taking care of all the details for our Regional meetings and assisting Pastoral Relations Minister with CoF communications.
- Shelley Den Haan provides timely and relevant communications for the Region. Her dedication to this task has ensured that we know everything that is happening! She has willingly helped with logos and images, written and edited articles, arranged zoom meetings and generally kept us all up to date. Thanks for her commitment to this role.
- Thanks to Leanne Templeton who works with Chinook Winds to keep archives up to date. She has great stories from our history and shares with such delight.
- Joel Den Haan consults with our region on property. He has been integral to so many of the redevelopment projects, and we appreciate his ability to have difficult conversations with grace and compassion for those CoFs considering their future.

## Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, our priorities include:

- Deepening our investment in First Third engagement
- Strengthening regional collaboration and shared ministry
- Continuing to grow and adapt our LeaderShift programming

Through it all, we are guided by the question:

Where is the water flowing? Where is the Spirit stirring something new?

As Ezekiel reminds us, the river begins as a trickle—but it grows, it deepens, and where it flows, there is life. Chinook Winds is proud to be a part of that living stream.

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